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Mainstream Newspaper Coverage:
A Barometer of Government Tolerance for
Anti-Regime Expression in Authoritarian Brazil

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Abstract

This paper evaluates the theory that in authoritarian regimes leaders of civil society follow the mainstream press not so much for the specific information it provides, but rather as a barometer for the government's tolerance for opposition activities or to gauge the government's ability to quash such activities. By observing trends in coverage and the government's treatment of journalists and their publications, activists can gauge when it might be safer to plan mass actions, which in turn can encourage mass participation — strengthening their cause. The analysis in this paper relies on a careful coding structure of *A Folha de São Paulo,* one of the main Brazilian newspapers, during the period from 1974 (the start of political détente) to 1982 (the first direct gubernatorial elections after the 1964 military coup). The content analysis contains information on coverage of subjects generally considered taboo under authoritarian regimes, such as criticism of the economic model, crimes and corruption by government officials, satire, exposés on the leader's family or information critical of the leader himself, coverage of the opposition and its electoral efforts and criticism of government policies. The data also contain information on reports of arrests and injuries to the media and activists, anti-media acts by the government, such as censorship and closures of publications, and coverage of the release of prisoners and the return of exiles. Additionally the data include information on strikes, protests and other anti-regime activities reported both in the national and foreign press. Using negative binomial regression with a lagged dependent variable as well as autoregressive Poisson models, this paper demonstrates that key opposition actions followed trends in coverage. This relationship was mediated by the government's actions against the media and attacks on journalists and editors. Elites planned more events during periods soon after reporters successfully reported on taboo subjects without suffering repercussions from the government.[1]

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Introduction

News reports of substantial turnout in the 2005 Iraqi elections astonished viewers, given the dangerous environment of post-Hussein Iraq. In 1989 people marveled at the courage of Chinese students, intellectuals and labor activists when they protested in Tiananmen Square and felt the heavy hand of the repressive Chinese government. In 1965 African Americans and other supporters of civil rights faced the threat of violence head on as they marched from Selma toward Montgomery, Alabama to gain equal voting rights for black citizens. Understanding what drives people to participate in such risky actions has long mystified scholars who focus on rational decision making. Nevertheless, such risky behavior by civilians protesting in the name of some cause despite the threat of repression occurs in many situations.

It seems heroic when people march down major thoroughfares to protest their authoritarian ruler or show up at a polling station amid actual or anticipated government repression. While scholars have found many satisfying explanations for the growth of such protests once they have been initiated (Kuran 1991; Chai 1993; Lohmann 1993, 1994, Minkoff 1997), they have not yet adequately explained why the early participants take to the street or how and when they go about initiating protests. It is unlikely that these early initiators, usually leaders of opposition movements, are blind to the risks they face.

Though activist leaders may have a higher tolerance for risk than most citizens, I argue that they do not disregard their safety or that of potential participants. To the contrary, the security of participants is of the utmost importance to opposition leaders. The purpose of mass actions is to demonstrate visually to the regime the level of support for the opposition and its positions or, conversely, the strength of the threat against the regime and its policies. Therefore, the opposition

leaders' goal is to maximize attendance at these events because higher attendance signifies greater strength.

Understanding that people are less likely to take to the street or sit down in the classroom if they fear retribution from government forces, opposition leaders seek moments of diminished risk to plan these activities. John Ginkel and Alastair Smith argue that information is difficult to acquire in repressive regimes; "Given the limited amount of free press and other forms of information, the general public has little idea about whether the government can survive a major rebellion. Such information is costly and dangerous to obtain" (1999: 293). However, I argue that under these conditions, more information is available than one first presumes. Due in part to the tension created between journalists and government from restrictions on the press, media coverage can offer an inside view into the administration's thought process. I hypothesize that activist leaders monitor the mainstream media — and the government's reaction to these media — as a barometer of government tolerance for anti-regime activity and/or to gauge the regime's willingness to repress such activity.

Even within publications whose ownership and editors sympathize with authoritarian governments, some journalists continue to challenge the limits, trying to publish content that is taboo under either explicit or implicit constraints. Journalists may be more likely to contest government than the average citizen because they can veil such actions as fulfilling the duties of their job. Journalists also have both national and international organizations that serve as watchdogs of government treatment of journalists. With editors facing the dilemma of wanting to appease the government — or at least to remain free from prosecution — but also wanting to sell more newspapers to citizens eager for honest news, some critical stories make the editors' final cut before going to press. The regime then faces a choice to either prohibit the critical information via prior

censorship, respond harshly ex post, or to let the incident pass with no adverse consequences for the journalist, editor or publication.

I argue that opposition leaders follow coverage in mainstream publications regularly to observe trends in reporting and to assess the government's mood and strength. When more critical stories appear in the paper and the regime does not respond with repressive actions, opposition leaders infer from this that the regime is either (a) more tolerant of anti-regime expression or (b) in a weakened position and unable to impose its desired constraints on the press. In either case, the risk of participation is diminished and therefore it is an optimal time to plan a mass action.

In this paper I focus on unarmed opposition groups in Brazil and their construction of a mass opposition movement against the military regime that assumed power in a 1964 coup. I focus on the period of political liberalization[2] when the struggle between the press and government was most evident. I connect the trends in mass actions to the liberalization of the media and the government's reduced repression of journalists. I begin the analysis in 1974, when the soft-liners within the Brazilian military wrestled control from the hard-line faction, and I extend the analysis through 1982, which marked Brazil's return to direct and competitive gubernatorial elections.

I begin this paper by reviewing the relevant literature. I then provide the historical context necessary for the reader to understand the development of relations between media and activism given Brazil's particular circumstances. I briefly discuss the mindset of opposition leaders, their motivations and their needs, offering a series of testable hypotheses. I then explain the methodology I employed to collect the data. I look at which factors prevented the government from responding

[2] This refers to political liberalization as described by Alfred Stepan (1988), which is distinct from democratization. "In an authoritarian setting, "liberalization" may entail a mix of policy and social changes, such as less censorship of the media, somewhat greater working room for the organization of autonomous working-class activities, the reintroduction of some legal safeguards such as habeas corpus for individuals, the releasing of most political prisoners, the return of political exiles, possibly measures for improving the distribution of income, and, most important, the toleration of political opposition. 'Democratization' entails liberalization but is a wider and more specifically political concept. Democratization requires open contestation for the right to win control of the government, and this in turn requires free elections, the results of which determine who governs" (Stepan 1988: 6).

to these challenges by reverting to highly repressive behavior. After discussing the conditions and motivations of the actors, using data I collected from coding one of the main São Paulo daily newspapers and from external sources reporting on Brazil, I analyze the actual trends in critical coverage and mass participation, as well as the various external factors that influenced these trends. I assess whether or not activist leaders relied on the Brazilian mainstream media as a barometer of government and planned opposition actions, such as demonstrations and marches, following trends in reporting. I conclude by reviewing the key findings of this research and discussing their implications for other citizens struggling against authoritarian rule.

Literature Review

The fact that people participate in risky activities, as evidenced by the examples in the introduction, despite the purported irrationality of such behavior has been framed in research as the paradox of collective action (Olson 1965). The collective action dilemma arises from the fact that an individual, despite wanting and supporting political change, rationally should not choose to participate in risky actions to bring about the change; his individual contribution likely will not make the difference in a movement's success — which if it occurs he enjoys regardless of his participation — and by participating he risks arrest, injury or worse. On the other hand, a savvy individual recognizes that if all people behaved in this manner, change would never occur, despite a potential majority who support such change. This paradox — that people do in fact join protests despite the presumed irrationality of such behavior— has spawned several lines of research aimed at explaining what drives people to overcome the dilemma.

