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Respect for Human Rights after the End of the Cold War*

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By directly affecting democratization, globalization, domestic conflict, and interstate conflict, the end of the Cold War was hypothesized to exert an indirect effect on the propensity of governments to respect the human rights of their citizens. The findings for a sample of 79 countries showed that torture, disappearances, and extrajudicial killings continued at about the same rate even after the Cold War ended. However, after the end of the Cold War, there was significant improvement in government respect for the right against political imprisonment. Contrary to expectations, it was found that governments that decreased their involvement in interstate conflict or experienced decreased domestic conflict did not tend to increase respect for the right against political imprisonment. As hypothesized, it was found that governments that became more democratic or increased their participation in the global economy after the end of the Cold War tended to manifest higher levels of respect for the right of their citizens not to be politically imprisoned. However, a closer look at several recent examples of democratization in Africa suggests that any human rights improvements resulting from post-Cold War democratization may be short-lived. In the cases examined, improved government respect for the right against political imprisonment resulted from short-term manipulations by the leaders of 'illiberal' or 'demonstration' democracies who were not committed to democratization or to the advancement of the human rights of their citizens.

Introduction

The literature of the Cold War period implied that the struggle between the Superpowers caused more frequent and more serious violations of human rights by other governments around the world – especially the governments of less developed countries. According to many scholars in the West, the Cold War caused greater violations of human rights by hindering the spread of democracy and pre-

venting the globalization of the world capitalist system. However, the Cold War also may have *reduced* violations of human rights by containing domestic conflict, especially within communist countries, and by reducing interstate conflict, especially among smaller states. Governments that experience less domestic and interstate conflict tend to violate the human rights of their citizens less than other governments do.

By implication, the end of the Cold War should have changed the propensity of governments around the world to respect human rights. The amount of the change in a particular government's willingness to respect the human rights of its citizens

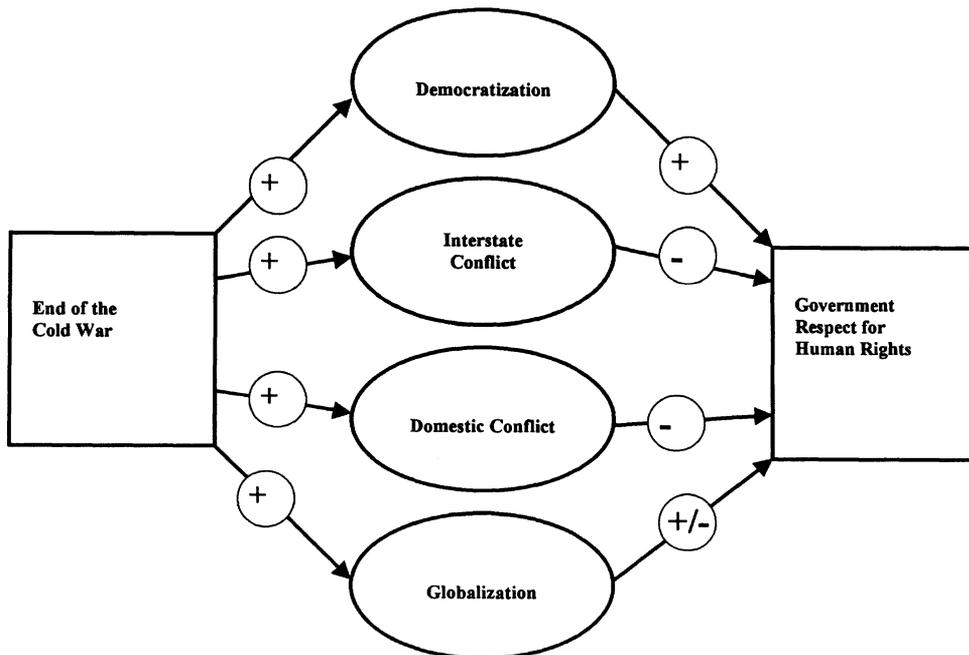
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would depend upon the directions and relative magnitudes of the changes in democratization, interstate conflict, and domestic conflict it experienced in the post-Cold War period. The consequence of globalization for human rights is less certain. Without question, the triumph by the West has led to a stronger and more inclusive capitalist world economy. Scholars continue to disagree, however, about whether greater participation in the world capitalist economy pushes a government towards greater or less respect for its citizens' human rights.

Figure 1 presents a diagram of the four types of indirect effects the end of the Cold War might have exerted on government respect for physical integrity rights around the world according to these perspectives. This research project examines these four hypothesized indirect effects of the end of the Cold War on government respect for

one category of human rights, physical integrity rights. Physical integrity rights include extrajudicial killings, torture, disappearances, and political imprisonment. We refer to a causal path having two positive signs as a 'positive effect' thesis, since the total causal effect of the end of the Cold War would be to *improve* government respect for physical integrity rights. For example, the top path in Figure 1 shows that, according to the democratic perspective, we would expect democracy to have increased as a direct effect of the end of the Cold War. As a result of that direct positive effect we would then expect an increase in respect for human rights; hence, the *indirect* positive effect of the end of the Cold War. We refer to a causal path having a positive and negative sign as a 'negative effect' thesis, since the total causal effect would be to *decrease* respect for human rights.

Figure 1. Illustration of Hypothesized Indirect Cold War Effects on Human Rights



We examined a random sample of 79 countries from 1981–96 to see how average government respect for these four rights had changed from the Cold War period (1981–90) to the post-Cold War period (1991–96). We found no significant change in mean government respect for three of the four rights considered – the rights not to be tortured, extrajudicially killed, or to disappear. However, we did find evidence of substantial improvement in government respect for the right not to be politically imprisoned in the post-Cold War period. After presenting these results, we considered whether any of the four perspectives outlined above about the effect of the Cold War on human rights practices could explain the post-Cold War improvements in average government respect for the right not to be politically imprisoned. We concluded that both democratization and participation in the more globalized economy are associated with post-Cold War improvement in government respect for the right not to be politically imprisoned.

Four Perspectives

Spurring Democratization

After the end of the Cold War, some movement toward democracy was widely expected in Central Europe as Soviet control over governments in this region was reduced or eliminated. Additional movement toward democracy was expected to occur in less developed countries as both Superpowers stopped propping up allied authoritarian governments. During the Cold War, the US government had tolerated many authoritarian, repressive regimes simply because the leaders of those regimes were willing to oppose the Soviet Union. For its part, the Soviet Union also had been silent about defects in allied non-communist dictatorships, such as Iran under the leadership of Khomeini, as long as those regimes were

willing to oppose the USA (Hough, 1986: 250).

Democratization in the post-Cold War period, in turn, was expected to cause improved government respect for physical integrity rights. Indeed, one of the most consistent findings in previous empirical human rights research is that the governments of democratic countries tend to have more respect for physical integrity rights than the governments of authoritarian countries (Poe & Tate, 1994; Poe et al., 1997). Democracy is thought to reduce government oppression, because democracy empowers the masses. The masses, so empowered, use their power to prevent authorities from abusing their human rights.

Some do not accept this argument. For example, Fein (1995) suggests that countries in which there is no democracy will experience fewer violations of physical integrity rights than those states in the intermediate stages of democracy. This argument is referred to as the ‘more murder in the middle’ thesis. Fein states that ‘... the expansion of democracy actually increases the motives for repression among elites and parties fearing a populist victory. Divided elites, inequality, and violent challengers threatening the current social order impel the governing elite to resort to repression or state terror’ Fein (1995: 173).

