

Naming, Shaming, and Taming Human Rights Abuse in Severely Repressive Regimes

Abstract: Coercion is inherent in nearly all contemporary understandings of government. This is particularly true for severely repressive regimes, which are believed to hold their societies in check largely – if not exclusively – through force. Yet even the most severely repressive regimes do occasionally limit coercive behaviors, and commit to human rights improvements. One principled way in which members of the international community endeavor to inspire human rights improvements is through “naming and shaming” campaigns organized by human rights non-governmental advocacy organizations (HROs). As naming and shaming campaigns attempt to leverage transnational politics, they face steep hurdles: every decision to improve human rights carries the hazard that a newly emergent group of challengers will rise up to threaten the legitimacy and/or very existence of the regime. Due to the inherent risks, I argue that human rights improvements unfold as carefully managed openings, which proceed unevenly across the state’s territory. If correct, this implies scholars will need to move away from studying annual changes in country-level measures of human rights and begin studying links between various naming and shaming behaviors to micro-level improvements in human rights. Within this project, I explore subnational variation the naming, shaming, and taming of human rights inside Guatemala (1975-1985). Using unique data detailing human rights naming and shaming activities by domestic and international human rights organizations alongside original data collected from previously confidential police records, the analysis yields insight into a number of unresolved questions within naming and shaming research. Specifically, I find little evidence that naming and shaming publications generate sustained human rights improvements at the local level. However, in response to local-level human rights mobilization, campaigns of severe repression give way to expanded rights and liberties. These effects are shown to diffuse across time and space. Results imply that rights emerge through contentious politics and local-level bargaining over peace and security.

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Working Draft: 03/25/2018
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1. Introduction

Coercion is inherent in nearly all contemporary understandings of government. This is particularly true for severely repressive regimes, which are believed to hold their societies in check largely – if not exclusively – through force.¹ Not only are citizens exposed to the threat of physical violence, but they also face limits on their ability to express demands publically and collectively. In other words, they face pervasive human rights abuse. Yet even the most severely repressive regimes do occasionally limit coercive behaviors, and commit to human rights improvements. Within the first decade of the 21st century, approximately one in four regimes where repression was most severe (and targeted towards “large numbers of the population”) enacted human rights improvements (Wood and Gibney 2010; see also Farriss 2014).²

Despite the significance this process, the factors contributing to human rights improvements in severely repressive regimes remain poorly understood (Conrad and Moore 2010; Kathman and Wood 2011; Conrad and Ritter 2013; Conrad 2014). A puzzling challenge is that suddenly improving human rights creates a host of new vulnerabilities for the regime. As fear of repression diminishes, previously marginalized groups can begin publically expressing their demands. Every decision to improve human rights carries the hazard that a newly emergent group of challengers will rise up to threaten the legitimacy and/or very existence of the regime (e.g., Beissinger 2002; Almeida 2003).

One principled way the international community seeks to inspire rights improvements in severely repressive regimes is through “naming and shaming” by human rights non-governmental

¹ Within this paper, *repression* refers to, “coercive actions political authorities take to inhibit the will or capacity of people within their jurisdiction to influence political outcomes” (Ritter 2014, 145). The terms repression, coercion, and human rights abuse are used interchangeably throughout the study. *Severely repressive regimes* can be defined as states in which coercion is applied pervasively against large segments of the population (cf., Wood and Gibney 2010). Finally, *human rights improvements* refer to sudden, drastic, and lasting reductions in the use of repression.

² *Human Rights Improvements* refer to sudden and drastic reductions in the use of repression.

advocacy organizations (HROs).³ Domestic and international HROs use their limited budgets to spotlight and publicize state repression where they believe their efforts will be most effective and/or where human rights abuse is wanton (Ron et al. 2005; Hill et al. 2013; Hendrix and Wong 2014; Barry et al. 2015; Bell et al. 2017). Under several well-specified conditions, proponents argue that HRO naming and shaming can improve human rights by imposing international costs on the target government and/or encouraging domestic mobilization in support of human rights improvements (e.g., Murdie and Davis 2012; Hendrix and Wong 2013; Bell et al. 2017). At the same time, several important questions remain unanswered. When threatened by HRO naming and shaming, regimes face strong incentives to maintain or increase repression (Hafner-Burton 2008; Dupuy et al 2016; Conrad and DeMeritt 2017). And once a regime initiates severe repression, campaigns of human rights abuse typically continue through endogenous and self-perpetuating processes, leaving doubts about the ability of naming and shaming to induce lasting human rights improvements (Davenport 1996; Conrad and Moore 2010; Davenport and Loyle 2012; Schnackenberg and Fariss 2014; Hill and Jones 2014; see also Frianklin 2008). If the expressed objective of naming and shaming is to identify, publicize, and *end* campaigns of severe repression, as of yet evidence of efficacy remains inconclusive (cf., Hafner-Burton 2008; Hafner-Burton and Ron 2009; Conrad and Moore 2010; Hill and Jones 2014; Conrad and DeMeritt 2016; DeMeritt and Conrad 2016).

Examining these challenges, one would have to consider why a severely repressive government would suddenly limit its reliance on coercion. Due to the inherent risks, I argue that human rights improvements do not occur through a singular decision, articulated in the capital and applied all at once across the country. Instead, human rights improvements unfold as carefully managed

³ *Naming and shaming* involves efforts to publicize repression and direct negative attention towards human rights abuse (cf., Bell et al. 2017, 4).

openings, which proceed unevenly across the state's territory. If correct, this presumption implies that explanations for how naming and shaming can induce human rights improvements in severely repressive regime must consider micro-level links between naming and shaming behaviors and improvements in human rights. In recent years, scholars studying the micro-foundations of conflict and human rights produced sophisticated explanations accounting for sub-national variation in political repression inside brief temporal windows (i.e. months rather than years). However, naming and shaming research remains largely focused on annual changes in country-level measures of human rights. The scale of existing work makes it difficult to distinguish between competing causal mechanisms and leave open questions about the geographic scope or duration of naming and shaming's effects.⁴

Below I specify causal mechanisms and testable propositions linking naming and shaming behaviors to micro-level human rights improvements in a severely repressive regime. I then present new data and analysis examining these effects. There are strong data requirements associated with such an approach. In this study, I generate new evidence drawn from Guatemala, a critical (if contested) case featuring heavily within HRO research. Looking at municipal-level politics over a ten-year period (1975-1985) reveals substantial micro-level variation in (1) the location and timing of HRO naming and shaming activities as well as (2) when and where human rights improvements occurred.

Analyzing unique data detailing human rights naming and shaming activities by domestic and international HROs alongside original data collected from previously confidential police records, this study makes several contributions to research on human rights, conflict, and transnational advocacy. After briefly summarizing the historical context situating Guatemala, I advance distinct

⁴ In a review of earlier research, Hafner-Burton and Ron (2008, 391) explicitly recommend that scholars study the subnational effects of naming and shaming in cases where high-quality, disaggregated data exist.

mechanisms through which naming and shaming might induce micro-level human rights improvements. I then present and analyze the data. While this research disputes the efficacy of information-based naming and shaming mechanisms, findings indicate that HRO mobilization inspires sustained human rights improvements in severely repressive regimes (cf. Murdie and Davis 2012; Murdie 2013; Bell et al. 2017). These effects diffuse across time and space. By identifying the efficacy of local HRO mobilization, the study advances the argument that rights emerge through contentious politics (Tilly 2007). Consequently, the international community should not concede its power to affect severely repressive regimes. Instead, by promoting domestic HRO mobilization, transnational networks can increase bottom up pressures for human rights improvements.