Why people protest

Sociologists, political scientists and psychologists have offered many competing explanations for which conditions are necessary for people to participate in potentially risky endeavors. One of the principal and earliest theories, relative deprivation theory, argues that people are most likely to

participate when their actual economic conditions are inferior to the conditions they believe they ought to have (Gurr 1971). Some evidence supports this theory, particularly when studies employ subjective rather than objective measures of economic status (Corning and Myers 2002). Many people do not have grandiose visions of where they ought to be in life and so even small improvements in their conditions leave them satisfied. On the other hand, those in the middle class who see major declines in their purchasing power, even if they still earn a reasonable wage, could become irate and willing to protest. Therefore, relying on financial indicators of people's condition, such as gross income, to predict people's proclivity for political activism suggests an expectation that all poor people are discontent and likely to join protests, while in reality students, laborers and intellectuals — often from the middle class — tend to be the most likely to join opposition movements.

Although any one person may be inclined to protest because of his assessment of his personal economic conditions, in order for actions to be successful, they rely on the coordination of groups of individuals. While relative deprivation theory helps to explain why someone might *want* to protest, it does not explain why that individual participates in any singular protest. Other research suggests that people become more likely to protest when they observe declines in status or economic position of a group with which they identify rather than with their personal condition (Corning and Myers 2002). Charles Brockett (1993) argues that researchers' failure to explain protest behavior stems from viewing individuals as autonomous rather than as social beings. "Real individuals are usually enmeshed in social networks, which might lead them to different perceptions, calculations, and behavior" (Brocket 1993: 462). Brockett cites a similar argument made by Karl-Dieter Opp that essentially eliminates the dilemma of collective action:

> Average citizens may adopt a collectivist conception of rationality because they recognize that what is individually rational is collectively irrational—that if people like themselves were individually rational free riders, the likelihood of success of protest action would be very small, and that, therefore, it is collectively rational for all to protest despite the fact that the

> objective probability of a single individual influencing the outcome is negligible (1989: 77 in Brockett 1993: 462).

An opposing viewpoint, shared by many scholars, suggests that irrespective of considering individuals as autonomous or social beings, deprivation always exists and therefore cannot explain why some societies revolt over these grievances and others' gripes remain latent (Oberschall 1973; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tilly 1978). These researchers advocate resource mobilization theory, which argues that social movements evolve more from resource acquisition and social interaction of the movements with other organizations than from any psychological state of latent protesters.

Relative deprivation theory thus accounts for the motivations behind protest, and resource mobilization theory accounts for the evolution of activist groups; yet, to understand the process of collective protest, researchers must look beyond the motivation to participate and the conception of social movements toward understanding the strategy opposition groups employ to carry out these protests.

An important step toward understanding opposition leaders' strategy is to understand *when* people protest. Many scholars believe that people are opportunistic (Brockett 1993; Earl et al 2003). Doug McAdam argued that, "As political opportunity structure shifts to the advantage of challengers, the power discrepancy between them and elites diminishes, increasing challengers' political leverage and improving the possibility of outcomes in their interest" (McAdam in Brockett 1993: 470).

What defines an opportunity may differ depending on the environment in which protesters operate. In a democracy, the media's presence may benefit protesters by protecting them from observable repression by the government (Wisler and Guigni 1999). This is less likely in more authoritarian regimes where the governments influence media content and may seek coverage of their use of repression to portray an image of strength as well as to signal to other potential protesters the risk of their participation. On the other hand, if the country is receiving a foreign

visitor like a democratic head of state or the pope, the authoritarian government may be constrained by international attention. If the regime announces measures of political liberalization, as was the case in Brazil, this too may offer protesters an opportunity because the regime's actions may be constrained by their own statements about reform.

The argument that protestors — or at least those who organize protests — are opportunistic implies that people must be able to recognize an opportunity. Recognizing an opportunity, however, is not sufficient for generating mass participation. Opposition leaders must be able to communicate this opportunity to others in order to persuade them to join the action.

Issues of Risk Assessment and Effects of Repression

The issue of leaders' abilities to communicate and persuade the masses to join risky actions brings us back to the issue of coordination and overcoming the collective action dilemma. Will H. Moore (1995) argues that when researchers moved from non-strategic rational choice theory — individuals make decisions without concerning themselves with the behavior of others — to strategic rational choice theory — a decision maker takes into consideration others' likely behavior in determining his course of action — they found more reasonable solutions to the free rider problem. He offered four categories of arguments that offer explanations for how people overcome this problem:

1) Selective incentives: rewards or benefits, either economic or social, distributed to those who participate in the collective action and withheld from those who do not (Olson 1965; Muller and Opp 1986; Gibson 1991).
2) Efficacy: people's overestimation of the impact their contribution will have on the outcome of collective actions (Popkin 1979). By breaking down a group's goals into component parts people can be convinced they can achieve this smaller task.
3) Contracts and conventions: social organizations hold people accountable and provide norms for behavior (Taylor et al 1987; Taylor 1988; Popkin 1988; Chong 1991).
4) Tipping phenomenon: people's choices are contingent upon how many others have joined the rebellion at a given point (Kuran 1991; Lohmann 1993, 1994; Goldstone 1994; Minkoff 1997).

These arguments illustrate ways in which latent protesters overcome collective action problems and decide to participate in risky behavior. However, as the case for selective incentives points out, members of organizations must evaluate not only the risk of participation, but also the potential risk of non-participation, given that activist leaders have incentives — though not necessarily the ability — to punish free-riders. Sun-Ki Chai stated that "(w)e can plausibly assume that individuals make estimates of P_d (perceived probability of detection) based on some function of time, the number of credible reports of punishment they have heard, and the approximate size of the organization" (1993: 104). Therefore, individuals when deciding whether or not to protest must concern themselves not only with the consequences of participating inflicted by the regime's security forces, but also with the consequences from their peers or group leaders if they decide to refrain from participating. Although it might seem logical that people would prefer to stay at home if their actions are bound to meet government repression (believing this to be harsher than any form of retribution imposed by opposition groups), it is not always the case that such repression deters political action, including demonstrations, marches and such.

Regime violence smothers popular mobilization under some circumstances but appears to provoke it under others (Brockett 1993). T. David Mason and Dale E. Krane argue that whether a regime targets its repression toward (1) a movement's leaders, (2) the movement's leaders and members, or (3) indiscriminately, will determine who will participate in mass actions against the regime and the strength of such participation (1989). In the first scenario, the mass public likely will refrain from participation, believing such participation to be futile. In the second scenario, mass participants continue to stay on the sideline, now fearing participation as well as viewing it as useless. In this case, however, those who joined the protests early would continue to participate, believing themselves already marked as targets of the regime. The third scenario, Mason and Krane argue, would produce opposite results, triggering mass protest because now refraining from participation

does not necessarily protect someone; by participating in the opposition, however, one may be shielded by the opposition organization against the government's repressive hand.

While Mason and Krane believe that people's response to repression — whether or not they join protests — depends on who the government targets, other researchers believe that it is the intensity of this repression, irrespective of the government's target, that affects people's decision to participate or not. These other researchers propose that a negative quadratic relationship, or an inverted-U, exists between repression and activism where repression can have both positive and negative effects on participation in opposition actions (DeNardo 1985; Lichbach 1987, 1994; Muller and Weede 1990). In this case, people are willing to risk some degree of repression, if rather moderate means are used, to protest a cause. On the other hand, a complete absence of repression (a rather unlikely situation in authoritarian regimes) may leave people with little reason to protest, and extreme use of repression may deter protests.

Mark Lichbach argues that one must take into consideration the government's use of both repression and concessions together to evaluate repression's effectiveness in deterring political action (1987). In the face of opposition actions, the government may offer protesters concessions as an alternative to utilizing repressive tactics. Concessions by the regime can appease protesters by giving them what they want. However, accommodating the opposition encourages more protests because (a) it illustrates that the regime is too weak to impede protests through repression, and (b) shows the effectiveness of the tactic itself (Lichbach 1987; Rasler 1996; Ginkel and Smith 1999). If the government employs both tactics simultaneously, which Lichbach describes as "inconsistent," the granting of concessions can undermine the usefulness of repression.