Yet another counter-argument is that the end of the Cold War has encouraged the creation of many ‘illiberal democracies’. As Zakaria (1997) has argued, regular elections are held in these apparently democratic systems, but the people are not really empowered because there are too few constitutional limits on the power of leaders and insufficient guarantees of basic rights and freedoms. Even during the Cold War, Herman & Brodhead (1984) argued that many ‘demonstration democracies’ had been created in the Third World to please the USA and international lending institutions

such as the World Bank. They noted that some of the basic rights commonly not protected by these new democracies were freedom of speech, a free press, freedom of organization of intermediate groups such as unions, freedom to form political parties and field candidates, and freedom from government-sponsored terror.

Increasing Interstate Conflict

The first 'negative effect' thesis we consider contended that the end of the Cold War would lead to more interstate conflict, including low-intensity wars among smaller states. This thesis is, in fact, one of many we might have drawn from the longstanding debate over the relationship between the distribution of power in the world and likelihood of war among constituent states. In reviewing the relevant literature, Wagner (1994) finds other theses including: war is least likely if power is distributed equally (Claude, 1962); war is least likely if power is distributed unequally (Blainey, 1988: 108–124; Organski, 1958: 292–293); and the distribution of power has no effect on the probability of war (Wittman, 1979: 749–751). The empirical evidence is not conclusive.

From our reading of the relevant literature, we expected at least a short-term increase in interstate conflict as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the consequent change from a bipolar to a unipolar distribution of power. During the Cold War, the Superpowers, preferring stability, limited the autonomy of their allies. They often prevented them from engaging in wars with their neighbors and placed limits on other hostile acts short of war. Both Superpowers preferred peace among their allies, because peace continued the status quo in relative power among states, a condition that favored both Superpowers. Peace also helped preserve the balance of power, which was one way the Superpowers avoided

direct military conflict. On the other hand, war, even among smaller states, presented the immediate danger of contagion to other states, and the longer-term danger of nuclear war between the Superpowers.

If the collapse of the Soviet Union has led to increased interstate conflict, we would expect a corresponding increase in the frequency and seriousness of human rights violations by the governments of states experiencing more external threat. Previous research (Poe & Tate, 1994; Poe et al., 1997) has demonstrated that states engaged in external conflicts tend to violate the physical integrity rights of their citizens to a greater extent than states at peace. Thus, by allowing more interstate conflict, the end of the Cold War would, indirectly, cause greater levels of human rights abuse. If, counter to our expectations, there has been a decline in interstate hostility since the end of the Cold War, then we would expect lower levels of human rights abuse in the post-Cold War period.

Poe (1997) has proposed a causal model of human rights abuse that explains the threat–repression linkage, by relying heavily on a rational actor decisionmaking theoretical formulation developed by Most & Starr (1989) and expanded upon by Starr (1994). The key to that model is the ratio between regime strength and threats posed to the rule of the regime. When leaders perceive the strength of the regime to be less than adequate to meet the threat or if they perceive threat to be increasing relative to regime strength, they will be motivated to increase the strength:threat ratio. Interstate war or even credible threats of military attack made by the governments of other states reduce the ratio in two ways. First, meeting international threats uses up some regime strength, diverting resources from domestic uses. Second, participation in wars, or even resisting hostile acts short of war, may stimulate internal dissent. Repression is

one means to reduce the internal threat to the regime's rule.

Increasing Domestic Conflict

A second 'negative effect' argument implied that the end of the Cold War would cause a net increase in domestic conflict as well. The term 'domestic conflict' refers to anti-government behavior ranging from anti-government demonstrations to revolutionary movements. The thesis that the end of the Cold War would cause more domestic conflict around the world is also one of many which we might have drawn from the literature. In some ways the Cold War stimulated intrastate conflicts; in other ways it held them in check.

The Cold War created or intensified some civil conflicts around the world because the Superpowers engaged each other militarily by supporting revolutionary movements among each other's allies. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union promoted civil conflicts by encouraging left-wing revolutions. Support for left-wing revolutions was considered to be a moral obligation by almost all members of the Soviet foreign policy establishment. As Hough (1986: 182) noted, 'Just as the instinctive reaction of Americans was to applaud the Solidarity movement in Poland, so the instinctive feeling of Soviet citizens is to think that the Sandinista or El Salvadoran rebels have represented the cause of justice in their battles with right-wing regimes'.

However, the Cold War also prevented some potential domestic conflicts, particularly within the Soviet camp. The most obvious way that civil conflict was held in check was because the Soviet Union and its allied communist governments would not allow internal dissent by their citizens. Cullen (1993) notes that this practice operated on two levels: by suppressing dissident individuals and by quashing independence movements by groups. For example, the

Soviet Union stifled both Andrei Sakharov and Baltic, Georgian, and Armenian secession movements (Cullen, 1993: 26).

The post-Cold War breakup of the Soviet Union into many smaller states provided additional unforeseen opportunities for civil conflicts in the newly created states. One violent corollary of these newly formed states is the increase in ethnic conflicts in less developed countries that accompanied the end of the Cold War. Huntington (1993) asserts that during the Cold War the world was conceptually carved up along lines of political system and level of economic development, but the post-Cold War world will be divided along the lines of culture and civilization. Secession movements gelled peoples against the Soviet Union, but with no external 'us versus them'. An internal 'us versus them' was found in the languages of ethnicity and religion (Huntington, 1993: 29).

Previous research (Gurr, 1986; Poe, 1997; Poe & Tate, 1994) has demonstrated that governments faced with intense domestic opposition tend to choose greater repression of the human rights of their citizens. Warding off domestic opposition saps regime strength and the domestic conflict, itself, provides a direct threat to the continued rule of the regime. Repression is one way to increase the strength:threat ratio.

Encouraging Globalization

Without doubt, globalization of the world economy was one of the direct effects of the end of the Cold War. Since the end of the Cold War, more nations trade with one another and the average volume of world trade has increased. Capitalism has been strengthened in many nations and in a few has replaced socialism as the mode of economic production and distribution. With the threat of Superpower war and expropriation greatly lessened, multinational corporations (MNCs) can move capital and equipment

more freely from one country to another. Indeed, in many ways, MNCs have become more powerful in global affairs relative to national governments (Barber, 1996). Together, these developments constitute what we refer to as 'globalization' of the world economy. However, while democratization is almost certain to produce more respect for physical integrity rights, the indirect effect of the end of the Cold War on respect for human rights via globalization is a matter of considerable dispute.

One view held by those subscribing to the neoliberal school of economics posits that foreign direct investment (FDI) and trade help improve government respect for human rights by creating and sustaining a middle class. Both FDI and trade stimulate economic growth in developing countries. Economic growth widens the policy options of domestic elites and, through a 'trickle-down' effect, provides economic benefits to the masses, eventually helping to create a middle class. Foreign direct investment also provides developing countries with access to advanced technology, management and marketing skills, and creates desperately needed jobs (IMF, 1997; Spar, 1998). A large middle class increases the probability of a stable political environment that is respectful of human rights.

According to this school of thought, governments that trade and wish to attract FDI must create conditions that foreign investors regard as conducive to profitable business. Sometimes, providing such conditions requires the destruction of local monopolies and the extensive recasting of policies that were designed to benefit some groups at the expense of less affluent ones. These policy changes may include setting up a foundation of law, and investment in social services and infrastructure (Chhibber, 1997). Thus, foreign investment may break down parochial interests, stabilize internal relations, and promote greater respect for

human rights. Richards et al. (1998) have found that increases in FDI in developing countries are significantly associated with increases in government respect for civil rights and political liberties.

