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Right or Robust? The Sensitive Nature of Repression to Globalization*

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A growing number of studies provide quantitative evidence that economic globalization encourages government protection of human rights: trade and investment advance civil and political rights and encourage governments to refrain from violations of the right to life, liberty, and the security of the person. Other studies provide evidence that globalization promotes government repression of human rights: the arbitrary arrest, torture, forced disappearance, or extra-judicial killing of citizens, activists, or dissidents by state security forces under the control of ruling state elites. This article employs a variant of Extreme Bounds Analysis in order to analyze the robustness of this growing body of important but contradictory inferences. It argues that (1) we can make robust empirical claims about the relationship between certain trade and investment indicators and government repression, but shows that (2) cumulative knowledge across studies nevertheless remains limited by the sensitivity of many indicators to conditioning sets of information. This problem stems from vaguely specified theoretical mechanisms linking economic processes to government repression and is of potentially great consequence for scholarship seeking to explain the causes of human rights violations, in particular, and the effects of economic globalization, in general.

Introduction

A growing body of sophisticated research today provides evidence to support a causal link between economic globalization¹ and

¹ This study limits analysis to the existing literatures on the human rights effects of economic globalization because repression of human rights (London & Williams, 1988; Meyer, 1996; Smith, Bolyard & Ippolito, 1999; Richards, Gelleny & Sacko, 2001). Yet this burgeoning quantitative literature raises a truly vexing problem. Evidence to date points in opposite directions, as a growing number of scholars present apparently contradictory findings regarding the nature and consequence of global market integration. According to some, trade and investment empower leaders to abuse weak and underprivileged individuals, encouraging a spiral of government

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they are abundant and important. Globalization, however, is by no means limited to market transactions. Although they are presently in short supply, studies linking social, political, or cultural forms of globalization to human rights practices should also be an important topic of analysis. The term globalization throughout the remainder of this article refers to economic globalization.

repression, exploitation, and violence (Nader, 1998; Evans, 1999). According to others, the globalization of markets encourages a worldwide movement toward the protection of basic human rights and freedoms, discouraging government repression through the creation of wealth, the rule of law, and respect for the basic rights of citizens (Mitchell & McCormick, 1988; Dorn & Wang, 1990).

This article is the first to systematically assess the empirical robustness of existing research findings, in order to evaluate our substantive knowledge about how different globalization indicators shape government repression. The problem at hand is clear. Existing theoretical models do not uniformly identify the core globalization variables that should be held constant while conducting statistical inference. We frequently make substantive inferences about globalization; however, we do so without drawing precise connections between globalization concepts and the data employed to represent them. At the root of this problem exists ambiguity concerning the mechanisms that link different aspects of globalization and repression. The result is that important substantive findings about the social consequences of economic integration are presently obscured by empirical inconsistencies, thus suggesting contradictory messages about what aspects of the global economy are likely to influence human rights behavior.

In the following pages, I provide the first systematic evidence to determine which arguments are most clearly supported by *robust* empirical evidence (i.e. to suggest that minor changes in the causal variables do not fundamentally alter the substantive research conclusions). To do so, I draw from a number of recent exemplary studies concerning the effects of trade and direct foreign investment on human rights. I employ a variant of Edward Leamer's Extreme Bounds Analysis (EBA) commonly applied to studies of economic growth (Leamer, 1985) and demonstrate two novel empirical findings.

many commonly identified First, relationships between trade and investment indicators and repression of human rights are tremendously sensitive to slight alterations in the conditioning set of variables; and many publicized coefficients change sign with small changes in model specification. Second, certain trade and direct foreign investment processes are, empirically, quite robust: they correlate strongly and significantly with government respect for human rights across a great number of different theoretical models. Both findings provide us with new empirical information that we can use to our theoretical advantage to improve our research on the effects of globalization.

Globalization and Human Rights: From Concepts to Indicators

Significant attention has been given to the measurement of different kinds of human rights indicators. These choices of indicators, although not problem-free, are routinely questioned and analyzed by the community of researchers who care to say something about government-sponsored violence and repression of citizens.² By contrast, there has been no open discussion or analysis of the proliferating number of globalization indicators that so many scholars rely upon to test their claims. Yet, different indicators measure different kinds of economic flows, thereby controlling for and influencing different kinds of actors. With so many variables to choose from, our research on the human rights consequences of globalization too often confronts measurement problems that we presently ignore. In this section, I evaluate current trends in the measurement of globalization's effects on human rights. I

 $^{^2\,}$ For an analysis of human rights measures and concepts, see Claude & Jabine (1992), Lijn (1995), and Poe, Carey & Vasquez (2001).

draw examples from as many different studies and viewpoints as possible to show that current globalization concepts are often weakly and variously linked to systematized concepts and indicators, making it difficult to draw substantive comparisons across studies.

Theoretical Views: How Globalization Influences Human Rights

Scholars from many theoretical traditions and disciplines argue that something called 'globalization' has an effect on human rights. Causal mechanisms are various. Some argue that market liberalization boosts economic development, thereby promoting human rights through long-term growth (Apodaca, 2001; Poe & Tate, 1994). Others argue that globalization creates middle-class constituents that come to demand greater protection of their fundamental rights, changing governments' policies through representation (Richards, Gelleny & Sacko, 2001; Meyer, 1996). Still others suggest that globalization produces greater political stability through growth in living standards, thereby reducing the need to employ acts of repression (Gelleny & McCoy, 1999). But what do we really mean when we say 'globalization' has an effect on human rights?

