

ETHNICITY AND REPRESSION:
The Ethnic Composition of Countries and Human Rights Violations

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Abstract

This study explores the impact of (1) the ethnic composition of a country and (2) democratization on the extent to which the government violates human rights. Scholars have found that the ethnic composition of a country will affect its foreign policy behavior, and the literature on ethnic conflict proposes that it has an effect on violence. More recently, scholars have reported that ethnic civil wars can be distinguished empirically from non-ethnic civil wars, and that the former last longer and are more violent. Rather than focusing on societal violence or foreign policy this study empirically investigates the impact of ethnic composition on state violations of human rights using a global data set. We find only limited and inconsistent evidence to suggest that the ethnic composition of societies directly influences a government's observance of rights to the integrity of the person. However, we do find support for the argument that, during democratization, the presence of a large ethnic minority group will mitigate the otherwise positive impact of democracy on human rights provision.

Introduction

This study explores the impact of the ethnic composition of society on the violation of human rights in that country. Scholars have found that the ethnic composition of society has an impact on the foreign policy behavior of countries (Davis & Moore 1997, Saideman 2000), on the level of political violence in countries (Muller & Seligson 1987), rebellion (Hibbs 1973), and civil wars (Collier & Hoeffler 1998, Ellingsen 2000, Sambanis 2001). Further, Walker & Poe (2002) explore the impact of ethnic diversity on the provision of a variety of human rights. They find limited support for the proposition that ethnic diversity reduces the provision of human rights, circa 1980. We build on these previous studies and ask whether the ethnic composition of society has an impact on the extent to which governments observe the human rights of their citizens.

Why anticipate that the ethnic composition of society might influence provision of human rights? We tie together the work of three of the authors of this study, among others, to make a case. First, government coercion tends to be responsive to dissident threats: protest and rebellion from the population. Second, ethnic groups have a mobilization advantage over economic- or politically-based groups. Thus, ethnic minority groups are especially likely to mobilize and engage in protest. Third, democratization ties government hands with respect to coercion, thus creating more space for protest. Ethnic groups should have a mobilization advantage, and thus be more likely to mobilize during a democratization. If governments indeed find protest and rebellion threatening, then societies with large ethnic minority groups and societies transitioning to democracy should experience greater levels of human rights violations. We sketch these arguments, and the literatures on which they draw, below.

The study proceeds in five sections. In the following section we briefly review the literature on the link between the ethnic composition of countries and protest and rebellion. This is followed by a discussion of the determinants of the propensity of governments to respond to threats with coercion. We discuss the impact of democratization on ethnic mobilization and government response in section three. In the fourth section we describe our research design and the data we use to measure our concepts. We present our findings in a fifth section and then conclude with a discussion of the implications of our study.

Ethnic Composition of Countries and Violence

An ethnic group may be defined as “a segment of a larger society whose members are thought, by themselves and/or others, to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture and who, in addition, participate in shared activities in which the common origin and culture are significant ingredients” (Yinger 1985: 159). This definition includes two important characteristics of Gellner’s version (1983: 7): a shared culture and the recognition by self and others of belonging to the same group. Horowitz (1985:17-8) provides us with an inclusive concept of ethnicity: “Ethnic groups are defined by ascriptive differences, whether the indicium is color, appearance, language, religion, some other indicator of common origin, or some combination thereof.” Our definition is a combination of Gellner (1983) and Horowitz (1985): we define ethnic groups on the basis of ascriptive differences that the members of the group and others see as salient to their identity.

Among multiple identities possessed by people, ethnicity is one of the most salient.¹ Ethnicity is a mid-level identity, representing a group small enough to mobilize, but large enough to lead to favorable results. It also provides a strong bond similar to the one of an extended family. This bond is created by early socialization processes and enforced by daily relationships between the members of the community.

Today, a large portion of the over 190 existing nation states consist of more than one ethnic group. Writing in the 1980s Connor (1983: 374) found that only fifteen of the world's states were homogenous nation states. That select group included Iceland, the two Koreas, Portugal, and Japan.² Perhaps more importantly, back then the largest ethnic group was a majority in only 31 percent of the existing countries (Connor 1983: 375). There is little reason to believe that the countries of the world have become substantially more homogenized in the last 20 years.

It is also true that since the end of World War II, at least one half of the world's states have experienced significant ethnic conflict and 80 percent of deaths from political violence have been internal to nation states (Williams 1994: 50). Clearly every domestic political conflict is not caused by ethnicity, but as Gurr (1993) reports, between 1950 and 1989 non-violent protest³ by ethnic minorities went up by 230 percent; violent protest by

¹ Ethnicity is, of course, but one identity. As we explain below, we believe it is an important identity with respect to understanding political mobilization, but it is certainly not the only type of category over which people mobilize. We nevertheless restrict our attention to ethnicity in this study.