The counter-argument is that policy choices made by elites in developing countries are constrained or guided by their economic connections to the developed world, particularly to MNCs. As a result, decisions are often made to the benefit of the MNC and the domestic elite, but to the overall detriment of the average citizens and the overall domestic economy. Some have even argued that the intrinsically exploitative nature of capitalism is the main reason for the generally high levels of repression by the governments of many less developed countries. According to Parenti (1989), for example, an important goal of US foreign policy is to expropriate the land, labor, markets, and natural resources of weaker nations and to build a military security system to safeguard the international social order that ensures further capital accumulation by US-based interests.¹ Since capitalism creates tremendous inequalities both within and between societies, repression is necessary to maintain a world capitalist system. Violence is often required to protect foreign investors and the ruling elites of less developed countries from their own potentially rebellious populations. Human rights abuses and other forms of oppression are actually encouraged, because the repression of labor generally improves the investment climate for MNCs (Carleton, 1989; Petras, 1981).

According to this critical view of globalization, the Cold War may have helped control the worst excesses of capitalism because, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union provided a socialist model of devel-

¹ For other similar neo-Marxist critiques, see Chomsky & Herman (1979a,b), Gardner (1976), Kolko (1967) Magdoff (1969), and Williams (1959).

opment for economically developing countries. With the demise of the Soviet threat, the US government and other economically powerful states were expected to continue encouraging government repression in developing countries. Only the justifications for doing so would change. The post-Cold War justifications include the alleged need to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, protect supplies of natural resources (especially oil), protect Americans abroad, stop terrorism, and stop drug-trafficking (Shalom, 1993).

One other consequence of the end of the Cold War is that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have allegedly joined forces with MNCs, the US government, and the governments of other economically powerful states in encouraging repression around the world. Often the governments of less developed countries turn to the IMF and the World Bank for external capital. Because of the weighted voting systems these institutions employ, the lending policies of both are strongly influenced by the preferences of US leaders and other major contributors to the bank such as Japan and Germany. Under recent IMF and World Bank policies, less developed nations with large debts must agree to 'stabilization' terms before new loans are given. These terms usually include an agreement to cut back on spending for education, health, and welfare while producing more for export, encouraging more foreign investment, and introducing more free enterprise principles into the economy. Imposition of austerity measures places severe short-term burdens on the poor and the middle classes in less developed countries, sometimes resulting in rioting and political instability. Some regimes choose to increase repression to maintain control. The argument that IMF stabilization policies cause government repression by the govern-

ments that receive IMF loans is made frequently in the case-study literature (McLaren, 1998). However, few systematic, scientific studies of the relationship have yielded positive results.²

Expectations

From the above perspectives, we expect to find the following direct and indirect relationships from our empirical examinations:

- (1) Democracy will have increased after the Cold War, causing increased government respect for human rights.
- (2) Interstate conflict will have increased after the Cold War, causing decreased government respect for human rights.
- (3) Domestic conflict will have increased after the Cold War, causing decreased government respect for human rights.
- (4) Globalization will have increased after the Cold War, causing either an increase or decrease in government respect for human rights.

Data

Sample

This study uses a cross-national time-series dataset containing variables describing government respect for various human rights. This dataset comprises a random sample of 79 nations of the world with a population of at least 500,000 in 1981. Within this sample, 27% of the countries can be described as 'fully developed', while the remaining 73% can be described as 'developing' countries. This country sample is representative of all geopolitical regions of the world (except Oceania) as well as representative of all political system types.³ The dataset covers the period 1981 through 1996 at three-year

² For a review of these studies, see Richards et al. (1998).

³ No countries from Oceania were selected in the random draw.

intervals.⁴ The period is lower bound at 1981 due to problems with the quality and availability of human rights data before 1981.

For our analyses, we divide our 1981–96 dataset into two segments, one representing the Cold War period (1981–90), and another representing the post-Cold War period (1993–96). We consider the year of 1990 as part of the Cold War period, because the Cold War formally came to an end in November of 1990, when several important treaties were signed (McCormick, 1992). Thus, most of that year falls into the Cold War period. In addition, though the Berlin Wall was removed in November of 1989, it took some time for the effects to be felt around the world. Thus, many Cold War norms stayed in place throughout most or all of 1990.

Government Respect for Physical Integrity Rights

We examined government respect for four physical integrity rights – extrajudicial killings, disappearances, political imprisonment, and torture. Torture refers to the purposeful inflicting of extreme pain, whether mental or physical, by government officials or by private individuals at the instigation of government officials. Torture includes the use of physical and other force by police and prison guards that is cruel, inhuman, or degrading. Political imprisonment refers to the incarceration of people by government officials because of their ideas, including religious beliefs; their nonviolent religious practices, including proselytizing; their speech; their nonviolent opposition to government policies or leaders; or their membership in a group, including an ethnic or racial group. Individuals who are imprisoned because they have committed violent acts, regardless of the reasons they

⁴ The data were collected at three-year intervals for two reasons. First, over time the level of government respect for human rights is a stable phenomenon. Second, given the number of variables in the dataset, the number of countries in the sample, and the limited resources available to us, annual coding was not possible.

committed those acts, are not considered political prisoners in this analysis.⁵ Extrajudicial killings are killings by government officials without due process of law. They include murders by private groups if instigated by government.⁶ Disappearances refer to unresolved cases in which political motivation appears likely and in which the victims have not been found. Disappearances and killings are closely related practices. Many victims of human rights abuse who are ultimately found to be dead are initially categorized as having disappeared.

The scoring of our four indicators of government respect for physical integrity is based on information about government respect for these four rights found in both Amnesty International's yearly *Annual Report* and the US State Department's annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices*. It has become standard procedure in the systematic study of human rights to check these two sources of information against each other (Carleton & Stohl, 1985, 1987; Gibney & Dalton, 1996; McCann & Gibney, 1996; Poe, 1990, 1991, 1992; Poe & Tate, 1994; Stohl et al., 1984). When conflicts occurred, Amnesty International's position was coded as 'correct'.

Each of the four indicators of government respect for physical integrity rights was scored using the following three-point scale

⁵ In this work, we do not distinguish between political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. According to Amnesty International, a prisoner of conscience is a person who has been imprisoned solely because he or she holds opinions that are contrary to the interests of the state. Amnesty International distinguishes between prisoners of conscience and political prisoners. They view the latter as someone who has been imprisoned because of his or her beliefs *and* because he or she advocated violence. The key attribute is that both have been imprisoned for their thoughts and speech, not for committing violent acts. For a more detailed discussion of the Amnesty International position, see Bouandel (1997).

⁶ Extrajudicial killings may result from the deliberate, illegal, and excessive use of lethal force by the police, security forces, or other agents of the state whether against criminal suspects, detainees, prisoners, or others. Extrajudicial killing excludes combat deaths.

(where ' N ' represents the number of confirmed violations):⁷

- (0) Frequent Violations ($N \geq 50$)
- (1) Some Violations ($0 < N < 50$)
- (2) No Violations ($N = 0$)

These ordinal categories rest on event-based criteria. A country must have 50 or more confirmed violations of a right to be scored a zero. A score of one represents less than 50 but more than zero confirmed violations. A two denotes no confirmed violations of a right.

Ordinal categories based on events data are used because these scoring categories fit the accuracy of the data being reported. Our coding schemes must be geared to 'the level of precision actually evident in the information we employ' (Stohl et al., 1986: 603). Jacoby (1999) clearly demonstrates that often when we make interval or ratio assumptions about our data, we are tricking ourselves into believing that we have achieved a level of precision when we have not. This would truly be the case were we to make such an assumption about human rights data. Using a raw event count and applying the statistical techniques that are appropriate to such data would be misleading in terms of precision.

