

WHEN MONEY TALKS, WHO LISTENS? DEMOCRACY AID SHOCKS
AND HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS
IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, 1990-2013

by

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ABSTRACT

As democracy aid becomes more prevalent in the developing world, a thorough understanding of it and its effects becomes necessary. A series of recent studies determine that shocks in democracy aid, sudden decreases in democracy aid, increase the likelihood of armed conflict within the shocked country, as well as, increase human rights violations within the shocked country. However, can democracy aid shocks in one country affect human rights in its neighboring countries? This paper analyzes how democracy aid shocks, by the U.S. to the developing world since the end of the Cold War, affect neighboring countries. I argue that democracy aid shocks in one country cause increased human rights violations in its neighboring countries. I use a mixed methods research approach, first using a large-N study of U.S. democracy aid to the developing world from 1990-2013 to determine if a correlation between democracy aid shocks and human rights repression in contiguous nations occurs when controlling for other relevant factors likely to affect human rights violations. I also include a process-tracing case study of Uzbekistan from 1996-1997 to uncover potential causal mechanisms related to the diffusion of contiguous democracy aid shocks. To finish, I consider what this correlation signifies for U.S. democracy aid practices.

When Money Talks, Who Listens? Democracy Aid Shocks and Human Rights Violations in Neighboring Countries, 1990-2013

Foreign aid, especially democracy aid, continues to influence how countries act, the way countries view themselves, and how countries view other countries. For 2021, the Trump Administration requested \$41 billion be budgeted in foreign aid in order to “reduce the reach of conflict; prevent the spread of pandemic disease; and counteract the drivers of violence, instability, transnational crime, and other security threats,” among others (USAID). While the figure represents a request as opposed to an official budget, it does demonstrate the prominence of foreign aid in international policy, even if it is a decreased number since the previous year. Foreign aid both affects recipients and serves donor interests in a variety of ways. However, when donors decide to allocate or reallocate aid, dramatic reductions in assistance to recipient countries can occur. Through past studies of foreign aid, we have seen that violent armed conflicts are more likely to occur when a country experiences a shock in foreign aid (Neilsen et al., 2011). Additionally, human rights violations increase in a country where democracy aid is removed (Hernandez and Scott, 2019). Knowing this, can we explain the behavior of countries neighboring a nation experiencing an aid shock? That is, how do democracy aid shocks affect human rights violations in countries adjacent to the shocked country?

Through previous examination of the effects one country's actions have on another, we know that 'political neighborhoods' exist and diffusions of ideas and outcomes from one neighboring country to the next occur. Human rights, and, in particular, a country's view on human rights, are included in the scope of this potential diffusion. Therefore, since human rights violations are known to increase when a democracy aid shock occurs, I argue it is more than possible for these human rights violations to diffuse to countries neighboring the shocked nation.

Furthermore, many countries with public statements against human rights violations have justified military intervention in places that experience such violations “to protect vulnerable populations” (Falk, 2004). However, if countries care enough to respond to human rights violations with war, should they not also care enough to try to predict where and when human rights violations will occur and see if they can remedy the problem before war is needed?

In this paper, I analyze how U.S. democracy aid shocks to the developing world affect neighboring countries. I argue that democracy aid shocks to a former recipient country cause increased human rights violations in its neighboring nations. I study U.S. democracy aid to the developing world from 1990-2013 to determine if a correlation between democracy aid shocks and human rights repression in contiguous nations occurs when controlling for other relevant factors likely to affect human rights violations. I also conduct a process tracing case study of Uzbekistan during the 1990s to further study the causal processes linking neighboring democracy shocks to human rights performance in contiguous states. To finish, I consider what this correlation signifies for U.S. democracy aid practices.

Human Rights

Human rights are not a new idea, but they have grown into an increasingly important element of world politics since World War II, and for U.S. foreign policy since the 1970s. However, what exactly are human rights? In 1948, the United Nations General Assembly constructed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to outline human rights every country should observe. The document lists numerous human rights including every person is born free and equal, is guaranteed life, liberty, and security, has freedom of thought and peaceful association, and more, regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national origin, or status (“Universal Declaration of Human Rights”). While some critics of

universal human rights claim they are a Western ideal pushed onto non-Western civilizations, they are, in fact, a product of modernization, which can be replicated anywhere, not just in the West (Franck, 2001). As the world has become more connected, human rights are tied in with this connection (Stammers, 2009).

As we examine human rights, we must also review human rights violations. As the name suggests, human rights violations are acts that go against or are opposite of the human rights outlined by the United Nations. Article 30 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein." Furthermore, a human rights violation can be boiled down to the failure of a country to address the basic needs of its entire population (Falk, 2004).

There are multiple reasons, both internal and external, why states choose to commit human rights violations against their citizens. Physical environments help determine the conditions of a country, often helping to explain famine, drought, floods, plagues, and so on (Monshipouri, 1992). These conditions, in turn, lead to coercive, authoritarian governments (Monshipouri, 1992) fraught with corruption, conflict, and poverty, breeding human rights violations (Global Citizenship Commission). Repression, unexpectedly, is inversely correlated to improved living conditions, meaning that as a regime is more repressive, a nation's standard of living decreases. (Monshipouri, 1992). Autocracies have learned to stunt social progress in order to stay in power (Franck, 2004). To do this, they violate human rights and justify their actions as acceptable in the pre-modernized world they have created (Franck, 2004). Scholars often emphasize the necessity for improved domestic and living conditions in a country for human rights dialogue and interest to occur (Chen, 2005; Monshipouri, 1992).

In addition to physical factors, structural and historical factors - social stratification, class rigidity, inequality of power and wealth, fragmentation, system of government, military force available to the elite, colonial history, political instability, population size, domestic conflict, economic crises, and forced modernization - lead to a country's willingness to implement human rights violations (e.g., Monshipouri, 1992; Landman and Larizza, 2009). Furthermore, a country's view of themselves and their view of human rights affects their behavior regarding violations (Chen, 2005). All of these factors lead to the marginalization of oppositional political groups, the poor, refugees, disabled people, and other vulnerable peoples. These groups are most affected by human rights violations since they are unable to demand justice due to their marginalization and day-to-day concern with merely surviving (Global Citizenship Commission; Monshipouri, 1992; Vogelgesang, 1979).

War, border disputes, military coups in neighboring countries, international pressure, international human rights norms, superior-inferior relationships between countries, adoption of resolutions, arms imports, and foreign aid are all external factors which further affect a country's human rights practices (Monshipouri, 1992; Chen, 2005; Flowers, 2009; Blanton, 1999). Overall, countries will weigh the costs of committing human rights violations over the benefits of doing so to decide their stance on the issue (Vogelgesang, 1979).

Foreign Aid and Democracy Aid

Foreign aid is the transfer of aid from one or multiple governments for economic, social, or political development (Nielsen et al., 2011). It is an integral part of international relations and policymaking since many foreign aid donors use it to forge relationships, gain alliances, achieve personal policy goals, and push their own political models (Bindra, 2018). Loans are not

generally considered a part of foreign aid since they are a short-term transfer that is ultimately repaid (Bindra, 2018).