²Japan has a small Korean minority, showing that even the countries we consider homogenous do not always consist of one ethnic group.

³ Gurr (1993:93) defines protest as acts aiming at “persuading or intimidating officials to change their policies toward the group” by mobilizing support on behalf of reform. Any violence used by protesters is sporadic and unplanned.

ethnic minority groups rose by 420 percent; and rebellion⁴ by ethnic minority groups increased by 360 percent. So most nation states have ethnically heterogeneous societies and a non-trivial amount of protest and rebellion one observes in the world in undertaken on behalf of ethnic minority groups.

Ethnic conflict is usually a result of government-ethnic group interaction. We submit that ethnic groups enjoy an advantage in mobilizing. Lindström (1996) draws on Olson (1965), Tilly (1978) and Chong (1991) to explain ethnic groups' ability to mobilize more easily and effectively than other societal actors. He begins with a collective action model that builds on Olson's claim that collective action can come about when a group is small and homogenous. He argues that since individuals are recognizable inside the smallest units, free riding is more difficult among ethnic groups than among other segments of society since sanctions are easier to administer and psychological factors are more likely to come into play. Thus, although ethnicity in itself does not lead to mobilization, there is a link between ethnicity and the capacity to mobilize for conflict behavior because of pre-existing networks among ethnic groups.

Lindström (1996) tests his hypotheses using Gurr's (1993) Minorities at Risk data set⁵ and finds support for the contention that ethnicity is positively correlated with mobilization for conflict through the concepts of homogeneity and pre-existence of group networks. Lindström's results provide evidence for the link between ethnicity and mobilization for dissent.

⁴ Gurr (1993:93) distinguishes rebellion from protest by its more fundamental goals, its strategy of mobilization of coercive power, and its systematic and planned use of violence.

⁵ Minorities at Risk data set contains information on 233 ethnic, or communal, groups that have at one time or another since 1945 showed some signs of political activity

We thus have some reason to anticipate that the ethnic composition of society may have an impact on the extent to which a society experiences protest: if grievances are relatively constant across many groups in a given society, then one would expect ethnic groups to more readily mobilize than other types of groups. Societies in transition, experiencing wide-spread economic dislocation, etc. will have fairly wide-spread discontent. And we suggest that societies experiencing such changes that also have ethnic minority groups are more likely to bear witness to protest and, perhaps, rebellion than societies that lack these conditions. To the extent that governments find that threatening, they can be expected to respond with coercion. We now turn our attention to our argument about that process.

Determinants of Human Rights Violations: An Argument

To properly determine whether ethnic structures have an impact on human rights requires that we control for/include other factors that are also expected to affect the extent to which a government respects human rights. Because we use statistical analyses to evaluate the claims about ethnic structure, we must first construct a baseline statistical model of human rights violations. To be useful, statistical models must be ground in argument or theory. Here we present the arguments we use to specify our baseline statistical model of human rights violations.

That said, we must emphasize that the arguments advanced below are inherently partial. In other words, we discuss the effect that we expect a number of different concepts to have on the extent to which a government will violate the physical integrity rights of its citizens, and in so doing, we do not mean to suggest that these factors are

individually determinant. In fact, the effects we discuss are effects that one would observe *holding all other relevant factors constant*. Of course, all other relevant factors are never held constant—they have their own effects, and the outcome in any given country at any moment in time will be influenced by all of the factors. To statistically test the impact of the ethnic composition of a society on human rights violations, we must specify as many other relevant factors as we can and control for them (statistically) by measuring them and including them in our statistical analysis. With that as background, we turn our attention to our argument.

The argument is similar to the one advanced by Davenport, Moore & Poe (2002) in a study on refugee flows. Davenport, et al. contend that refugees respond to three major sources of threat in their environment: dissident violence, government coercion, and the violent interaction of dissidents and governments. Following Poe & Tate (1994), Davenport (1995), King (1998), Poe, Tate & Keith (1999), and Lee (2001), we argue that governments are more likely to engage in repression and violate the physical rights to integrity of the person when they perceive dissident activities as threatening.

Various authors (e.g. Tilly 1978, Gurr 1986, Lopez 1986, Mason and Krane 1989, Muller and Weede 1990, Gartner and Regan 1996, Franklin 1997, Loveman and Davies 1997, Mahoney-Norris 2000, Poe, Tate & Lanier 2000, and Kaufman 2001; see also the Poe chapter in this volume) recognize a link between threat perception and the use of repression. Pion-Berlin (1989) discusses a basic assumption that connects threat perception to repression: regimes practice state terror because they feel threatened. He characterizes threat perception as “an anticipation on the part of an observer, the decision maker, of impending harm – usually of a military, strategic, or economic kind to the

state” (p. 7). The basic premise is that the use or attempted use of coercion shows that a regime anticipates danger, and that the greater the magnitude of force used by dissidents, the higher the state’s perception of threat.