2. Background

Repression in Guatemala, 1975-1985

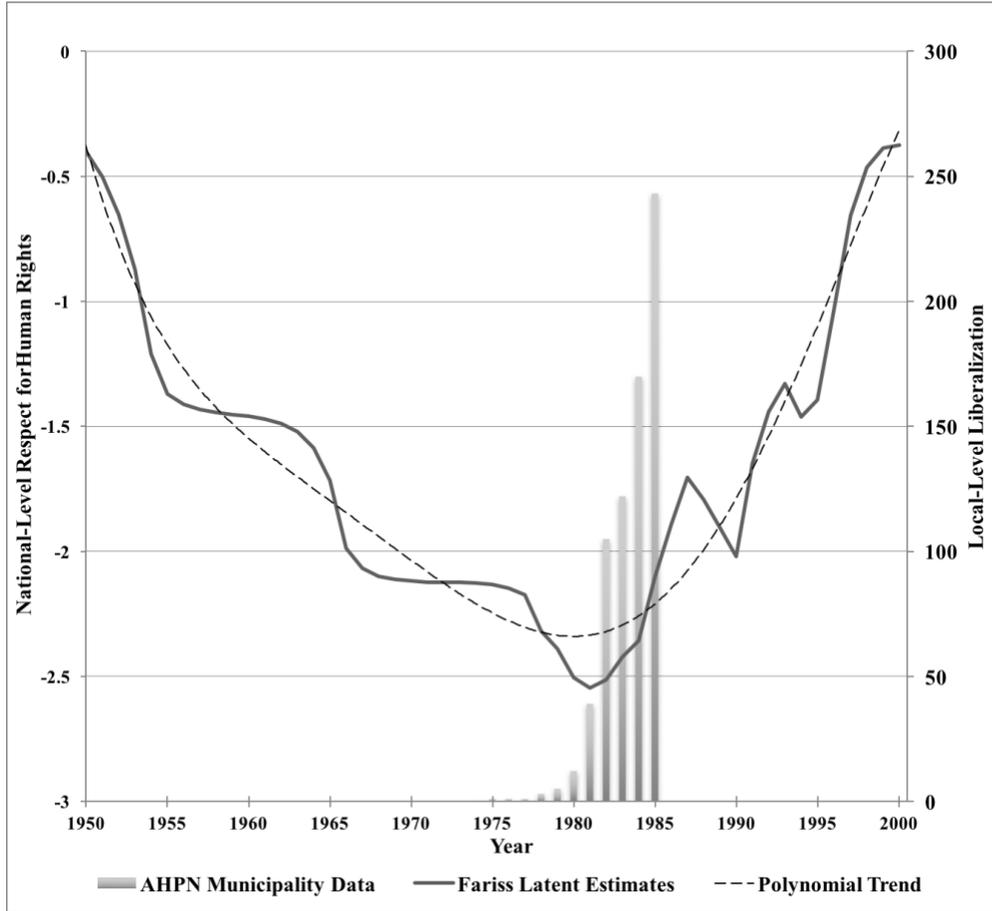
From the start of this period, Guatemala was ruled by a severely-repressive regime centered around a security force with unchecked coercive powers. Using police, military, and paramilitary units, Guatemala's government waged a repressive campaign against urban labor unions sympathetic to communism and a variety of small, rural insurgent bands. Following a fraudulent election in 1978, the regime increased the use of extrajudicial killings, torture, and disappearances. Beginning around 1980, repression escalated further, expanding to include village massacres. National-level repression peaked between 1981 and 1982, during which time the regime committed persistent and widespread repression targeting large segments of society, particularly the indigenous communities living in the rural highlands.⁵

⁵ For further detail see Stohl (1993), Schirmer (1998), McCleary (1999), Manz (2005), and Garrard Burnett (2011).

A growing body of research systematically examines the determinants of Guatemalan repression during this time period. Several studies consider the strategic logic of severe repression, showing that coercion occurred in areas of weak government control, that the patterning of repression clustered around identity and ideology, and that perpetrators believed atrocities would persuade survivors to align themselves with the regime (Sullivan 2012; 2016a; Schwartz and Straus 2018). Research also identifies several mechanisms through which committing repression incentivized additional human rights abuse, including restructuring security force institutions (Bateson 2014), adding to information failures (Sullivan 2014), and encouraging backlash challenges (Sullivan 2016b). Situating this literature alongside earlier research studying the subnational patterning of repression reveals that scholarship lacks coherent account of when, where, and why a severely repressive regime like Guatemala would suddenly commit to human rights improvements (cf., Conrad and Moore 2010; DeMeritt 2012; Krain 2012; Bellamy 2015).⁶

⁶ Genocides and other forms of mass killing commonly take place in the context of civil war, while civil war also escalates repression more generally (Poe and Tate 1994; Buhaug and Gates 2002; Valentino et al. 2004; Armstrong and Davenport (2008). Acknowledging these facts, coercion by severely repressive regimes is broader as well as more localized than cross-national research would suggest. Absent an armed group challenging the state or ethnic violence intended to destroy entire communal groups, regimes in Cuba, Iran, and Brazil engage in persistent and widespread repression. Internally, these regimes contain substantial temporal and spatial variation in repression as well as human rights improvements.

Figure 1: Human Rights in Guatemala



Evidence from Guatemala shows that after decades of severe repression, human rights began to improve. The line graph in Figure 1 represents aggregate (i.e., country-level) repression from 1950-2000.⁷ As can be seen, there was a clear improvement in human rights beginning around 1982 and continuing through the end of the period.⁸ Figure 1 also displays a disaggregated indicator of human rights improvements—the number of Guatemalan municipalities experiencing human rights improvements by year (1985-1985).⁹ Consistent with national-level trends, a sharp

⁷ Fariss' (2014) latent physical integrity rights measure serves as a proxy for human rights writ large. The dashed line represents a fitted polynomial trend line.

⁸ Studying the period leading up to and following this critical shift as well as the significant local-level geographic variation avoids the problem of selecting on the dependent variable.

⁹ Guatemala's 326 municipalities are the country's second smallest administrative unit. In 1973, the least populous was San Jose Chacaya, which had 567 inhabitants, and the largest was Guatemala City, with 700,460.

uptick in local-level human rights improvements began in the early 1980s and continued through the end of 1985.¹⁰ Guatemala's two major truth commissions reached similar conclusions. The Archbishop of Guatemala's *Recovery of Historical Memory Project* (REMHI) identifies new limits on repression imposed towards the end of the 1983 and continuing through 1985 (REMHI 1999: *Tomo IV*). The *Commission for Historical Clarification* (CEH) notes "the most violent and bloody period" had ceased by the end of 1985 and that this period resulted new constitutional checks on arbitrary human rights abuse (CEH 1999: 18).

Case Context and Scope

Looking at the case as a whole (i.e., pooling all municipal jurisdictions together), historical research attributes the decline of human rights abuse to a number of different causes. In addition to HRO naming and shaming, the literature points to three important factors contributing to human rights improvements in Guatemala: civil war, democratization, and economic dependency (see Stoll 1993; Schirmer 1998; CEH 1999; McClearly 1999; AHPN 2011; Garrard-Burnett 2011.¹¹ Understood in this way, prior efforts have over-determined national-level improvements in respect for human rights. But national averages in human rights improvements aggregate a wide variety of actions occurring in different parts of the country at various times. By disaggregating the case to examine the emergence of human rights improvements subnationally, this research dissects these competing accounts.

Examining the effects of naming and shaming in relation to Guatemala's civil war, democratization, and economic dependence also holds implications for interpreting the context

¹⁰ The Supplemental Appendix contains additional details on the distribution of local human rights improvements.

¹¹ Additional case materials elaborating these competing accounts can be found in the Supplemental Appendix. Cross-national human rights research also connects civil conflict and democratic competition to levels of repression (Davenport 2007). Evidence surrounding economic dependency is less conclusive (Hill and Jones 2017).

and generalizability of the study's findings. While studies remain divided over the nature and direction of the specific effects of interest, recent work suggests that naming and shaming's effects remain conditional on these same three factors. For instance, there is evidence showing that non-democratic regimes as well as states with strong economic dependence on the West are more responsive to HRO naming and shaming, while states involved in civil war may be less responsive (Franklin 2008; Hafner-Burton 2008; Hendrix and Wong 2013). The analyses below evaluate local interactions between naming and shaming and these crucial contextual factors.

Human Rights Naming and Shaming

As commonly presented, the story of HRO naming and shaming in Guatemala takes shape through the story of Rigoberta Menchu, a human rights activist who was exiled following the assassination of her parents. While rights organizations remained active well before and after her widely disseminated testimonial, *I, Rigoberta*, the book's translation into English and French helped to draw attention to acts severe repression waged by the Guatemalan regime (Burgos-Debray 1982). Menchu delivered a powerful account portraying a fight for indigenous rights against an oppressive government, which resonated with human rights allies abroad. A dense transnational activist network emerged, connecting local rights groups to international support in a pattern manner emblematic of Keck and Sikkink's (1998) "boomerang effect."