Foreign aid acts as a form of diplomacy. Therefore, issuance or removal of such aid makes statements to the international community about the donor country's policy or the recipient country's actions (Vogelgesang, 1979). Aid selectivism plays a significant part in the conditionality of aid packages, that is, donor countries avoid removing aid from allies or from countries that vote with the donor in the United Nations (Nielsen, 2013). Additionally, Nielsen finds that donors severely sanction aid when countries neighbor a donor ally but are not an ally themselves, when a country votes against the donor country in the United Nations, or when the recipient country commits human rights violations that threaten donor allies (2013).

Furthermore, donors will decide when and whom to give aid based on the reliability of the government or group receiving the aid, the risk of aid capture, and how the state deals with goods and services (Dietrich, 2013; Dietrich, 2016).

Since the 1970s, donor countries have claimed to take human rights violations into account when determining foreign aid disbursements (Vogelgesang, 1979; Schoultz, 1981). Scholarship on foreign aid asserts if a country receiving aid demonstrates human rights violations, then the donor country might withhold or withdraw this aid in order to dissociate themselves from these countries (Cingranelli and Pasquarello, 1985; Meernik, Krueger, and Poe, 1998; Vogelgesang, 1979; Carnegie and Marinov, 2017). However, evidence has been found that recipient countries who exhibit human rights violations but are allies to their donors often do not face aid sanctions (Nielsen, 2013).

There is also competing research on whether sanctioning countries based on their human rights records actually improves human rights situations in sanctioned countries. Some literature

claims that since donor countries began using human rights violations as a determining factor for aid, human rights in those countries have seemed to improve. (Vogelgesang, 1979; Carnegie and Marinov, 2017). However, other literature determines sanctions due to human rights will only increase economic issues in developing countries (Demirel-Pegg and Moskowitz, 2009), which, in turn, increases the countries probability of committing human rights violations since wealthier countries have more consistent human rights conduct (Mitchell and McCormick, 1998; Schoultz, 1981). Furthermore, recipient countries who experience foreign aid withdrawal can make human rights a lower priority since they are no longer receiving aid, and therefore do not need to meet donor requirements regarding human rights.

Studies vary on the positive impact of general foreign aid on democracy in recipient countries. Some research indicates, on average, aid has little effect, positive or negative, on democracy in recipient countries (Askarov and Doucouligos, 2013; Scott and Steele, 2012; Knack, 2004), while other research determines the opposite. However, there is significant research dictating when a specific type of foreign aid - democracy aid - is allocated, democracy in the recipient country does improve (Scott and Steele, 2012; Askarov and Doucouligos, 2013; Heinrich and Loftis, 2017; Dietrich, 2013; Dietrick, 2016; Dietrich and Wright, 2015; Finkel et al., 2007; Kalyvitis and Vlachaki, 2010).

Democracy aid is when donor countries transfer money to recipient countries to fund democratic reform and build democratic political structure. However, donor countries are known to use democracy aid to “buy political reform” (Dietrich and Wright, 2015). Primary objectives in the giving of democracy aid include gaining gratitude or sympathy from recipient countries and strengthening the recipient country's economy or military to implement further policy reforms (Bindra, 2018). Democracy aid from the United States has spiked since the 1970s and

'80s, especially to combat the Global War on Terror (Hernandez and Scott, 2019). Although democracy aid benefits the donor country greatly, it has also been found to stabilize democracy and democratic practices in the recipient country, as stated above (Dietrich and Wright, 2015; Scott and Steele, 2012). Even though various factors including economic development, international norms and pressures, individual values, and free trade all impact democracy growth (Finkel et al., 2007), democracy aid has been found to improve government accountability, democratization practices, and governance (Askarov and Doucouliagos, 2013; Finkel et al., 2007; Heinrich and Loftis, 2017). Additionally, since democracy aid creates a more democratic environment, one which is more likely to uphold human rights (Demirel-Pegg and Moskowitz, 2009), we would expect that as democracy aid increases, human rights protections increase as well.

Most foreign aid and democracy aid literature focuses on its impact on the recipient country, including why it is given to some countries and not others, when do donors threaten to withhold aid, and how aid affects human rights. However, what happens when such aid suddenly ends? This withdrawal or the severe, sudden decrease in aid is better known as an aid shock (Nielsen et al., 2011) and can lead to acute, negative consequences. Following general aid shocks, the likelihood of conflict within the recipient country increases (Nielsen et al., 2011). Nielsen et al. (2011) indicate that aid shocks disrupt the economic power balance between parties within the country, and therefore potential conflict increases due to this disruption (2011). Democratizing states see a higher probability of conflict resulting from aid shocks (Savun and Tirone, 2011).

Democracy aid shocks, sudden decreases in democracy aid, appear to have similar effects, but on human rights and repression instead of civil war (Hernandez and Scott, 2019). Not

only do democracy aid shocks leave a country less incentivized to uphold human rights based on receiving aid (Hernandez and Scott, 2019), but they also signify to the recipient lesser attention to or care of human rights from the democratic donor (Hernandez and Scott, 2019). Additionally, democracy aid shocks leave citizens and civil society groups less able to demand human rights, since these groups are no longer funded and lose their external sponsorship (Hernandez and Scott, 2019). These factors all lead to an increase in repression and violence, in order for leadership to maintain power (Hernandez and Scott, 2019; Nielsen et al., 2011), as well as to higher levels of human rights violations, which are tangibly seen in the recipient country's deteriorating human rights practices the year following the democracy aid shocks (Hernandez and Scott, 2019).

Diffusion

Is there a connection between human rights violations in one country and violations in another country? To answer this, we must look to diffusion. Diffusion is defined as the process in which one entity's behavior or actions changes the probability other entities will change their behavior as well (Solingen, 2012) and suggests that states are interconnected rather than isolated in their decisions (Cardenas, 2014). Diffusion manifests as persuasion, teaching, signaling, group behavior, and status anxiety (Solingen, 2012). Schelling's "tipping model" easily explains diffusion by showing how small changes in one actor result in substantial changes elsewhere (Gleditsch and Ward, 2006). Not only do ideas spread (Cardenas, 2014), most governments are acutely aware of the policy adoptions of other state governments (Simmons and Elkins, 2004). While diffusion works globally, Tobler's Law ("everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related than distant things") suggests that diffusion in geographic clustering is especially powerful. This notion has been widely examined in various international relations

issue areas and is generally accepted as the neighborhood effect. This effect shows that state actions involve their interdependencies and spatial links within their 'neighborhood' or region (Gartzke, 2003), and therefore are geographically confined (Gleditsch, 2002).

In this context, domestic variables alone insufficiently explain human rights, therefore suggesting that other variables, such as diffusion, are at play when examining when and why human rights reform occurs (Solingen, 2012). Regional clustering is evident as the number of National Human Rights Institutions has increased (Cardenas, 2014), and states are more likely to reform their human rights when their neighbors have already done so (Solingen, 2012).

Additionally, states trying to decide how to move forward with a particular policy will look at the behavior of actors who share common values (Simmons and Elkins, 2004). This behavior then acts as models for both onlooking states and civilians who can compare this behavior to other governments (Guzman and Linos, 2014). A country's endorsement of certain rights that initially seemed unobtainable allows other countries to view them as achievable (Guzman and Linos, 2014).