The Conceptualization of Globalization

A survey of the literature suggests that we mean different things when we say globalization. As a *background concept*,³ globalization has been defined variously as the integration of financial markets and the increasing dispersion of capital (Gartzke & Li, 2003), as the increasing integration of the organization of production and the consumption of commodities in the world economy (Chase-Dunn, Kawano & Brewer, 2000), and as a process of transformation fueled by a radical change in the flow of investment, services, and goods across state borders (Berger & Dore, 1996).

Scholars thinking about the effects of globalization on human rights identify a wide range of dimensions in order to conceptualize systematized concepts that represent specific and partial aspects of globalization. These include foreign economic penetration (Richards, Gelleny & Sacko, 2001); state dependency on other states or international actors (Apodaca, 2001); the spread of world capitalism (Mitchell & McCormick, 1988; Cingranelli & Richards, 1999a); the expansion of global markets that create competitive advantages independent from the nation-state (Cerny, 1996); the establishment of global economic institutions (McCorquodale & Fairbrother, 1999); the proliferation of multinational corporations (Meyer, 1996; Smith, Bolyard & Ippolito, 1999); and preferential trade agreements (Hafner-Burton, 2005).

Scholars also adopt a wide variety of *indicators* to operationalize these systematized concepts (i.e. in order to develop one or more measures for classifying cases). Commonly used indicators include trade, foreign direct investment, foreign aid, development assistance, and portfolio investment, as well as the availability of technology such as telephones. Recent examples of these indicators are reviewed in Table I, which offers a sample of commendable studies seeking to explain the consequences of globalization on government repression.

Measurement Validity: The 'Problem' of Globalization

Measurement is valid when scores meaningfully capture the ideas that are contained in

³ Background concepts are the broad constellation of meanings and understandings associated with a given concept. They are conceptualized into systematized concepts, which are specific formulations of a concept that commonly involve an explicit definition. Systematized concepts are themselves operationalized into *indicators*, which include any systematic scoring procedure to classify cases. Finally, indicators are composed of *scores* that rank each case within a system of classification (Adcock & Collier, 2001).

682

Study	Globalization concepts	Indicator	Score
Apodaca (2001)	Globalization	Investment; trade; development assistance; portfolio investment; aid	World FDI; exports; bilateral aid; multilatera aid; portfolio investment (all divided by population)
Barbieri & Davenport (1997)	Trade dependency	Trade openness	Imports + exports by GDP
Burkhart (2001)	Globalization	Phones; trade; investment	Phones per 100 citizens; trade (% GDP); World FDI
Cingranelli & Richards (1999b)	Globalization	Investment	World FDI
Davenport (1996)	Government expenditure	Energy consumption	Energy consumption (pc)
Heinisch (1995)	Trade levels	Trade with OECD	Imports + exports with industrialized countries
London & Williams (1988)	Transnational corporate penetration	Investment	$\sqrt{\frac{FDI\ capital}{total\ capital\ stock}} \times \frac{FDI\ capital}{population}$
Mever (1996)	Multinational corporate penetration	US investment: US aid	FDI from the USA: aid from the USA
Mitchell & McCormick (1988)	Capitalist involvement	Trade investment	Absolute trade: World FDI
Richards, Gelleny & Sacko (2001)	Foreign economic penetration	Investment; development assistance; Portfolio investment; aid	World FDI; official development sssistance; portfolio investment; aid
Smith, Bolyard & Ippolito (1999)	Transnational corporate penetration	investment; US aid	World FDI; aid
			OECD stocks FDI
Timberlake & Williams (1984)	Foreign economic penetration	Investment from development	Total energy consumption X population
		Assistance Council (OECD)	$\sqrt{100000000000000000000000000000000000$
			100

Table I. Measurement Validity of Globalization and Human Rights Studies: From Concepts to Indicators to Scores

the systematized concept, for example, when the scores derived from a given indicator can be interpreted in terms of the specific formulation of the larger concept (Adcock & Collier, 2001). Over the years, scholars have theorized about a large number of different globalization factors influencing human rights.⁴ Of these factors, measures of trade and foreign direct investment are by far the most common and the most important in the literature and will serve as the subject of examination throughout the remainder of this article. When we say that 'there are aspects of globalization that have a positive impact on the attainment of human rights standards' (Apodaca, 2001: 600), or that 'the Cold War caused greater violations of human rights by . . . preventing the globalization of the world capitalist system' (Cingranelli & Richards, 1999b: 511), what do we mean by globalization and what are we measuring?

Table I provides some insight into two problems that currently complicate measurement validity across research on globalization and human rights. First, we frequently use the same indicators to make arguments about different systematized conceptual components of globalization, but then we use different indicators to draw conclusions about the same systematized concepts. Consider foreign direct investment (FDI). Scholars employ FDI data to make statements about the effects of transnational corporate investment (London & Williams, 1988; Meyer, 1996; Smith, Bolyard & Ippolito, 1999), to make claims about globalization and degree of participation in the global economy (Cingranelli & Richards, 1999b), or to test statements about the influence of global investment more broadly. Some studies interpret FDI indicators as capturing state dependence on external actors, while others understand investment to represent the degree of foreign penetration in a

local economy. Although the indicator is often the same, the theoretical connection between the concept and the indicator varies widely across studies.

Consider trade. Like FDI, scholars employ trade data to make statements about a wide range of conceptual phenomena, including the effects of capitalist involvement on human rights practices of thirdworld countries (Mitchell & McCormick, 1988), globalization (Burkhart, 2001), and the broader notion of international 'exchange' (Heinisch, 1995). These many interpretations are summarized in Table I, and it becomes immediately obvious that we often use the same variable to represent different causal processes.