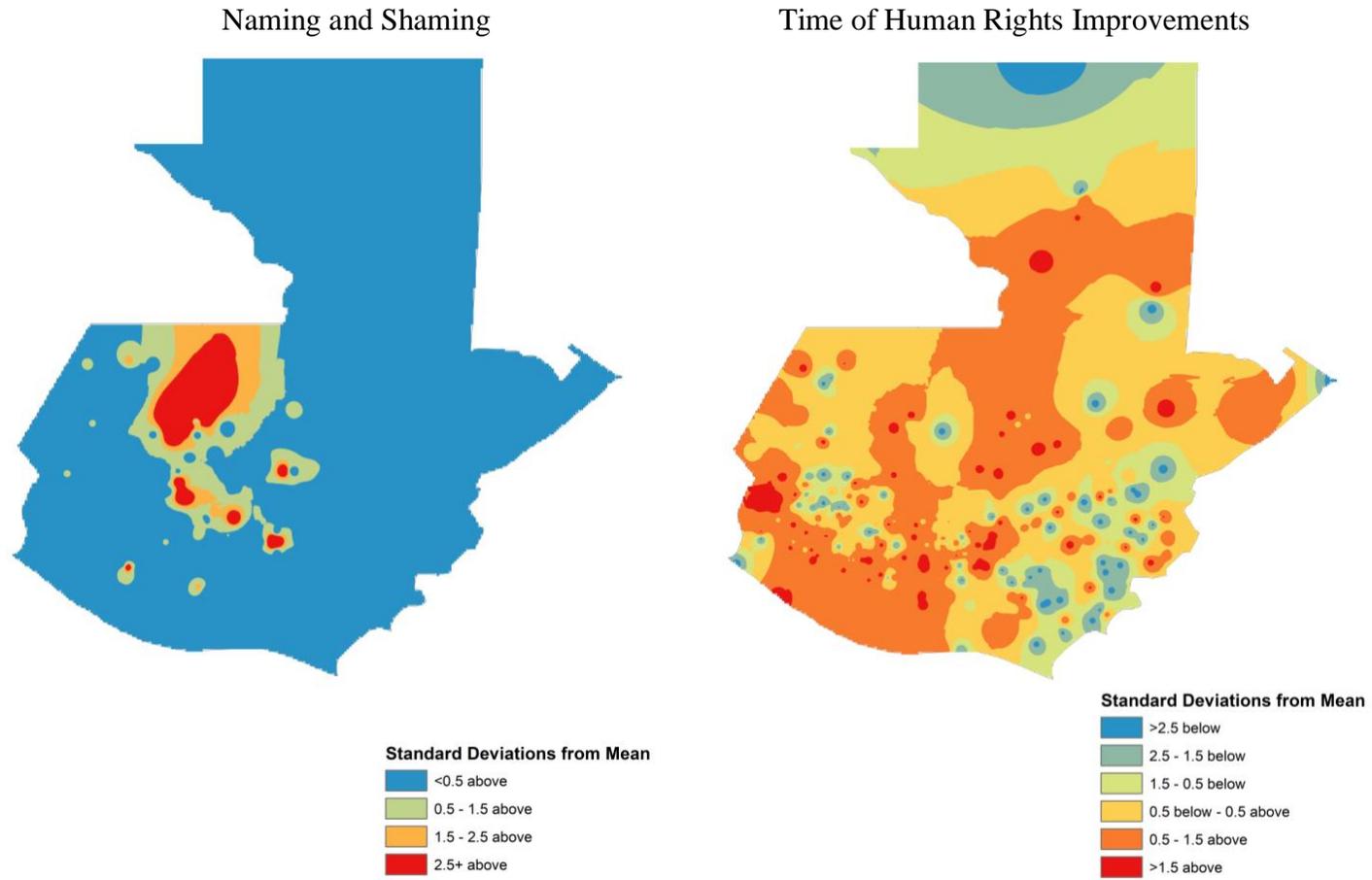
Significant to this study, it is common for activists and scholars to portray Guatemala as a successful case, in which HRO naming and shaming induced the government to improve human rights (e.g., Ropp and Sikkink 1999, 190; Franklin 2015; Krain 2012; Murdie 2013, 3-4). During the period under review, HRO naming and shaming efforts focused disproportionately on Guatemala because activists believed that targeting a country heavily dependent on US

development assistance and military aid would provide the greatest leverage for improving human rights (Hopgood 2006; see also Franklin 2008; Hendrix and Wong 2014). Still, others take a more pessimistic look at naming and shaming in Guatemala during this period, believing that HRO pressures were ineffective because the US remained heavily invested in defeating another communist revolutionary movement on the Western hemisphere (e.g. Martin and Sikkink 1993; Sikkink 2004; 2007). Within this latter view lies optimism suggesting that once the Marxist insurgents were defeated, HROs successfully pressured for human rights accountability and transitional justice (e.g. Lutz and Sikkink 2000; Sikkink 2011).

Case evidence indicates the Guatemalan government was acutely aware of pressures from human rights groups and actively adjusted its strategy in order to minimize the documentation of repressive behavior. To limit its exposure, the Guatemalan government commonly repressed human rights monitors (Anderson 1989).¹² Human rights organizations were so severely repressed that by 1978 international HROs began to pull out of the country and establish their offices in

¹² A related argument contends that while Guatemala received significant attention from HROs, the severe repression directed at the media meant that these naming and shaming efforts were less likely to be picked up by the press (Franklin 2008; see also Davenport and Ball 2002; Sullivan 2016a).

Figure 2: Naming and Shaming and the Timing of Human Rights Improvements



Mexico or Costa Rica (Sikkink 2007, 138). Others fled to “communities of population in resistance,” located in the upper reaches of the highlands, beyond the reach of the army. Establishing permanent headquarters within Guatemala during this severely repressive time was impossible (outside some short-lived efforts in Guatemala City).

Despite severe repression, HROs remained active in the country, collecting and recording testimonies from across the Guatemalan highlands, and smuggling them to locations across the border in Mexico (e.g. CJP 1980; CDHG 1983a).¹³ The spatial location of HRO activity and the timing of human rights improvements are displayed in Figure 2.¹⁴ These maps provide preliminary descriptive evidence of how HRO activity and human rights improvements varied across the country. As can be seen on the left-side panel, there was a strong concentration of NGO activity within the highlands of Western Guatemala and along the Mexican border. The displacement of HROs might further localize the effects of their naming and shaming campaigns. However, regional networks may still matter, as research shows that HRO activity in neighboring states can supplement other forms of contentious politics occurring locally (Bell et al. 2012). Subsequent analyses consider both local and regional effects. And as shown on the right-hand panel, the timing of municipal-level human rights improvements varied substantially. In some sites, such as Guanagazapa, Concepcion Tutuapa, and Granados, improvements in human rights can be seen as early as the middle of 1979. However, in several other municipalities, including San Marcos and San Rafael Pie de la Cuesta, repression continued up through December 1985.¹⁵

¹³ As described by one of the CIIDH principle data architects, “These [reports] were collected through meticulous research from the organizations going directly into the field. Most of the information was taken from eyewitness accounts, but others were culled from individuals not directly present at events or from forensic evidence” (Davenport and Ball 2002, 439).

¹⁴ The figure measures naming and shaming using the quantity of repressive acts documented by HROs in each municipality, while the duration of repressive spells represents the number of months prior to municipal-level human rights improvements (for ease of interpretation both quantities are standardized).

¹⁵ The Supplemental Appendix includes further discussion of variation in the timing of *Human Rights Improvements*.

3. The Micro-Dynamics of Naming and Shaming

While scholars tend to agree on the objectives of naming and shaming, there are two distinct theoretical foundations upon which scholars build their arguments expectations. The first body of research focuses on information politics, and specifically on the ability of naming and shaming campaigns to raise the expected costs of severe repression by publicizing information identifying victims and perpetrators. When successful in garnishing widespread attention, naming and shaming can induce a range of international costs, including tarnished reputations, sanctions, depreciating loans and trade, divestment, and international intervention (Barry et al. 2013; Blanton and Blanton 2007; Blanton 2000; Lebovic and Voeten 2009; Hafner-Burton 2005; Murdie and Peksen 2013; 2014; Petersen et al. 2016; Woo and Murdie 2017). As the real or expected costs associated with these international pressures increase, severely repressive regimes reevaluate the benefits of continuing a repressive campaign.

A second body places less emphasis on international costs in isolation, and more emphasis on processes linking naming and shaming to pressures emerging from the mobilization of domestic human rights activism.¹⁶ Within severely repressive regimes, HRO mobilization demonstrates the movement's resolve and signals that persistent repression will be met with increased resistance (Sundstrum 2005; Simmons 2009; Murdie and Bahsin 2011; Meernick et al. 2012; Murdie and Davis 2012; Murdie 2013). (Brysk 1993; Sundstrum 2005; Murdie and Davis 2012).¹⁷ Within this cycle, the success of domestic mobilization remains highly specified—HRO mobilization leads to

¹⁶ To be clear, I am drawing a distinction based upon emphasis. Both sets of theories see the greatest possibility for changes when pressures from below combine with pressures from above.