Although diffusion is generally studied in regard to positive consequences, negative outcomes also diffuse (e.g., conflict) (Cardenas, 2014). While some assert that states are unlikely to commit human rights violations if they see other states oppress human rights (Guzman and Linos, 2014), most diffusion literature contradicts this theory. When a country creates policies against a specific human right or set of human rights, other countries are less likely to uphold those same human rights because they see them as unimportant (Guzman and Linos, 2014). Additionally, as a country observes little to no intervention against human rights violations in other countries, they are more likely to engage in their own human rights violations. This assumption comes from the observed trend of increased war in a country as they see little to no

war intervention in neighboring countries (Solingen, 2012). After all, aid shocks lead to reshaping alliances which are visible to other countries, and “individual states are sensitive not only to shocks they themselves experience, but also to shocks of their network neighbors” (Maoz and Joyce, 2016).

As discussed above, foreign aid and, especially, democracy aid can positively affect human rights practices within a recipient country. Democracy aid contributes to this outcome because it helps advance a more democratic environment in the recipient country, which is subsequently more conducive to better human rights practices (Scott, 2012). However, when a recipient country experiences a foreign aid shock, and in particular, a democracy aid shock, it also experiences a higher amount of human rights violations (Hernandez and Scott, 2019). Also, as a donor country withdraws democracy aid, it can signal to surrounding countries that human rights are no longer a priority; therefore, interventions against human rights violations are less likely. Furthermore, these shocks are not only felt in the country they are directed towards, but also in their neighbors, suggesting diffusion within 'neighborhoods' is at play. If a country feels the shocks of its neighbors because of diffusion, why would poorer human rights behavior resulting from those shocks not also diffuse from the shocked country to its neighbors? This logic thus leads to the following hypothesis:

Democracy aid shocks in a recipient country are likely to affect human rights practices in neighboring countries negatively.

Data and Methods

To test my hypothesis, I study U.S. democracy aid to developing countries from 1990-2013. Not only are developing countries most likely to be receiving democracy aid, but they are also already at high risk for increased levels of human rights violations. The 1990-2013 time

frame allows for situational factors related to the Cold War period to be excluded, and for more data on democracy aid specifically since democracy aid during this time is more ubiquitous.

My dependent variable is human rights, which I measure in two different ways. First, I use the Physical Integrity Index from Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay (2014). This index reports variables of torture, extrajudicial killings, political imprisonment, and disappearances within a country on a 0-8 scale, with lower scores indicating poorer human rights behavior.

Second, I use the Political Terror Scale (Gibney et al., 2013), which reports a country's torture, excessive use of force, political imprisonment, disappearances, and other forms of violations of security by the state on a 1-5 scale, with a 1 indicating the best human rights performance. It is important to note that extra-territorial violations and terrorism are not included within the scope of the data. For my research, I use an inverted version of the Political Terror Scale, to align with the Physical Integrity Index scale, meaning on the inverted PTS scale a 1 indicates the worst human rights performance.

My key independent variable is contiguous democracy aid shocks. The contiguous democracy aid shock data comes from AidData 3.1, following the calculation of shocks developed by Tierney et al. (2011) and then applied to democracy aid by Hernandez and Scott, (2019). From this starting point, I calculate contiguous democracy aid shocks using Correlates of War contiguity data, with a 0 indicating a country had no neighbors that experienced a democracy aid shock and a 1 indicating a country had at least one neighbor that experienced a democracy aid shock during the year examined.

I include four control variables. First, I control for GDP per capita, with the data coming from Penn World Tables and measured in millions of 2011 U.S. dollars (Feenstra et al., 2015). Second, I control for Major Episodes of Political Violence, which the Center for Systemic Peace

defines as “systematic and sustained use of lethal violence by organized groups that result in at least 500 directly-related deaths over the course of the episode” (Marshall, 2016). The variable is dichotomous, with a 0 indicating there was no major episode of political violence in a given country and a given year and a 1 indicating there was a major episode of political violence in a given country and given year. Third, I control for ethnolinguistic fractionalization, a measure of the ethnic diversity in a state that measures the probability that two randomly drawn individuals who are drawn from the same country are not from the same ethnic group (Drazanova, 2019). The variable is measured on a 0-1 scale, with 0 indicating the least amount of ethnolinguistic fractionalization within a given country and given year. Last, I control for regime type using an adjusted form of Polity IV data, which comes from the Center of Systemic Peace and measures the regime within a country in a given year (Marshall and Jaggers, 2012). This data measures regime type on a scale of -10 to +10, with a -10 indicating the most autocratic regime type and a +10 indicating the most democratic regime type. The adjusted form of the Polity IV data I use comes from corrections by Hernandez and Scott (2019) to replace missing values and normalize the scale from 0-20. Diagnostics show that collinearity between the control variables is not an issue.

First, I test my argument using two techniques appropriate to the study of panel data (e.g., Beck 2009): generalized least squares (GLS) models with random effects and GLS models accounting for the autoregressive process (AR1) in the dependent variables (human rights practices). I test models for both the PTS and the Physical Integrity Index. Finally, I lag the independent variables by one year and two years to ensure that the causes precede the effects. All results derived from Stata, version 13.

Next, I conduct a process-tracing case study, also known as “causal process observations” (Levy, 2008), to trace the links between the theorized causes and observed effects (George and Bennett, 2005). For this research I subscribe to George and Bennet’s definition of process-tracing, “in process-tracing, the researcher examines histories, archival documents, interview transcripts, and other sources to see whether the causal process a theory hypothesizes or implies in a case is in fact evident in the sequence and values of the intervening variables in that case” (2005). Not only do mixed methods research approaches record the comprehensive trends between variables through large-N studies, but the addition of qualitative case studies can help capture perceptions, motives, internal-decision making environments, and judgements otherwise not captured in the same large-N studies (George and Bennett, 2005; Thaler, 2017; Levy, 2008).

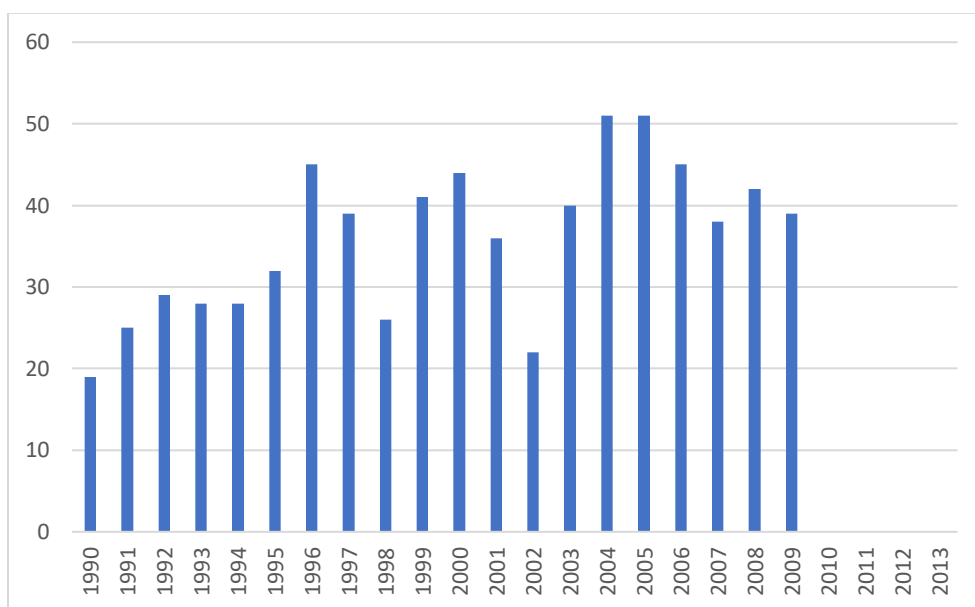
There are a variety of case selection types, ranging from typical, to extreme, to influential (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). Desiring to trace the mechanisms of human rights behavior diffusion after a contiguous democracy aid shock and then applying it as representative of the sample population as a whole, I decided to study a typical case. In a typical case, the study “focuses on a case that exemplifies a stable, cross-case relationship” that can then explain the casual mechanism more generally (Seawright and Gerring, 2008). For the case study, I have chosen Uzbekistan between 1996 and 1997. I choose Uzbekistan during these years because it exhibits a noticeable decrease in both human rights scales (Cingranelli et al., 2014; Gibney et al., 2013) the year after experiencing contiguous democracy aid shocks in 1996. Furthermore, during this timeframe, Uzbekistan itself did not undergo a democracy aid shock or have any indications of civil war or violence that would otherwise unintentionally manipulate the results. While some critics are skeptical of case study selection based on the dependent variable, there is substantial evidence in support (George and Bennet, 2005), and therefore I feel confident in the case’s