Many scholars have subsequently argued that repression has both positive and negative effects as well, but their argument plays out somewhat differently. Repression discourages protest because it can have a high cost to participants, yet it also indirectly encourages mobilization by providing

potential protesters with greater reason to object to the regime (Mason and Krane 1989; Opp and Roehl 1990; Rasler 1996). Marwan Khawaja's (1993) analysis of collective action in the West Bank found empirical evidence that while the inverted-U relationship held true when measuring repression with arrests, severe repression measured by political deaths did in fact foster mobilization and encourage participation in mass actions. Khawaja's assessment appears accurate in the case of Brazil as well. A few cases, in particular, highlight this effect. Immediately after accounts of the death by torture of a journalist, Vladimir Herzog, and later of two union members, huge protests occurred in São Paulo and throughout Brazil.[3] Referring to Herzog's murder, Audálio Dantas, a journalist and one-time member of the sanctioned opposition party, said "The situation changed at this point. Journalists' consciences and even the whole national conscience decided we couldn't take it anymore … It was more than the final straw. It was a starting point."[4]

I suspect that given the its expressed intention of liberalizing politically, the regime felt constrained by the national and international attention that news of these deaths brought; to counteract the image of these deaths, the regime refrained from violent responses to protests and religious ceremonies immediately following these incidents.[5]

John Ginkel and Alastair Smith (1999) also believe protest is more likely under highly repressive conditions. They argue that the "mob" is more likely to join "dissidents" in protesting government under highly repressive conditions, because the dissidents earn the mob's trust by facing grave sanctions. The debate continues with regard to the success of the government's use of repression in

[3] The first two of these deaths were reported by the regime as suicides (the third happened during a protest in front of others and thus the regime had no plausible deniability). Nevertheless, many among the public knew rather quickly of the falsity of the government's claims. For example, Rabbi Henry Sobel of the principal synagogue in São Paulo conducted a public funeral for Herzog, a Jew, in the main part of the cemetery (told in interview between Geraldo Alckmin and author on May 7, 2007). Given that Jewish tradition prohibits "proper" burial for suicide victims, this ceremony sent a strong signal to repudiate the regime.

[4] Interview with author on February 2, 2005.

[5] In both the case of Palestinians and in Brazil, the responsible actor for the deaths was either a democratic government or one feigning to be. The surge in mobilization following political deaths experienced in Israel's occupied territories and in Brazil might not occur in more totalitarian systems where regimes rarely feel constrained by world opinion let alone the opinion of the country's own citizens.

deterring protests. While some scholars have found evidence to support repression's usefulness as a tactic for government, others have found it less effective, or effective only given particular conditions. Given that researchers remain stymied as to the effect of repression on political activism, it would be safe to presume that opposition leaders also cannot anticipate how repression might affect potential participants for their planned actions.

Given the unknown effect of repression, leaders must continue to assess risk, assuming that repression could deter at least some potential participants. In order to properly assess risk, activists must have information. Both leaders and mass participants require information; though the level of necessary information is different for each type of actor and the sources of such information likely vary as well.[6]

Information Needs

People's ability to assess the risk of participation — whether it be how many other supporters of the opposition are likely to participate or the degree of repression the government will employ — is only as good as the information available. Yet although information is essential to the survival of activists, its availability and accessibility can vary. Carlos Alberto Lobão, a member of National Liberation Action (ALN), an armed opposition group, explained:

> …(Y)ou need to have information in some form to be a citizen; you have to have information on what's going on in the world, but you have to read and distrust what you read.[7]

People's ability to obtain information is not uniform. There exist obvious impediments such as illiteracy or insufficient income to purchase newspapers, televisions, radios, and, increasingly, computers that are the key instruments for disseminating news to the population. Additionally some

[6] Although radio and television played an important role in informing the masses, activist leaders still relied on print media for the information that it revealed.
[7] Interview with author on December 10, 2004.

people have direct access to information, either from participation in or connections to government, the media establishment, or opposition entities — groups that "create" much of the news.

Ginkel and Smith believe that opposition leaders receive "noisy" information from government's actions, and additional information from government's disposition in dealing with the opposition, such as specific concessions offered by the government (1999). Although the dissident leaders' sources of information are limited, they are superior to those of the masses. In addition to the contact leaders may have with researchers and journalists who have direct access to information, the leaders tend to be better educated than the masses and better able to understand the limited information that is available. Therefore, those in the masses frequently look to others outside of their peer group for information necessary to participate in political life. They may take cues from a neighborhood leader, spiritual leader, or union boss, for example, who has greater interactions with newsmakers and pays more attention to the media. As a result individuals who belong to social networks, such as student groups, labor unions, or Catholic organizations, and thus have access to well-informed leaders, are likely to be better informed than their unaffiliated counterparts. Nevertheless, information spread by word of mouth via social networks is not always efficient. "If the press is reasonably credible, it can provide an unwitting external channel of communication to dispersed members" (Chai 1993: 104).

A member of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua explained the importance of radio in helping the organization communicate.

> [The Front] robbed banks, which all the radio stations reported while the whole country hung on the beep-beep-beep-beep of those famous flashes. With news like that going out to the whole country we saw ourselves as much bigger than we really were through the magnifying glass of publicity… (Chai 1993: 105).

This member of the FSLN attributed a large part of people's decision to join the Front to these reports and the fact that as a decentralized group based on cells, people were not aware of the details of the organization as a whole and so could only imagine its strength based on information such as

these news bulletins. Sun-Ki Chai argues that, given the scenario above, violence (by activist groups) should be more common in countries with a well-developed popular press. While Chai's argument relies on the publicity value of media, others argue that media leads people to take action via opinion formation. Elihu Katz (1992) explains that newspapers first fuel conversations, which then shape opinion; it is opinion that eventually drives people to take action.

Citizens may be motivated to participate in opposition actions against an authoritarian regime because they dislike the regime on ideological grounds, feel the regime has worsened their economic conditions or has failed to make good on its original justifications for seizing power. Regardless of the motivation, citizens usually want to be assured of their own personal safety before acting on their desires. Activist leaders use various tactics to encourage citizen participation, including rewarding and punishing individuals, respectively, for their contribution or lack thereof; convincing people of the efficacy of their participation in mass actions; creating social norms and conventions within opposition organizations; and also by trying to reduce the risk of participation in order to encourage those with lower risk tolerance to join the activity.

Opposition leaders must therefore be opportunistic; they must recognize when the regime is more willing to tolerate anti-regime expression. Though some scholars argue that the limited information in countries where authoritarian regimes influence the press impedes activist leaders' ability to recognize these opportunities, I argue that savvy leaders use the dynamic between the media and government created by censorship as a barometer for regime tolerance. Recognizing the motivations of participants, activist leaders' calculations are used to decide *how*, *where* and *when* to take action, and the information leaders require to coordinate such actions is an important first step to understanding the relationship between the media and activists — both leaders and the masses.

Historical Overview

Before moving forward with this discussion, it is important to understand the context facing opposition activists in Brazil. The Brazilian military assumed control of government in 1964, fearing the leftist policies and alliances of President Goulart (Skidmore 1988). The military regime, like most in Latin America in the last few decades of the 20th century, governed from a nationalistic, economically liberal and socially conservative perspective.

This perspective hardened through the first five years of military rule, leading up to December 13, 1968, which marked the initiation of the most repressive phase of the dictatorship. The military consolidated its power by establishing the Fifth Institutional Act (AI-5) that the opposition later referred to as the "coup within the coup."[8] The president suspended Congress and under the umbrella powers created by AI-5, the military instituted formal censorship of the press and other media, redefining political opposition in Brazil.