¹⁷ For states signatory to international human rights laws, domestic mobilization implies continued pressure for failure to comply with their international legal obligations (Murdie and Davis 2012; Conrad and Ritter 2016).

human rights improvements only when (1) mobilization by human rights groups retain an active presence domestically (or within neighboring states) and (2) the regime is vulnerable to domestic and/or international pressure (Haftner-Burton and Tsutsui 2005; Franklin 2008; Hafner-Burton 2008; Simmons 2009; Murdie and Davis 2012; Murdie and Peksen 2013; Bell et al. 2012; Hendrix and Wong 2013).¹⁸

Drawing connections between these by these arguments and local-level human rights improvements demands a set of micro-foundational mechanisms linking the publication of naming and shaming reports to behavioral changes by security forces. In considering how a severely repressive regime responds to naming and shaming, I concentrate on the role of information along two dimensions. First, how is information regarding naming and shaming (and its potential costs) transferred to government decision makers dictating repressive policy. Second, how does this information interact with what the regime already knows about its repressive campaign (i.e., the factors that motivate persistent patterns of severe repression) locally. With regards to the first, it is clear that the Guatemalan regime was highly attuned to HRO monitoring of human rights abuses. Information from within the Guatemalan security apparatus demonstrates the awareness of and conscious attempts to limit publications of abuse.¹⁹ For instance, in March of 1980, police in Chimaltenango filed a report detailing the publication of a pamphlet documenting the disappearance of four community leaders.²⁰ Similar reports documented HRO naming and shaming in Santiago Atitlan, Rabinal, Chichicastenango, Esquintla, and Quetzaltenango.²¹ The regime was following HRO reports likely out of concern for managing its international reputation

¹⁸ Factors theorized to increase regime vulnerability include institutional accountability, economic dependency, international legal commitments, and connections between international and domestic norms.

¹⁹ Additional information detailing the Guatemalan regime's response to HRO activism can be found in the supplemental appendix.

²⁰ AHPN 2011a

²¹ AHPN 2011b; 2011c; 2011d; 2011e

as well as an attempt to glean any useful insight into the network of activists and their strategies.²² However, with regards to local strategy, information contained in the reports were imprecise-both spatially and temporally. While reports name and shame specific violations occurring on a given date and local, the network creating these reports may be operating elsewhere and publication may take place in a third area. This leaves open the question of what the government hoped to learn from these reports and how they might respond by shifting strategies of repression. Following HRO reporting, the regime garners a vague notion that there is a network of activists located nearby. In response, they may choose to improve human rights in order to reduce the likelihood of additional naming and shaming.²³

H1a: HRO naming and shaming will systematically increase the likelihood of human rights improvements within the municipality where the documented repression took place.

H1b: HRO naming and shaming will systematically increase the likelihood of human rights improvements regionally within the areas surrounding the documented repression.

When considering transnational information politics, one must consider the information channels through which naming and shaming reports translate into international awareness. Research on transnational activism commonly looks to the press as interlocutors transforming the information set in which both the perpetrator and the transnational community operate (e.g., Sikkink 2004; Franklin 2008; Murdie and Davis 2012). Media publications of human rights abuse simultaneously draws the attention of transnational actors and signals to the repressive regime that

²² Files from the CIA and US State Department similarly reveal an interest in monitoring the publication of HRO naming and shaming reports (National Security Archive 1999).

²³ Other work suggests the state might step up repression in order to displace local activists and their supporters or hide abuse beneath the fog of war (Hafner-Burton 2005).

its behavior is subject to international monitoring. As a result, severely repressive regimes may learn more about the potential international costs of naming and shaming through press reporting than they do from HRO reports directly. Reflecting on the case evidence again suggests that the regime was keenly aware of these dynamics and integrated it into the ongoing repressive campaign. At least 42 Guatemalan journalists were murdered or disappeared between 1977 and 1981, while another 49 were killed between 1981 and 1982 (Garrard-Burnett 2011; Ball et al. 1999). Killing journalists was intended to send a signal to the press that publications critical of repression would be subject to severe sanctions. Still, even while subject to severe threat and censorship, the domestic and international media continued to publish some materials documenting human rights abuse (Sullivan 2016a). From these press reports, the regime likely learned both that an active HRO network was transmitting information from repressed locals to media sources and that the potential costs of continued repression increased as a result. In response, the regime may improve human rights in areas documented in press reports as well as in the surrounding area, where the activists network may lie waiting to report additional abuse.²⁴

H2a: Press naming and shaming will systematically increase the likelihood of human rights improvements within the municipality where the documented repression took place.

H2b: Press naming and shaming will systematically increase the likelihood of human rights improvements regionally within the areas surrounding the documented repression.

²⁴ Recognizing the link between the local HRO network and the press, a severely repressive regime may back off locally while maintaining repression targeting the media.

Returning to broad theories sketched above, it is important to consider mobilization by naming and shaming HROs as well as important questions such as what leverage mobilizers have to induce human rights improvements and how the regime's security forces respond to HRO mobilization. Considering the local-level effects of HRO mobilization draws into focus a primary critique articulated by naming and shaming skeptics: the law of coercive response (Davenport 2007a; Hafner-Burton 2008). Domestic HRO mobilization further exacerbates threats to the regime, and regimes under threat commonly turn to repression as a tool for containing short-term risks. In this case, severely repressive regimes might respond to HRO mobilization by escalating local-level repression to contain or eliminate organizers. Throughout this period, Guatemala maintained a vast surveillance operation designed to monitor mobilization throughout the country (Sullivan 2016b). And, in cases when mobilization supported "radical demands," repression increased in the region surrounding mobilization behaviors (Sullivan 2016a).

Considering that human rights abuse may escalate rather than improve, any mobilization effort must consider the regime's willingness and capacity to repress local activists. And if an HRO wishes to improve human rights, why engage in mobilization activities that might incite additional repression? One potential answer is that HRO mobilization emerges as an endogenous strategic equilibrium where activists mobilize anticipating reductions in repression and the state eases repression in anticipation of HRO mobilization (cf., Ritter 2014; Ritter and Conrad 2016). For organizers, mobilizing around human rights improvements and naming and shaming is a way of casting their struggle against the regime in terms likely to elicit support from external actors, without directly challenging status quo distribution of political or economic power. Mobilization by naming and shaming HROs leverages international norms and the politics of duty, obligation, and empathy, which can put a severely repressive regime on the defensive (Brysk 1993). HRO

mobilization intends to counter the regime's claims to representation and legitimate governance, and replace it by framing a social conflict between state violence and individual or collective rights.

For the regime, naming and shaming mobilization undermines the legitimacy of repression without calling into question the infrastructural power of the state.²⁵ Improving human rights in response can signal legitimate and responsive governance, while persistent repression would demonstrate that state forces do not represent the morality and interests of citizens or provide citizens with law and order. Observing these tradeoffs transforms the identity of security forces away from seeing their role as combatants to a more neutral stance in which they are responsible for maintaining peace and order. Naming and shaming activists also benefit from the fact that this conflict transformation does not directly threaten the supremacy of the security forces.²⁶ Observing that political mobilization centers on rights improvements and not redistributions of power, the security forces can safely reduce their reliance on coercion, which demonstrates responsiveness to local demands while simultaneously enabling the regime to reallocate resources previously devoted to repression towards other means for maintaining order, such as enhanced surveillance or increased local police presence. This leads to the expectation that following HRO mobilization, we should see severely repressive regimes improve human rights in the locality and region where naming and shaming activism took place.

H3a: HRO mobilization will systematically increase the likelihood of human rights improvements within the municipality where mobilization activities take place.

²⁵ While demands for radical redistribution and armed conflict can solidify elite pacts, debates over the strategic benefits of continuing or abating repression in response to HRO mobilization can split elite interests, particularly between security forces and the political and economic elite who wish to maintain international credibility alongside political order (cf., Brysk 1993).

²⁶ This presumes that naming and shaming activists do not demand rights abusers be prosecuted. Strategies of achieving peace and justice are more complex than this stylized model would suggest (e.g., Arthur 2009; Loyle and Davenport 2014).

H3b: HRO mobilization will systematically increase the likelihood of human rights improvements regionally within the areas surrounding mobilization sites.

4. Data and Methods

HRO Naming and Shaming

Within this study, I employ unique subnational data documenting the location, timing, and activity of HROs in Guatemala. The study follows the convention within the naming and shaming literature when operationalizing these operationalize the unique disaggregated data. Specifically, the study differentiates between (1) HRO naming and shaming reports, (2) media naming and shaming reports, and (3) mobilization by human rights activists operating on the ground.

Reflecting the first of these three, *Naming and Shaming* is an event-count measuring human rights abuses reported by HROs by municipality-month.²⁷ This measure relies on a catalog of human rights violations documented by HROs and compiled as part of Guatemala's transitional justice process. Data were compiled by the Center for Human Rights Research (CIIDH), a nongovernmental organization based in Guatemala City that conducted a thorough review of published human rights reporting as part of Guatemala's truth and reconciliation process.²⁸ Researchers at the CIIDH collected HRO naming and shaming reports from the two largest transnational HROs (Amnesty International and Americas/Human Rights Watch) as well as Guatemala's best respected domestic HROs (Guatemalan Human Rights Commission [CDHG], the Mutual Support Group [GAM], the Committee for Justice and Peace in Guatemala [CJP], and

²⁷ Measuring *Naming and Shaming* by the number of fatalities produced similar results.