Many have noted how difficult it is to measure the human rights practices of governments. First, information about government violations of human rights is the kind of information an accused government tries to hide. Second, very often, victims of physical integrity abuses are either immediately killed or imprisoned. In either case, this severely limits their ability to describe events relating to themselves or others. Third, witnesses to human rights violations often have an incentive to lie, most often out of fear of possible government reprisals against them. Fourth, many of the accounts of government

human rights practices given by Amnesty International and the US State Department provide rough estimates of the number of violations of each type of right, not precise numbers. This is enough to allow us to make useful ordinal comparisons among countries, regions, and system types (Spirer, 1990: 203). An additional advantage of using 'more or less' comparisons of the number of confirmed violations is that the coding of countries into ordinal categories is more reliable.

Other Indicators

Following Poe & Tate (1994), we use the Freedom House Political Rights Index as our measure of democracy.⁸ This index is the product of eight criteria that indicate the extent to which a country's political process allows for political self-determination. It is an ordinal scale ranging from one to seven, where a seven is a completely non-democratic state (e.g. Afghanistan) and a one is a fully consolidated democracy (e.g. UK).⁹ One of the advantages to using this index is that it is conceptually distinct from our dependent variable. Freedom House essentially provides three types of information about a country: political rights, civil liberties, and an overall three-point indicator of how 'free' a country is (based on the other two indices). Conceptual confusion sometimes arises when Freedom House measures are used in empirical studies of human rights, due to the fact that the civil liberties index includes a criterion that asks whether

⁸ The Polity III measure of democracy could not be used because the Polity III dataset does not extend to 1996. Thus, we would have been limited to only one time-point (1993) for our post-Cold War period had we used the Polity III measure. We have no reason to believe that using Polity III would have changed the results of our analysis. A Kendall's tau correlation of Freedom House's political rights index and Polity III's democracy index for those years where both measures were available yielded a coefficient of 0.81 ($N = 364$, $p = 0.000$).

⁹ For our empirical tests, we invert this scale so that it is in the same direction as our other indicators.

⁷ For more on our technique of measuring human rights, see Cingranelli & Richards (1999).

violations of physical integrity have occurred. This criterion is not considered when assigning a country a score on the political rights index, however, so the political rights index is conceptually distinct from dependent variables measuring government respect for physical integrity rights.¹⁰

As an indicator of the level of interstate conflict experienced by a country, we use the 'hostility level' variable contained in version 2.10 of the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) data collection compiled by the Correlates of War (COW) Project.¹¹ The MID data set covers the years 1816–1992 and provides information about conflicts in which one or more countries threatens to use or uses force against one or more other countries.¹² The hostility level indicator is a five-point ordinal scale that categorizes the extent of interstate hostility from least severe to most severe: (1) no militarized action, (2) threat to use force, (3) display of force, (4) use of force, and (5) war.¹³ The MID data are structured so that the basic organizational unit is a particular dispute, or MID. Our organizational unit is a country-year. We assigned each country-year the highest hostility level attained. Situations where there was not a MID for a given country year

were coded as one (no MID). This variable provides a richer measure of the degree of interstate conflict experienced by each state in our sample than the dichotomous ones used by Poe & Tate (1994) and Wallensteen & Sollenberg (1998).

The indicator of domestic conflict used in this study is constructed using seven variables from Arthur S. Banks' *Cross-Polity Time-Series Data* (1979). Similar to Taylor & Jodice (1983), the seven variables used to create this indicator – assassinations, general strikes, guerrilla warfare, major governmental crises, riots, revolutions, and anti-government demonstrations – are, in their raw form, unweighted frequency counts of events. One advantage that these data have over Taylor & Jodice are their temporal coverage. Both Taylor & Jodice and Banks cover every country in the world. In the latest public release, however, Banks' data extended up to 1995 for these variables, whereas the data of Taylor & Jodice extended only up to 1982. Thus, it was feasible for the authors to update Banks' data to 1996.¹⁴

Another advantage of the Banks-based indicator used in this study is that it does not assume that all categories of domestic conflict are equally serious. If governments increase repression because they are threatened by domestic conflict, and if some types of domestic conflict are more threatening than are others, then when creating a composite indicator of domestic conflict using event count categories, the categories should not be weighted equally. Banks (1996) provides a weighting scheme for these domestic conflict indicators. The weighting scheme is: assassinations (48), general strikes (46), guerilla warfare (148), major government crises (102), riots (43), revolutions (200), and anti-government demonstrations (24). To create the indicator used in this study,

¹⁰ Banks (1986) shows that the two indices always correlate at 0.90 or above.

¹¹ These data can be obtained from: <http://pss.la.psu.edu>.

¹² The hostility level data that are currently publicly available only covers through 1992. Consequently, the data had to be updated through 1996 for use in this study. Using the extensive files kept for assembling *The Political Handbook of the World*, the authors, among others, updated this variable through 1996. The authors would like to thank Tom Muller, co-editor of *The Political Handbook of The World* for allowing access to the Handbook's country files.

¹³ Each of these five levels is associated with a group of actions, except for level one. Level two actions include: threat to blockade, threat to use force, threat to occupy territory, threat to declare war, and threat to use nuclear weapons. Level three actions include: show of troops, show of ships, show of planes, alert, nuclear alert, mobilization, and border fortifications. Level four actions include: blockades, occupation of territory, seizure, clash, raid, declaration of war, and use of CBR weapons. Level five indicates that a war exists, or that a country has joined an interstate war.

¹⁴ This was done by the authors, among others, using the country files of *The Political Handbook of the World*.

the frequency count of each indicator was weighted by multiplying it by its corresponding weight. These seven weighted indicators were then added together to form a composite measure of the level of domestic conflict in a given country-year. Thus, our findings concerning the intensity of domestic conflict after the end of the Cold War cannot be compared directly with those reported by Wallensteen & Sollenberg (1998) who use a dichotomous measure of domestic conflict that ignores challenges from government opposition groups resulting in fewer than 25 battle-deaths.

We used the amount of FDI in a country as our measure of that country's participation in the global economy. According to the World Bank, FDI consists of any investment that results in the purchase of at least 10% of the voting stock of a foreign enterprise. One consequence of the presence of FDI in an economy is that foreign economic influence is exerted through the daily operations of private firms within a country. Thus, the amount of FDI received by each country in our sample is a reasonable indicator of the degree each country participates in the global economy. Data indicating the level of FDI in each country in our sample come from the World Bank, and are expressed in constant 1987 US dollars.

Findings: The Big Picture

The Direct Effects of the End of the Cold War

Each of the perspectives we examined suggested that the end of the Cold War would have some direct, or immediate, effect which in turn would lead to an improvement or decline in government respect for human rights. In this section, we examine the four direct effects posited. These are that, after the end of the Cold War, democracy, interstate conflict, domestic conflict, and globalization will have increased.