Davenport (1995) also supports the idea that regimes respond to domestic threats with repression. His primary argument is that state repression is not merely a function of a unidimensional conception of domestic threat, where regimes consider only one attribute of political conflict, rather repression is a function of a multidimensional conception of domestic threats, meaning several attributes of political conflict are considered by regimes. Davenport’s multidimensional threat perception theory addresses four aspects of conflict: (1) frequency, (2) the presence of violence, (3) the variety of strategies used by dissidents and (4) deviations from culturally accepted levels of dissent. The results of his pooled cross-sectional time-series analysis support the idea that state repression is multidimensional in character and conditioned by several political-economic characteristics: democracy, economic development, coercive capacity, dependency, and the government’s past repressive behavior. His findings indicate that three different aspects of political conflict (conflict frequency, strategic variety, and deviance from cultural norm) are statistically significant in their relationship to repression. Furthermore, he finds that the degree to which the government is democratic significantly changes the relationship patterns between political conflict and repressive behavior. In addition, King (1989) and Lee (2001) tested Davenport’s model using time-series data from several Latin American cases and found substantial support for the multidimensional threat perception hypothesis: several of the dimensions were relevant in each case. To

summarize, we contend that dissident protest activities and violence influence the state's decision to engage in human rights violations.

Another factor that we expect to have an effect on the extent to which countries violate the right to physical integrity of the person is civil war. We conceptualize civil wars as events where both the government and a dissident group are actively engaged in armed struggle with one another. Dissident groups largely begin with guerrilla tactics, but in some cases professional soldiers may break away from the army and fight for the dissidents. Recent research (and events such as those in the former Yugoslavia, Colombia, Sierra Leone, etc.) suggest that both sides may spend more time attacking unarmed civilians than one another (Kalyvas 2000), but as long as both the government and at least one dissident group are actively engaged in sustained armed conflict with one another, we consider it a civil war. And we expect this type of armed conflict to have an independent effect—beyond dissident protest and violence—on human rights violations.

We expect the government to decrease its respect for human rights during a civil war because it is mobilizing its citizens in the context of being threatened. Both governments and populations tend to respond to security threats by restricting liberties and expanding the judicial power of the executive. Further, while some counter-insurgent doctrine emphasizes the importance of the rule of law when fighting insurgents (e.g., Thompson 1966), other counter-insurgent doctrine explicitly justifies human rights violations as a means to secure victory (Pion-Berlin 1989). Supporting our argument, research by Henderson (1991), Poe and his colleagues (1994, 1999), Mitchell & McCormick (1988), among others, show that civil wars increase human rights violations.

The next concept that we anticipate to have an impact on the violation of human rights is international war. The argument is much the same here as it was for civil war: governments have a broad tendency to both restrict freedom and liberty and to expand the executive's judicial power when mobilizing for war. Supporting our argument, Stohl (1975) and Rasler (1976) report that in the United States the level of government coercion tended to rise during periods when the US was at war, and Poe and his colleagues (1994, 1999) show that international wars increase the level of human rights violations throughout the world.

The above concepts are behavioral: they focus on the behavior of one or more groups in society. The main factor we examine in this study is structural: the ethnic composition of society. Yet, it is not the only structural factor that is likely to have an impact. In the next section we discuss democratization as a transition process that may well affect the extent to which a government observes human rights.

Transitions to Democracy

Zanger (2001), Davenport (1999, 1995, Davenport & Armstrong 2002), Henderson (1991), Poe and his colleagues (1994, 1999), among others, find that the extent to which a government's institutions are democratic influences the extent to which that government engages in repression or violates human rights. In her study of civil violence, Ellingsen (2000) reported that regime type had a larger effect on violence than did ethnic structure. These findings suggest that the institutional structure of the regime is an important characteristic to consider, so we turn our attention to the arguments one finds in the literature.

The conventional argument about the institutional structure of the regime is that democracies observe rights such as the integrity of the person at higher levels than autocracies. That is, constraints on executive authority and a commitment to judicial due process, which are common characteristics of democratic institutions, serve to limit government's abuse of those rights. We wish to expand this argument. We turn to Eckstein & Gurr (1975) who contend that the coherence of a regime's institutions will affect the behavior of governments. They argue that regimes with a coherent set of democratic or autocratic institutional characteristics will be able to govern effectively, but that regimes which mix some democratic with some autocratic institutional characteristics (i.e., anocracies) will tend to govern ineffectively.

As Arendt (1970) argued, power is negated by the use of violence: a truly powerful government is able to obtain the voluntary compliance of its citizenry. A threat of violence may underpin government authority, but governments that must regularly use (rather than threaten) violence are less powerful (or, to use Eckstein & Gurr's language, effective). Because anocratic regimes will find it more difficult to govern effectively, they will rely more heavily on human rights violations to retain power than will governments with autocratic regime characteristics.