²⁸ Ball et al., 1999; Davenport and Ball 2002

the Guatemalan Church in Exile).²⁹ HRO reports identify more than 4,000 individuals killed in deadly acts of political repression (Davenport and Ball 2002). For each fatality, the data were coded for a variety of relevant variables including where and when the fatal incident took place, who was killed, how many other victims there were, along with a number of other highly detailed descriptive characteristics (Ball 1999).

Note that because data on the publication date is not available for a large majority of the human rights reports, the date in which the reported violation took place is used to identify the human rights report, rather than the date in which the report was published. This seems to be relatively inconsequential as the available evidence suggests that human rights reporting took place quickly. Among the reports for which data on the publication date is available from the CIIDH, 85% of the reports were published in the same month in which the reported violation took place. 93% were published within two months of the violation occurring. Less than 2% were reported more than six months after the violation occurred.

Qualitative materials affirm these quantitative trends. Documents from a newly released digital collection of Guatemalan HRO reports confirms that (1) reports were published within 1-2 months of the killings and (2) reports relied on local activists for information on the killings (CJP 1982a; 1982b). Likewise, America's Watch details how the transnational activist network relied on local activist groups, who were on the ground during the conflict (America's Watch 1982; 1984; see

²⁹ Patrick Ball, one of the creators of the CIIDH data requests that the following note be included alongside these data: "These are convenience sample data, and as such they are not a statistically representative sample of events in this conflict. These data do not support conclusions about patterns, trends, or other substantive comparisons (such as over time, space, ethnicity, age, etc.)." This is an important caveat that bears weight upon nearly all convenience samples used to study transnational politics (Balcells and Sullivan 2018). However, it also important to keep in mind (1) that these data represent unrivaled access to domestic HRO reporting at the local level and (2) that they approximate a complete sample of fatal incidents reported by these organizations. A number of recent publications studying political violence make use of the AHPN data, including Bateson (2013), Sullivan (2014), and Schwartz and Straus (2018).

also Amnesty International 1982, 140; see also CDHG 1983b). These details contradict claims that transnational pressures to improve human rights were effectively silenced by repression.³⁰

Media Reports

Media Reports are operationalized as the publication of stories by the domestic and international press that mention fatal incidents of repression. The study measures media reporting on human rights using multiple data sources. Like the HRO naming and shaming measures, the CIIDH data provide important details on the media's reporting of lethal repression (Davenport and Ball 2002). Most significantly, the data document where and when victims were killed as reported by 17 domestic press sources, including *Prensa Libre*, *El Grafico*, *La Hora*, *El Impacto*, and fourteen smaller newspapers (ibid.). In their study comparing these news publications to HRO naming and shaming, Davenport and Ball (2002) find that the media and HROs focused on distinct forms of repression, with the media providing greater coverage of urban events and HROs reporting on more rural incidents. The media also appear more sensitive to repression. Sullivan (2016a) also finds that media reports declined precipitously during the most intense periods of repression. In that work, Sullivan extends Brocket's (2005) coding of media reports on contentious politics. Crucially, both Brocket and Sullivan record events reported in major international press outlets, including *The New York Times*. While these data do not identify which press source published specific stories, merging fatal repressive incidents identified by Sullivan and Brocket into the study's measure of *Media Reporting* enables the measure to identify media reporting

³⁰ Note that this does not invalidate the Martin and Sikkink's claims regarding the limitations of transnational activism resulting from the Nicaraguan revolution and U.S. coalitional politics (see also Sikkink 2004, 158-169). Likewise, Ropp and Sikkink's (1999, 178) argument that "Guatemalan society was simply too closed and government policy too repressive to allow for even minimal international socialization to occur during the height of the violence (1978-1983)." Still, comparing transnational HRO documents to local HRO reporting suggests that while European HROs did not maintain offices in Guatemala during this period, information was being disseminated between local and international organizations (cf., Amnesty International 1982; Americas Watch 1984).

internationally as well as domestically. Using a strategy identical to the one used for *Naming and Shaming*, the study measures *Media Reporting* as a monthly, municipal-level event count of fatal acts of repression.

HRO Mobilization

Following accounts focusing on local-level mobilization, the analyses subsequently seek to identify the impacts of activists networks supporting naming and shaming. Specifically, the aim is to estimate whether HRO mobilization inspired human rights improvements independently from their naming and shaming activities. Recent work shows that HROs are most effective when they operate on the ground and can coordinate local activism (Murdie and Bhasin 2011; Murdie and Davis 2012; Murdie 2013). Here, too, additional discussion of case, context, and measurement is needed. While earlier research projects have been able to capture the presence and activity of HROs by examining lexicons of their membership, organizational activities, and headquarters locations, these measures are not readily available in a severely repressive regime even using the unique data discussed above. As noted, severely repressive regimes often target HROs, which means not only that they are reluctant to set up permanent headquarters (which make for easy targets), but they also wish to conceal their mobilization sites and membership activity to protect themselves from future repression.

Yet while direct measures of HRO mobilization are not as readily available in scenarios of severe repression as they might be elsewhere, another unique Guatemalan data source reveals unparalleled information on covert mobilization activities by human rights activists—the Archive of the Guatemalan National Police (AHPN). The AHPN contains tens of millions of previously confidential documents produced by the Guatemalan security apparatus and detailing repression

and resistance from 1975-1986. Documents in the AHPN were produced by a bureaucracy that never believed its records would be made public. And the AHPN subsequently released these records without oversight by those responsible for repression. As a result, the archive represents one of the most transparent and comprehensive human rights data sources identified to date (Sullivan 2016a).

Local-level data on *HRO mobilization* are derived from Sullivan's (2016a) coding of the AHPN. Mobilization activities are by their nature clandestine and difficult to observe. However, security forces (particularly those waging campaigns of severe repression) possess both the incentives and resources to monitor political mobilization (Sullivan 2016a). For instance, Sullivan's AHPN data codes roughly 1,300 events classified as mobilization activities, which Sullivan (2016b, 661) defines as, "dissident behavior designed to increase the level of formal organization of a dissident group or to raise the resource endowment of existing challenger organizations." The AHPN records also identify specific organizations associated with each mobilization activity as well as mobilizers' expressed demands.

HRO Mobilization uses the AHPN data to generate a count of mobilization events supporting a specific HRO or human rights causes more broadly. The variable is measured monthly within each municipality. In spite of claims that political repression decimated mobilization in Guatemala, the AHPN data reveal significant levels of mobilization supporting a diverse set of causes, including a significant number of mobilization activities promoting HROs. Approximately 3% of the mobilization activities identified in Sullivan's (2016a; 2016b) dataset are characterized as *HRO Mobilization*.³¹ This suggests that even while HROs were unable to establish permanent headquarters within the country for most of the period under review, individuals linked to domestic

³¹ See Sullivan (2016c) for details on the distribution mobilization across space, time, and category as well as for additional information on the coding and categorization of repression.

and international human rights organizations maintained the social ties and resource mobilization actions necessary to name and shame the government's abuses.

Human Rights Improvements

The study's dependent variable—*Human Rights Improvements*—is conceptualized as sudden, drastic, and lasting reductions in the use of repression within a given area. Using the AHPN records, this study measures the timing human rights improvements across Guatemalan municipalities by month from 1975-1985. The first step in the measurement process required identifying where and when repression was perpetrated. To measure repression, the study relies on Sullivan's (2016a) coding of the AHPN, which includes events data on more than 2,500 repressive acts incorporating a broad range of overt and covert tactics, such as torture, politically motivated arrests, disappearances, and surveillance.³² The National Police held jurisdiction over the entire country throughout the period.³³ Their responsibilities included maintaining a vast surveillance operation, of which the police archive was a principal component. In addition, the police were responsible for arresting, torturing, and killing individuals identified as threats to the state (CEH 1999; Brocket 2005; López 2013; Sullivan 2016b; Guberek and Hedstrom forthcoming). Examining an encompassing range of repressive tactics enables the study to capture repressive actions often missed within previous research on the topic.

³² Details on the sampling and coding procedures used to construct the AHPN data can be found in Sullivan (2016a; 2016b; 2016c). In the Supplemental Appendix, I compare how this study's operationalization compares to Sullivan (2016a).