At the level of the individual study, differences in the way we operationalize globalization (i.e. in the way we link indicators to systematized concepts) are unproblematic only so long as the indicators meaningfully capture the ideas that are embedded in our globalization concepts. When the wealth of current research on globalization and human rights is considered in toto, however, it becomes very hard to disentangle the threads linking various theoretical concepts to specific indicators. In short, our theories about which specific causal mechanisms to measure (growth of the middle class versus political stability, for example) are often imprecisely linked to our economic data. If we use the same indicator to represent these two concepts, how are we supposed to know which causal mechanism is at play? Further, how are we to interpret variation across studies that use different indicators to measure the same concept?

An illustration of the problem is useful. Consider the concept of transnational corporate penetration. In an early and important article, London & Williams (1988) argue that a consistent negative relationship between basic human rights and foreign corporate investment is indicated by a measure

⁴ For an excellent review of arguments, see Richards, Gelleny & Sacko (2001).

of investment dependence. Governments in need of economic resources, they argue, experience competitive pressures to create an attractive environment for foreign investment. Foreign corporations and donor governments co-opt domestic elites through foreign investment, displacing local capital while promoting uneven development and fostering competitive advantage among repressive states. Economic exploitation and instability often create a local environment of social unrest and contestation, encouraging the violent repression of basic human rights to enact policy and to maintain the political stability necessary to attract investment.⁵

Nearly a decade later, Meyer (1996) argues the contrary: multinational corporate penetration is positively associated with human rights over time. Measured by US direct foreign investment (income and employment), Meyer concludes that the presence of foreign investors promotes human rights, encourages the growth of an urban middle class, and strengthens political stability and tolerance in society at large.⁶ Measuring corporate investment with yet a third indicator - global net direct foreign investment - Smith, Bolyard & Ippolito (1999) challenge both conclusions and find that penetration has no systematic or consistent effect on human rights.

Each study offers broad and contradictory conclusions about the human rights effects of 'transnational corporate penetration'. Although the substantive concept is the same, each study employs different indicators to measure their specific concept of investment and each challenges the findings of the others. At a glance, it is impossible to know whether one or more studies are simply wrong or whether they actually offer compatible insights into different conceptual components of penetration. Are these three indicators actually capturing the same global process? Does the overarching concept of 'penetration' contain subconcepts that pull in opposing directions?

The problem does not end there. We often use a range of different scores to classify the same indicator, complicating the comparison of research across studies and potentially confusing the links between scores and indicators. This tendency can produce a host of data inconsistency and bias problems. Consider again the example of FDI. The studies discussed in this article reveal a wide range of different measurement techniques to score investment. Scholars employ US FDI (Meyer, 1996), world FDI (Smith, Bolyard & Ippolito, 1999), gross FDI (Hafner-Burton & Tsutsui, 2005), and Bornschier's indicator⁷ (Timberlake 8 Williams, 1984), among many other measures. Within the popular category of world FDI alone, scholars invoke numerous measures, including the following five variables that will be examined throughout the remainder of this study (described in detail in Table II): FDI net inflows (in current \$); gross FDI (% GDP); FDI net (in current \$); FDI net inflows (% GDP); and FDI net inflows (% gross capital formation).

Table II demonstrates substantively that these five investment indicators do not all measure the same economic processes – some capture only inward investment, while others capture absolute flows – and they do not all measure the influence of the same economic actors. Moreover, simple correlations show that only a few of the five scores capture similar underlying processes, and, even then, they are not identical.⁸ Whether

⁵ Also see Chomsky & Herman (1979), Claude & Jabine (1992), Oloka-Onyango & Udagama (2000), and Richards, Gelleny & Sacko (2001).

⁶ Others have made similar arguments. See Spar (1998) and Winston (1999).

⁷ See Bornschier & Chase-Dunn (1985).

⁸ Correlations run between the five frequently used investment scores in 1995 indicate that, of the five indicators, only FDI Net Inflows (% GDP) and FDI Net Inflows (% GCF) are highly correlated (0.85), while the remaining indicators demonstrate very low correlations (below 0.3).

Foreign Direct Investment, Net Inflows (current US\$)	Net inflows of investment to acquire a lasting management interest (10% or more of voting stock) in an enterprise operating in an economy other than that of the investor. It is the sum of equity capital, reinvestment of earnings, other long-term capital, and short-term capital as shown in the balance of payments. Current US dollars.
Gross Foreign Direct Investment (% GDP, PPP)	Sum of the absolute values of inflows and outflows of foreign direct investment recorded in the balance of payments financial account. Ratio to GDP converted to international dollars using purchasing power parities (PPP).
Foreign Direct Investment, Net (BoP, current US\$)	Net inflows less net outflows by the reporting country of investment to acquire a lasting management interest.
Foreign Direct Investment, Net Inflows (% GDI)	Net inflows of investment to acquire a lasting management interest. Gross domestic investment (used in the denominator) is gross domestic fixed investment plus net changes in stocks.
FDI Net Inflows (% GCF)	Net inflows of investment to acquire a lasting management interest. 1995 constant US dollars and calculated as a ratio to Gross Capital Formation (GCF).

Table I	I. Fo	reign E	Direct	Investment	Indicators
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Source: World Bank (2001).

a scholar chooses to use one score instead of another to capture an investment concept is, thus, likely to affect the empirical results concerning the consequences of investment, because these measures do not capture the same systematized concepts. A theory arguing that FDI affects human rights practices through the formation of a public middle class, for example, should require a very different measure of FDI than a theory arguing that investment affects human rights practices through corporate responsibility practices or through the generation of governmental wealth.