ability to reveal causal mechanisms. To conduct research on the case study, I look both at the quantitative data used in the large-N study, in addition to qualitative data including archival reports and diffusion literature on the case study's behavior.

Results – Large-N Study

To begin, I consider the descriptive context of the key variables in my argument. First, Figure 1 displays the total number of contiguous democracy aid shocks in a given year since 1990. As Figure 1 shows, contiguous democracy aid shocks generally increase over time, with the only real outlier occurring in 2002. Additionally, of the 4,311 observations, 846 observations recorded a 1, indicating that at least one neighbor experienced a democracy aid shock. Of those 846 observations, 619 recorded one neighbor experienced an aid shock, 161 recorded two neighbors experienced an aid shock, 50 recorded three neighbors experienced an aid shock, 14 recorded four neighbors experienced an aid shock, and 2 recorded five neighbors experienced an aid shock.

Figure 1: Number of Contiguous Democracy Aid Shocks Per Year Since 1990



Furthermore, Figures 2 and 3 help display human rights scores over time. Figure 2 shows Physical Integrity Index scores (Cingranelli et al., 2014) by year since 1990, where lower scores indicate worse human rights performance. Each year, more countries score 0 than do countries that score 8, with only the years 2000 and 2003 diverging from this pattern. This trend indicates that torture, extrajudicial killings, political imprisonment, and disappearances within a country are increasing. The mean Physical Integrity Index score within the data is 4.17, with a standard deviation of 2.20. The majority of scores, 52.83%, are placed within the 0 to 4 range. Figure 3 shows inverted Political Terror Scale scores (Gibney et al., 2013) by year since 1990, where lower scores indicate worse human rights performance. This figure displays an increase in human rights violations over time. The majority of the inverted PTS scores, 60.92%, are placed within the 1 to 3 range, with the mean PTS score being 3.16 with a standard deviation of 1.04. This indicates that human rights violations, particularly a country's torture, excessive use of force, political imprisonment, disappearances, and other forms of violations of security by the state, remain a major factor in the developing world.

Figure 2: Physical Integrity Index Scores By Year Since 1990

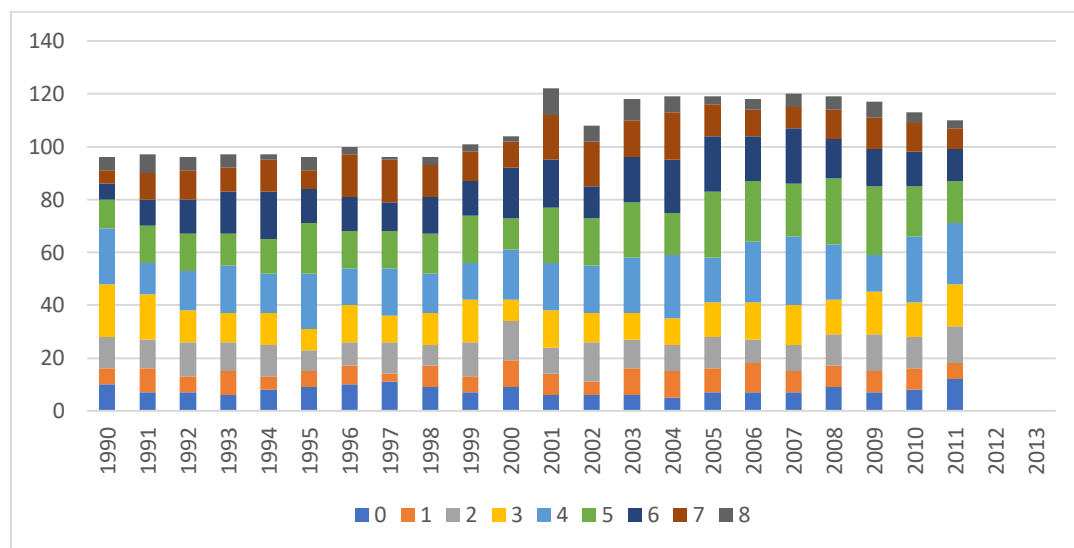
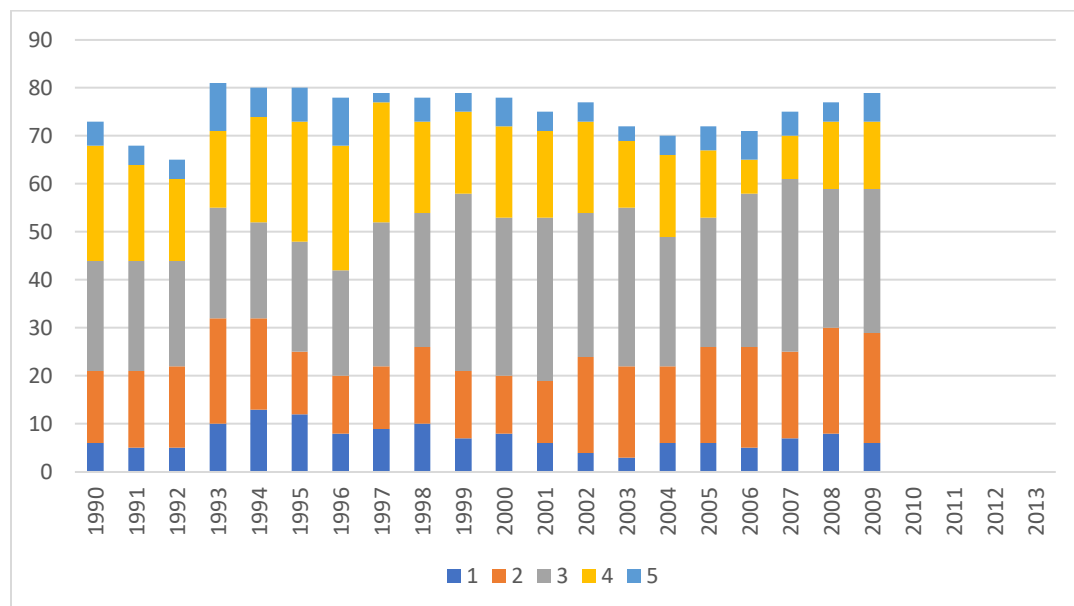


Figure 3: Inverted Political Terror Scale Scores By Year Since 1990



My independent variable is contiguous democracy aid shocks. As a simple, initial test of my hypothesis, Table 1 presents bivariate correlations between contiguous democracy aid shocks and human rights, measured by the Physical Integrity Index (Cingranelli et al., 2014) and the Political Terror Scale (Gibney et al., 2013). Both of these human rights scores, Physical Integrity Index and Political Terror Scale, are forwarded a year to ensure that the contiguous aid shock precedes change in human rights performance. As Table 1 shows, for both the Physical Integrity Index and the inverted Political Terror Scale, neighboring democracy aid shocks are related to lower human rights performance the following year. On both measures of human rights, there is a modest correlation between contiguous democracy aid shocks and worsening human rights performance in the expected direction (negative). Countries with neighbors that undergo democracy aid shocks experience declining human rights performance in the following year. This sample result lends initial support for my hypothesis.