³³ A more conservative assessment would consider this a study of human rights improvements by police forces in a highly-repressive regime. Even so, throughout the period, the police and military were in close collaboration, and this coordination is captured in the police files (see also Amnesty International 1981). The police were formally under military jurisdiction for a large portion of this period. In the dataset, 48% of the repressive actions identified were either exclusively carried out by the military or involved coordinated military-police operations.

Human Rights Improvements measures municipal-level changes in repressive events (recorded over several different time intervals). This operationalization strategies reflects recent research on naming and shaming. Consistent with the repression literature more generally, the majority of existing work focuses on examining *levels* of coercion (i.e., whether repression in one geographic unit or event was more or less severe than another). Following this approach, the bulk of the analyses below operationalize *Human Rights Improvements* by looking at monthly changes in levels of human rights improvements, conditional on past levels of abuse as well as a host of confounders.

Confounding Variables

While little systematic research focuses directly on human rights improvements in severely repressive regimes, a large literature developed to study the intensity or level of human rights abuse (Davenport 2007b; Hill and Jones 2014). Addressing this work, two variables are to used control for overt threats to the regime. *Insurgent Attacks* is a count variable identifying armed attacks by organized groups challenging the government. *Protests* is a count variable identified non-violent, public demonstrations. *Insurgent Attacks* and *Protests* are both measured monthly within each municipality counts based on Sullivan’s (2016a) coding of the AHPN data. In addition, I include a control for all *Mobilization* events not directly tied to human rights within each municipality month.

I also control for institutional variables preciously shown to affect levels of repression. While institutional measures of democracy in Guatemala are not yet available at the subnational level, I am able to extract a behavioral indicator of democratic competition.³⁴ *Campaign Competition*

³⁴ Country-level measures of democracy typically did not improve the accuracy of the models. Since these variables are measured annually, they can increase issues of covariance among “tied spells” in event history models.

provides a municipality-month indicator of democratic competition, measured using public activities organized by political parties and identified in the AHPN database (Sullivan 2016a). The variable is dichotomous, taking on a value of 1 within municipalities after they witness campaign activities by more than one political party. All other municipality months are scored 0.

To examine principal-agent dynamics, the study employs data from the CIA to identify the sites of permanent military and police headquarters, which serve as a proxy principal oversight (Doyle 1999; see DeMeritt 2015). *Headquarters Location* measures whether a municipality was the site of a headquarters.³⁵ Models further control for economic dependency, measured using logged annual U.S.-Guatemalan Military Aid values from the USAID Greenbook. I generate a local indicator, *Regional Military Aid*, which takes annual U.S.-Guatemalan Military Aid and weights it by the average distance each municipality was from the site of a police or military base (i.e. a spatial lag of *Headquarters Location*). The idea is that municipalities closer to headquarters would be more sensitive to changes in military aid than far flung municipalities. Finally, the analyses control for a variety of municipal-level characteristics. Specifically, I employ a 1973 census to measure the following municipal level characteristics: *(Log) Population*, *Literacy Rate*, and the percentage of the municipality identifying as *Indigenous*. The research also includes a control for municipal *Elevation*.

Modelling Strategy

Modelling Human Rights Improvements

The analysis examines connection between *Human Rights Improvements* and measures of *Naming and Shaming*, *Naming and Shaming Networks*, and *HRO Mobilization*. For each of the

³⁵ Earlier studies used measures of state capacity as a more encompassing, though less direct, indicator of principal oversight (e.g., Butler et al. 2007). Here I measure state capacity using literacy rates and population.

primary independent variables, I estimate models predicting their local as well as regional impacts. The analysis first estimates a series of pooled cross-sectional time-series models of *Human Rights Improvements*. This analytical approach closely mirrors recent advancements made in macro-level naming and shaming research as well as studies examining the micro-foundations of political repression (cf., Franklin 2008; Murdie and Davis 2012; Berman et al. 2011; Sullivan 2016a). Model 1 describes the functional form of the core model predicting human rights improvements as a function of municipal HRO behavior. Model 2 describes the form of the spatial model estimating human rights improvements as function of the HRO spatial lags. The dependent variable represents changes in the count of repressive events in a given municipality-month ($Y_{i,t}$). Each naming and shaming measure is lagged one month ($X_{i,t-1}$). In Model 2, I estimate the spatial diffusion of HRO activity as a function the global distribution of $X_{i,t-1}$ weighted by an inverted distance matrix (\mathbf{w}_i) measuring municipal proximity (Ward and Gleditch 2008). Models control for time variant ($Z_{i,t-1}$) and time invariant controls (V_i) as well as a lagged measure of municipal repression ($Y_{i,t}$). In both case I adopt a generalized linear models (GLM) approach estimated using maximum likelihood.³⁶ Models estimate cluster robust standard errors to account for spatial auto-correlation (Broström and Holmberg 2011).³⁷

$$\Delta_n Y_{i,t} = \alpha + \beta \Delta_1 X_{i,t-1} + \gamma \Delta_1 Z_{i,t-1} + \rho V_i + \theta Y_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad 1$$

³⁶ GLM is adopted because maximum likelihood accounts for serial correlation, generating consistent estimates of the lagged dependent variable model with serially correlated errors (Beck and Katz 2011).

³⁷ Given that repression clusters across space, it is possible that decisions to improve human rights operate at larger spatial units. To address the potential confounding effects of spatial-auto correlation, I replicated the results including a spatial-temporal lag of the dependent variable. In this case the spatial-temporal lag is insignificant and the naming and shaming results remain unaffected. Including department-level fixed effects likewise produces substantively identical results.

$$\Delta_n Y_{i,t} = \alpha + \beta \Delta_1 \mathbf{w}_i X_{i,t-1} + \gamma \Delta_1 Z_{i,t-1} + \rho V_i + \vartheta Y_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad 2$$

I estimate human rights improvements across three temporal windows: one month differences, three-month differences, and six-month differences. The delta parameters for human rights improvements as well as the HRO measures and covariates are defined following equations 3-5, with equation 3 representing human rights improvements over one month, equation 4 representing human rights improvements over three months, and equation 5 representing improvements over six months.

$$\Delta_1 Y_{i,t} = Y_{i,t} - Y_{i,t-1} \quad 3$$

$$\Delta_3 Y_{i,t} = \overline{(Y_{i,t} + Y_{i,t+1} + Y_{i,t+2})} - \overline{(Y_{i,t-1} + Y_{i,t-2} + Y_{i,t-3})} \quad 4$$

$$\Delta_6 Y_{i,t} = \overline{(Y_{i,t} + Y_{i,t+1} + Y_{i,t+2} + Y_{i,t+3} + Y_{i,t+4} + Y_{i,t+5})} - \overline{(Y_{i,t-1} + Y_{i,t-2} + Y_{i,t-3} + Y_{i,t-4} + Y_{i,t-5} + Y_{i,t-6})} \quad 5$$

Accordingly, the analyses predict how changes in HRO activity affect changes in human rights. This specification directly accounts for human rights improvements (across various temporal windows) as a function of naming and shaming behaviors and past levels of repression. Another approach that was considered, but not adopted, was to use a binary indicator for human rights improvements (cf., Murdie and Davis 2012). In this case, *HRO Mobilization* perfectly predicts human rights improvements the following month, which inhibits estimation while also supporting

the proposition that HRO mobilization activity has strong local-level effects on human rights improvements.

Selection Effects

It is well established that repression and mobilization jointly affect one another (e.g., Pierskalla 2009; Ritter 2014; Ritter and Conrad 2016; Conrad and Ritter 2016). The conventional approach to address this problem has been to lag the independent variable one time period. By estimating first-differenced changes resulting from lagged HRO behavior, the approach above represents something of an improvement. However, if mobilization and repression are endogenous then lagged mobilization is endogenous to lagged repression. Consequently, including a temporal lag in this instance does not adequately resolve the issue (Bellemer et al. 2017).

$$\Delta_n Y_{i,t} = \delta_i + \beta \Delta_1 X_{i,t-1} + \gamma \Delta_1 Z_{i,t-1} + \vartheta Y_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad 6$$

$$\Delta_n Y_{i,t} = \delta_i + \beta \Delta_1 \mathbf{w}_i X_{i,t-1} + \gamma \Delta_1 Z_{i,t-1} + \vartheta Y_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad 7$$

Reflecting prior efforts to account for temporal trends in cross-sectional time-series, I develop two sets of models to separate the short run impacts of HRO activity on human rights improvements, independently from any endogenous strategic feedback. First, I estimate a series of first-differenced within-group fixed effects models, as specified in Models 6 and 7. This approach follows Berman et al. (2011), who argue that the within-group fixed effects approach accounts for the strategic selection of specific municipalities, which may simultaneously be more prone to HRO