In an established democracy the institutions arbitrate conflicts. With stable institutions in place, everybody knows the rules of the game and that those rules will be enforced. In an autocracy the compliance is caused by the threat of violence. Because the government is not bound by rules as a democracy is, its citizens know that the threat of violence is real. Thus, in both autocracies and democracies the actual use of power becomes unnecessary.

Democratizing countries, on the other hand, are not powerful states. The fact that the previous regime gave in to democratization demands is often viewed as a sign of weakness. According to Dahl (1971, 8) democratization consists of two processes: liberalization and inclusiveness. Pridham (2000) defines liberalization as a “qualitative change in authoritarian rule, such as when restrictions on individual and group rights are lifted.” Inclusiveness, on the other hand is the expansion of the number of people who can participate in the democratic process. As a result, because democratizing regimes are (1) bound by their emerging democratic institutions and (2) in the process of eliminating their repressive institutions, repression is not an appealing tool. Add to this observation that point that citizens who support parties that lose in elections have an incentive to protest and support non-institutional regime change (Przeworski 1991), and recent survey research which suggests that many people are willing to act on that incentive (Anderson & Mendes 2002) and one can see the difficulty that democratizing regimes face.

There are two widely used paths a country can take while democratizing. The one followed by Western democracies in the past was gradual where liberalization preceded inclusiveness. As Dahl claims (1971, 37) “tolerance and mutual security are more likely to develop among a small elite sharing similar perspectives than among a large and heterogeneous collection of leaders representing social strata with widely varying goals, interests, and outlooks.” Because it was spread over a long period of time and people were included in the political process gradually, this method produced stable democracies.

The alternative method is going through liberalization and inclusiveness simultaneously. This is the most common path in more recent democratizations. Because

these transitions take place in a short period of time, the political system is not well established and groups are uncertain about both their role in the system and their power vis-à-vis other groups.

Looking at recent transitions to democracy, Turan (2002) describes two parallel processes taking place. On the one hand, opposition groups compete with the former regime in forming the new institutional framework of the new system. During this bargaining process the state will face a dilemma: accommodation or repression. With repression the democratization attempt comes to an end and is likely to be followed by violence when ethnic groups refuse to surrender the rights they have already obtained.⁶

Accommodation creates an equally problematic situation. When the first wave of demands is accommodated, a second and more extreme wave is likely to follow. As the second process, Turan (2002) argues that ethnic groups and their leaders compete with each other for better positioning in the new system. With new institutions shaping up, they want to maximize their power or, at the very least, they try not to fall too far behind other groups. This security dilemma is explained by Saideman et al (2002:106) “the ethnic security dilemma starts with the idea that the government of any state is the greatest potential threat to any group inside its boundaries... Groups may fear that others control the government and may use its resources... against them.”

Contrary to these arguments, Cingranelli & Richards (1999), Davenport (1999), Scarritt & McMillan (2000), and Zanger (2001) have found that democratization has a positive impact on governments’ human rights behavior. This is likely to be due to the

⁶ Ethnic groups are not the only ones that are likely to mobilize. However, as we argued above, ethnic minority groups are likely to mobilize, and we focus our attention on those groups because that is the focus of our study.

government's limited ability to repress once democratic rules are adopted. Yet, Turan (2002) found that democratizations are followed by increasing levels of protest and rebellion by ethnic groups. Because ethnic violence is a result of the state and the ethnic group responding to each other's actions, these results imply that post-democratization violence is initiated by group policies, in which case a democratizing government's human rights violations are due to a lack of better methods to deal with the crisis. We thus anticipate that democratization will be associated with greater levels of rights violations while democracy (or regime type) will have a negative association with rights violations. Further, following the combined arguments of Lindström (1996), Lee (2001), and Turan (2002), this relationship should be stronger in countries with ethnic divisions than in more homogenous countries: governments respond to threats; countries with ethnic divisions are more likely to experience mobilization than those without, and that probability rises with more groups who might mobilize; and democratization processes raise the likelihood that all groups—including ethnic minorities—will engage in protest and rebellion.

Research Design and Data

The arguments raised above suggest that dissident violence, government coercion, the violent interaction of governments and dissidents, international war, regime type, democratization, and the ethnic composition of society will each have an independent impact on, and ethnic composition and democratization will have a joint impact on, the extent to which a government respects the physical integrity rights of its citizens. To determine whether these concepts have a systematic impact on the observance of physical

integrity rights we need to measure them and then determine the extent to which the data co-vary with one another. And we want to do so over a large group of countries to ensure that the results are not due to having studied an unusual group of countries.

To include as large a group of countries as possible we collected data on all countries with a population over 1 million people. That limit is a practical constraint: few large data sets in political science collect data on countries with less than 1 million people. Our results should then hold for countries that have a population larger than 1 million people. The other constraint on the countries and years that we included in our study is simply data availability. As such, our study is based on the years 1976-1993, and includes between 114 and 158 countries.

