

## Research Note

# HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, UMBRELLA CONCEPTS, AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

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ONLY in the last decade or two have political scientists begun systematic, cross-national research on government violations of human rights. The primary research focus has been the rights associated with the “integrity of the person.” At least two factors account for this relatively recent attention: the interest of President Jimmy Carter and Congress in setting human rights as a goal of American foreign policy and the publication of country-by-country accounts of human rights performance by the U.S. Department of State, Amnesty International, and Freedom House. As the issue rose on the political agenda and as data sources for large cross-national analyses became available, scholarly interest quickly developed.<sup>1</sup> In this sense, human rights research has been driven as much by policy priorities and data availability as by theory.

Recent empirical work reflects both the strengths and the weaknesses of this sort of approach to social science analysis. Consider the research by Steven Poe and C. Neal Tate, who conducted the most ambitious recent empirical analysis of human rights violations. As they rightly note, “The data set we employ clearly represents the most comprehensive yet analyzed.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, by building on the pioneering work of Carleton and Stohl, they collected annual data on human rights vio-

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, David Carleton and Michael Stohl, “The Foreign Policy of Human Rights: Rhetoric and Reality from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 7 (May 1985); and Neil J. Mitchell and James M. McCormick, “Economic and Political Explanations of Human Rights Violations,” *World Politics* 40 (July 1988).

<sup>2</sup> Poe and Tate, “Repression of Human Rights to Personal Integrity in the 1980s: A Global Analysis,” *American Political Science Review* 88 (December 1994), 853.

*World Politics* 49 (July 1997), 510–25

lations for 153 countries over an eight-year period, and, using a cross-sectional, time-series design, they examined the relative impact of several independent variables, drawn largely from the extant literature. In turn, they reached a number of conclusions, for example, about the role of democracy in reducing human rights violations and about the role of international and domestic threats in exacerbating them.<sup>3</sup> Their work represents an advance in terms of quantity of data analyzed, methodological sophistication, and the number of independent variables included in the analysis.

For all that this is an advance, however, we do have reservations about this and related analyses in terms of their tendency to treat a multidimensional concept unidimensionally.<sup>4</sup> In line with the developments in other areas of the discipline, we believe that theoretical and policy progress in the human rights area depends on recognizing the separate dimensions of the concept “repression of human rights to personal integrity.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, recognizing the dimensions of concepts is a well-established principle in the comparative methodology literature, and the theoretical and empirical maturation of research in other areas of the discipline has depended on this recognition. The argument of this research note is a theoretical and methodological one that hinges on the problems of information loss and missed analytical opportunities arising from the failure to disaggregate the concept appropriately. In addition, in the second part of this research note, we illustrate these problems with some cross-national human rights data from the 1980s. We demonstrate both conceptually and empirically that unidimensional treatment of human rights confounds two important components of the concept—the use of imprisonment and the use of torture and killing—and generally produces a measure closer to the latter than to the former. Future research needs to recognize the detrimental normative and analytical consequences of a unidimensional treatment of the human rights concept and should analyze its important components separately.

### HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS: A MULTIDIMENSIONAL CONCEPT

More than two decades ago Ivan Vallier stressed the importance of “extricating the implied dimensions” of “master concepts,” such as “mod-

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 866–67.

<sup>4</sup> See Carleton and Stohl (fn. 1); David L. Cingranelli and Thomas E. Pasquarello, “Human Rights Practices and the Distribution of Foreign Aid to Latin American Countries,” *American Journal of Political Science* 29 (August 1985); and Conway Henderson, “Conditions Affecting the Use of Political Repression,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 35 (March 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Poe and Tate (fn. 2), 853.

ernization.” Vallier described the procedure as “disaggregating a concept or the exhausting of its analytical components.”<sup>6</sup> In a similar vein Robert Jackman revisited this same issue about a decade ago and put the concern more directly:

[V]ariables are supposed to be unidimensional. While this may seem rudimentary, the literature on comparative politics is replete with umbrella concepts that carry too much baggage to be reducible to a *single* unidimensional variable. Examples of such broad concepts include system support, political culture, modernization, democratic stability, mobilization, political institutionalization, and post-industrialism. Instead of identifying a potentially unidimensional variable, each of these concepts identifies a broad constellation of factors, which may or may not be empirically inter-related . . . it is important to focus on their separate components if we are to make meaningful empirical statements about these problem areas.<sup>7</sup>

In our judgment, repression of human rights should be added to the list of master, or umbrella, concepts.