Table 1: Correlations Between Neighboring Democracy Aid Shocks and Human Rights

Shock	Physical Integrity Index	Inverted Political Terror Scale
Neighboring Democracy Aid Shock	-0.1094	-0.1623

Tables 2 and 3 display the multivariate test results and the main tests of my argument, controlling for other factors related to human rights performance. Both tables show support for my hypothesis – contiguous democracy aid shocks contribute to lower human rights performance in countries neighboring the shocked country.

Table 2 displays the results of contiguous democracy aid shocks and human rights performance. The control variables ethnic fractionalization and violence in a country consistently show a negative relationship with human rights performance, while GDP per capita shows a consistently positive relationship with human rights performance. The fourth control variable, adjusted polity score (regime type), also shows a positive relationship; however, it is less consistent, reaching statistical significance in three of the four models. In general, poorer, less democratic, more ethnically diverse countries experiencing civil war engage in more human rights repression.

Table 2: Neighboring Democracy Aid Shocks and Human Rights Performance, 1 Year Lag, 1990-2013

IVs	Physical Integrity Index Models		Political Terror Scale Models	
	GLS	GLS + AR1	GLS	GLS + AR1
Constant	4.24 (.25)***	4.18 (.27)***	3.33 (.12)***	3.30 (.13)***
Neighboring Aid Shock	-.33 (.09)***	-.17 (.08)**	-.17 (.04)***	-.04 (.04)
Ethnic Fractionalization	-1.03 (.37)***	-1.07 (.38)***	-.53 (.17)***	-.58 (.18)***
GDP Per Capita	.00002 (7.45e-06)***	.00003 (8.92e-06)***	9.38e-06 (3.18e-06)***	.00002 (4.05e-06)***
Violence In A Country	-1.09 (.11)***	-.80 (.13)***	-.67 (.05)***	-.49 (.06)***
Adjusted Polity Score	.04 (.01)***	.03 (.01)***	.01 (.005)**	.003 (.006)
	N = 1380 Wald Chi2 = 163.76 R2 Overall = 0.26 R2 Between = 0.41	N = 1380 Wald Chi2 = 78.72 Rho = .47 R2 Overall = 0.26 R2 Between = 0.40	N = 1328 Wald Chi2 = 207.68 R2 Overall = 0.35 R2 Between = 0.53	N = 1328 Wald Chi2 = 99.76 Rho = .47 R2 Overall = 0.34 R2 Between = 0.50

*=.10 **=.05 ***=.01

After controlling for these variables, the results indicate consistent, statistically significant support for a relationship between contiguous democracy aid shocks and decreased human rights performance. In the GLS models, neighboring democracy aid shocks negatively impact both human rights scales (Physical Integrity Index and PTS). GLS results show that neighboring democracy aid shocks lead to about a 0.33 point or approximately 4% decrease in Physical Integrity Index scores the following year and about a 0.17 point or approximately 3% decrease in Political Terror Scale scores the following year. In the GLS models where AR1 is included, the substantive effects are somewhat smaller, but still provide partial support for my argument. The Physical Integrity Index model maintains a negative relationship between contiguous democracy aid shocks and human rights performance the following year. However,

the substantive decrease in scores in the year following a contiguous democracy aid shock is smaller. In the Political Terror Scale model, the relationship between neighboring democracy aid shocks and lower human rights performance the following year is not statistically significant, although the sign of the coefficient is in the expected direction. In all, these results indicate substantial support for my argument that contiguous democracy aid shocks are associated with deteriorating human rights performance the following year.

Table 3 displays the results of contiguous democracy aid shocks and human rights performance two years following the shock. The results of Table 3 continue to show support for my hypothesis; however, with less conviction than the results forwarded only one year. This is expected, however, given the possibility of more intervening variables in the two-year lag than the one-year. The control variables ethnic fractionalization and violence in a country consistently show a negative relationship with human rights performance, just as they did in Table 2. GDP per capita shows a consistently positive relationship with human rights performance. Adjusted polity score (regime type) again is less consistent, only reaching statistical significance one out of the four times. Additionally, the same Table 2 generality can be applied that poorer, less democratic, more ethnically diverse countries experiencing civil war participate in more human rights repression.

Table 3: Neighboring Democracy Aid Shocks and Human Rights Performance, 2 Year Lag, 1990-2013

IVs	Physical Integrity Index Models		Political Terror Scale Models	
	GLS	GLS + AR1	GLS	GLS + AR1
Constant	4.43 (.26)***	4.38 (.28)***	3.33 (.12)***	3.26 (.13)***
Neighboring Aid Shock	-.21 (.09)**	-.03 (.08)	-.22 (.05)***	-.13 (.04)***
Ethnic Fractionalization	-1.17 (.38)***	-1.23 (.39)***	-.55 (.17)***	-.55 (.19)***
GDP Per Capita	.00002 (8.71e-06)***	.00004 (.00001)***	.00001 (3.83e-06)***	.00002 (4.82e-06)***
Violence In A Country	-.95 (.11)***	-.66 (.13)***	-.58 (.06)***	-.40 (.06)***
Adjusted Polity Score	.03 (.01)***	.01 (.01)	.008 (.006)	.004 (.007)
	N = 1376 Wald Chi2 = 117.48 R2 Overall = 0.25 R2 Between = 0.41	N = 1376 Wald Chi2 = 56.24 Rho = .48 R2 Overall = 0.23 R2 Between = 0.38	N = 1219 Wald Chi2 = 160.30 R2 Overall = 0.35 R2 Between = 0.53	N = 1219 Wald Chi2 = 84.01 Rho = .48 R2 Overall = 0.33 R2 Between = 0.49

*=.10 **=.05 ***=.01

The results of Table 3 indicate moderate support for the theorized relationship between neighboring democracy aid shocks and worsening human rights performance two years after the shock. Similar to Table 2, both human rights scales in the GLS models show a decrease in scores. For the Physical Integrity Index, there is about a 0.21 point or approximately 2% decrease in scores two years following contiguous democracy aid shocks. For the Political Terror Scale, there is about a 0.22 point or approximately 4% decrease in scores two years following contiguous democracy aid shocks. When AR1 is applied to GLS, results show less support for my hypothesis, same as in Table 2. For the Physical Integrity Index model, there is no statistical significance reached between contiguous democracy aid shocks and human rights performance two years following a shock, although the sign of the coefficient is in the expected direction. For

the Political Terror Scale model, there is a statistically significant, negative relationship between contiguous democracy aid shocks and human rights performance two years after a contiguous democracy aid shock. The two-year lag between contiguous democracy aid shocks and human rights shows a weaker contiguous democracy aid shock – human rights performance relationship when compared to the model forwarded only one year, yet this is expected. Overall, even models forwarded two years lend support for my hypothesis.