An additional illustration is included for the purpose of further demonstrating the problem. Both Apodaca (2001) and Richards, Gelleny & Sacko (2001) test the effects of 'foreign direct investment' on personal integrity rights. Apodaca offers data from the IMF conditioned on population, while Richards, Gelleny & Sacko offer data from the World Bank. Their models are nearly identical but produce different results: one finds that foreign direct investment (as a ratio to the population) is significantly related to lower personal integrity abuses, while the other finds no systematic relationship between foreign direct investment and the same dependent variable.9 There is no single or obvious measure of 'foreign direct investment'. Indeed, the World Bank supplies all five measures of foreign direct investment introduced in Table II, and any one of these indicators could have been selected for either study. The authors never specify which measure of foreign direct investment they have chosen, how that measure captures a hypothesized causal mechanism, or why it would or would not be appropriate to condition the measure on population. Because FDI indicators are not highly correlated, this choice is likely to matter a great deal to the substantive results.

⁹ Samples vary and are addressed in the web appendix.

Exports of Goods and Services (% GDP)	Value of all goods and other market services provided to the rest of the world: value of merchandise, freight, insurance, transport, travel, royalties, license fees, and other services (communication, construction, financial, information, business, personal, and government services). Factor services are excluded. Transfer payments are excluded from the calculation of GDP.
Imports of Goods and Services (% GDP)	Value of all goods and other market services received from the rest of the world.
Trade (% GDP)	Sum of exports and imports of goods and services measured as a share of gross domestic product.
Trade (% Goods GDP)	Sum of merchandise exports and imports divided by the current value of GDP in US dollars after subtracting value-added in services.
Exports as a Capacity to Import (constant LCU)	Current price value of exports of goods and services deflated by the import price index. Data are in constant local currency.

Table III. Trade Indicators

Source: World Bank (2001).

Our problems are not limited to investment. Competing operationalizations also exist for commonly used trade indicators. A great number of human rights scholars use a country's total imports and exports, weighted by gross domestic product, as a measure of trade (Heston & Summers, 1991; Barbieri & Davenport, 1997). Others select absolute trade flow in currency (Mitchell & McCormick, 1988) or exports weighted by population (Apodaca, 2001). Within the category of international trade, scholars commonly invoke the following five variables that will be analyzed throughout the remainder of this study (described in Table III): Exports of Goods and Services (% GDP); Imports of Goods and Services (% GDP); Trade (% GDP); Trade (% Goods GDP); and Exports as a Capacity to Import (constant LCU).

Table III tells us that some of these indicators operationalize different trade processes – some capture only inward trade, while others capture outbound trade or the ratio of exports to imports – and, thus, measure the influence of very different economic actors

and processes. A theory proposing to test the claim that trade affects human rights practices through efficiency gains and growth through access to technology, for example, is likely to require a very different trade indicator than a theory arguing that the causal link between trade and human rights is political liberalization or the mobilization of nongovernmental actors to lobby in support of human rights. Correlations show us that these trade indicators are no more interchangeable empirically than they are theoretically.10 Whether we use one indicator instead of another to capture a trade concept is likely to affect our empirical results, because these measures of trade do not capture the same systematized concepts.

In sum, the scholarly community seeking to make *robust* claims about the human rights effects of various global economic transactions is in stalemate. Many of us test

¹⁰ Correlations between these five frequently used trade measures in 1995 demonstrate that, of the five indicators, only Exports and Imports of Goods and Services (% GDP) are highly correlated to Trade (% GDP), while the remaining indicators demonstrate very low correlations.

theoretical propositions about different aspects of globalization, using a wide assortment of indicators and scores, and we produce what appear to be inconsistent claims about the ways in which trade and investment practices do or do not shape repression. The problem is that we are not adequately theorizing our links between the scores, indicators, and globalization concepts we think we are measuring, and we are not even aware that we are avoiding the issue. We use different indicators to make contradictory substantive claims about the same concepts, but the scores we use to quantify our indicators are often measuring different empirical facts. The end result has been damaging to the cumulative research program. It can also change.

Right or Robust? An Empirical Analysis

Is there a *robust* relationship between our commonly used trade and investment indicators and human rights practices? I explore the question in the following section. My aim is to strengthen the current debate over globalization and human rights by providing information that can help us to form even better theories and stronger empirical analyses. To that end, I combine data and insights from a large collection of excellent research on the subject and create a comprehensive dataset on globalization and human rights that has been drawn from 177 states during the period 1976 to 2000. I examine a wide range of plausible model specifications employed by different scholars to model globalization, using a variant of Leamer's (1985) Extreme Bounds Analysis (EBA). I follow Levine & Renelt's (1992) empirical application of this test to a broad collection of growth studies, incorporating Sala-I-Martin's (1997) modification of this application. Applying the EBA methodology to the study of globalization and human

rights, I investigate the sensitivity of five trade and five FDI coefficient estimates to alterations in the conditioning set of information and then determine how *robust* the empirical links are between globalization indicators used to draw inference about personal integrity rights practices. (I also examine robustness across samples in a web appendix.)

Extreme Bounds Analysis (EBA)

The central insight of the EBA method is that a coefficient of theoretical interest is robust to the extent that this coefficient exhibits a small range of variation to the presence or absence of other explanatory variables. Consider a scholarly literature where researchers estimate regressions in the following context: certain focus variables are almost always included in the regression equations used in different studies, while other *doubt* variables may or may not appear in the model of a given study (Leamer, 1985). The focus variables capture the common theoretical wisdoms shared by scholars about a cause and an effect, while the doubt variables represent the disagreement in the scholarly community over potential causes or influences. In conventional methods of reporting, we present the single best-fitting result, that is, the result that best corresponds with our prior theoretical beliefs. We often arrive at this result through the exploration of several different models, including or excluding doubt variables from the regression until the model satisfies our theoretical standards. Our resulting model almost always looks different from those of our colleagues.