Before discussing the dimensions of this concept, let us focus more generally on the possible empirical and theoretical dividends of separating out the components of a concept. Research on human rights views the individual as a *subject* of political control in her or his relationship to government. Consider, however, the individual in the role of *citizen* and *political participant*. A critical step in the analysis of individual participation in the political process is the recognition that “political participation” as a concept is not unidimensional. To be sure, in early research, participation “was considered to be a unidimensional phenomenon. The main distinction across political actors was the extent of their ‘activeness’—essentially how much effort they put into political participation.”<sup>8</sup> Yet Verba, Nie, and Kim also argued that the conceptualization must reflect, not only level of activity, but also type of activity. That is, political participation includes voting, campaign activity, citizen-initiated contacting, and cooperative activity. They argued that “the failure to distinguish among types of participation is . . . in large part responsible for many of the ambiguities in the findings about participation and its role in democracies—what causes it to increase or decrease, how it affects the allocation of social values, and so forth.”<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Vallier, “Empirical Comparisons of Social Structure: Leads and Lags,” in Vallier, ed., *Comparative Methods in Sociology* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 223.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Jackman, “Cross-National Statistical Research and the Study of Comparative Politics,” *American Journal of Political Science* 29 (February 1985), 169, emphasis in original.

<sup>8</sup> Sidney Verba, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-on Kim, *Participation and Political Equality: A Seven-National Comparison* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 52.

<sup>9</sup> Sidney Verba, Norman H. Nie, and Jae-on Kim, *The Modes of Democratic Participation: A Cross-National Comparison* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1971), 8.

Theoretically, the disaggregation of the concept led to the progressive realization that the different actions fit different structures of motivations, opportunities, and resources. In the case of participation, voting is a lower cost, "broad" benefit activity. In contrast, contacting is a higher cost, "narrow" benefit activity.<sup>10</sup>

The development of the political participation concept, then, is highly suggestive for the concept of human rights violations, where individuals are the subjects of political control. However, the dominant approach in empirical work on human rights violations is to treat the concept unidimensionally. Advocating this approach, Poe and Tate say: "We believe that it can be persuasively argued that the two dimensions postulated by Mitchell and McCormick stem, in reality, from the one dimension that Stohl and his colleagues tap—that both torture/killing and imprisonment are rooted in a regime's willingness to repress its citizens when they are considered a threat."<sup>11</sup> One can have no great quarrel with the statement about the "roots" of repression—any more than Verba, Nie, and Kim would quarrel with a statement that participation is "rooted" in the citizen's willingness to influence his or her government. Nevertheless, that view does not provide a persuasive rationale for aggregating data on imprisonment and torture/killing (or for that matter, data on voting, campaign activity, citizen contacting, and cooperative activity) in the same conceptual container.

Instead, we contend that human rights violations differ in type not just amount, such that they cannot be clearly represented on a single scale. That is, there is a substantive difference between the use of imprisonment on the one hand and the use of torture and killing on the other.<sup>12</sup> Substantively, these are quite different types of government activity, with differing consequences for the victims, differing use of governmental resources and capabilities, and differing costs for the government, both domestically and internationally. Normatively, too, there is a considerable distance between a regime that relies on imprisonment as a method of political control and one that relies on torture and killing.

This normative distinction provides a basis for arguments about the universal as opposed to culturally relative nature of human rights and even about the interpretation of international law concerning human rights. Bilahari Kausikan, an official in Singapore's Ministry of Foreign

<sup>10</sup> See Jan E. Leighley, "Field Essay: Attitudes, Opportunities and Incentives: A Field Essay on Political Participation," *Political Research Quarterly* 48 (March 1995), 182. See also John Aldrich, "Rational Choice and Turnout," *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (February 1993).

<sup>11</sup> Poe and Tate (fn. 2), 855.

<sup>12</sup> In fact, the logic of the argument would extend to disaggregating torture from killing as a third dimension.