The first concept we need to measure is the right to physical integrity of the person. The Political Terror Scale (PTS) project (Gibney & Dalton 1997) provides a useful indicator and is available for the years 1976-96. The PTS is a standard based measure of the extent to which annual reports produced by Amnesty International and the United States Department of State identify violations of the integrity of the person (i.e., imprisonment without due process, disappearances, beatings, torture, and killings).⁷ Coders read the report entry for each country and then assign a value between 1 (for few violations) to 5 (for extensive violations) for a given country and a given year. The PTS has been used extensively to study human rights violations cross-nationally.⁸

Measures of the ethnic composition of society have only recently become widely available. Ellingsen (nd) has collected cross-national data on the size of the largest and

⁷ We report the results obtained using the Amnesty International measure, but also estimated parameters using the US State Department variable. When the results differed across the two data sources, we identify that difference in a footnote.

second largest ethnic groups in society, as well as the number of ethnic groups in society.

She collects the data for ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups using three sources:

Handbook of Nations, Britannica Book of the Year, and the Demographic Yearbook.

The temporal domains of the sources vary, but cover selected years in the span from 1956 through 1993.

Following Ellingsen (2000), we use her data to measure the ethnic composition of society in three ways.⁹ First, the size of the largest group (measured as a percentage of the total population) taps one dimension of ethnic composition. The larger this value, the less likely the government is to be threatened by minorities (holding all other factors constant), and thus we expect it to violate rights at a lower level. Second, the size of the second largest group (i.e., the largest minority, measured as a percentage of the total population) taps a second dimension of ethnic structure. The larger this value, the more likely the state is to be threatened by minorities (holding all other factors constant), and thus we expect it to violate rights at a higher level. Finally, the number of groups in society is used as a third dimension of ethnic composition. The larger this value, the more likely the state is to be threatened by minorities (holding all other factors constant), and thus we expect it to violate rights at a higher level.

To measure dissident violence we adopt four measures used by Davenport (1995) in his study of government repression. His variables record (1) the number of dissident protests and acts of violence in each country in each year; (2) the absence/presence of at least one act of dissident violence in each country in each year; (3) the number of

⁸ For more discussion, see Poe, et al. (1999:297-9).

different types of violence protest/violence (across four categories) in each country in each year; and (4) whether the level of dissident protest/violence was greater than ‘normal’ for each country in each year. As noted above, Davenport found that each of the four variables affected repression, though studies by King (1998) and Lee (2001) found that many, but not all, of the variables had an impact. We used all of the variables in our analysis, but similar to the King and Lee studies, we do not find that all of the variables have an impact on human rights violations. These data are created from the Bank’s Cross-National Archive and are available from 1948-1996.¹⁰

To measure civil war we use the Correlates of War (COW) dataset on civil and extra-systemic¹¹ wars (Sarkees 2000). The COW project uses a threshold of 1,000 killed per year to include the country and year in their data, and the dead must include both government troops and dissident guerrillas (in addition to members of the population). The data are available from 1816-1997.

Recent research by Sambanis (2000) makes it possible to blend our ethnic composition of society concept with our civil war concept as he has developed a list of ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars. The former are civil wars in societies that have an ethnically divided population and the latter are civil wars in relatively ethnically homogenous societies. As Poe and his colleagues have reported elsewhere, and we show again in this study, civil wars increase the violation of integrity of the person rights. But,

⁹ See Walker & Poe (2002) for an alternative to the operational approach taken here. They are interested in the ethnic fractionalization of society, which takes into account both the number of groups and the relative frequency of each group.

¹⁰ *Cross-national Time-series Data Archive*,
<http://www.databanks.sitehosting.net/www/main.htm>.

¹¹ Extra-systemic wars are—essentially—those fought between a colonized people seeking national liberation against a colonial power.

following Sambanis, one might argue that governments in ethnically divided countries that are fighting civil wars will violate human rights at a higher rate than governments in relatively ethnically homogenous countries that are fighting civil wars (holding all other factors constant). In other words, Sambanis' work implies that governments fighting ethnic civil wars will violate human rights at higher levels than governments fighting non-ethnic civil wars. We use Sambanis' ethnic civil war data and non-ethnic civil war data to explore this possibility.

We use the COW interstate war data set (Sarkees 2000) to measure our international war concept. Like the COW project's measure of civil war, the measure of international war uses 1,000 dead per year (with soldiers of both countries among the dead) as a threshold for including a given country and a given year in the data. These data are also available from 1816-1997 and have been widely used in scholarly research.