During the early years of the military regime, the mainstream newspapers reflected the views of the regime, with rare exceptions. This limited perspective was due in part to the threat or reality of censorship, but the editorial views also reflected the close relationship between newspaper owners and government elites. The emergence of alternative publications in the early 1970s — mostly magazines, underground newspapers and pamphlets — offered members of the opposition another outlet. The government subjected the legal publications to heavy-handed censorship and pursued and persecuted those groups responsible for underground publications.

On top of the limitations placed on the alternative press by government, these publications lacked the resources and access of the mainstream press, restricting them from regularly reporting on the critical issues and news of the day. Raimundo Pereira, the editor of *Opinião* and *Movimento*, two of the most popular alternative publications, said, "You can't be well informed just by reading

[8] Mino Carta used this term in his interview with the author on January 31, 2005. Elifas Andreato referred to it as "the greater coup" in his interview with the author on January 31, 2005.

the alternative press, because it had very few resources, so you needed to read the mainstream press."[9] Nevertheless, the alternative press and even some publications within the mainstream, managed to challenge the voice of government. Newsstand owners began to carry these alternative magazines and circulation increased in the early to mid 1970s. The relative success of the alternative media applied some competitive pressure on the mainstream newspapers to offer more than one voice. Many journalists within these conventional publications who sympathized with the opposition were more than happy to oblige.

Within the mainstream press, "the newspaper had everything — almost all of the political organizations and almost all of the security entities were represented there" (Gabeira 1979: 87). So there were forces from the left pushing to say more, though taking precautions not to say too much. They were cautious not to reveal information known to them through their ties with opposition organizations, but not available more broadly to the press.

In the early 1970s, faced with restrictions imposed by AI-5, a relatively constrained opposition movement existed in Brazil's civil society, and the mainstream press still remained strongly tethered to government. Opposition media continued to battle censorship at this time. In 1975, soon after the initiation of a political opening, the military withdrew its censors from the mainstream publications and some alternative press. The government completely removed prior censorship in June 1978; however, this did not spell the end to government repression of the press. From time to time the regime and its allies continued to threaten journalists and their editors with physical harm, lawsuits, confiscations and other forms of intimidation. Many mainstream publications began to report more thoroughly on opposition to the regime, usurping much of the content that had been reserved for alternative publications.

[9] Interview with the author on December 14, 2004.

At the same time that the alternative press was making headway, the opposition landscape evolved as well. By the early 1970s, the government had successfully dismantled most of the armed guerilla movements. Students, intellectuals, the Catholic Church, labor unions and other neighborhood and professional associations began to define the opposition to the regime as opposition actions began to focus more on civil disobedience than on violent actions. The importance of distinguishing between armed activists and civic groups lies in this difference: the types of actions opposition groups participated in affected both the type of information they needed from the media and what use the media could be to the groups. Armed activists participated in actions such as armed robbery and kidnapping that never would be considered tolerable to the regime under any circumstances. They therefore did not look to the media as a gauge of government tolerance, but rather as a vehicle through which to apply pressure on the regime to comply with their demands. On the other hand, civil society groups participated in events like sit-ins and marches that the regime might tolerate given a particular atmosphere or set of circumstances. In this scenario, opposition members could gain insight into the government's disposition by observing trends in media coverage and the interaction between journalists and government.

While some form of public contestation existed throughout the regime, opposition groups burgeoned as censorship waned. Massive student protests in 1977 marked the first wave since the Fifth Institutional Act was put in place, followed soon after by metalworkers' strikes and other mass movements. Mass actions became much more commonplace in the latter half of military rule. Although the regime attempted to repress or at least limit many of these actions, they were restrained by their official position of supporting a slow, gradual and controlled return to democracy.

Opposition Leaders' Mindset

The struggle against authoritarian rule is comprised of myriad groups who oppose the regime, its policies, and form of government. While each group may have its set of preferred tactics that relate to the organization's resources — both human and economic — and members' tolerance for risk, they all share the objective of pressuring government to make concessions or cede power. To do this effectively requires successful coordination of mass actions.[10] The leaders of dissident groups shoulder the burden for finding ways to encourage members of their groups to participate.

Leaders hope to encourage substantial participation among the masses because the size of a demonstration or strike, in large part, determines its success and ability to sway government. Fearing revolution, a government may prefer to make concessions rather than to repress dissident actions. Since not everyone shares the same passion and understanding of the issues as the opposition leaders, the masses are less likely to participate if they view the effort as futile or if they fear personal retribution for such action. The leaders must convince potential participants of the worthiness of their cause, and the likelihood of successful action without reprisal. It is generally accepted that the more people who participate in a given action, the lesser the risk of participation for any one individual. One activist explained, "(F)or actions like a demonstration at the Praça da Sé, we had to make sure that there would be so many people that the police wouldn't be able to do much."[11]

In the absence of this type of security, opposition groups needed to resort to other means of anti-regime expression. Rather than gamble on a mass action that might fail due to a lack of participants, opposition leaders resorted to other forms of expression requiring minimal action from the group's membership or the masses.

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[10] Many argue that the Brazilian regime transitioned because of changes within the military leadership and not due to the influence of public behavior (O'Donnell & Schmitter 1986; Stepan 1988). Regardless of whether or not the ultimate transition occurred in response to internal changes within the military, the opposition believed it necessary to take action to bring back democracy.

[11] Interview with Luis Momesso by author on March 3, 2005. The Praca da Sé is a principal public space in the center of São Paulo.

Mass actions include anti-regime activities that require many participants' physical presence and expose these participants to the possibility of direct and immediate government reprisals. Strikes, marches, sit-ins and demonstrations qualify as mass actions while acts such as an open letter or a petition do not, even if many people support these endeavors. While the government could potentially penalize anyone who signed a petition or supported a manifesto, this would require further action by government forces who would need to seek out the participants in order to carry out any punishment.

I distinguish between these two types of activities because I believe activist leaders only worried about the government's mood — or at least worried significantly more —- when planning mass actions that required participants to expose themselves, making them vulnerable to immediate government repression. When an opposition group issues a manifesto or writes an open letter, leaders are less concerned with the government's tolerance of anti-regime activity because the broader membership of the organization is not required to participate directly in these actions. Therefore in periods of intense repression, I suspect that the opposition more likely engaged in non-participatory forms of expression, such as issuing manifestos, initiating petitions, and releasing open letters. They did not want to chance a failed mass action that could weaken the opposition's public display of strength and expose those who did participate to unnecessary risk.

H1: The ratio of non-mass actions to mass actions should favor the former during the more repressive periods of authoritarian rule. (Alternatively stated, the government's use of institutionalized repression affects activists' use of mass actions but does not influence their use of non-mass actions.)

Since non-mass actions offer a less visual display of strength and probably have a weaker impact on government and ordinary citizens, opposition groups would prefer to organize more public displays of their support when possible. To encourage mass participation, leaders must motivate the masses, finding common ground and addressing the issue of security. Fernando Gabeira, a member of student movements as well as the armed resistance, explained that "(t)he plans of a demonstration

usually have many details. And there are many that don't work out" (1979: 85). Activist leaders operated in an environment of less-than-perfect information. The government rarely stated when and where it would suppress opposition activity, and when they did make an open threat or announce a restriction, it was not certain that they would or could back up this assertion.

Leaders needed to be resourceful in seeking information that would reveal clues to the sincerity of the government's posturing. I suggest that the media were an essential tool for opposition leaders in gauging the government's mood and strength. In an authoritarian regime, a natural tension arises between the government's desire to control information and the democratic view of the media as a watchdog of government. Audálio Dantas of the São Paulo journalists' association explained journalists' apprehension at the publication where he worked:

> We started being very cautious. We were a very united team, but, in spite of a relative freedom within the company, our texts were sent to Brasília for the censors to analyze. So we were all concerned with that. Still, we were able to write some important pieces … We were careful, but we kept trying.[12]

Opposition leaders can infer from the media's successes that the regime is either more lenient toward anti-regime expression or too weak to successfully combat it. If an opposition leader regularly observes the newspaper and notices more stories challenging taboos without repercussions to journalists or media outlets, he can then infer that the risk of organizing mass actions in that environment is reduced.