Affairs, argues that the “myth of the universality of all human rights is harmful if it masks the real gap that exists between Asian and Western perceptions of human rights,”<sup>13</sup> and he asserts that

future Western approaches on human rights will have to be formulated with greater nuance and precision. It makes a great deal of difference if the West insists on humane standards of behavior by vigorously protesting genocide, murder, torture, or slavery. Here there is a clear consensus on a core international law that does not admit derogation on any grounds. The West has a legitimate right and moral duty to promote those core human rights. . . . But if the West objects to, say, capital punishment, detention without trial, or curbs on press freedoms, it should recognize that it does so in a context where the international law is less definitive and more open to interpretation.<sup>14</sup>

Whether or not one agrees with this more restrictive definition of human rights, the important point here is that such discussion reinforces the argument that imprisonment and torture are qualitatively different activities. Regimes choose different mixes of these methods of political control, a variation that is masked by a one-dimensional scale. For governments or their agents considering violating human rights, the choice of one activity in addition to or over another will depend, in part, on their calculation of the costs and benefits. The costs refer not just to the deployment of their own resources but to the possibility of externally imposed costs, such as international sanctions. These costs will likely vary with the normative differences in the activities. The use of torture and killing carries the likelihood of higher external costs, and governments implicitly recognize this when they opt, for example, for “disappearing” victims rather than killing them. Furthermore, there may be different “benefits” attached to the use of torture or imprisonment. The agents themselves, police or soldiers, may derive more specific benefits—from sadistic pleasure to direct monetary gain—from the choice of one type of repression over another. In this policy area, as with any other, implementation is a critical stage, such that the narrower aims or purposes of those charged with implementation may deserve separate theoretical consideration. We must recognize the possibility of what might be called “entrepreneurial repression,” where police forces act independently to use their coercive powers corruptly in their personal interest.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Kausikan, “Asia’s Different Standard,” *Foreign Policy* 92 (Fall 1993), 32.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 39–40.

<sup>15</sup> One analysis of the use of torture by police in India argues that because they have low status and low pay “as with many other Indian officials they feel driven to supplement their incomes. The detainees themselves, or their families, are threatened with torture if they do not bribe the police—a threat that can work only if those who do not pay, or cannot pay, are in fact tortured.” See David J. Rothman and Aryeh Neier, “India’s Awful Prisons,” *New York Review of Books* (May 16, 1991), 54.

If regimes see these practices as less or more acceptable, as argued by Kausikan, and frame their choices accordingly, then efforts to explain (and change) these practices will have to take these differences into account. Further, insofar as political scientists aim to generate knowledge that is useful to “governments, international organizations, and sub national actors . . . interested in improving respect for personal integrity around the world,”<sup>16</sup> they will have to be sensitive to the different types of activity, the different meanings attached to them in different contexts, and the nature of the political challenge.

### COMPOSITE INDICES AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Beyond the normative and methodological arguments for separating umbrella concepts, like human rights violations, into their important components, there are conceptual and empirical arguments that center on measurement clarity, ease of interpretation, and loss of information. Because we had collected and coded data for 1984 and 1987 from one of the same sources (*Amnesty International Reports*) that Poe and Tate used in their larger analysis and because they have generously provided their data, we can undertake several different kinds of tests to compare the two approaches for this same data source and across the same countries at the same time.

Let us first describe each coding scheme briefly. For their human rights measure, Poe and Tate used a composite index composed of a five-point ordinal scale, based on Freedom House’s coding rules.<sup>17</sup> A score of 1 was a country “under a secure rule of law, people are not imprisoned . . . , and torture is rare or exceptional.” By contrast, a score of 5 is a country where “the terrors of [level 4] have been expanded to the whole population.” For our human rights measure, we developed two indices for each country, one based on the degree of arbitrary imprisonment and the other based upon the systematic use of killings and torture of prisoners.<sup>18</sup> Each index ranged from 0, where a country had no violations on that dimension, to 4, where a country had frequent violations.<sup>19</sup>

Although the Poe and Tate index was developed with a good level of intercoder reliability, there remain more fundamental problems in interpreting its meaning. We can begin by examining the definitional

<sup>16</sup> Poe and Tate (fn. 2), 867.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 867–68.

<sup>18</sup> See Mitchell and McCormick (fn. 1), 483–85.