Overall, these results show substantial, but not perfect, support for a relationship between contiguous democracy aid shocks and human rights performance and support my hypothesis in 6 of the 8 models. It appears that when a nation experiences a contiguous democracy aid shock, its human rights performance decreases in the following years. While this relationship is present two years following the neighboring shock, it is more substantial one year after the contiguous democracy aid shock. It appears there are immediate, short-term contiguous democracy aid shock signals and diffusion in effect here. Overall, these results indicate that countries are aware of the occurrences of their neighbors and that regimes feel enabled to commit human rights violations when their neighbors experience a democracy aid shock.

Results – Case Study

To test my theory using Uzbekistan between 1996 and 1997, I first look to prove a neighborhood. Pulling from neighborhood effect literature, I looked for indicators of interdependencies and spatial links (Gartzke, 2003) between Uzbekistan and its neighbors, specifically Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, as those are the countries that experience shocks. The first indication of such links comes from the shared Soviet history of Uzbekistan and its neighbors, including Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

This shared Soviet past informed the governmental structures and institutions present in Uzbekistan and its neighbors after the fall of the USSR through the period studied (Ziegler, 2016). References to such structures occur in various human rights reports for all three relevant countries, appearing as early as 1994, two years before the democracy aid shocks occur. In 1994, the U.S. State Department wrote that Tajikistan's "court system remains unmodified from the Soviet System (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1994 – Tajikistan*). Likewise, in 1995, Human Rights Watch reported that Uzbekistan's treatment of certain human rights was in an "alarmingly familiar Soviet style" and that certain policies in Turkmenistan were a "grim reminder of Soviet practice" (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1996*). Not only do these similar USSR informed structures suggest commonalities present between Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan, but they show shared experiences were already commonplace years before the shocks occurred. This shared history led each of the Central Asian states to embody shared values, again informing state actions across the region (Ziegler, 2016).

Another clear example of interdependencies between Uzbekistan and its neighbors after the fall of the Soviet Union leading up to the 1996-1997 time period is economic links. In the period leading up to the shocks, Tajikistan maintains economic ties with Uzbekistan through natural gas sales (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1996 – Tajikistan*) and Russia through military support (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*). Turkmenistan also exemplified regional economic ties, as it intended to strengthen financial connections within Central Asia by constructing pipelines through its neighbors Iran and Afghanistan in 1995 (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1996 – Turkmenistan*). While the existence of economic links clearly shows regional

interdependencies, the tumultuousness of some of these economic links is equally important. This tumultuousness is best seen in Uzbekistan's policy towards Tajikistan in 1995, in which Uzbekistan temporarily ceased natural gas sales to Tajikistan due to nonpayment and "political reasons" (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1996 – Tajikistan*). This incident shows that economic links force countries to be aware of other countries' actions, indicating the existence of a neighborhood and possible diffusion links, as the literature describes.

Uzbekistan and its neighbors are also highly connected through immigration, refugees, and ethnic minorities. A year after the start of the Tajikistan Civil War, 500,000 Tajikistan residents were displaced, gaining refugee status and fleeing to neighboring countries such as Afghanistan (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1994*). Again, the movement of refugees denotes interdependencies within a region, as both the refugee receiving government and refugee creating government are aware of the actions and reactions of each other regarding these refugees. This is most clearly seen in Afghanistan's acceptance of refugees and the subsequent planning by Tajikistan with Afghanistan for their repatriation. Additionally, when the Tajikistan Civil War ended and the repatriation of refugees occurred, multiple national governments within the region were involved. Apart from the prominent players, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Uzbekistan also inserted itself, exerting control over the Tajik-Uzbek border, effectively blocking imports, passenger trains, and repatriating refugees (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*).

Furthermore, ethnic diversity within the region's countries denoted interdependencies. Throughout multiple countries within the region, ethnic minorities received discrimination during the studied period, as reported in Uzbekistan (*U.S. Department of State Country Report*

on *Human Rights Practices 1994 – Uzbekistan*), Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*). However, there does appear to be an acute awareness by governments of the treatment of their ethnic majority in other countries. Russia clearly exhibited this awareness, arranging governmental meetings to discuss the treatment of ethnic Russians in Turkmenistan and revealing its desire to protect ethnic Russians in Tajikistan (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*). The ethnic crossovers within the region appear to manifest themselves in governmental interdependencies, as both the ethnic majority and ethnic minorities' governments engage in conversations and actions regarding this ethnic diversity.

Through these interdependencies, Central Asian states, including Uzbekistan and its neighbors, constitute a "neighborhood," as previous literature defines it. Recent literature has further identified these neighborhood links, which indicates a distinct Eurasian regionalism in post-Soviet states since the fall of the Soviet Union (Karabayeva, 2021). Furthermore, this regional identity, the existence of a neighborhood, and the collection of interdependencies between Uzbekistan and its neighbors, also suggest an innate reliance on each other's governments, as indicated in the "neighborhood effect." These reliances, as such strong interdependencies and links between neighboring countries, are then expected to act as transmission belts between countries. These transmission belts, as the name suggests, denote specific mechanisms in which diffusion, or the transmission of ideas, occurs, as they already closely link neighboring countries together. Concerning Uzbekistan and its neighbors, these reliances, and therefore diffusion mechanisms, appeared both explicitly and implicitly. Explicit forms typically manifested as governments colluding together to remove, intimidate, arrest, or kidnap nationals wanted by other governments – Uzbekistan officials persecuting activists in Kazakhstan and Russia in 1994 (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*), Turkmenistan agents

arresting activists in Uzbekistan in 1994 (*Amnesty International Report 1995*), Uzbekistan arresting and questioning, on behalf of the Tajikistan government, a Tajikistan national visiting Uzbekistan in 1997 (*Amnesty International Report 1998*). For each government to oppress their own citizens, even when abroad, they needed their neighbors' explicit help and permission, requiring a strong reliance between them.

The implicit forms of such reliances and transmission belts appeared through observed patterns in behavior rather than explicit collusion. However, these implicit forms also continued to provide evidence that the governments of Central Asian states were aware of their neighbor's actions and in multiple occasions over multiple years responded to this awareness through tangible governmental actions. I found that there was extensive research on authoritarian diffusion within Central Asia and that it supported the idea that diffusion occurred within the region since the fall of the USSR. Most prominently, this literature indicated that the autocrats of Central Asia learned from their neighboring peer states (Ziegler, 2016), suffered from status anxiety (Karabayeva, 2021), and embraced mimicry, emulation, and praise (Buranelli, 2020), all known manifestations of diffusion. A clear example of this diffusion in practice is Kazakhstan, which after the fall of the Soviet Union, looked to Uzbekistan and Russia, both within its neighborhood, to inform its own state actions as it was nervous about the potential division of its country (Karabayeva, 2021). Additional observed diffusion across Uzbekistan and its neighbors occurred in 1994, as Uzbekistan was noted in its U.S. State Department Country Report to "justify" its own repressive behavior by pointing to, and thus learning from, Tajikistan during the Tajikistan Civil War (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1995 – Uzbekistan*). Similarly, Turkmenistan, in 1994, passed a referendum extending the president's term in office (*Amnesty International Report 1995*), which was conveniently mirrored in

Uzbekistan the following year (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1995 – Uzbekistan*). While these conveniently similar events hold the possibility of being mere coincidences, it is doubtful, as expressed by a Western diplomat based in Central Asia at the time, "these referendums in central Asia are definitely the result of a dialogue between the presidents" (Buranelli, 2020). Likewise, an international lawyer expressed similar sentiments stating, "in terms of internal legislation, they look to Russia, but they also look to each other, they look at their behavior, they mimic each other, they compare each other, if not explicitly. They try to be at the same level. You can find the same law in all the countries with very little time difference" (Buranelli, 2020).