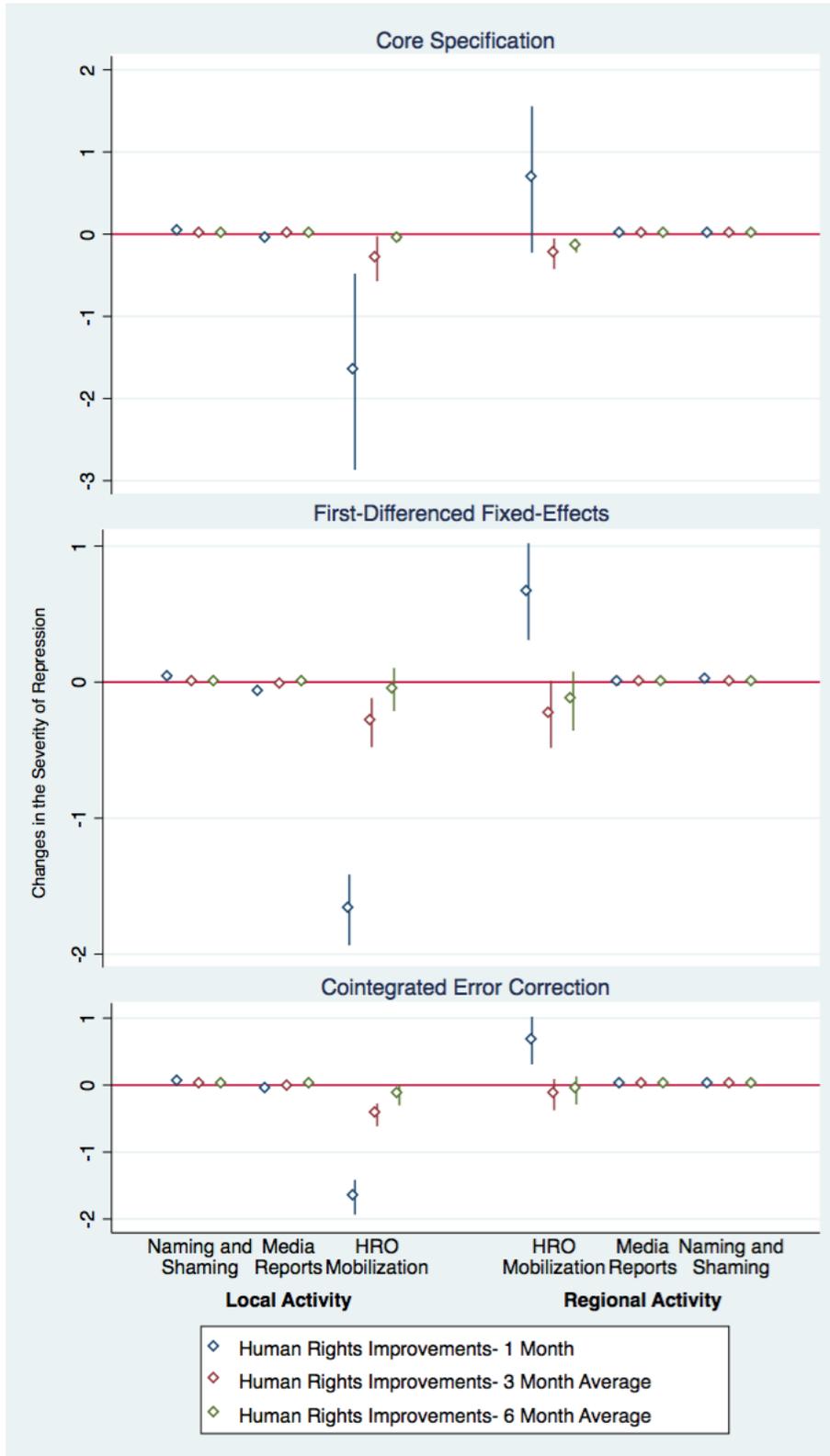
mobilization and repression. Conditional on unobservable municipal-level characteristics (δ_i), these models estimate changes in human rights abuse as a function of changes in HRO behavior.

$$\Delta_n Y_{i,t} = \delta_i + \beta \Delta_1 X_{i,t-1} - \lambda(Y_{i,t-1} - KX_{i,t-1}) + \gamma \Delta_1 Z_{i,t-1} + \vartheta Y_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad 8$$

$$\Delta_n Y_{i,t} = \delta_i + \beta \Delta_1 \mathbf{w}_i X_{i,t} - \lambda(Y_{i,t} - K\mathbf{w}_i X_{i,t}) + \gamma \Delta_1 Z_{i,t-1} + \vartheta Y_{i,t-1} + \varepsilon_{i,t} \quad 9$$

Second, I adopt the error correction model specified in Models 8 and 9. In this expression, the error correction model reformulates the short-run first-differences approach to account for the long-run equilibration of x and y . As Beck and Katz (2011, 343) note for pooled cross-sectional time-series, the error correction model, “allows for the nice interpretation that short-run changes in y are a function of both short-run changes in x and how much x and y were out of equilibrium last year, where the equilibrium y and x are given by $y_{i,t} = Kx_{i,t}$ and the speed of equilibration (per [month]) is λ .” Using a derivation of the autoregressive distributive lag model, I estimate dynamic fixed-effects error correction models shown to yield consistent coefficient estimates for both short-run and long-run relationships (Persaran et al. 1999). In this case, models estimate short-run correlations between HRO behavior and repression, while simultaneously adjusting for long-run joint-strategic equilibrium between government repression and dissident mobilization.

Figure 3: Cross-Sectional Time-series Models of Local-Level Human Rights Improvements



Analyses

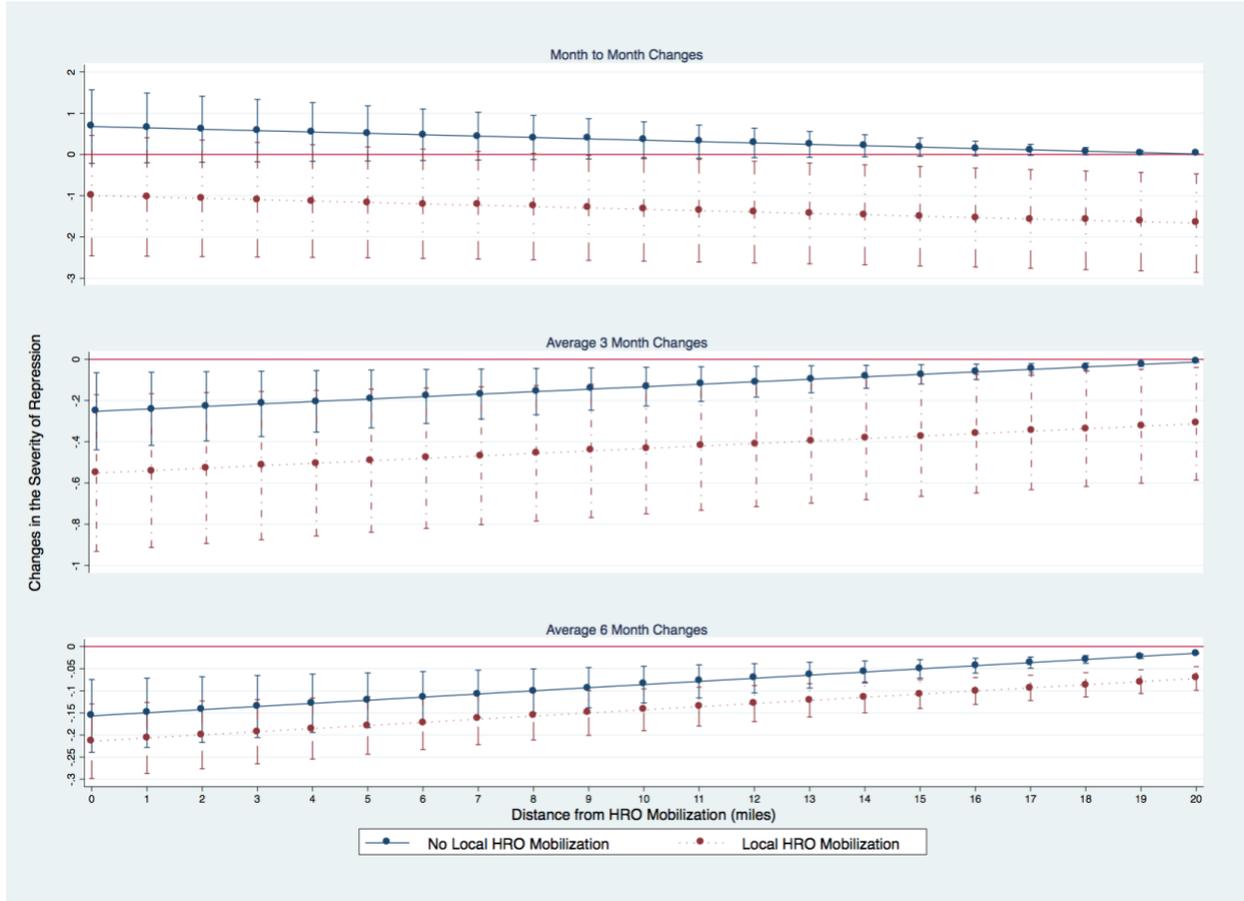
Results from the analyses strongly support the proposition that *HRO Mobilization* leads to significant and substantively meaningful improvements in local-level human rights improvements, while casting doubt on the local-level effects of *Naming and Shaming* or *Press Reporting*. *Naming and Shaming* has no significant correlation with rights improvements. And while *Press Reporting* significantly correlates with rights improvements, the substantive effect is small. Only one in six municipalities where *Press Reporting* documented human rights abuse experienced sufficient amounts of coverage to predict one or more fewer fatal repressive incidents occurring the next month.