<sup>19</sup> Quantitative levels were employed to make this gradation. See Mitchell and McCormick (fn. 1), 485 n. 17.

construction of the index. Table 1 separates out the two major dimensions that are mixed in Poe and Tate's composite measure and identifies the key words in the coding rules that describe the level of activity on each dimension. Note first that for the imprisonment dimension the level of activity has to increase with each rank, whereas for the torture and killing dimension the level of activity is about the same for countries scoring a 1 or a 2, and quite possibly for countries scoring a 3 with the use of the conditional phrase ("may be common"). Only with countries ranked 4 or 5 could one be sure that torture and killing is greater than "rare." But at these ranks the distinctions concerning imprisonment ("more than extensive," and the "whole population") become more blurred. Further, as defined, the approach does not exhaust all the logical possibilities.<sup>20</sup> Although the missing possibilities are quite rare, there is no ranking for instances where governments or their security forces have a "take no prisoners" strategy: that is, cases where imprisonment rates are relatively low (less than extensive) but where torture and killing are widespread.<sup>21</sup>

In effect, the composite scale is more likely to capture the incidence of imprisonment better than the incidence of torture and killing at the lowest values of the scale; and it is more likely to capture the incidence of torture and killing better than the incidence of imprisonment at the highest values. As the two dimensions are not equally represented at each value on the composite scale, there is no reason to expect that they would be equally represented in any overall sense. By mixing the dimensions in this way, we lose considerable information about the global condition of human rights and can conceivably misconstrue the conditions within individual countries. Analytically, we lose the possibility of examining the choice strategies, the logic behind them, and the degree of complementarity between these separate methods of political control.

To this point the discussion has been definitional and conceptual, rather than empirical. Yet it is nevertheless interesting to examine how the logic of the composite scale manifests itself empirically, and how the separate dimensions are confounded in the composite scale. A simple correlational analysis of the prisoner and torture scales for 1984 and 1987 and the composite index illustrates that while, as one would ex-

<sup>20</sup> For a discussion of the logical criteria of classification, see Arthur L. Kalleberg, "The Logic of Comparison: A Methodological Note on the Comparative Study of Political Systems," *World Politics* 19 (October 1966).

<sup>21</sup> It is not simply genocidal regimes such as that in Nazi Germany or in Cambodia under Pol Pot that might aim for this combination of human rights violations. Take, for example, Amnesty International's description of human rights violations in the Philippines in its 1988 report. Descriptions focus almost entirely on extensive killings and disappearances, not on imprisonment of political dissidents.

TABLE 1  
THE POSSIBLE DIMENSIONS OF POE AND TATE'S UNIDIMENSIONAL  
HUMAN RIGHTS MEASURE

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Political Imprisonment</i>	<i>Torture/Killing</i>
1	none	exceptional/extremely rare
2	limited	exceptional/rare
3	extensive	may be common
4	more than extensive	common
5	whole population	whole population

pect, all these scales are related, they are by no means identical. For the prison and torture scales for 1984 and 1987, the correlations were .60 and .64, respectively. The composite index is somewhat more closely associated with torture (.70 and .73 in 1984 and 1987, respectively) than imprisonment (.56 and .63).<sup>22</sup> What these summary statistics cannot help us with, however, is the question of the locus of the particular mixes of imprisonment and torture on the composite scale, and the modeling implications of mixing the measurements of imprisonment and torture decisions for a set of independent variables. It is to these issues that we now turn.

First, is it the case, as our analysis of the composite scale's coding scheme suggests, that for these data imprisonment is "captured" better at the lower end of the composite scale than is torture? A simple cross-tabular display is the most direct way to address this question. Figure 1 shows the percentage of cases (countries) that fall on the diagonal when the composite scale (1–5) is cross-tabulated with the prisoner and torture scales (0–4 for each). If, as expected, different specific values of the composite scale reflect different mixes of imprisonment and torture, then we expect variation between the imprisonment and torture scales in the proportion of cases that fall on the diagonal for the values of the composite scale. We should see greater agreement between the composite scale and the imprisonment scale (as opposed to the torture scale) at the lower values. Conversely, we should see greater agreement between the composite scale and the torture scale (as opposed to the imprisonment scale) at the higher values.

These expectations are generally borne out in Figure 1. The top portion of the figure shows quite vividly that the imprisonment scale is most closely associated with the composite scale at the two lowest val-

<sup>22</sup> There were 115 cases to analyze for 1984 and 125 cases for 1987. For each year, there were a small number of cases that Poe and Tate did not include because they lacked data on one or more of the independent variables they were analyzing.