H2: Ceteris paribus, trends in political actions should trail trends in taboo content. (In other words, soon after spikes of stories published on "unmentionable" topics occur, leaders should initiate protests.)

As the media challenge the regime, they are sometimes, though not always, met with a repressive response. Here, they serve as the sacrificial canary in the coal mine. In doing their jobs, they risk becoming martyrs. When the regime responds either with actions taken against the journalist or editor (such as arrests or beatings) or punishes the publication in some way (e.g., via censorship,

[12] Interview with the author on Feb. 2, 2005.

confiscation or closure), leaders can infer that the regime is intolerant of anti-regime expression and also has the ability to repress it.

Repression, when seen as an arbitrary action of government, can often trigger increased activism by reinforcing many of the reasons why people oppose the regime in the first place (Mason and Krane 1989, Opp and Roehl 1990, Brockett 1993, Rasler 1996). Yet, these same actions when seen as a direct reaction to or punishment of journalists' publication of critical material can indicate to activists that they may benefit from waiting for a more opportune moment.

H3: Ceteris paribus, repressive actions, when taken alone or against groups other than the media, will spur protest activity.

H4: If the government employs repressive actions against the media after they have increased their critical coverage, such actions will deter activist leaders from organizing protests.

After such incidents new protests are less likely to occur and if protest cycles already have begun, the number and size of such protests likely will diminish.

The effect of the government's response to protesters' actions remains a bit unclear. Logically, one might presume that if the government reacts by arresting and beating up participants in a demonstration or strike, this should deter most people from joining future mass actions. However, many scholars have found that these protests can rile up activists, providing more incentive to oppose the authoritarian regime. It is conceivable that in response to government repression of mass actions, the participation in future mass actions may decline because those citizens with less invested or with a higher sensitivity to risk may choose to stay home; the frequency, nevertheless, of such protests could still increase among the hard-core supporters.

The effect of government concessions remains ambiguous as well. On the one hand, concessions, once granted, fulfill the demands of a particular opposition group removing its incentive for protest. However, the government's offer of concessions also demonstrates the success

of the tactics employed by that group, encouraging other opposition forces to engage in similar tactics.

It is important to consider that protesters generally need reasons to protest. Therefore mass actions against the regime will be inspired by other factors beyond media coverage. They may occur during economic downturns or during economic success if the gains are not distributed well among the masses. Particular government actions also may trigger responses from the opposition, like the murder of a well-known journalist or the suspension of political rights of a highly public figure. Nevertheless, the overall pattern of such events should demonstrate the role of the media in leading the way.

Alternative Hypotheses or Intervening Factors

Another possibility is that activists take to the streets first and pave the way for journalists to increase their critical coverage. In this case, trends in mass actions should precede trends in critical coverage. If the journalists looked to activists for signs of the government's tolerance for anti-regime expression, we would more likely see spikes in critical coverage after the government made concessions to protesters — demonstrating the success of their tactics — rather than following incidents of mass repression, punishing activists for their behavior.

It could also be the case that something else is causing the trends in both mass actions and critical coverage. While it would be likely in this case that mass actions and critical coverage would thus trend together, it is feasible that the rate of reaction to this spurious variable was different for journalists than for political activists. While it is impossible to control for all possible intervening variables, I do control for some economic and political conditions that might influence both newspaper content and political activism. It also tends to be true that these other factors trend much more slowly than the movements of media and mass actions, so these factors may influence long-

term trends, but are unlikely to be responsible for slight and more frequent changes observable in media content and protest trends.

Methodology

To test the hypothesis that the mainstream media serve as a barometer for opposition leaders planning mass protests, I began by building a database based on content coded from *A Folha de São Paulo,* one of the main daily newspapers in Brazil's largest city. With the help of assistants, I read and coded every 10th day of the newspaper from the start of the regime-initiated *abertura*, "political opening," through 1982, the year of the first direct gubernatorial and truly competitive congressional elections. My assistants and I double-coded every 10th day of the dates coded.[13] We read the newspaper with the exception of the international, sports and classified sections. We read headlines and first paragraphs to see if an article was relevant. If it was, we continued to read the entire article to note particular details. We also scanned all sub-heads because some essential information, particularly on opposition actions, appeared lower down in an article. Additionally, since editorials are not structured like standard newspaper articles in which more important information appears earlier in a piece, we read editorials from beginning to end.

For each date of the paper, we coded any mention of protest, either mass actions such as marches, demonstrations, or strikes; or other methods such as petitions, open letters and targeted hunger strikes. If provided in the articles, we recorded the number of participants, who participated, when the event began and how long it lasted, and the demands made by the participants. We also noted the government's reaction to the protests, including concessions offered and whether

[13] I do not present inter-coder reliability scores because a constrained time frame caused by two separate and extended closures of the Brazilian National Library due to a workers' strike prevented us from double-coding the last years analyzed. Also, the complex nature of coding made it difficult to obtain a measure for inter-coder reliability. By referring to newspaper archives at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., I was able to fill in missing data and resolve conflicting data. This meant that I made adjustments to days coded by assistants, which diminished some of the benefits of double coding such as ensuring objectivity, though my adjustments made the database more complete over all. Double-coded days were combined to ensure inclusion of all anti-regime actions.

participants were injured, arrested or killed in the course of taking action. Separately we noted details of abuses against members of the opposition and/or the media such as arrest, torture, disappearance, etc. We also documented anti-media actions including censorship, confiscation, media closures, etc. The data include details of the release of prisoners or return of exiles reported in the media. Lastly we recorded any material that touched on content generally considered taboo in authoritarian regimes. We categorized articles, editorials and cartoons under nine categories: (1) criticism of economic policy or mismanagement of the economy, (2) crime by top government officials, (3) corruption by top government officials,[14] (4) negative personal information on the leader or exposés on his family, (5) splits within the ruling group, (6) citations of the non-sanctioned opposition, (7) opposition electoral efforts, (8) anti-government satire, and (9) criticism of government bodies or policies.[15]

Given that Brazil was not a democratic country and that the government censored the media, it would be fair to question whether the media were able to report most opposition activity. To assess how much the local paper reported, we coded foreign news sources for mention of anti-government activity. Using the same coding scheme from *A Folha de São Paulo* we recorded reports of anti-regime expression in a combination of *Facts on File, The New York Times, The Economist, Newsweek,* and *U.S. News & World Report.* Events that were reported in the foreign press generally appeared in the domestic press as well, whereas the domestic press provided more thorough coverage of some movements than did the foreign press. I, therefore, rely on data solely from *A Folha de São Paulo* for the analyses presented in this paper.