In our sample of 79 countries, the average level of democracy increased, but the amount of increase was small and not statistically significant. Reversing the Freedom House Political Rights index so that the best possible democracy score is seven and the worst possible score is one, the mean for the 1981–90 period was 3.99, while the mean for the 1993–96 period was only a little better at 4.36. Fein's (1995) 'more murder in the middle' thesis led us to expect that nations at intermediate levels of democracy would manifest less government respect for physical integrity rights than would nations with no democracy. Consistent with this thesis, we found that many nations at intermediate levels of democracy do not show significantly better respect for physical integrity rights than those with no democracy. However, in contrast to Fein's results, we did not find it to be the case that nations with no democracy have more respect for physical integrity rights than nations with some democracy.¹⁵

We also found that the average level of domestic conflict increased as expected. The mean scores for 1981, 1984, 1987, and 1990 were 131, 181, 144, and 223 respectively. The mean scores for the post-Cold War years of 1993, and 1996 were 161, and 343 respectively. Thus, domestic conflict increased significantly from a mean score of 151 during the Cold War period to 235 during the post-Cold War period. Despite the fact that external sponsorship of civil wars has declined dramatically since the end of the Cold War, there has been an increase in all kinds of civil conflicts around the world. Between 1989 and 1993, external sponsorship of Cold War-related civil wars ended in many countries in our sample including Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia,

¹⁵ Using histogram analysis, we looked at the distribution of scores of government respect for physical integrity at each level of democracy on a seven-point scale for 79 nations over the years 1981–96.

Ethiopia, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. In other countries, such as Peru and the Philippines, lower-level guerrilla and terrorist activity also slowed or stopped. However, while external sponsorship of ideologically-based internal challenges has declined, ethnic tribal, and religious conflicts have increased in countries such as Algeria, Burundi, Yugoslavia, Haiti, Nigeria, Liberia, Mexico, Turkey, Somalia, and Rwanda. In these places, there is more internal strife than there was before the Cold War ended.

The end of the Cold War was expected to lead to increased interstate conflict, but we found no evidence that it did. For our sample, we found that the average level of interstate conflict actually *decreased* from 2.19 during the Cold War, to 1.75 during the post-Cold War period. This decrease is also statistically significant. This finding of decreased interstate conflict after the end of the Cold War is corroborated by Wallenstein & Sollenberg (1998). We remind the reader that our definition of interstate conflict includes all conflicts in which one or more countries threatens to use or actually does use force against one or more other countries. A mean score of 'two' for our sample for a particular period indicates that the average country in our sample threatened to use military force against another country. Thus, the decline in mean scores from 2.19 to 1.75 represents a slight decrease in the willingness of the average government in our sample to threaten to attack another state.

There is no question that the end of the Cold War caused a strengthening of the international capitalist system in most parts of the world. China and North Korea are the only countries in our sample that did not abandon their centrally planned, socialist economies by 1993. All of the former republics of the Soviet Union, all of the formerly communist states of Central Europe,

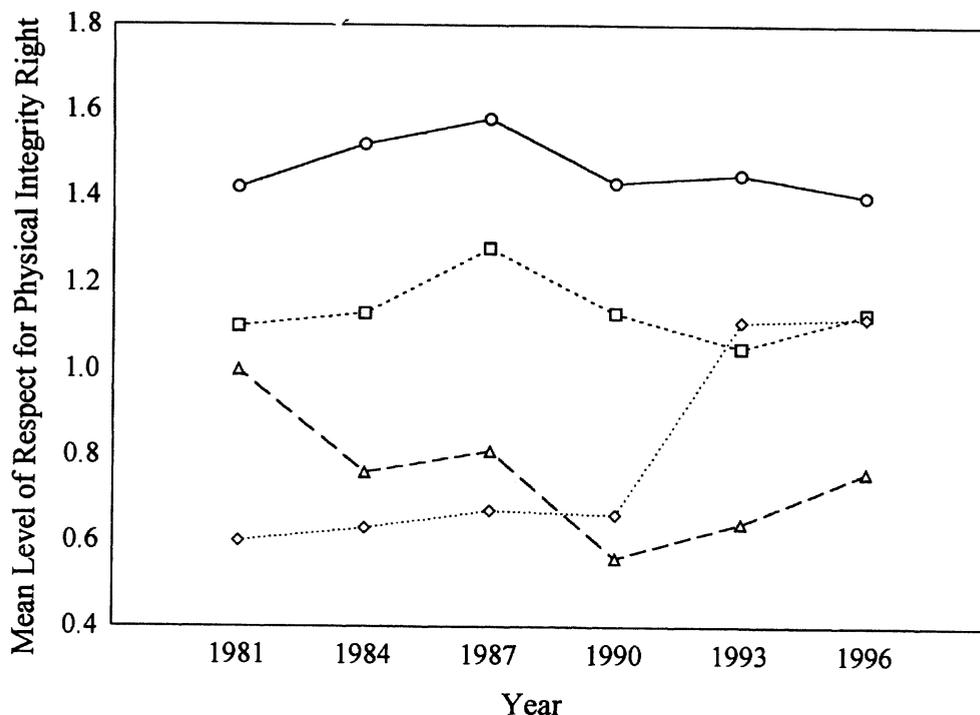
and many previously socialist states in the developing world have begun the transition to capitalism. Among the 42 less developed countries in our sample the mean level of FDI increased from approximately \$249 trillion to \$672 trillion (in constant 1987 dollars). This increase is statistically significant.

Trends in Respect for Physical Integrity Rights, 1981–96

For our 79 country sample, Figure 2 shows the mean level of government respect for the physical integrity rights against political imprisonment, torture, extrajudicial killing and disappearance throughout the 1981–96 time period. We can see which rights were the most respected and which were least respected as well as trends in respect for each right. The possible range of government respect for each of these rights ranges from zero (*no respect*) to two (*full respect*). The distances between the four lines on Figure 2 represent the average relative differences in government respect for these four rights. The line at the top represents trends in the right receiving the *most* respect in our sample (the right against disappearance). The line at the bottom represents the trend in government respect for the right receiving the *least* respect (from 1981–90 the right not to be politically imprisoned, then from 1990–96 the right against torture). Figure 2 shows that the actual range of government respect for these particular rights ranges from approximately 0.6 (almost *no respect* for right against torture in 1990) to approximately 1.6 (almost *full respect* for right against disappearance in 1987).

The average amount of government respect for three physical integrity rights – disappearance, extrajudicial killing, and torture – did not change when the Cold War ended. More precisely, the change in the mean scores for government respect for these three rights from 1990 to either 1993 or

Figure 2. Mean Level of Government Respect for Four Physical Integrity Rights, 1981–96



The mean levels of government respect for these rights are based upon an ordinal scale of 0–2, where 0 denotes no government respect for a right, 1 represents some government respect for a right, and 2 denotes complete government respect for a right.

—○— Disappearances
 - - □ - - Extrajudicial Killing
 - - ◇ - - Political Imprisonment
 - - △ - - Torture

1996 was not statistically significant. Respect for all three rights declined precipitously between 1987 and 1990, as the Cold War was ending. In fact, government respect for the right not to be tortured worsened considerably during the 1980s. Subsequently, it improved slowly. However, the post-Cold War improvement was not large enough to be statistically significant. Indeed, for our sample, the amount of torture in 1996 was still more than it had been throughout most of the Cold War.

In contrast, the level of government respect for the right not to be imprisoned for political reasons nearly doubled in the post-

Cold War period. The change in the mean score for government respect for the right not to be politically imprisoned from 1990 to either 1993 or 1996 is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). However, as indicated by the steep upward slope of the line between 1990 and 1993 (and the flat slope between 1993 and 1996), almost all of the improvement in government respect for this right occurred right after the Cold War ended. There is no evidence of continuing progress.