Now consider the entire field of regressions in which the focus variables that we generally agree upon, and any single combination of the doubt variables that we may variously use, are included in a model. If our inferences concerning the variables of interest are basically consistent across all combinations of the doubt variables (those variables that vary widely across different studies), then they are *robust*: insensitive to small alterations in the conditioning set of information (Learner & Leonard, 1983; Learner, 1985).

The EBA method confronts the consequences of our model-specification uncertainty by calculating the maximum and minimum coefficient bounds on an array of different specifications. The explanatory variables are divided into three subsets. F is a matrix of *focus* variables that always appear in the equation; these variables represent the theoretical control variables that scholars across many different studies agree must be controlled. I is the variable of theoretical interest that we would like to assess; in our case, one of the five trade or five investment indicators. D is a matrix of *doubt* variables taken from a pool of additional plausible control variables; these are variables of theoretical controversy that some scholars include in their studies, while other scholars exclude them. By convention, the D matrix is limited to three variables per model, drawn for each model from the larger pool of variables (Levine & Renelt, 1992; Folster & Henrekson, 2001; Hoover & Perez, 2001; Fowles & Merva, 2002).¹¹ λ is the dependent variable - in our case, the level of government repression of human rights, the β s are matrices of parameter estimates, *i* subscript represents the country of observation, t subscript represents the time of observation, α is the intercept term, and μ is the stochastic term.

$$\lambda_{it} = \alpha + \beta_{(F)} F_{it} + \beta_{(I)} I_{it} + \beta_{(D)} D_{it} + \mu \quad (1)$$

For each iteration of analysis, I select a single trade or FDI variable of interest (I)

and run a 'base' model that includes only the focus variables (F) and a single interest variable (I). I examine ten interest variables: five measures of FDI and five measures of trade commonly used in human rights research that were introduced in the previous section and described in Table IV. The focus (F) variables are selected on the basis of some general degree of theoretical consensus among scholars that a certain process or institution is influencing government repression in important ways. Among scholars of human rights, almost all agree that economic resources and domestic political institutions that regulate governing elites' authority are centrally and causally related to government repression (Strouse & Claude, 1976; Chomsky & Herman, 1979; Mitchell & McCormick, 1988; Henderson, 1991; Davenport, 1996). Governments regulated by democratic institutions and possessing adequate resources are more likely to protect human rights than autocratic or impoverished states.

The overwhelming majority of studies reviewed here include a measure of state democracy and state gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, and I include both in the F matrix on that basis. To measure democracy, I employ data collected by the Polity IV project,12 measuring five primary institutional features of state competition. They include the competitiveness and openness of the process for executive selection, the level of institutional constraints placed on the executive's decisionmaking authority, and the degree to which binding rules govern political participation. The variable takes on values ranging from 10 (most democratic) to -10 (most autocratic). To measure GDP per capita, I employ data collected by the World Bank, logged. In order to control for autocorrelation common to pooled cross-sectional time-series data, I adopt the standard

¹¹ The specifications of the focus, interest, and doubt variables are customarily made by assumption through theoretical specification. EBA is designed to analyze sensitivity of the variables of interest given the selection of focus and doubt variables, rather than to test the selection of the conditioning information.

¹² For a detailed explanation of the data, see http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity/.

treatment found in the human rights literature and include a lagged dependent variable in the base model.¹³

There are several different dependent variables (λ) that scholars use to test claims about the effects of globalization on human rights. It is beyond the scope of a single article to perform EBA analyses on all such indicators; thus, I have elected to focus on one of the most commonly used and most important measures of government repression: personal integrity rights - specifically, the rights to be free from murder, torture, or other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; prolonged detention without charges; disappearance or clandestine detention; and other flagrant violations of the right to life, liberty, and the security of the person (Keith, 1999; Cingranelli & Richards, 1999b; Poe & Tate, 1994). I draw upon two existing sources: Poe & Tate offer data on 153 governments' reported levels of repression from 1976 to 1993;14 and Mark Gibney offers repression data from 1980 to 2002 across a different sample of 141 states and territories.¹⁵ In both cases, data were collected from content analysis of annual human rights reports issued by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the US State Department and by Amnesty International. I combine information from the two datasets to create repression indicators on a total sample of 177 states from 1976 to 2000. The observed value of λ_{it} is ordinal, ranging across five levels of behavior where:

 countries are under secure rule of law, political imprisonment and torture are rare, and political murders are extremely rare;

- (2) imprisonment for nonviolent political activities is limited, torture and beating are exceptional, and political murder is rare;
- (3) political imprisonment is extensive, execution and political murders may be common, and detention (with or without trial) for political views is acceptable;
- (4) the practices of level 3 are expanded to a larger segment of the population, murders and disappearances are common, but terror affects primarily those who interest themselves in political practice or ideas;
- (5) levels of terror are population-wide, and decisionmakers do not limit the means by which they pursue private or ideological goals.

Finally, I select the doubt (D) variables based on a survey of past empirical research and theory. Of the many studies considered here, several provide theoretical reasons to include measures of civil war, population, urban density, debt, British colonial history, foreign aid, and literacy. These variables are consistent with different theories of human rights abuse, and, although they are commonly employed, they do not appear consistently across all model specifications; they are *doubt* variables. All variables included in this study are described in Table IV.

I estimate all models using ordered probit estimation appropriate to the structure of the dependent variable. I cluster analysis on country (specifying that observations are independent across countries, but not necessarily within them, over time), and report the Huber standard errors appropriate to the panel data. I begin by estimating a base model – computing the effects of the focus variables (F) on repression of personal integrity rights (λ) – which will serve as the

¹³ As a check, I adjust for first-order autoregression (AR1) and report any inconsistent results.

¹⁴ For details, see Poe & Tate (1994). Data are available from http://www.psci.unt.edu/ihrsc/poetate.htm.