To measure the institutional structure of government we turn to a widely used data set known as the Polity data.¹² These data measure the institutional characteristics of a regime, such as the constraints on executive authority, the ability for citizens to run for the highest office, etc. (Gurr, Jagers & Moore 1989, Jagers & Gurr 1995). It is not a democracy database based on civil liberties, elections, voter turnout, etc. Because we suspect the coherence of government institutions—in addition to the extent to which they are democratic—will affect the extent of human rights violations, we eschew the most widely used Polity measure which is a scale running from the most autocratic form of government to the most democratic form of government. Instead we develop a three

¹² *The Polity Project*, <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity/>.

point scale where democracies¹³ are assigned a value of 1, autocracies¹⁴ are assigned a value of 2, and anocracies¹⁵ are assigned a value of 3. The Polity data are available from 1800-2000.

Our measure of democratization is also based on the Polity data. In order to capture the full effect of a democratization process we use three different variables. The first is a dummy variable coded one when a country's democratization score improves four points or more, on the Polity scale, over the course of a year and stays one until the democracy score decreases. The four-point mark is chosen because it represents a significant change in the country's regime. Any smaller threshold would likely capture minor regime adjustments in a given country. A second variable measures the change in democracy score during the last democratization. We use it to distinguish the intensity level of the transition the country most recently went through. Finally, a counter variable is used to measure the maturity of institutions. It turns one when democratization takes place and counts until an "autocratization" or the next democratization.

In addition to these three variables measuring democratization, our argument requires the inclusion of two interaction terms. We argue above that democratization is likely to have a different impact on ethnically heterogeneous societies than homogeneous ones. To capture that relationship, we multiply two variables to create a set of interaction terms that measure the intensity of change in democracy score and the number of ethnic/religious/linguistic groups in a country. We create a second set of interaction

¹³ Democracies are those countries that have a score greater than 6 on the DEMOC variable in the Polity data.

¹⁴ Autocracies are countries that have a score greater than 6 on the AUTO scale in the Polity data.

terms that capture the impact of an intense democratization in a country and the proportion of the secondary ethnic/religious/linguistic population.

One final argument is important. Gurr (1988) argued that governments establish standard operating procedures for resolving violent challenges to their authority. More specifically, governments that successfully employ violence to defeat an insurgency (or a foreign country) create bureaucracies that specialize in violence (and investigation). Once the threat has been eliminated, the bureaucracies usually demobilize to some extent, but they are rarely dismantled. As such, both the memory of using violence and the means to deploy it are available to future governments. This implies that governments will tend to do what they have done in the past.

Findings

The results are reported in Table 1, which contains coefficient estimates from our statistical analyses. Those readers who are not interested in the technical details can ignore Table 1 in favor of the description provided here.¹⁶

[Insert Table 1 about here]

¹⁵ Anocracies are countries that have a score less than 6 on both the DEMOC and the AUTOC scales in the Polity data.

¹⁶ The results are based on ordinary least squares (OLS) regression. The data are arrayed in what is known as a pooled time series cross section format. This format raises two technical difficulties known as autocorrelation and (panel) heteroskedasticity. The standard solutions to those problems were not available in this study due to missing data which gave us a non-square data matrix. Rather than (1) exclude cases that were missing data or (2) interpolate missing data, we chose to use OLS regression with robust standard errors (to ameliorate heteroskedasticity) and a lagged dependent variable (to address autocorrelation). A replication data set will be available at the third author's web site, and interested scholars may want to replicate the results using different techniques. One might also want to consider using an ordered logit model rather than OLS regression.

There are five models reported in Table 1, the first of which we consider a baseline model: it contains the measures of the concepts described in the section above (dissident violence, civil war, international war, and regime type). The results support most of our arguments. Unlike Davenport, we find that only one of the variables has an impact on violations of the right to physical integrity: the absence/ presence of dissident violence. The effect of violence is small: a country with violence will, on average, experience one tenth of a point more human rights violations on the 5 point scale. Both civil war and international war increase the average level of violations a country will experience: civil war produces a four tenths of a point higher level of violations international war produces a three tenths of a point higher level of violations. Further, the type of regime also has an impact: an autocratic regime will, on average, violate rights at a level eight hundredths of a point greater than a democracy, and an anocratic regime will, on average, violate rights at a level eight hundredths of a point greater than an autocracy.

These effects are small in size, and one reason they are is that we included the previous year's score on the political terror scale in the model. We did so in part for statistical reasons, but also because it allows us to examine the argument that countries tend to follow standard procedures. The value of that estimate is 0.67, which suggests that governments have a strong tendency to continue to do what they have done in the past.¹⁷ Because we include this term in the model, and it is so strong, the other variables (dissident violence, civil war, international war, and regime type) have less to explain.

¹⁷ If the estimate was 1.0 then governments would, on average, do exactly what they did the year before—there would be very little change in the extent to which countries violate physical integrity rights over time.

That helps to explain why the size of the other estimates are so small (i.e., tenths and hundredths of a point on a five point scale). The way to think about those results, then, is that they are the impact of the variables given that the government will largely maintain its past level of rights violations.