Table I shows how many countries fell into each category of respect for the four physical integrity rights from 1981 to 1996. It illustrates in more detail the picture

Table I. Frequency Table of the Level of Governmental Respect for Four Physical Integrity Rights: 1981–96

<i>Right</i>	<i>Level of Respect</i>	<i>Year</i>					
		<i>1981</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1996</i>
Torture	None	25	36	32	48	38	30
	Some	28	26	30	18	30	36
	Full	25	17	17	13	10	10
Pol Pris	None	47	44	40	45	24	25
	Some	16	20	25	16	24	17
	Full	15	15	14	18	30	34
Killing	None	24	23	15	22	25	21
	Some	22	23	27	25	26	24
	Full	32	33	37	32	27	31
Disapp	None	12	14	9	15	11	16
	Some	21	10	15	15	18	12
	Full	45	55	55	49	49	48

The number in each cell represents the number of countries falling into that category of respect for that right, for that year. Torture = The right against torture, or other cruel and unusual punishment. Pol Pris = The right against imprisonment for political beliefs. Killing = The right against extrajudicial killing. Disapp = The right against disappearance.

shown by Figure 2. Here, as in Figure 2, we can see evidence of the improvement in respect for the right against political imprisonment that took place mainly between 1990 and 1993. Throughout the Cold War period, more than half of the 79 governments in our sample held 50 or more political prisoners. However, in 1993, only 24

governments held 50 or more political prisoners. By 1996, the number of governments in this category increased by one to 25. The frequency distribution displayed in Table I also shows the stability of respect for the rights against extrajudicial killings and disappearances over the entire 1981–96 period as well as the constant slight decrease in

Table II. Mean Regional and World Levels of Government Respect for the Right Against Political Imprisonment and Changes in these Mean Levels: 1990–96

<i>Region</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>Change</i>
North America & Western Europe	1.90	2.00	0.10
Latin America	0.93	1.50	0.57*
Eastern Europe	1.00	1.50	0.50
Africa	0.35	1.05	0.70**
Mideast	0.15	0.50	0.35
Asia	0.27	0.73	0.46*
World	0.66	1.12	0.46***

These mean levels of government respect for the right against political imprisonment are based upon an ordinal scale of 0–2, where 0 denotes no government respect for this right, 1 represents some government respect for this right, and 2 denotes complete government respect for this right. The ‘Change’ column denotes the change in the mean level of government respect for this right from the Cold War (1990) to the recent post-Cold War (1996), whether or not that change is statistically significant. * $p < 0.05$ one-tailed; ** $p < 0.001$ one-tailed; *** $p < 0.0001$ one-tailed.

respect for the right against torture that began in the 1980s.

Findings: Focus on Political Imprisonment

Regional Differences – Political Prisoners

We decided to look more closely at the post-Cold War improvement in government respect for the right against political imprisonment. First, we wondered whether there were regional differences in the shift towards more respect for this right. Table II illustrates the 1990 and 1996 mean levels of government respect for the right against political imprisonment, and the change in the mean level of respect between 1990 and 1996 for six regions and the world. Government respect for the right not to be imprisoned for political reasons improved in every region of the world. The last row of the Table shows that, for our world sample, average respect for this right increased from 0.66 (almost *no respect*) in 1990 to 1.12 (*some respect*) in 1996. As we noted earlier, this change of 0.50 is statistically significant.

The changes in regional mean scores indicate that the greatest improvements in respect for political prisoners occurred in Asia, Latin America, and Africa. These are the only regions where the change in the mean level of government respect for the right against political imprisonment from 1990 to 1996 was statistically significant.¹⁶ Asia manifests a change of 0.46, but even with this large increase in respect, it remains between the *no respect* and *some respect* categories. Latin America shows an increase of 0.57 in mean level of respect, and ends up

¹⁶ Eastern Europe, while not one of these three regions, did show a noticeable increase in the mean level of respect for the right against political imprisonment, and this increase may be substantive. However, because of the small number of Eastern European countries in our sample, we cannot confidently test whether the difference between the 1990 and the 1996 means is statistically significant.

with a moderate to high mean level of respect. The largest and most significant change in mean level of government respect for the right against political imprisonment occurs in Africa. Africa demonstrates a 0.70 increase in the mean level of respect for this right. During the Cold War, the average African government in our sample had 50 or more political prisoners. After the end of the Cold War, the average African government held some political prisoners, but fewer than 50.

Table III shows the overall improvement of African and other countries in our sample in terms of government respect for the right against political imprisonment. The categories in which the countries are arranged indicate each country's level of respect in 1996, and its change in respect from 1990. In the category *full respect, no change*, we see, as we would expect, mostly industrialized Western democracies. The West African state of Benin is also in this category. In twenty-nine of the 79 countries in our sample, there was improvement in the level of government respect for the right not to be imprisoned. Respect for this right declined in only four countries – Argentina, Jordan, Peru, and Yugoslavia. In the remaining 46 countries, government respect for this right remained at Cold War levels.

Table IV presents the results of an OLS regression analysis with robust standard errors where the dependent variable is the change in the level of government respect for the right not to be politically imprisoned. Each country's political imprisonment change score is calculated by taking the mean for each country's scores for political imprisonment in 1993 and 1996 and subtracting that post-Cold War mean from the mean for each country's Cold War score (1981, 1984, 1987, and 1990). The independent variables, representing each of the four theses discussed above, are measures of the changes in the level of interstate conflict,

Table III. 1996 Level of Government Respect for the Right Against Political Imprisonment, and Change in Respect, 1990–96

<i>Full Respect, No Change</i>
Austria, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Guyana, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Uruguay, USA
<i>Full Respect, Increased From Some Respect</i>
Bolivia, Greece, Mali, Paraguay, Romania, Spain, Zambia
<i>Full Respect, Increased From No Respect</i>
Burkina Faso, Cameroon, El Salvador, Estonia, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Laos, Malaysia, Mauritania, Nepal
<i>Some Respect, Decreased From Full Respect</i>
Argentina
<i>Some Respect, No Change</i>
Guinea, Israel, Malawi, Singapore, Somalia, Thailand
<i>Some Respect, Increased From No Respect</i>
Albania, Algeria, Chad, Chile, Mexico, Niger, Philippines, Syria, Tanzania, Tunisia
<i>No Respect, Decreased From Some Respect</i>
Jordan, Peru, Yugoslavia
<i>No Respect, No Change</i>
Afghanistan, Burma, Burundi, China, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Liberia, Morocco, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Sudan, Uganda, Zaire

democracy, domestic conflict, and participation in the global economy. The change measures for the independent variables were differences between the Cold War and post-Cold War means calculated in the same way change scores were created for the dependent variable.

As shown in Table IV, the strongest

explanation for governments taking fewer political prisoners after the end of the Cold War was the amount of post-Cold War democratization that occurred in some countries and, to a lesser extent, the degree of increase in participation in the global economy. Increases in interstate and domestic conflict experienced by some coun-

Table IV. Results of OLS Regression with Robust Standard Errors on Pre-Post Cold War Change in the Level of Government Respect for the Right not to be Politically Imprisoned

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Coefficient</i>
Change in Level of External Conflict	-0.040 (0.069)
Change in Level of Democracy	0.205*** (0.041)
Change in Level of Domestic Conflict	-0.000 (0.000)
Change in Level of Participation in The Global Economy	0.010** (0.003)
Constant	0.357*** (0.087)
<i>N</i>	77
<i>R</i> ²	0.27
Prob > <i>F</i>	0.00

Figures in parentheses are robust standard errors. * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.001$; *** $p < 0.0001$.

tries after the Cold War ended tended to worsen government human rights practices, as expected, but these relationships were not statistically significant when the effects of the other causal factors were controlled for. In light of these findings, we can now evaluate the four theses.