¹⁵ Data are available from www.unca.edu/politicalscience/ faculty-staff/gibney.html.

Tab	le IV.	Variał	ole De	escriptions
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Variable	Observed	Mean	Min.	Max.
Dependent variable (λ)				
Government repression	3,887	2.355	1	5
Interest variables (I)				
Exports of Goods and Services (% GDP)	5,226	32.872	0.440	215.380
Imports of Goods and Services (% GDP)	5,223	38.506	0.970	223.650
Exports as a Capacity to Import (constant LCU)	4,664	0.006	0.000	1.330
Trade (% Goods GDP)	2,541	129.245	11.340	1,266.80
Trade (% GDP)	5,221	71.315	1.410	439.030
FDI net inflows (current US\$)	4,756	0.010	-0.027	2.760
Gross FDI (% GDP)	2,906	1.748	0.000	41.310
FDI net (current US\$)	3,431	-0.001	-1.220	1.250
FDI net inflows (% GDP)	3,952	1.723	-25.78	145.130
FDI net inflows (% GCF)	3,655	6.851	-147.65	147.200
Focus variables (F)				
Polity VI	5,091	-0.388	-10.000	10.000
GDP per capita	5,435	0.548	0.000	5.268
Lagged Repression $(t-1)$	3,745	2.348	1.000	5.000
Doubt variables (D)				
Civil War	7,331	0.060	0.000	1
Urban Density	6,290	117.325	0.630	5,186.07
Population	7,566	2.260	0.002	125
British Colony	8,694	0.245	0.000	1
Debt	3,458	8.520	0.000	245
Aid per capita	5,341	56.235	-75.310	2,338
Adult Literacy	3,654	35.202	0.200	94.3

core specification from which to assess the consequences of small alterations in the conditioning set of information, D.

I then estimate the effects on repression (λ) of the focus variables (F), a single variable of interest selected from the trade and FDI indicators (I), and all possible combinations of a set of three doubt variables (D), drawn from the larger pool of seven key doubt variables identified above.¹⁶ To identify the extreme bounds of the coefficients of interest, I locate the highest and lowest

values for the coefficients on the variables of interest (I). Specifically, the *extreme upper bound* is defined as the maximum value of the coefficient of interest plus two standard deviations. The *extreme lower bound* is defined as the minimum value of the coefficient minus two standard deviations.

Extreme upper bound = $\beta_{(I)}$ + $2\sigma_{(I)}$

Extreme lower bound = $\beta_{(I)} - 2\sigma_{(I)}$

I then infer the sensitivity of the partial correlation between the outcome λ (government repression) and the variable of interest (*I*) from the extreme bounds on the coefficient of the variable of interest, $\beta_{(I)}$. According to Levine & Renelt (1992), when

¹⁶ For example, $\lambda_{ii} = \alpha + \beta_{(F)}F_{ii} + \beta_{(I)}I_{ii} + \beta_{(D)}D_{ii}$, where D_{ii} is a rotating matrix of 3 variables drawn from the larger pool. A first equation might include doubt variables 1, 2, and 3; a second 1, 2, and 4; and so forth.

 $\beta_{(1)}$ maintains statistical significance (at the .05 level) and a consistent sign at the extreme bounds, the partial correlation between λ and I is *robust*, indicating that we can proffer reasonable empirical confidence in that partial correlation across model specifications. If $\beta_{(1)}$ does not maintain statistical significance and a consistent sign at the extremes, the partial correlation is *fragile*, indicating that we should be less confident in the relationship between the indicator and human rights across model specifications, because small changes in the conditioning set of information lead to different inferences in different studies.

Sala-I-Martin (1997) suggests that this method amounts to the rejection of robustness when the coefficient of a single regression changes sign or becomes insignificant, making Levine & Renelt's standard for robustness too hard a test. In response to Levine & Renelt's application of EBA, Sala-I-Martin extends the method to examine the entire distribution of coefficient estimates rather than relying upon an absolute criterion of robustness. This critique is important. Following Sala-I-Martin's modification of Levine & Renelt's empirical application of EBA, I report an additional measure of strength of confidence in each variable. Rather than reject a variable as *fragile* if one $\beta_{(I)}$ is either insignificant or changes sign, this measure distinguishes the overall level of confidence we can have that a variable is *robust* or *fragile* by assessing the entire distribution of the estimators of $\beta_{(I)}$.

I consequently report two results. I identify a variable as *robust* when $\beta_{(1)}$ maintains a consistent sign at the extreme bounds; and I identify a variable as *strong* when $\beta_{(1)}$ maintains a statistical significance (at the .05 level) in greater than 50% of all possible combinations of the doubt (D) variables. When the partial correlation between λ and I is *robust* and *strong*, we can proffer a high degree of empirical confidence in that partial

correlation. When the partial correlation between λ and I is either *fragile* or *weak*, we should proffer a high degree of skepticism in that partial correlation.

Trade

Table V summarizes the results of the sensitivity analyses for five trade indicators. When we consider the distribution of coefficient estimates on all possible combinations of the doubt variables, Trade (% Goods GDP) exhibits a significant and negative effect on government repression over 80% of the time, as do imports and exports of goods and services. This suggests a very strong partial correlation in support of the proponents' generalized claims that more trade, by and large, has a positive influence on governments' protection of human rights. By contrast, the Exports as a Capacity to Import indicator exhibits a significant and positive correlation with government repression over 75% of the time, indicating that states with export-led economies are more likely to repress the rights of their citizens. Results for Trade (% GDP), perhaps the most commonly utilized measure, are robust yet *weak*, showing a negative relationship between trade and repression in 30% of the cases (at the 0.05 level of significance).