Mitchell and McCormick Prisoner Index<sup>a</sup>

		0	1	2	3	4
Poe and Tate Composite Index	1	75.0%* 81.8%				
	2		62.5% 81.3%			
	3			26.3% 21.7%		
	4				13.5% 12.0%	
	5					12.5% 20.0%
N	1984	8	8	38	37	24
	1987	11	16	23	50	25

Mitchell and McCormick Torture Index<sup>a</sup>

		0	1	2	3	4
Poe and Tate Composite Index	1	21.4%* 28.6%				
	2		76.9% 73.7%			
	3			51.6% 58.1%		
	4				37.0% 19.2%	
	5					43.8% 28.6%
N	1984	28	13	31	27	16
	1987	28	19	31	26	21

FIGURE 1  
CROSS-TABULATION OF POE AND TATE'S COMPOSITE  
HUMAN RIGHTS INDEX WITH MITCHELL AND MCCORMICK'S  
PRISONER INDEX AND TORTURE INDEX  
(1984, 1987)

<sup>a</sup>The first entry is the percentage of correspondence between the rankings of countries on the two scales for the 1984 data, while the second entry is the degree of correspondence for the 1987 data.

ues. These results are largely the opposite for the torture scale. The torture scale rather than the imprisonment scale is more closely associated with the composite index at the higher values. The relatively high correspondence between the torture scale category 1 and the composite scale category 2 is understandable. This represents a clear point of definitional correspondence between the two scales. Recall that the torture dimension on the first two, and possibly even three, categories of the composite scale is defined as "exceptional/rare." Only category 1 on the torture scale is defined in this way—"rarely" referred to countries in which one to ten cases of political prisoners or incidents of torture or killing were reported by Amnesty International.<sup>23</sup>

A second way to assess the impact of the separate dimensions on the composite scale is to regress this scale on both the prisoner and torture scales. This approach is comparable to Kenneth Bollen's use of regression analysis to disentangle the components of measures of democracy.<sup>24</sup> Table 2 shows those results for 1984 and 1987.<sup>25</sup> The torture and killing scale is the more powerful influence. Indeed, as the beta weights indicate in both equations, the torture scale is about twice as large as the prisoner scale, indicating the importance of that measure in predicting the ranking of a country on the composite scale. Both equations have reasonably large amounts of explained variances (50 percent or more in both cases), and the results are consistent across the two different years, providing additional confidence in our analyses.<sup>26</sup>

Yet a third way to assess the relative merits of the composite scales and the separate prisoner and torture scales would be to regress each on a common set of independent variables. If these dependent variables are capturing the same underlying process, we should expect to find substantial overlap in the number of significant variables with each of the different dependent variables. If we find differences between the composite scale and the prisoner and torture scales and, in turn, between

<sup>23</sup> Mitchell and McCormick (fn. 1), 485 n. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth A. Bollen, "Issues in the Comparative Measurement of Democracy," *American Sociological Review* 45 (June 1980).

<sup>25</sup> We also ran a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z test of normality for the dependent variable, the composite scale, for 1984 and 1987. In both instances, the scale was not normally distributed and thus some caution must accompany the interpretation of our regression results. Because we are working with a population of data and because we are employing a series of other tests, we believe that it is useful to report the regression results to obtain an overall portrait of the relationship among the three human rights scales.

<sup>26</sup> As a further check on our analysis, we employed a discriminant analysis using the prisoner scale and the torture scale in separate runs as predictors of the placement of countries on the composite scale. In general, the results imply that both the prisoner and torture scales are more predictive of values at the high and low ends of the composite scale. While these results are not wholly consistent with our other analyses, they do suggest some distinctive emphases within the composite scale.

TABLE 2  
REGRESSION ANALYSIS OF POE AND TATE'S COMPOSITE INDEX ON  
MITCHELL AND MCCORMICK'S PRISONER AND TORTURE INDICES<sup>a</sup>  
(1984 AND 1987)

	1984		1987	
	<i>Reg. Coeff.</i>	<i>Beta Weight</i>	<i>Reg. Coeff.</i>	<i>Beta Weight</i>
Prisoner index	.20*	.23	.22*	.25
	(.07)		(.07)	
Torture index	.40*	.56	.42*	.56
	(.06)		(.06)	
Adjusted R-squared	.51		.56	
N	115		125	

\*Significant at the .01 level

<sup>a</sup>The standard errors of the regression coefficients are in parenthesis.

the prisoner and torture scales, such results add further credence to disaggregating this umbrella concept because different factors seemingly account for its various components.