The second model includes the two measures of civil war: ethnic civil wars and non-ethnic civil wars. We include these variables to test for the possibility that countries that experience an ethnic civil war will have higher levels of rights violations than countries that have a civil war, but one that is not fought over ethnic divisions. The question is whether the estimates are the same or different. It turns out that the estimates are effectively the same, and a formal statistical test indicates that we can rule out the hypothesis that they are different. The implication is that ethnic civil wars are associated with the same level of human rights violations as non-ethnic civil wars. Our first test indicates that the ethnic composition of society does not have an impact on violations of the right to the physical integrity of the person.

The third model includes the three measures of the ethnic composition of society: the percentage of the population comprised by the largest ethnic group in society, the second largest group in society, and the number of ethnic groups in society. The variables from the baseline model are essentially unchanged, but not one of the ethnic variables has an impact on the violation of physical integrity rights.¹⁸ As noted above, because we included the previous year's PTS score, there isn't much variance left to explain. To probe that issue, we re-estimated the model without the previous year's PTS score, but this did not change the findings for the three ethnic composition variables

(results not shown): they do not have an impact. This finding implies that, on average, the ethnic structure of society does not affect the extent to which governments violate personal integrity rights. This was also the only model where our interaction term displayed significant results. The intensity of the democratic transition the country experiences, combined with the proportional size of the second largest ethnic group, has a significant and positive effect on human rights violations. This finding supports our argument that following a major political change a large ethnic group will be perceived as a threat by the state, leading it to use repression in order to prevent a potential challenge.

The fourth model uses the three religious variables to measure the ethnic composition of society: the size of the largest and second largest religious group, and the number of religious groups. These findings also fail to support the argument that the ethnic (more specifically, religious) composition of society affects the observation of human rights: neither of the size of population variables has an impact,¹⁹ and the number of religious groups has a small negative impact on rights violations. That is, a society with 11 religious groups will, on average, have a seven-tenths of a point *lower* level of violations on the five point scale than a society with 1 religious group. So the more religious groups there are in society, the lower will be the rights violations. This is the opposite of what was anticipated.

The fifth model includes the three measures of the linguistic composition of society: the percentage of the population comprised by the largest linguistic group in society, the second largest group in society, and the number of linguistic groups in

¹⁸ The largest ethnic group has a negative impact, as hypothesized, when we use the State Department PTS variable.

society. Linguistic structure also fails to have an impact: not one of the variables has a statistically discernible effect. Again, the baseline variables have essentially the same effect as they do in all of the other models. So linguistic differences are not, on average, associated with human rights violations.

The democratization variables we used to test our argument failed to produce significant results in any of our models. Neither a recent democratization, nor a drastic regime change appears to affect the government's human rights behavior. This goes against previously cited work that related democratization to an improvement of human rights (Cingranelli & Richards 1999; Scarritt & McMillan 2000). There may be a perfectly reasonable explanation for these results. It is possible to argue that once democratic norms start to take root, human rights violations cease to be an available policy option for these governments. A young democracy may not have all the necessary institutions in place to achieve an improvement on its human rights record, but it would definitely lack some of the repressive institutions it used for human rights violations.

To summarize, then, we have found that while our baseline model performs well, the ethnic composition of society variables do not have an effect on the extent to which government's violate the physical integrity rights of the person of their citizens: only the largest ethnic group and largest religious group measures had an impact, and these only when we used the US State Department PTS variable. The other variables that had an impact were robust: their effects were consistent and strong across multiple specifications and samples. More specifically, the structural variable that had an impact was the type of regime; the other variables code the behavior of both the government and dissidents, and

¹⁹ Again, the largest ethnic groups has a negative impact, as hypothesized, when we use

the government and other countries. This suggests that while the ethnic composition of society may have other effects on violent conflict in society, it does not appear to have a direct effect on the violation of human rights.

Conclusion

Our results are somewhat at odds with some results reported elsewhere in the literature. With respect to ethnic structure and human rights, our findings are consistent with Walker & Poe (2002), who conclude that there is only limited support for the proposition that ethnic fractionalization has a negative impact on human rights. Most of their findings failed to support the proposition, though they did report a linear negative relationship between ethnic fractionalization and physical quality of life indicators, which is a different dimension of human rights than examined here. With respect to democratization and human rights, Davenport (1999), Scarritt & McMillan (2000), and Zanger (2002) report a negative relationship between democratization and government coercion/physical integrity rights abuses. We took exception to the conventional wisdom and expected to find a positive relationship, mediated by the ethnic composition of society. We found no relationship, thus failing to find evidence to support arguments advanced by others or the argument advanced here.

Given that summary, it seems useful to suggest that our analysis of the ethnic composition of society on human rights violations is, in some sense, incomplete. Other studies have found that factors such as former colonial ties, the ideological orientation of the society (Poe & Tate 1994, Poe, Tate & Keith 1999), provisions in constitutions

the State Department PTS variable.