Evaluation of the 'Democratization' Thesis

The findings displayed in Table IV demonstrate that post-Cold War democratization is reliably associated with post-Cold War improvement in government respect for the right against political imprisonment. Further examination of the evidence suggested that democratization in Africa after the Cold War and the release of political prisoners there provided the strongest support for the democratization thesis. Therefore, we decided to take a closer look at some cases of democratization in Africa since the end of the Cold War.

Earlier, we noted that Benin was one of only a few Third World countries whose government did not hold political prisoners at the end of the Cold War (1990) or after the Cold War (1991–96). Due to its early (1988) shift to a democratic system of government, Benin is not an example of post-Cold War democratization. It is, however, a good example of how democratization can have a positive effect on government human rights practices. In 1988, Benin changed from a one-party state to a multi-party democracy, and has twice held open, competitive elections resulting in peaceful political succession. This political shift is synchronous with improvement in Benin's level of respect for the right against political imprisonment from 1981–87 (*no respect/some respect*) to 1990–96 (*full respect*). The category *full respect, increased from no respect* in Table III above contains countries that in 1990 had *no respect* for the right against political imprisonment, but by 1996 had increased to *full respect*. Of the eleven coun-

tries in this category, four (36%) are African states: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, and Mauritania. All four seem to provide evidence that democratization that occurred when the Cold War ended was partly responsible for improved political imprisonment practices.

However, many scholars of African politics are skeptical about the long-term chances of successful democratic transition and consolidation in Africa, because of the traditionally authoritarian nature of post-independence African governments. We can find evidence in support of this pessimistic view of African politics in Table III above. The category *no respect, no change* contains countries where governments in 1990 demonstrated no respect for the right against political imprisonment, and where in 1996 this situation had continued. Of the twenty-two nations in this category, ten (45%) of these nations are African nations.

Segal (1996: 369) notes that the end of the Cold War made it more difficult for African leaders to maintain one-party states. Nonetheless, the African tradition of strong leaders has led to the creation of 'authoritarian multi-party states' that quash dissent and opposition parties in much the same fashion as their predecessors. By Segal's count, 1988–96 saw only eight contested elections in Africa that produced political successions (372). In every other case authoritarian leaders from the Cold War period were elected. Thus, while many African nations may have the facade of democratization – regularly scheduled elections, popularly elected leaders, multi-party systems – not much has changed. Aidoo (1993: 707) notes that 'everywhere on the continent, human rights are routinely and systematically violated; whether a country is democratic or not does not seem to make a significant difference'. To further investigate whether democratization has indeed been responsible for Africa's overall improvement

in government respect for the right against political imprisonment, we examined the recent political histories of several African countries in our sample.¹⁷ The stories of Cameroon and Mauritania are representative of the post-Cold War African experience with democratization.

In Cameroon, post-Cold War elections failed to bring political succession, but popular pressure led to the release of a significant number of political prisoners. In 1990, in conjunction with events in Eastern Europe, citizen pressure on the Cameroon government to democratize was steadily growing. The government responded by arresting 11 opposition leaders in February 1990, and then killing six others while violently breaking up a democratic rally. In December of the same year, the national assembly voted to stop the government's authority to deny legal status to opposition groups. In 1992, there was a release of prisoners in exchange for the end of a *villes mortes* campaign waged by advocates of democracy. Following elections in 1992, the government freed 176 political prisoners in 1993 to ease post-election tensions. These tensions were largely a result of the government's continuing refusal to hold a national conference, and President Biya's re-election. Biya had been the head of government in one form or another since 1975, and Western observers accused Biya of manipulating the balloting.

In Mauritania, political prisoners were released before elections took place to help the previous military ruler win popular support in the election. In 1984, Maaouya Taya assumed the offices of President and Prime Minister following a military coup. The Taya regime was notorious for its sys-

tematic oppression of opponents. However, in 1991 Taya's regime called for multi-party presidential and legislative elections to follow a referendum on a new constitution. These elections included the legalization of political parties and led to a general declaration of amnesty for political detainees. In 1992, Taya was popularly elected President of Mauritania. National Assembly elections the following month were boycotted by six of fourteen opposition groups because of claims of massive fraud during the presidential balloting. Little more than one-third of the electorate voted in these elections which were dominated by Taya's party, the Democratic and Social Republican Party (PRDS). In the senatorial elections, only one party opposed the PRDS, and that party received no seats.

In both cases, authoritarian leaders used the release of political prisoners to reduce domestic unrest near the beginning of the democratization process when former authoritarian leaders needed to appease domestic opposition groups, so they each could be elected to serve as President of their respective countries. However, after election, both showed little continuing respect for either democracy or human rights. Cases like these may explain why Figure 2 and Table I above showed no continuing increase in respect for the right against political imprisonment after 1993.

Evaluating the Domestic Conflict Thesis

From the evidence presented in Table IV, we can conclude that the substantial increase in domestic conflict from the Cold War to the post-Cold War period did not exert a significant independent effect on government policy to respect the right of their citizens not to be politically imprisoned. Even in those states where Superpower involvement in armed civil conflicts ended with the Cold War, there has not been a consistent pattern of subsequently less

¹⁷ Of particular use in ascertaining the recent political histories of the countries examined in this study was Banks et al. (1997). Also of use for fact-checking purposes, and general background reading, were Ambrose (1995), Cohen et al. (1993), Conteh-Morgan (1997), McCarthy-Arnolds et al. (1994), and Welch (1995).

domestic conflict and improved government respect for the right not to be politically imprisoned. Three countries in our sample – Ethiopia, Afghanistan, and El Salvador – were ‘hosts’ to Superpower-sponsored proxy civil conflict during the Cold War. Ethiopia and Afghanistan are examples of countries where armed civil conflict continued unabated after the Cold War ended and, as was shown in Table III, government political imprisonment practices did not improve. El Salvador is an example of a country where the end of the Cold War did lead to an end of armed civil conflict and, as indicated in Table III, government political imprisonment practices did improve.

During the Cold War, Ethiopia was arguably the Soviet Union’s most important African client state. The Soviet bloc supported Ethiopia in the United Nations – especially by blocking potential UN queries into human rights violations by the Ethiopian government. The Soviet bloc also provided (Cuban) troops and equipment to help Ethiopia in its war with Somalia in the mid- to late 1970s. After rising to power in the bloody aftermath of a 1974 military coup, Colonel Mengistu Haile-Mariam was the Head of State in Ethiopia from 1977–91. Mengistu headed a Soviet-style state responsible for systematic elimination of opponents from 1979–90, when, in the face of diminishing Soviet support, increasing military insurgency, and forecasts of further famine along the lines of the well-publicized Ethiopian famine of the early 1980s, he renounced Marxism. To save his regime, Mengistu appointed a moderate Foreign Minister with US and European ties, but in 1991, was forced to flee to Zimbabwe as a decade’s war ended with guerrillas taking control of the capital city of Addis Ababa. Taking interim control of the government was the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the guerrilla group largely responsible for the

fall of Mengistu’s regime. After subsequent open elections, the EPRDF won a substantial majority of seats in the national legislature and eventually the powerful Prime Minister position. Though the internal civil war had ended, the EPRDF consistently imprisoned regime opponents for political reasons.

Afghanistan was probably the Soviet Union’s most important client state in the Middle East. In 1979, in response to political instability in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union sent 4,000 to 5,000 troops who helped install a new set of leaders in an authoritarian government. The United States subsequently backed an insurrection against the Soviet-backed regime conducted by *mujaheddin* (‘holy warrior’) guerrillas. By 1982, the Soviet military presence had grown to about 110,000 troops (Banks et al., 1997: 3). In 1988, the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw its military forces. The withdrawal was completed in February 1989. For all practical purposes, US involvement in the conflict ended at about the same time. Thus, the external sponsorship of this civil war ended almost two years before the Cold War period formally came to an end. The civil war, however, continues even without the involvement of the Superpowers. One of the former guerrilla groups, the Taliban, now has control of the government. Other groups continue to fight for control of the government. Political imprisonment continues to be a common practice.