These numbers are revealing in several ways. First, they suggest that small changes in the conditioning set of information lead, more often than not, to the same basic empirical inference across models. For example, high-trading states that are not export-driven are less likely than low-trading states to repress human rights over time, while export-driven economies are, in fact, more likely to repress. Depending on the structure of the domestic economy, trade can pull in both directions.

The numbers also suggest that we exercise some caution when making generalizable claims, because this finding leaves substantial room for variation. Our most commonly

								Confidence distribution (%)			
				SE Z			Strength	Positive bound		Negative bound	
Interest (I) variable	Model	Beta	SE		Doubt variablesª	Robust		P > t 0.01	P > t 0.05	P > t 0.01	P > t 0.05
Exports of Goods and Services (% GDP)	High Base Low	-0.003 -0.003 -0.010	0.002 0.002 0.002	-1.460 -1.340 -4.110	A, L, B P, D, L	Robust	Strong	0.00	0.00	83.33	0.00
Imports of Goods and Services (% GDP)	High Base Low	-0.004 -0.004 -0.009	0.002 0.002 0.002	-1.790 -1.910 -5.140	A, L, B P, D, L	Robust	Strong	0.00	0.00	83.33	0.92
Exports as a Capacity to Import	High Base Low	1.010 1.114 0.118	0.200 0.249 0.139	5.050 4.470 0.850	P, U, B C, D, A	Robust	Strong	75.00	0.83	0.00	0.00
Trade (% Goods GDP)	High Base Low	-0.002 -0.002 -0.006	0.001 0.001 0.001	-1.590 -1.580 -4.920	A, L, B P, D, L	Robust	Strong	0.00	0.00	83.33	0.00
Trade (% GDP)	High Base Low	-0.006 -0.002 -0.006	0.004 0.001 0.004	-1.620 -1.060 -1.660	C, D, A D, A, L	Robust	Weak	0.00	0.00	0.00	29.17

Table V.	Sensitivity	Results for the Effects of	of Trade Indicators on	Government Rep	pression of Huma	n Rights, 1976–2000
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^a The doubt variables include: Civil War (C), Population (P), Density (U), Debt (D), Foreign Aid (A), British Colonialism (B), and Literacy (L). By design, the Base model includes no doubt variables. employed Trade indicator (% GDP) was statistically significant only 30% of the time. Yet, even this weak finding provides us with several pieces of crucial information that we can use to our theoretical advantage. It tells us that many of our trade indicators are actually tapping into different theoretical concepts and thus demonstrate various relationships to human rights practices. Trade may not be a monolithic concept influencing human rights after all. Rather, several trade dimensions may exist simultaneously and influence human rights through various causal mechanisms that we have not yet identified. These different dimensions may also exert competing or contradictory pressures on different kinds of states. Rather than ignore them, we need to recognize and theorize those differences.

The substantive implication is that, depending on which indicator we choose, evidence can and does point in both directions. These inconsistencies demonstrate the great importance of strongly linking our trade indicators to systematized concepts that substantively capture our theories and, more specifically, the causal mechanisms implied by those theories linking trade flows to human rights practices.

Foreign Direct Investment

Table VI summarizes the results of the sensitivity analyses for our five FDI indicators. The findings show that Gross FDI and FDI Net Inflows (% GDP) are *strongly robust*, suggesting that we can proffer a high degree of empirical confidence in the partial correlations between these indicators and government repression across studies. FDI Net Inflows (% GCF), by contrast, exhibit a significant and negative effect on government repression under 20% of the time. Although this latter indicator is *robust*, it is very *weak* and frequently does not provide evidence to support the finding that investment decreases repression. By contrast, FDI Net Inflows (\$) and FDI Net (\$) are both *strong* yet *fragile*, suggesting that we should approach any generalizable findings based upon these correlations with extreme caution, as they are tremendously variable across our model specifications.¹⁷

These findings provide us with a great deal of information about what we know, as well as what we do not yet know, about investment and human rights. They show that choice of investment indicators makes a substantive difference. Dissimilar indicators produce dissimilar empirical results concerning the impact of FDI on government repression, and these empirical results are the basis of our causal inferences. In fact, depending on the conditioning set of information, any single regression analyzed in isolation can produce results that are not representative of the distribution of model sensitivity, thus providing faulty support for substantive inference about the effect of investment on government repression of human rights a good percentage of the time. This problem is exacerbated by vaguely specified theoretical mechanisms that link investment concepts and actors to human rights practices. By and large, we have very little evidence to show that FDI might increase government repression, although we should be very cautious about drawing generalized conclusions across studies, because several FDI indicators are too weak to provide evidence.

As in the case of trade, this finding provides us with new and constructive information about how to reckon with the effects of investment. Some of our indicators measure different theoretical concepts of investment that appear to be variously related to human rights practices. This

¹⁷ In an effort to investigate missing data resulting from the elimination of over 50 states and territories present in the world system, I ran an additional check on both trade and FDI analyses by including a variable coding percentage of missing values for each measure reported in the table. The percentage of missing data is not a significant factor influencing the results.