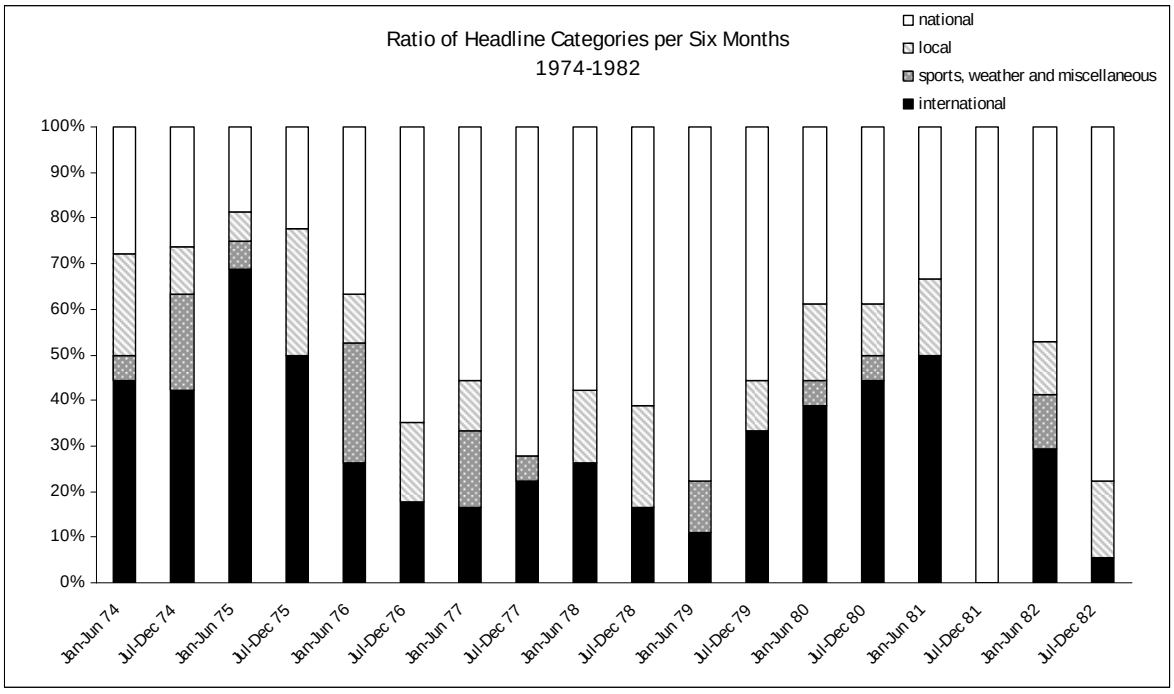
[14] For the purpose of analysis, groups two and three were combined because these topics overlapped substantially.
[15] Most of these categories were drawn from a book edited by Anthony Collings, *Words of Fire: Independent Journalists Who Challenge Dictators, Druglords, and Other Enemies of a Free Press* (2001). Additionally, in my interviews I suggested that in authoritarian regimes, certain topics are prohibited from being covered. I then asked the interviewee to confirm if that was the case in Brazil for each of the nine topics. The majority of my interviewees agreed with this list, though a few felt that journalists were able to report on some of these topics at some point in the dictatorship.

After entering these data into a relational database, I quantified them in order to perform statistical analyses of the data to test my hypotheses. I discuss these analyses in more detail in the next section of the paper.

Trends in Coverage vs. Trends in Activism

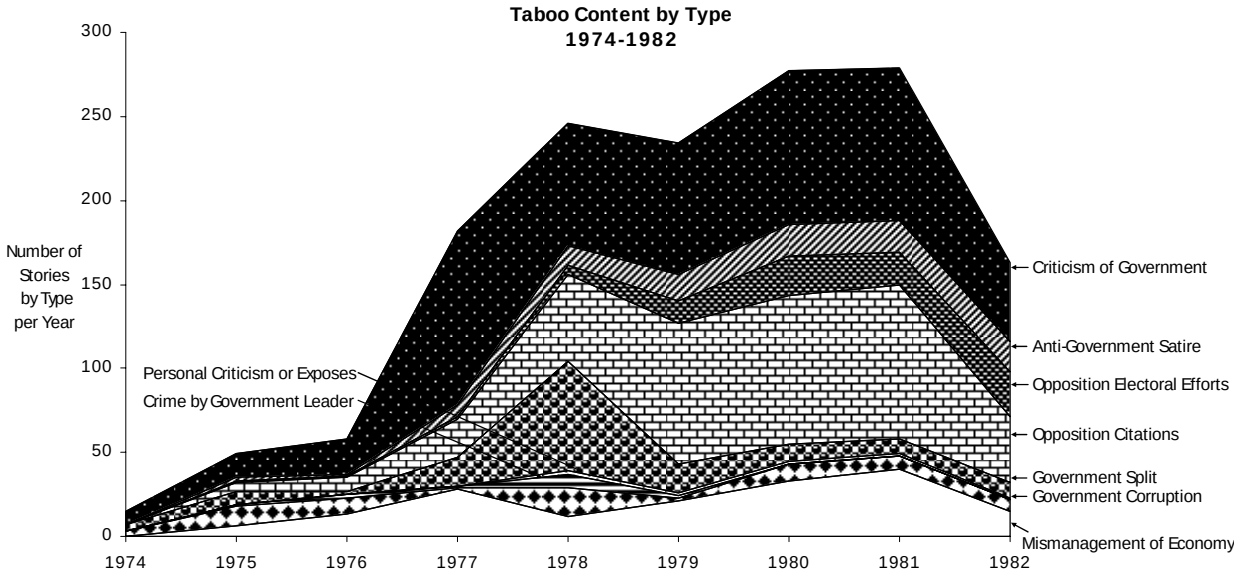
The media's coverage of the regime at the onset of political liberalization was benign from the point of view of government. Few stories that challenged norms of authoritarian ways made their way to print. While the papers mentioned democracy in the early 1970s, this did not challenge the regime since Brazil continued to hold elections and the government had announced its intention to move toward democratization. At the onset of political liberalization, the newspaper was focusing much of its attention on international news, leaving domestic political news for the interior of the paper. *A Folha de São Paulo* even dropped their editorial page for a period in 1975. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of headlines by category from 1974-1982. While the regional distribution of newsworthy events may vary somewhat over time, it is unlikely that there were significantly more newsworthy occurrences internationally in 1975 than in later years. Yet the daily headlines in the São Paulo newspaper paid far less attention to national issues (the solid white portions of the bars) during the initial phase of the political liberalization process, preferring instead to divert attention to other types of stories.

Figure 1. Distribution of Headlines by Subject in Six-Month Intervals



Despite President Ernesto Geisel's announcement of *abertura*, the media did not immediately report critically on the regime. Only after prior censorship was lifted from some initial publications in 1975 did the media begin to challenge the regime more. Figure 2 illustrates the overall increase in critical coverage during the period from 1974 to 1982 and also shows how this coverage broke down by type of content.

Figure 2. Taboo Content by Topic from 1974-1982



When prior censorship was removed completely in June 1978, the media already were reporting fairly critically on government. Nevertheless, some topics remained comparatively more off limits than others.[16] Although it may have become legitimate for a journalist to cite the opposition[17] or challenge government policies, rarely could the media target the president or his family with personal attacks. Only a handful of stories appeared discussing the president's health and his ability to govern when he fell ill. Criticism of the government's handling of the economy also remained off-limits

[16] I had no expectation that there would be an equal distribution of content across taboo subjects. For example, space in a newspaper for satire is generally limited to the editorial pages and, in particular, the political cartoons, whereas citations of opposition members or criticism of policy can appear almost anywhere in a newspaper. Additionally, certain categories are limited to reporting on actual occurrences, such as splits within the regime or crimes and corruption by government leaders. While these things may occur without being covered (as was likely the case in the early years of the dictatorship), these topics are unlikely to appear in the news unless an actual incident occurs.