The end of the Cold War had much more positive consequences for democratization and human rights in El Salvador. By the end of hostilities in early 1992, El Salvador had been torn by over a decade of harsh fighting between the rightist government (supported by the USA), and the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), the military arm of the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) – a coalition of leftist dissident groups. Central America was a

region well-publicized for its gross violations of human rights in the 1980s, and El Salvador contributed heartily to this reputation. In January 1992, both sides signed a treaty providing for UN supervision of the ceasefire while rebel forces disbanded over a nine-month period, purchase by the government of land for distribution to peasants in rebel-held areas, a blanket pardon for all combatants, 'purification' of the government's officer corps, absorption of the infamous national guard and treasury police by the regular army, dissolution of the military's intelligence, civil defense, and counterinsurgency units, and the creation of a new civil police force (Banks et al., 1997: 251). In 1993, Ruben Zamora, a Christian Democratic Party candidate, was supported by the FMLN for President. Although Zamora lost, human rights conditions in El Salvador have improved steadily, and even more importantly, seem to have stabilized. As shown in Table III above, the right against political imprisonment improved from *no respect* in 1990 to *full respect* in 1996.

From this case-study evidence, we cannot conclude that the end of Superpower involvement in particular armed civil conflicts has been associated with a cessation or even a lessening of the intensity of those civil conflicts. On the other hand, this evidence does lend additional support to the idea that when armed civil conflict ends, as it did in El Salvador, respect for the right against political imprisonment improves.

Evaluating the Interstate Conflict Thesis

Similar to domestic conflict, a government's involvement or non-involvement in interstate conflicts after the end of the Cold War did not explain its policy on taking political prisoners. The reader will recall that, in our sample countries, after the Cold War ended, there was a statistically significant decrease in involvement in external wars. We initially

thought the reduction in interstate wars might be part of the explanation for the improvement in government respect for the right against political imprisonment. We reasoned that, of the four physical integrity rights included in our analysis, the right against political imprisonment was the one most likely to suffer during wartime. When a nation is at war or when it is faced with the threat of war from other states, seditious speech is less likely to be tolerated. Speakers who criticize their own government's policies are more likely to be imprisoned, and human rights organizations are likely to characterize such imprisonment as politically motivated. Sometimes, even the government's suspicion of disloyalty during wartime can lead to imprisonment of those so suspected. For example, in the USA, during World War II, many loyal citizens were interned just for being of Japanese descent.

As shown in Table IV, we found that the states that experienced a lessening in external threat since the end of the Cold War also experienced an improvement in government respect for political imprisonment. However, when controlling for the effects of other factors in our model, the association was very weak and statistically insignificant. Thus, we can conclude that the decline in the level of interstate conflict from the Cold War to the post-Cold War is not a satisfactory explanation of increased government respect for the right against political imprisonment.

Evaluating the Globalization Thesis

The multivariate results displayed in Table IV, above, show that, besides the degree of post-Cold War democratization, only the degree of participation in the global economy had a statistically significant effect on pre- and post-Cold War changes in government policies toward political prisoners. More participation in the global economy,

as indicated by relatively large increases in foreign direct investment after the Cold War ended, was found to be associated with governments taking fewer political prisoners. Laos, Tanzania, Benin, and Ghana are the four countries in our sample that saw the biggest increases in foreign direct investment. Laos and Ghana improved from having *no respect* to *full respect* for the right against political imprisonment. Tanzania increased from *no respect* to *some respect*. Benin, which democratized in 1988, stayed at *full respect*.

Conclusion

We examined four perspectives about how the Cold War might have affected government respect for human rights. Using quantitative and qualitative means, we examined these perspectives as they applied to one category of human rights, physical integrity rights. For our quantitative tests, we used information about human rights practices in a sample of 79 countries around the world for the years 1981–96. We found that, after the Cold War ended:

- (1) The average level of democracy, domestic conflict, interstate conflict, and participation in the global economy increased.
- (2) The average level of torture, disappearances, and killings did *not* significantly change.
- (3) There was significant improvement in government respect for the right not to be politically imprisoned.

When we looked more closely at the overall post-Cold War improvement in respect for the right not to be politically imprisoned, we found that:

- (5) Those governments that became more democratic and/or increased their participation in the global economy also

tended to improve political imprisonment practices.

- (6) Governments that increased their involvement in interstate conflict or experienced increased domestic conflict did not also increase their political imprisonment practices.
- (7) Three regions of the world – Africa, Asia, and Latin America – all had statistically significant increases in government respect for the right against political imprisonment during the post-Cold War period.

Why did respect for the right against political imprisonment increase while respect for the other rights remained unchanged? One possibility is that government leaders may be able to manipulate political imprisonment practices more easily than other types of government human rights practices. It is difficult for government leaders to put a stop to torture, disappearances, and extrajudicial killings. Police, soldiers, and prison guards, often without the permission or even the knowledge of high government officials, usually carry out these acts. Therefore, making significant improvements in these practices requires re-socializing or replacing large numbers of people in the civilian and military bureaucracy. Ordering the release of some or all political prisoners, however, is a relatively easy thing to do.

Our multivariate analysis showed that the two most important developments for explaining improvement in government respect for the right not to be politically imprisoned were democratization and globalization. The globalization finding seems to provide a fairly straightforward endorsement of the neoliberal school of thought concerning the beneficial social and political consequences of a more inclusive and more capitalist world economy. However, a more in-depth examination of some of the cases of

post-Cold War democratization led to serious reservations about the positive relationship between democratization and government respect for the right against political imprisonment.

Many formerly authoritarian governments have democratized as a result of international pressure rather than indigenous social and political developments. The end of the Cold War has given developed countries and the World Bank a freer hand in demanding economic and political reform as a condition for providing desperately needed financial assistance to less developed countries. To accommodate these demands, many 'illiberal' democracies have been created around the world. In these 'illiberal' democracies, political parties have been legalized, elections scheduled, and political prisoners released as a one-time election payoff by former authoritarian rulers wishing to stay in power. Ultimately, in many cases, these former authoritarian rulers have been re-elected, continuing on from that point in their previous repressive manner. We found this process to hold true in most newly democratized African states. At the time of writing, a similar pattern is developing in Nigeria. If the pattern we have identified holds true in most cases of democratization, then it is misleading to think of democratization as the 'cause' of the release of political prisoners, since the logic of science requires that causes precede effects.

We are left with a paradox. A modest amount of democratization did occur after the Cold War ended. This democratization has led to an improvement in government respect for at least one physical integrity right – the right not to be imprisoned for political reasons. One way to interpret this finding is that the proponents of the democratization thesis were correct. On the other hand, many of the governments most responsible for the improved political imprisonment practices we have reported are

still a long way from being liberal democracies. If, in time, these illiberal democracies become liberal democracies, the human rights gains of the 1990–96 period are likely to be consolidated and even improved upon. If these illiberal democracies drift back towards authoritarianism, then even the modest post-Cold War human rights gains reported here will soon be lost.

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⁷ **Measuring the Level, Pattern, and Sequence of Government Respect for Physical Integrity Rights**

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¹⁰ **The Analysis of Human Rights Data over Time**

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