					Ca	stribution (ution (%)				
Interest (I) variable				Ζ				Positive bound		Negative bound	
	Model 1	Beta	SE		Doubt variablesª	Robust	Strength	P > t 0.01	P > t 0.05	P > t 0.01	P > t 0.05
FDI Net Inflows (current \$)	High Base Low	1.612 0.959 -3.178	0.534 0.563 1.286	3.020 1.700 -2.470	C, L, B P, D, B	Fragile	Strong	16.67	25.00	20.83	62.50
Gross FDI (% GDP)	High Base Low	-0.042 -0.025 -0.056	0.021 0.015 0.023	-2.000 -1.690 -2.430	C, D, A P, D, L	Robust	Strong	0.00	0.00	33.33	100.00
FDI Net (current \$)	High Base Low	1.278 -0.550 -3.205	0.380 0.861 1.434	3.370 -0.640 -2.230	C, A, L P, D, L	Fragile	Strong	12.50	0.17	16.67	0.50
FDI Net Inflows (% GDP)	High Base Low	-0.007 -0.009 -0.012	0.005 0.004 0.006	-1.510 -2.100 -2.070	C, D, A P, D, L	Robust	Strong	0.00	0.00	0.00	70.83
FDI Net Inflows (% GCF)	High Base Low	-0.002 -0.003 -0.005	0.002 0.002 0.002	-0.850 -1.290 -2.150	C, D, A P, D, L	Robust	Weak	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.67

Table VI. Sensitivity Results for the Effects of Investment Indicators on Government Repression of Human Rights, 1976–2000

^a The doubt variables include: Civil War (C), Population (P), Density (U), Debt (D), Foreign Aid (A), British Colonialism (B), and Literacy (L). By design, the Base model includes no doubt variables.

should lead us to identify exactly why Gross FDI (% GDP), for example, has a different human rights effect than FDI Net (\$). Do they tap into different causal mechanisms or actors? Which suits our specific theory of influence? We should also be immediately suspicious of any generalized claim that net inflows of investment are good or bad for human rights. FDI Net Inflows (current \$), for example, are significant and positive 25% of the time and significant and negative nearly 63% of the time. This suggests that the indicator may have variable effects on different kinds of states (characterized by different doubt variables) and that we need to theorize this variation explicitly. Moreover, this suggests that there may be good reason to anticipate *fragile* relationships between the indicators that we presently ignore completely and that could lead to novel and important discoveries about how trade and investment influence repression.

Conclusion

The conclusions of this article are far from pessimistic about the emerging literature on globalization and human rights. Scholars participating in this important debate frequently offer worthy and important theoretical arguments about why global economic flows are linked to human rights practices. Indeed, the studies reviewed here signal a major step forward in our thinking about the causes of government-perpetrated violence against citizens and help to push forward our thinking about potential solutions.

First, and perhaps most importantly, it is possible to make sense out of the large body of conflicting research findings that today define the state of research on globalization and human rights. There is no evidence to support the view that higher trade flows (as a percentage of GDP) systematically increase repression, and this finding holds whether these flows are disaggregated into exports and imports of goods and services or aggregated into total trade. This finding is *strongly robust* across our sometimes very different model specifications and should help us conclude with confidence that trade flows may encourage a wide variety of different governments to support better human rights practices.

There is, by contrast, strong evidence to show that export-led economies with a high degree of export flows may be more likely to repress human rights. This finding has critical implications for how we think about the links between trade and human rights, because it suggests that the structure of domestic economies may really influence how governing elites respond to global economic pressures. Whether trade is a positive or negative force for human rights may strongly depend upon state capacity in ways we have yet to acknowledge. Consequently, how we measure trade matters a great deal, and we may expect certain indicators to be weak or fragile for that very reason. We should begin to theorize these conditions.

Evidence about the relationship between FDI and human rights provides strong, although not entirely robust, reasons to believe that foreign direct investment is very likely correlated with better human rights practices across all states over time, whether it is measured in gross, net inflows or net. Yet, we learn another lesson from the results on FDI. The robustness analyses performed here suggest that our ability to know whether and how foreign direct investment relates to human rights is, at present, greatly limited by the inconsistency of our findings for several of the indicators. For that reason, it is substantively difficult to draw reliable conclusions from existing studies about the role of FDI. The problem is threefold: we presently operationalize a wide array of indicators to measure investment; we theorize investment effects very broadly; and we make far-reaching substantive claims. Our data choices make a real difference, because various measures of what may seem like the same concept sometimes capture different processes or different actors. We now know that specific FDI measures can also lead to different empirical results.

My argument is positive rather than normative: it is not a bad thing that some of our trade and investment indicators are *fragile* or *weak*. Rather, this finding can offer us new and crucial information about how to grapple with the question of influence. A *weak* or *fragile* indicator provides us with several clues about our theoretical arguments, and we can use these clues to construct better research.

When a finding is *weak* or *fragile*, we should disassemble the theoretical components of our claim and clarify how our various substantive concepts are related to our indicators and our specific choice of scores across studies. In the process, we may find that many of our studies actually speak to different aspects of similar phenomena rather than contradict one another; our globalization problem may sometimes be rhetorical and interpretive rather than substantive.

Weak or fragile findings might lead us to another conclusion, and one that is largely overlooked in our current canon. We should reconsider whether it is theoretically reasonable to expect robustness across the various sample populations being considered. An indicator is weak and fragile when it does not perform consistently across different combinations of the doubt variables. In some cases, we may have every reason to expect that global economic processes have different human rights effects on various kinds of states and actors. If so, we should theorize the conditions under which we expect to see fragility and, in turn, draw meaningful substantive conclusions from the finding that an indicator does not perform consistently across model specifications.

In short, we have strong political reasons

to believe that our theories linking globalization and human rights are extremely important. We also know that our empirical gauges sometimes measure different aspects of trade and investment and implicate different actors and processes. These measures can and sometimes do provide contradictory evidence, and they often suggest that different theoretical mechanisms are at work mechanisms that we have yet to appreciate. What we can learn from this is that future research on the relationship between globalization and human rights is crucial, but the accumulation of knowledge is likely to be *robust* only through public and explicit clarification of how trade and investment work to shape repression. We need more explicit identification of the causal mechanisms and actors through which they work and rationalization of which economic indicators are best able to capture those mechanisms.

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