Figure 3 presents a visual representation of results from the models specified above. On the left-hand side, the Y axis presents changes in the absolute number of repressive events, with negative values indicating human rights improvements and positive values representing increasingly severe repression. For each of the naming and shaming variables, the models estimate their effects on local-level human rights improvements across different spatial and temporal units. The figure's left side includes estimates of municipal actions, while the right side presents results of spatial diffusion as specified in models (2), (7), and (9).

Mobilization by naming and shaming activists substantially improve human rights in the municipality in which it occurred. Following *HRO Mobilization*, the regime perpetrated approximately two fewer repressive incidents in the municipality than they would have otherwise. Interestingly, this effect is observed even as *HRO Mobilization* occurred predominantly in areas where repression was most severe. Municipalities without any form of *HRO Mobilization* experienced repression only once out over four months. For municipalities where activists mobilized around human rights, 90% were victimized by repression during the month of

mobilization, with an average of 1.9 repressive events occurring at the time of *HRO Mobilization*. In other words, while targeting the most severely repressed municipalities, *HRO Mobilization* nearly eliminated repression the following month. These effects endured across time, bringing the average number of repressive events down by an average of 66% in the three months following *HRO Mobilization*. Expanding out to a six-month interval, the effects appear more nuanced. Nearly 70% of municipalities with *HRO Mobilization* experienced human rights improvements over the next six months, and among those rates of repression dropped nearly 90%. In the other 30%, human rights did not improve during the six months following *HRO Mobilization*, but instead worsened. These effects are reasonably consistent across model specifications, indicating robustness.

Figure 4: Spatial and Temporal Diffusion of Human Rights Improvements



Regionally, if we look at the spatial lag of *HRO Mobilization*, human rights do not appear to improve in areas surrounding mobilization. This result is highly sensitive to model specification, however. Some specifications predict a one month increase in human rights abuse within neighboring municipalities, indicating a shift in tactics away from mobilization sites and targeting the areas nearby. However, this effect disappears if we look only at the spatially weighted variables (excluding local actions), and becomes insignificant almost all of the other models estimated for this analysis.

Results become more interesting once we expand the view to look at how the regional effects of *HRO Mobilization* diffuse across space and time. Figure 4 shows the effects of *HRO Mobilization* plotted across three time intervals (as predicted using Model (2)). The X axis indicates distance from a mobilization site. For reference, the figure includes predicted effects for having *HRO Mobilization* in a given municipality, which is significant across specifications as shown in Figure 3. If we look at municipalities where there was no local *HRO Mobilization*, being close to a mobilization site does not appear to affect human right improvements during the following month. However, looking at the predictions over 3-month and 6-month averages shows that over time the effects of *HRO Mobilization* diffuse to improve human rights in neighboring municipalities. Across both time intervals, significant effects can be observed at least 20 miles away. Extrapolating from these results indicates that approximately one in five municipalities experienced significant human rights improvements following *HRO Mobilization*. Local action appears to shape rights improvements regionally as well as locally. However, this takes time to occur.³⁸

Extensions

The Supplementary Information accompanying this research note extends the analysis in several important directions. I first narrow the analysis to look only at a subsample of municipalities located in the Guatemalan highlands. Case evidence shows that naming and shaming, media reporting, and HRO mobilization were particularly difficult for activists working within the valley areas where the state concentrated its power (cf., Scott 2009). Limiting the analyses to highlands municipalities ensures that all units had some positive probability of

³⁸ One interpretation is that as security forces backed away from mobilization sites, they eliminated potential threats along the way. Future work will need to expand upon the dynamics of diffusion.

experiencing naming and shaming. Results are identical to those reported above. Subsequently within the SI, I consider non-parametric methods to address confounding variables. This extension preprocesses the data using genetic matching, weighting observations based on their predicted probability of experiencing naming and shaming. Here too the results are observationally equivalent to those above.

Within the space of the Supplementary Information, I conduct additional analyses into the duration of the observed naming and shaming effects. Specifically, I conduct a series of event history analyses predicting the duration of repressive spells and the onset of enduring human rights improvements. The event history models employ three distinct operationalizations for *Human Rights Improvements*: (1) the onset of a period of six months or longer without municipal repression, (2) the onset of a period of twelve months or longer without municipal repression, and (3) the end of repression in a municipality. Controlling for prior *Human Rights Improvements*, confounders, right censoring, and municipal-level frailty, results are consistent with those included in the primary text above. Local HRO mobilization appears to have lasting effects, leading to drastic and enduring human rights improvements (locally and regionally).

Finally, I consider interaction effects. Previous research shows that the effects of naming and shaming campaigns are contingent on (1) domestic factors conditioning the use of repression and (2) international factors leveraging the effects of transnational political pressures. I consider three such facets: civil conflict, democratic competition, and economic dependency. In each case, the estimated effect of *HRO Mobilization* is impacted by context. Situations of conflict suppress the positive effects of *HRO Mobilization*. Local-level democracy likewise depresses the positive impacts of mobilization, though not in a significant way. And economic dependency attenuates the

impact of HRO mobilization on *Human Rights Improvements*, suggesting that mobilization has the strongest impacts when foreign governments can threaten to cut off aid.

Conclusion

This study shows that the timing of human rights improvements in highly-repressive regimes varies subnationally across space and time and, more importantly, remains sensitive to mobilization by human rights organizations. Results demonstrate that the likelihood of municipal-level repression yielding to human rights improvements increases following HRO mobilization. In contrast, naming and shaming publications do not predict significant changes in human rights improvements, while press reports display very marginal effects. While some may find these mixed findings discouraging, it is necessary to not lose sight of the fact that campaigns of severe repression are extraordinarily difficult to terminate. Obeying the ‘law of repressive persistence’ campaigns of intense human rights abuse craft garrison states, in which repression persist over time under its own institutional logic and momentum (Gurr 1986; Davenport and Loyle 2012). Standing up to demand an end to severe repression can leave activists vulnerable to becoming targets themselves. However, local HRO mobilization also provides bottom up signals to the regime about the relative costs of repression. And in the face of a few bold HRO mobilization events, the results here suggest that severely repressive events may divert their energies to alternative, less coercive strategies for governing their populace.

Although this singular study is unable to test these arguments outside Guatemala, evidence from other highly-repressive regimes, such as Nepal and Mozambique suggests that human rights improvements occurred after the governments felt pressure from local mobilization (Corothers 2002; Huan 2016). Still, contextual factors clearly matter. Opportunities for engaging in this type

of systematic repression may be less viable in the absence of civil conflict. Indeed, because of the inherent relationship between conflict and repression, one rarely observes highly-repressive regimes not engaged in civil conflict (cf., Bellamy 2015). Acknowledging this facet, it is possible to consider the implications of the study for less violent cases. Here, one would anticipate slower moving and more restrained patterns of repression persisting. Through auxiliary examination of additional cases as well as cross-national comparisons, it will be possible to further investigate the generalizability of the findings. The key will be gathering better data on both clandestine mobilization and less readily observable forms of repression.

Two additional caveats also warrant acknowledgement. The first involves the potential long-term implications of naming and shaming. Work within the constructivists tradition suggests that naming and shaming might operate over a longer time horizon by expectations of appropriate behavior that affect identity and behavior. Second, this study focuses specifically on *HRO* naming and shaming. This leaves future research to examine how other important sources of naming and shaming affect human rights improvements within severely repressive regimes (cf., Lebovic and Voeten 2009).

If correct, the study's arguments contain broad implications for scholars as well as activist. If human rights improvements (sometimes called liberalization) precede democratization, as is commonly argued, then the fact that *HRO* mobilization can inspire sustained rights improvements takes on additional significance. Indeed, this argument suggests that rights emerge out of contention, and only take place once citizens take action to organize their struggle for additional rights (cf., Tilly 2007).

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