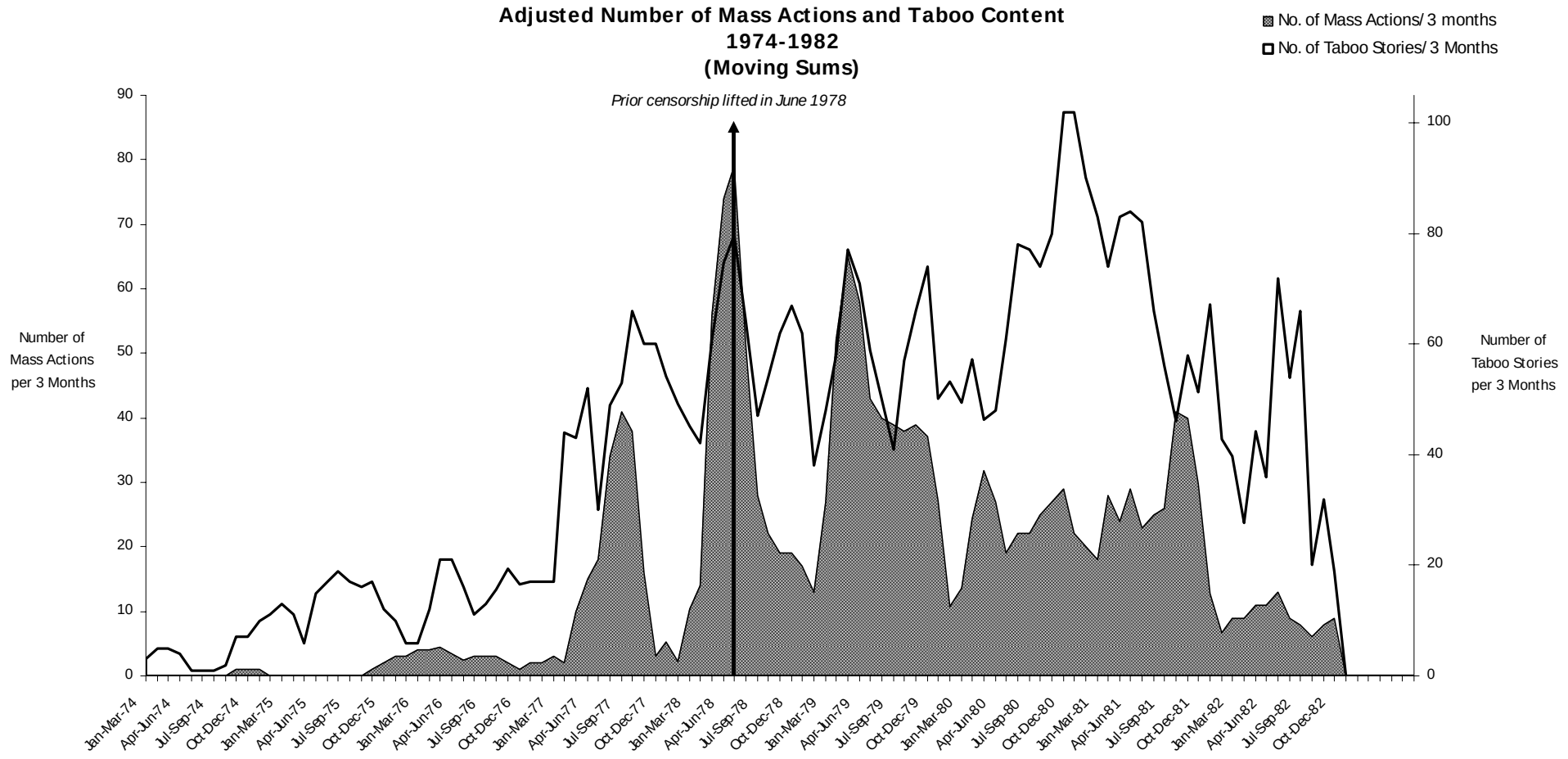
[17] From 1965 to 1979 there was a two-party system consisting of the government party, Arena, and the government-sanctioned opposition party, the MDB. Since the regime formally sanctioned the MDB, and the MDB played by the military regimes' constitutional rules, we did not code citations by the MDB as opposition quotes. In 1979, however, the military regime introduced party reform that replaced the two-party system with a multiparty system. Arena broke up. The majority of its members formed the PDS party. The MDB reformed as the PMDB, but many of its members helped form other opposition parties as well. This left me with the dilemma of who to consider as part of the opposition when coding opposition citations. I considered all members of the opposition parties including members of the PMDB to qualify for opposition citations because at this point these parties acted like opposition to the regime and challenged the institutional rules introduced by the military regime. All types of people previously considered part of the non-sanctioned opposition remained so after party reform. This manner of counting opposition admittedly may overrepresent the increase in opposition voices from the period before party reform to the period after, but accurately reflects changes that occurred within the opposition itself.

despite the collapse of Brazil's heralded "economic miracle" and the revelation in 1977 that the regime had manipulated the figures on inflation that were used to calculate increases in the minimum wage in 1973 and 1974. On the other hand, while initially forbidden, anti-government satire became somewhat commonplace in later years. While taboo content generally continued an upward trend beginning in 1977 through 1981, the newspaper coverage of taboo subjects dropped substantially in 1982. Since I did not follow coverage after the 1982 elections, I do not know if this trend continued or was only a temporary decline. In 1982, much of the political dialogue focused on the now-direct gubernatorial elections. People started to believe that direct elections were a viable and attainable objective and a proper means to express their opposition. With the emergence of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party), the strike movement experienced in the beginning of the decade petered out. The press likewise redirected its attention toward the elections and the future possibility of direct presidential elections. I presume this new focus of the press brought about the decline in taboo coverage.

Figure 3 depicts the trends in both newspaper coverage and mass actions.[18] Because the number of actions and taboo content are erratic from one 10-day period to the next, I use moving sums to smooth out the trend line and better illustrate the comparison between trends in taboo content and trends in mass actions. I use sums rather than averages because when dealing with small values, this helps to show visually the differences over time. The figure illustrates that in the initial period of political détente, mass actions tended to trend in synch with taboo content. The number of mass actions would increase soon after taboo content increased, as expected. However, as political liberalization moved further along, particularly with the lifting of censorship and the end of the Fifth Institutional Act, the media could publish pretty freely with few threats of reprisal from the government.

[18] The chart displays a moving sum of both taboo content and mass actions over a three-month period. This takes into consideration that recent history can still influence behavior. It also allows the reader to see the trend over time.

Figure 3. Comparison of Trends in Mass Actions and Taboo Content during Political Liberalization in Brazil



Once the media no longer needed to play tug of war with the government to determine their content, media coverage failed to serve as a reliable barometer of the government's mood. Therefore, soon after the government lifted censorship the relationship between activism and media coverage began to dissipate. There should be a higher correlation between protest and lagged taboo content during the period of censorship than in the period afterward. The change in this relationship did not occur immediately after the policy shift as both the media and activists likely were testing whether the withdrawal of censors would stick.

The height of opposition mass activity occurred between 1977 and 1979 with three major opposition movements. In 1977 students initiated a cycle of protests, demanding greater autonomy and progress toward democratization. In 1978, union workers took over the mass movement with major metalworkers' strikes in Greater São Paulo led by Brazil's current president, Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva. Union workers had both economic and political demands. These two groups along with professionals and intellectuals joined forces in 1979 with another major wave of protest actions pushing for complete amnesty for political prisoners and calling for the end of the authoritarian regime and its policies. This combined effort by the opposition continued into 1980.

Invariably because of the nature of reporting, some taboo content will trend with these mass actions, as journalists report on these events and the issues behind them. However, a careful look at these data indicate that journalists appeared to initiate a cycle of critical coverage prior to most opposition movements' actions. These protests were not without interruptions and consequences.

Figure 4 overlays actions taken against the media, such as censorship and confiscation, from 1974 through 1982 on top of the number of mass actions during the same time period. As with Figure 3, I rely on moving sums to illustrate the relationship between anti-media occurrences and mass actions.