Fortunately, we can undertake this comparison, since the two years for which the prisoner and torture scales are available overlap with two of the eight years in the Poe and Tate analyses. Because the Poe and Tate dependent and independent variables have been made available to researchers,<sup>27</sup> we can calculate comparable regression models for 1984 and 1987 with the only difference being in the choice of the dependent variable. (Unfortunately, we cannot carry out the pooled, cross-sectional, time-series analyses originally reported by Poe and Tate because the Mitchell and McCormick measure does not exist for the other six years.)

In order to do these analyses, however, we still had to make several important research decisions to maximize comparability. First, as noted earlier, we selected only those countries that were coded in both the Poe and Tate and the Mitchell and McCormick datasets. This gave us 115 countries for 1984 and 125 countries for 1987. Second, we used only the Amnesty International measure from the Poe and Tate data, since Amnesty International was also the data source for the one developed by Mitchell and McCormick. Third, for the democracy measure in the regression equations we relied upon the Vanhanen index, rather than the Freedom House measure (Poe and Tate report results for both), since Poe and Tate acknowledge that some overlap exists between the

<sup>27</sup> The data are available through the following website: <http://www.psci.unt.edu/ihrsc/>. For ease of analysis, we truncated some of Poe and Tate's independent variables to two decimal places. Such a design decision should not affect the interpretations offered here.

Freedom House measure and the dependent variable.<sup>28</sup> By making these analytic decisions, we enhance the degree of comparison between the two approaches and thus focus attention principally on the role of the differing dependent variables.

On a cautionary note, this third test is based not only on the characteristics of the different human rights scales but also on the quality of the set of independent variables already in the model. Thus, if the independent variables are weak or poorly specified or measured, we cannot have much confidence in conclusions drawn from the differences or similarities across the various measures of the dependent variable.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, we should add that these results are not definitive on the role of these variables in accounting for human rights violations; rather, they are illustrative of the differing results one obtains for some previously used predictor variables when employing alternative measures of human rights violations. Finally, an additional complicating factor, of course, is that we are employing ordinary least squares regression for this test with dependent variables that are ordinal, not interval.

The coefficients for these regression analyses with the differing dependent variables are reported in Table 3. In their pooled analysis, Poe and Tate find four of their ten variables significantly related to their composite measure: civil war, international war, democracy, and population size. There is little overlap in the variables that are significant with the composite scale and the separate prison and torture indices. Across the six equations, only the civil war variable appears important in affecting violations of human rights, regardless of the dependent variable chosen (excepting the prison index, 1987). Besides civil war, the only other variable that produces any consistency across the measures is the logged population variable, a measure simply connoting that the size of a country affects the magnitude of human rights violations. (Because Amnesty International's reporting procedure does not take into account the population size of countries, analysts must control

<sup>28</sup> On this point, see Poe and Tate (fn. 2), 856–57.

<sup>29</sup> Poe and Tate operationalize their influential civil war variable in terms of number of deaths, the government "involved as a direct participant in the war," and the assumption that "there must be effective resistance" on the nongovernment side. This may provide them a distinction between genocide and civil war, as they assert, but it does not permit the confident assertion that civil war as a "concept is kept distinct from our dependent variable"; Poe and Tate (fn. 2), 859. There is likely considerable circularity between the measurement of civil war and the measure of government "repression of human rights to personal integrity," particularly at the high end (values 4 and 5 of the dependent variable). Thus, the interpretation of the relationship between the civil war variable and the dependent variable should be treated carefully.

Finally, we should note that while Table 4 reports a significant relationship for leftist government control and the unidimensional measure of human rights violations for 1984, the coefficient has the wrong sign, as it had in Poe and Tate's pooled analysis; Poe and Tate (fn. 2), 861.