Diffusion between Uzbekistan and its neighbors, however, did not only exist in terms of authoritarianism. I found strong examples to indicate that diffusion of human rights policies also occurred between Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan before the 1996 contiguous democracy aid shocks. In 1994, Tajikistan established both an Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) office and a Human Rights Watch Helsinki (HRWH) office within its borders (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*). The following year, Uzbekistan followed suit, establishing both an OSCE office and a Human Rights Watch Helsinki office in Tashkent (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1995 – Uzbekistan*), despite being staunchly against the involvement of human rights organizations within Uzbekistan just the year prior (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1994 – Uzbekistan*). The quickness in Uzbekistan's resolved feelings towards international human rights involvement within the country through its approval of these organizations to establish working offices within its borders indicates it adopted Tajikistan's

position, learning from its own actions and applying them within Uzbekistan, which is inherently categorized as diffusion.

A similar occurrence appears when reviewing the human rights rhetoric of each country during the period. After years of openly oppressive human rights behavior, in 1996, Uzbekistan began, in the words of Human Rights Watch Helsinki, “a concerted campaign to shed the reputation of serious human rights abuser that it had gained in 1992” (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1996*). To do this, Uzbekistan's president publicly and internationally acknowledged Uzbekistan's lack of human rights progress (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1995 – Uzbekistan*). Likewise, in the same year, Tajikistan's President also used new rhetoric, again publicly and internationally acknowledging past human rights abuses within the country (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1995 – Tajikistan*). In the following year, 1997, Turkmenistan followed the examples of its neighbors, acknowledging for the first time its human rights deficiencies (*Amnesty International Report 1998*). This change in rhetoric is especially noteworthy considering Turkmenistan, up until 1997, had not attempted to recognize or change its human rights behavior, and thus indicates that Turkmenistan is acutely aware of its neighbor's actions and is reacting accordingly. Although this specific pattern of human rights rhetoric occurs after the observed democracy aid shocks, it still exemplifies the diffusion of human rights policies between Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. Furthermore, it indicates human rights diffusion occurs after the shocks, which will be investigated later in this case study.

Having demonstrated both the neighborhood aspects of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan and patterns of diffusion between the countries before the 1996 democracy aid shocks, I examined diffusion following these shocks. Continuing with the human rights rhetoric,

especially in Uzbekistan, a stark contrast occurs before and after the shocks. Before 1996, as previously discussed, Uzbekistan, at least on a public, international scale, actively promoted human rights. In 1995 and 1996, Uzbekistan increased human rights protection mechanisms (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1996*), engaged in open human rights dialogues (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1996*), extended the participation of the previously banned Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1997*), and declared its desire to create a multiparty democracy (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1995 – Uzbekistan*). Although diffusion within the region has already been shown to influence the human rights behavior of the region's countries, such as Uzbekistan, the quantity and quality of these human rights protections within Uzbekistan were unique to the country. That is to say, the other countries studied, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, did not include the same types of human rights protections or nearly the number of protections as Uzbekistan. Furthermore, a distinct international emphasis on Uzbekistan's human rights rhetoric – public, international campaigns for greater human rights protections, with little internal human rights changes – indicates an express desire by Uzbekistan's government to follow just the actions of other regional governments. Instead, to account for such increased public human rights behavior over such a short period of time, I turn to the influence of the United States and the regional diffusion of its human rights rhetoric during the period.

In 1993, the United States displayed its seriousness toward aid provisions and human rights for one of the first times in the region. In September of that year, "Ambassador-at-Large Strobe Talbott declared...that Washington would not provide economic aid if Turkmenistan did not enact democratic reforms" (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1994*). Likewise, in Uzbekistan, Ambassador Talbott also threatened aid provisions based on Uzbekistan's lack of

democracy (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1994*). The United States further proved its seriousness by actively protesting the Turkmenistan government's practice of gender discrimination within an academic exchange (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1994*). This action, coupled with the aid removal threats, demonstrates not only the United States' emphasis on human rights in Turkmenistan, but would have been closely followed by the other countries in the region, thereby diffusing outward and affecting the subsequent actions of neighboring states, such as Uzbekistan.

The United States' emphasis on human rights continued in the region throughout the period. In 1995, the United States appeared to engage the most with human rights rhetoric, raising human rights concerns with Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Although some of these conversations were privately conducted between U.S. diplomats and the country's respective government, this should not have significantly affected the diffusion this rhetoric would create within the region, given the previously discussed closely related and interdependent nature of the three governments. Therefore, although not publicly conveyed to the citizens of the countries, each government would continue to be acutely aware of the discussions, condemnations, and concerns brought up within each government's meeting. Furthermore, in the case of both Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the United States was reported as "the only country known" to have kept human rights on its bilateral agenda with each respective country (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1996*). Again, this proves the seriousness of human rights protections by the United States to Uzbekistan and its neighbors within the period before the shocks.

Reactions to such seriousness are clearly seen in Uzbekistan. In multiple reports, Uzbekistan employed greater efforts to "mask" its oppressive policies from the United States

starting in 1994 (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1995*; *Human Rights Watch World Report 1996*). Additionally, as previously discussed, Uzbekistan initiated greater acknowledgment of past human rights abuses (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1995 – Uzbekistan*), offered greater participation to internal human rights organizations (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1997*), and encouraged the return of previously exiled human rights activists (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1996 – Uzbekistan*).

In 1996, both Turkmenistan and Tajikistan experienced democracy aid shocks, as indicated by AidData 3.1, following the calculation of shocks developed by Tierney et al. (2011) and then applied to democracy aid by Hernandez and Scott (2019). At the same time, the United States shocked the democracy aid allotted to Turkmenistan and Tajikistan during 1996, it continued to engage closely with Uzbekistan, reportedly remaining highly interested in its human rights performance and at "the forefront of international governmental efforts to address human rights concerns in Uzbekistan" (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1997*). In 1997, the United States continued its human rights relationship with Uzbekistan, offering direct assistance to human rights groups within the country, including both parliamentary groups and citizen groups (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1998*). This assistance, however, was offered in the form of computer and internet equipment, not monetary aid (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1998*).

Despite this continued United States emphasis on human rights in Uzbekistan, in 1997, following its contiguous democracy aid shocks, the country's human rights performance plummeted. On the Physical Integrity Index, Uzbekistan's human rights score declined from a 5 in 1996 to a 2 in 1997 (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay 2014). On the inverted Political Terror Scale, Uzbekistan's human rights score declined from a 4 in 1996 to a 3 in 1997 (Gibney et al.,

2013). These declines were validated by the U.S. State Department's Country Report on Uzbekistan in 1997, stating the "pace of reform slowed during the year" (*U.S. Department of State Country Report on Human Rights Practices 1997 – Uzbekistan*), and by the 1997 Human Rights Watch World Report, which stated, "human rights observance in Uzbekistan in 1997 was marked by a sharp departure from government promises made in 1996 to improve its performance" (*Human Rights Watch World Report 1998*).