(Davenport 1996), elections (Davenport 1997), population growth (Henderson 1991), foreign aid (Cingranelli & Pasquarello 1985, Blanton 2000), and foreign economic penetration (Richards, Gelleny & Sacko 2002) have an impact on respect for human rights. We do not control for such factors in our study, and it is possible that were we to do so, one (or more) of the relationships we reported might change. Future studies may want to probe such relationships.

In addition, we do not model what are almost surely reciprocal relations among some of these variables. Lindström & Moore (1996) and Gurr & Moore (1997) have shown that protest/rebellion and coercion are interconnected and that when one models them this way, one can uncover somewhat different relationships. The argument behind such a finding is simply that the level of dissident violence in a society is (partly) determined by the level of government repression in that society. Francisco (1995, 1996) and Carey (2002) study the reciprocal relations between dissent and repression across regime types, and show that the behavior of both dissidents and governments is mutually constituted. We, like others studying human rights violations, have modeled it as unidirectional phenomenon. But future work would do well to follow the lead of these studies to try to model the interactions between human rights violations and dissent.

The results presented here are, thus, provisional rather than definitive. That said, the baseline model findings are remarkably consistent across different groups of countries: data availability caused us to estimate parameters using as many as 158 countries and as few as 114 countries. Yet, the estimates reported in Table 1 are very similar in each column. This suggests that the relationships are strong. Thus, while we cannot rule out that some of the results might change in the face of a more sophisticated,

reciprocal model, we have good reason to anticipate that most of the relationships will stand much as reported here.

Turning our attention away from research technicalities toward human rights, the tragedy is that there is a great deal of variance to be explained. If there is a positive note to take away from this study it is this: ethnically diverse societies are just as likely as ethnically homogenous societies to experience a positive or negative human rights environment. Some scholars have argued that ethnic partition is the best way to solve ethnic conflicts (e.g., Kauffman 1996, Mearsheimer & Van Evera 1999). Our results do not speak directly to that issue, but they are somewhat related, and they suggest that the ethnic composition of societies does *not* have a general (or inevitable) negative effect on human rights provision. Violence and mobilization for war most assuredly erode human rights provision, but the ethnic, religious, and linguistic composition of societies does not. As Moore (2002) has argued, warnings with respect to ethnic divisions can become self-fulfilling prophecy: we will do well to ground analyses of such phenomena in evidence.

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Table 1: Regression Results

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Constant	<u>0.53</u>	<u>0.50</u>	<u>0.83</u>	<u>1.05</u>	<u>0.48</u>
PTS_{t-1}	<u>0.71</u>	<u>0.72</u>	<u>0.67</u>	<u>0.66</u>	<u>0.66</u>
Frequency	-0.00	-0.00	0.00	0.00	-0.00
Violence	<u>0.08</u>	<u>0.10</u>	<u>0.13</u>	<u>0.10</u>	<u>0.17</u>
Variety	0.03	0.02	0.04	0.03	0.04
Deviance	0.05	0.07	-0.03	-0.02	-0.05
Civil War	<u>0.51</u>	--	<u>0.42</u>	<u>0.43</u>	<u>0.43</u>
Ethnic Civil War	--	<u>0.33</u>	--	--	--
Nonethnic Civil War	--	<u>0.35</u>	--	--	--
International War	<u>0.24</u>	<u>0.27</u>	<u>0.31</u>	<u>0.28</u>	<u>0.27</u>
Polity	<u>0.11</u>	<u>0.12</u>	<u>0.07</u>	<u>0.10</u>	<u>0.08</u>
Democratization	-0.11	-0.12	-0.12	-0.07	-0.20
Time since Democratization	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01
Change in Democracy Score	0.00	0.00	-0.00	-0.00	0.01
1st Ethnic Group	--	--	-0.00	--	--
2nd Ethnic Group	--	--	-0.00	--	--
# of Ethnic Groups	--	--	0.01	--	--
1st Religious Group	--	--	--	-0.00	--
2nd Religious Group	--	--	--	-0.00	--
# of Religious Groups	--	--	--	<u>-0.07</u>	--
1st Linguistic Group	--	--	--	--	0.00
2nd Linguistic Group	--	--	--	--	0.00
# of Linguistic Groups	--	--	--	--	0.02
Ethnic Interaction*	--	--	0.00	--	--
Religious Interaction**	--	--	--	0.00	--
Linguistic Interaction***	--	--	--	--	0.00
F	420.66	359.16	163.69	153.79	145.58
R²	0.71	0.71	0.64	0.62	0.65
# of Cases	2,163	2,163	1568	1594	1344
# of Countries	160	160	135	129	114

* An interaction term created from democratization change and the population ratio of the second largest ethnic group to country population.

** An interaction term created from democratization change and the population ratio of the second largest religious group to country population.

*** An interaction term created from democratization change and the population ratio of the second largest linguistic group to country population.