TABLE 3  
REGRESSION COEFFICIENTS<sup>a</sup> FOR POE AND TATE'S INDEPENDENT VARIABLES<sup>b</sup>  
WITH THREE HUMAN RIGHTS MEASURES  
(1984, 1987)

	<i>Poe and Tate</i>		<i>Mitchell and McCormick</i>			
	<i>Composite Scale</i>		<i>Prison Index</i>		<i>Torture Index</i>	
	<i>1984</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>1987</i>
Economic						
PCGINC	.004 (.004)	.0008 (.003)	.012** (.005)	.002 (.003)	.004 (.006)	.0005 (.004)
PCGNP	-.064** (.021)	-.038* (.018)	-.019 (.025)	-.034 (.023)	-.032 (.034)	-.053* (.027)
Political						
VANHDEMO	-.014 (.009)	-.011 (.009)	-.022* (.010)	-.022 (.012)	-.028* (.014)	-.021 (.014)
LEFT	-.416* (.206)	.127 (.216)	.329 (.238)	.277 (.276)	-.289 (.326)	-.116 (.316)
MILCTR2	.110 (.182)	-.072 (.177)	-.100 (.210)	.255 (.226)	-.009 (.288)	-.011 (.259)
Cultural						
BRITINFL	-.394* (.164)	-.339* (.169)	-.388* (.190)	-.090 (.215)	-.017 (.260)	-.249 (.247)
War						
CWAR	.987** (.246)	1.143** (.235)	.903** (.285)	.089 (.300)	1.037** (.390)	.814* (.344)
IWAR	.977** (.275)	.801** (.288)	.987** (.318)	.733* (.368)	.564 (.435)	.372 (.422)
Population						
LPOP	.090 (.048)	.137** (.047)	.108* (.055)	.231** (.060)	.203** (.075)	.316** (.069)
POPINC	.049 (.057)	.053 (.056)	.132* (.066)	.017 (.071)	.174 (.090)	-.027 (.082)
Adjusted						
R-squared	.39	.38	.36	.25	.22	.27
N	115	125	115	125	115	125

\*Significant at the .05 level

\*\*Significant at the .01 level

SOURCES: Data and variable definitions were provided by Steven Poe and C. Neal Tate at their International Human Rights Center site on the world wide web (<http://www.psci.unt.edu/ihrsc/>).

<sup>a</sup>The entries are unstandardized regression coefficients for the six different regression equations using different operationalizations of the dependent variable. The standard errors of the regression coefficients are in parenthesis.

<sup>b</sup>The variables are defined as follows:

PCGINC=yearly percentage increase in GNP per capita

PCGNP=corrected GNP per capita (in 1000s)

VANHDEMO=Vanhanen Democratization Score

LEFT=Leftist Regime Dummy Variable

TABLE 3 (*cont.*)

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MILCTR2=Dichotomous Military Control Variable
BRITINFL=British Government Influence Dummy Variable
CWAR=Civil War Dummy Variable
IWAR=International War Dummy Variable
LPOP=Logged Population Variable
POPINC= Yearly Percentage Increase in Population, 1980–87

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for this factor.) For ease of presentation, we have grouped the other variables into the political, economic, and cultural categories and find that only scattered commonalities occur across these different measures. Thus, for example, per capita income and British influence are significant for the composite scale but the former is only significant for the torture index in 1987 and the latter for the prison index in 1984. Although democracy is an important factor in their eight-year analysis, it has little impact on the Poe and Tate measure for the years in this analysis. It is, however, important for the prison and torture analyses for 1984.

The results seem to suggest a substantial difference between the predictor variables and the Poe and Tate dependent measure and Mitchell and McCormick measures (taken as a group), but are the predictors sufficiently different for the separate indices to warrant the use of the prisoner/torture distinction? Here the results provide some support for our contention that imprisonment and killing are distinct strategies that produce some scattered contrasts in significance and direction of the relationships. Focusing on the war variables, civil war is generally significant for the imprisonment and torture scales, but some differences between the imprisonment and torture and killing scales emerge for international war. For three of the independent variables (LEFT, MILCTR2, and POPINC), the direction of the relationship changes for the differing dependent measures. For the other variables, there are differences in the size of the coefficients across the different measures of the dependent variables, and some prove statistically significant.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> We computed t-tests for the differences between the unstandardized coefficients (assuming independence) for each model with the other two (that is, the composite model with the prison model, the composite model with the torture model, and the prison model with the torture model) for each year. For the 1984 data, three differences were significant: the coefficients for the LEFT variable for the composite and prison measures were significantly different from one another at the .05 level, the coefficients for the LPOP variable with the composite and torture measures were significantly different at the .10 level, and the coefficients for the LEFT variable with the prison and torture models were significantly different at the .10 level. For the 1987 data, three were significant as well: the coefficients for the CWAR variable for the composite and prison models (.01), the coefficients for the LPOP variable for the composite and torture models (.01), and the coefficients for the LEFT variable for the prison and torture models (.10).