These declines, despite continued United States – Uzbekistan relations, suggest that something else is occurring within the region to embolden Uzbekistan's negative human rights behavior. I argue that these declines indicate diffusion stemming from the contiguous democracy aid shocks, specifically the United States' signaling a disinterest in the human rights rhetoric or policies of Turkmenistan and Tajikistan since money and conversations are no longer allotted to human rights performance via democracy aid. Although in 1997, both Turkmenistan and Tajikistan's human rights scores increased following their democracy aid shocks, this behavior would not have been recorded or manifested as diffusion until the following year in 1998. In fact, in 1998, Uzbekistan's human rights scores increased on the Physical Integrity Index Scale from a 2 to a 4 (Cingranelli, Richards, and Clay 2014). This increase lends even greater support to the diffusion of contiguous democracy aid shocks, as Uzbekistan internalized the observed shocks as an indication of a lack of care towards human rights by the United States in Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, and therefore reacted in decreased observance both publicly and internally of human rights.

In all, this case study, focusing on Uzbekistan and its neighbors, specifically Turkmenistan and Tajikistan, from 1996 to 1997, displays the processes by which democracy aid shocks diffuse into neighboring, non-shocked countries, causing poorer human rights behavior in

those neighboring countries. Once both a neighborhood and interdependencies between neighbors were established, I focused on the existence of diffusion before the shocks, especially as it pertained to the previously established existence of interdependencies, linkages, and transmission belts. This diffusion was exemplified by authoritarian policies and human rights behavior within the region. This pre-existing diffusion is of high importance, as it indicates that diffusion mechanisms were used before the contiguous democracy aid shocks and thus were most likely continued after as well. Noticing a significant and unique increase in human rights protections within Uzbekistan before the contiguous democracy aid shocks, I found support that diffusion of U.S. human rights rhetoric within the region, specifically between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, offered the fullest explanation for this increase. Likewise, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan's democracy aid shocks in 1996 most likely diffused into Uzbekistan as a signal of the United States' lack of human rights attention within the region. Therefore, in 1997, Uzbekistan's human rights performance decreased, as indicated by its human rights scores, and thus suggesting that the diffusion of the contiguous democracy aid shocks negatively affected Uzbekistan's human rights performance.

When applied generally, as a representative of the sample population, this Uzbekistan case study provides descriptions of the causal mechanisms related to the effects of contiguous democracy aid shocks on human rights behavior. Firstly, it describes how neighboring countries can be connected in a neighborhood – through interdependencies in economics, history, and ethnic diversity. Next, it demonstrates how these interdependencies translate into transmission belts for regional diffusion – through closely related links that provide necessary reliances on, and thus awareness of, neighboring governments. Diffusion through such transmission belts not only occurs in explicit forms, as seen in collusion between governments, but it also can occur in

implicit forms, as seen in the patterns by neighboring governments in the adoption of greater authoritarian behavior. Furthermore, the case study revealed how diffusion between neighboring countries can directly relate to human rights – patterns in the use of similar human rights rhetoric and acceptance of human rights organizations.

In addition to the regional specificity of diffusion, that is how neighboring governments respond to the specific policies of other neighboring governments, the case study revealed the effect of the international community, specifically the United States, on regional human rights diffusion. In it, we see that the attention given by the United States to human rights practices appears to influence the behavior of countries, and in turn through diffusion, the behaviors of neighboring governments. Lastly, the case study revealed that following a democracy aid shock, the country neighboring the shock appears to internalize insinuations made by the shock. That is, the country neighboring the shock seems to accept the shock as an absence of continued United States interest in human rights within the region. Likewise, and as expected, this internalization manifested as lower human rights performance within the country neighboring the shock the year following the contiguous democracy aid shock. Most surprisingly, this internalization of disinterest by the United States remained within the country neighboring the shock even as the United States continued to denote direct interest in improved human rights behavior within that country, suggesting further that the lower human rights performance occurs because of diffusion from the contiguous democracy aid shock. In all, the case study helps to clearly demonstrate how contiguous democracy aid shocks diffuse outward into neighboring countries, ultimately supporting further my argument that democracy aid shocks in a recipient country are likely to affect human rights practices in neighboring countries negatively.

Conclusion

Previous research and literature on democracy aid reveals the intricacies of when, where, and to whom it is delivered. Additionally, research describes the devastating effects shocking democracy aid can have on the former recipient country. However, previous research has failed to describe the effects of a democracy aid shock on countries neighboring the former recipient. Such effects are at the center of my research. Overall, I find that when U.S. aid is shocked human rights performance decreases in countries neighboring the former democracy aid recipient. As expected, this trend is stronger one year after the democracy aid shock, and while still present two years after the shock, the relationship does become weaker. My quantitative analysis implies that affected human rights protections due to a democracy aid shock diffuse to neighboring countries, causing neighboring countries to experience a decrease in human rights performance.

I also attempt to trace these diffusion processes following a contiguous democracy aid shock through a qualitative, process tracing case study focusing on Uzbekistan from 1996 to 1997. Through this case study, I find strong evidence that after experiencing two contiguous democracy aid shocks in 1996, one in Turkmenistan and one in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan internalized signals from these shocks that translated into poorer human rights behavior in 1997. In particular, I find that the contiguous democracy aid shocks most likely diffuse throughout the neighborhood due to their perceived signal that the United States is disinterested in human rights performance within the region. When applied generally, this case study helps reveal the causal mechanisms of the diffusion of contiguous democracy aid shocks, as well as lends further support for my theory.

These findings are significant to foreign affairs and U.S. policy creation. Democracy aid shocks not only stunt human rights protections in recipient countries but are now found to affect

human rights in neighboring countries. This could be particularly detrimental to the promotions of democracy and improved human rights performance across the world, as more than just the recipient country expresses repressive behavior when a country undergoes a democracy aid shock. Additionally, it causes neighboring countries, countries that may very well be U.S. allies, to suffer the consequences of an action intended for a single country.

While my initial research found significant results in support of my hypothesis, it does yield itself to further future research. First, analyzing the data again in the years to come would be interesting, as just in the time I have been conducting my research, protests and a greater consciousness of human rights have increased around the world. Not only has this occurred in the U.S. with the Black Lives Matter movement, but in Hong Kong, Mexico, Kenya, Brazil, and many other countries for a variety of human rights issues. This phenomenon begs the question, will this vocal, widespread call for improved human rights initiate different results regarding democracy aid shocks and human rights performance in neighboring countries? Additionally, more case studies might help reveal important aspects related to the theory, including additional causal mechanisms, other patterns of human rights diffusion, and different reactions by governments to contiguous democracy aid shocks. In particular, case studies where the human rights performance stays the same or increases following a contiguous democracy aid shock would be interesting, as it could reveal insights about the conditions needed for contiguous democracy aid shocks to negatively affect human rights behavior. Furthermore, including a case study in which a country experienced only one contiguous democracy aid shock would be helpful, as it could reveal whether the number of contiguous democracy aid shocks impacts the diffusion from this shock. That is, do more contiguous democracy aid shocks yield a larger

signal of US disinterest or is a single contiguous democracy aid shock sufficient for the diffused internalization?

As my research currently stands, however, democracy aid shocks do, in fact, affect more than just the shocked country, reaching neighboring countries as well, and therefore threatening the livelihoods, inherent human rights, and well-being of even more people than previously understood.

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