Finally, we should note that the comparison of the performance of the dependent variables is only as strong as the theoretical justification and operationalization of the independent variables.<sup>31</sup> But even this last and most contingent empirical analysis provides some support for the direct comparisons of the dependent variables, suggesting that the content of human rights violations and the different approaches to measuring this content have important implications for social science modeling as well as for victims.

### CONCLUSIONS

Human rights violations is an important but complicated concept, and we recognize that we are dealing with only a portion of it in this analysis. In international law, for example, human rights extends to economic and social rights, while also including the "integrity of the person," the focus of this research. Further, there is no universal agreement regarding the integrity of the person—as witnessed by the East-West debate alluded to earlier and the continuing philosophical and normative controversy over human rights generally. To be sure, social scientists have contributed to the explication of the concept and developed a variety of quantitative indicators designed to measure it cross-nationally. While all such indicators can only approximate reality, we have argued on normative, conceptual, and analytical grounds that further progress lies in separating the human rights concept into its important components. The normative problem is the failure to discriminate morally between alternative strategies of repression (the use of impris-

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Following Carmines and Zeller, we also computed a series of bivariate correlations for the independent variables with each of the dependent measures as another way to test the differences among the various models. See Edward G. Carmines and Richard A. Zeller, *Reliability and Validity Assessment* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1979), 17–27, 66–70, esp. 68. To evaluate the differences for each of these bivariate relationships, we compared the unstandardized coefficients (assuming independence) from the three bivariate regression models for each variable. Comparable results obtained, with the exceptions that the VANHDEMO variable in 1984 was now significant at the .10 level for the composite model and the prison model comparison and for the composite model and torture model comparison, and that the LPOP variable comparison was now not significant in 1984. For 1987 CWAR is now significant for the composite model and prison model at .05 level (instead of .01), and CWAR is now significant for the prison and torture model comparison at the .10 level. LPOP for the composite model and torture model comparison is now significant at the .10 level (instead of .01) in 1987.

<sup>31</sup> See Carmines and Zeller (fn. 30), 26. Also, as Poe and Tate (fn. 2) point out, "The development of theories to explain . . . such crimes . . . would seem to be a vital undertaking, [yet] social science scholars have only begun to use the newly developed information toward this end" (p. 853). Unfortunately, assessing the construct validity of a concept "is, by necessity theory-laden. . . . In a very real sense, whenever one assesses the construct validity of the measure of interest, one is also evaluating simultaneously the construct validity of measures of the other theoretical concepts"; Carmines and Zeller (fn. 30), 23–25.

onment versus the use of torture and killing). The conceptual problem is the failure to appreciate fully the value of disaggregation, an established principle of social science methodology and a design decision critical to the development of social science methodology.

The various empirical analyses presented here support the methodological and theoretical arguments for disaggregation. In practice, the unidimensional scale, while designed to represent both the major dimensions of human rights violations, does so in a way that is difficult to interpret. Both imprisonment and torture are methods of political control that are important in themselves, and research efforts ought to be geared to maximizing information gains about both of these activities. Using separate indices seems a more appropriate means for moving in that direction.

The work of social scientists in a related area also makes a compelling and persuasive case for disaggregation. Those interested in generating useful knowledge on individual crimes, rather than state crimes, do not employ a one-dimensional crime scale that combines nonviolent and violent crimes. They disaggregate shoplifting from rape and seek explanations for these substantively different types of criminal activity. To draw out the parallel, one would think that disaggregating state crimes would be a rudimentary and a relatively uncontroversial research design decision as well. Indeed, only when we have done the job of “exhausting [human rights violations] of [their] analytical components”<sup>32</sup> can we be confident of making the most of our analytic opportunities.

Finally, and importantly, as analysts have increasingly moved toward understanding human rights violations as a policy choice—that governments have alternatives in how much and what type of human rights to violate—then disaggregating the types of violations into their key components has become even more important. In this sense, the prospects for theoretical breakthrough seem greater through disaggregation than through reliance on a composite scale that masks important underlying components of the human rights concept.

<sup>32</sup> Vallier (fn. 6), 223.