Figure 4. Comparison of Political Activism and Actions Taken against the Media from 1974-1982

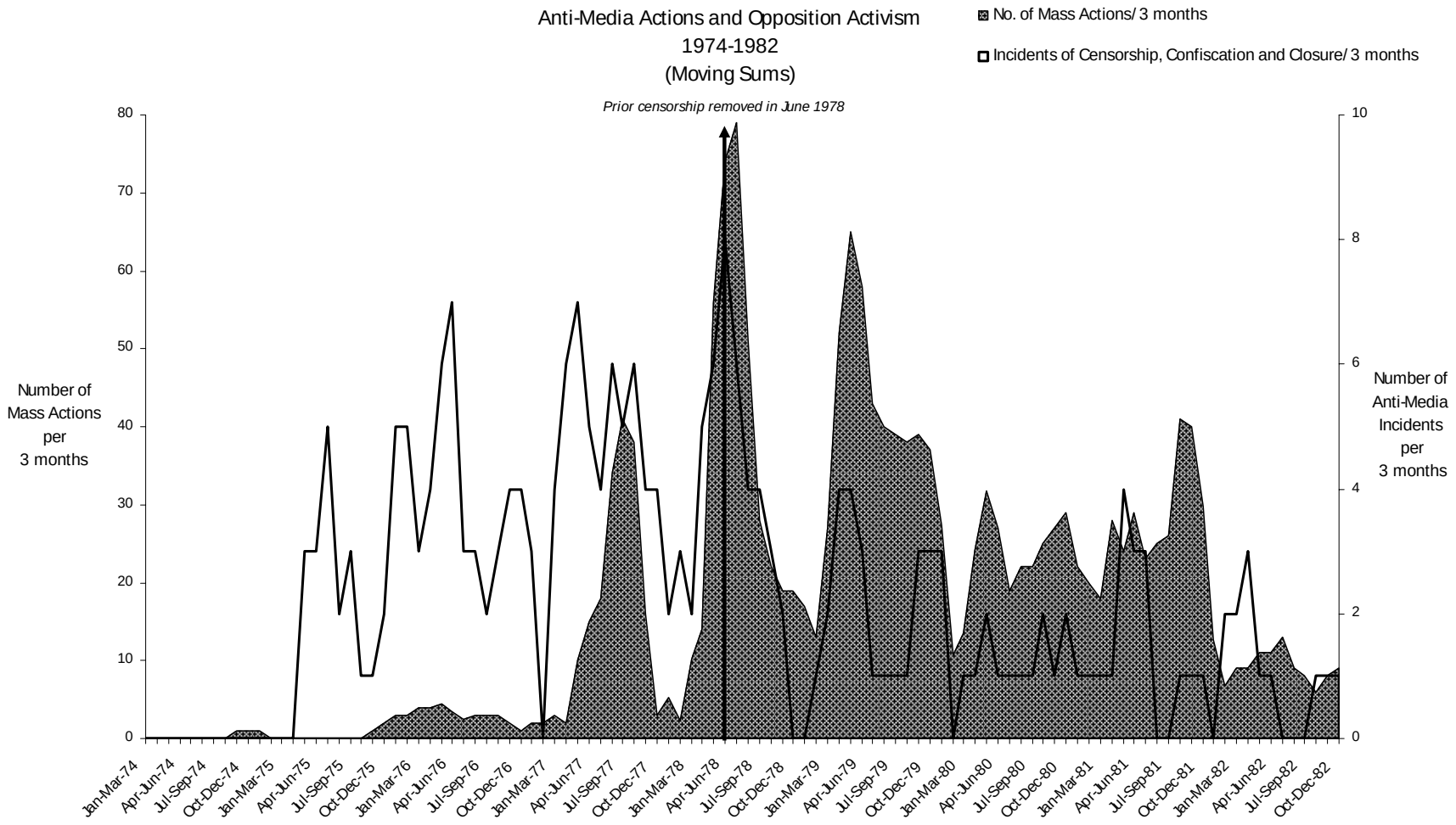


Figure 4 demonstrates that the government repressed the media and suppressed its content more during the first years of liberalization. Thus, there was minimal taboo content during this period; activists took their cue from the media and rarely participated in mass actions. Nevertheless, as the process of liberalization progressed the government did not completely cease taking actions against the media. Even after removing formal censorship, the government and paramilitary groups continued to harass and intimidate the press.

To determine with greater certainty the relationship between activism and media coverage as well as the mediating effect of anti-media actions and other factors, I conduct a statistical analysis controlling for other external factors, such as economic performance and foreign influence, likely to influence both media coverage and political activism.

Model Specification

Dependent Variable

To test the media's barometer effect on political activism, I rely on the content data described in the methodology section. The dependent variable is the number of mass actions initiated in the 10 days preceding a coded issue of the newspaper.[19] The mass actions are comprised of conferences and symposiums, demonstrations, marches, public meetings, strikes, work slowdowns and vigils.[20] For comparison's sake, I also use the number of non-mass actions initiated in the 10 days preceding a coded issue. These actions consist of petitions, manifestos, open letters, public statements, press releases, boycotts and hunger strikes.[21] Since both of these variables are measured by counting the number of mass (or non-mass) actions initiated during a 10-day period, these data only consist of

[19] When coding newspaper articles on mass actions, we looked for a reference to the start date. If it was not mentioned but made clear that it was more than a day before, we defaulted to the first of the month. If it did not appear to have been ongoing we used the date of the day prior to the publication of that issue. The original data notes if the specific date was not provided.

[20] This variable includes actions taken against private companies, such as strikes, and private universities. During the military regime, the vast majority of strikes were considered anti-government because of the close relationship between the regime and big business. For example, the metalworkers' labor movement, which theoretically targeted the auto industry owners was considered one of the largest anti-government campaigns of the military regime. The government also intervened substantially in the university system and easily could have influenced the rectors of these educational institutions as well.

[21] Though the latter two may seem like mass-actions, they do not require the participants' presence in a public space and, therefore, participants are not immediately subject to repercussions from government.

non-negative integers with a large number of observations registering zero actions in a 10-day period; they do not fit the assumptions required for ordinary least squares.

The default model for count dependent variables is the Poisson regression, which deals with the distinct distribution of such data. However, it has some stringent assumptions that make it inappropriate for the data at hand. A Poisson model assumes a constant rate of event occurrence over an observed period and assumes the mean of the dependent variable is equal to its variance, not allowing for overdispersion (the case in which the variance exceeds the mean). If the data violate these assumptions, it may lead to biased standard errors for the independent variables (Barron 1992). To accommodate overdispersion of the data, which can be caused by contagion or time-dependence, people often resort to the negative binomial model that corrects for overdispersed counts (Barron 1992). While this improves matters, it still requires that the occurrence of each event be independent of others. Since the occurrence of a mass action at a given moment likely depends to some degree on whether there were or were not mass actions in the preceding days, this independence does not exist. Also given that the time periods selected for this study are arbitrary (i.e., there is no reason why I begin on one day versus any other), this independence also does not exist across time periods. One option that may correct for autocorrelations is the inclusion of a lagged dependent variable among the model's explanatory variables. Some scholars who study collective action have used the negative binomial model with a lagged dependent variable (Pickering 2002, Meyer and Minkoff 2004). An alternative model used to correct for both the overdispered and autocorrelated nature of these data is the autoregressive Poisson model (Schwartz et al 1996, Worrall and Tibbets 2006), originally created to deal with epidemiological information (Katsouyanni et al 1996).[22] For the purposes of this paper, I will show the results of both the negative binomial with lagged dependent variable and the autoregressive Poisson methods for equivalent models to

[22] Many scholars have suggested other models to deal with the specific issues of time series count data, such as the PARMA model proposed by Patrick T. Brandt and John T. Williams (1998, 1999), or the PEWMA model (Brandt et al 2000). Others have argued that more traditional models that are easily accessible to the non-statistician such as Dynamic Ordered Probit will suffice (Jung et al 2005).

compare results. The autoregressive Poisson method deals with overdispersion either through autoregressive studentized residuals or a lagged dependent variable (Tobias and Campbell 1998).

Independent Variables

The key independent variable measures the number of stories that appeared in an issue of the newspaper that could be considered taboo. These stories encompass the nine topics generally considered off-limits in authoritarian regimes described in more detail in the methodology section of this paper. Like the dependent variable, the values for taboo content are non-negative integers.

To control for the government's treatment of the media I rely on two different variables. The first of the two variables measures actions taken against the media in a broader sense. This includes incidents of censorship; confiscation of printed material; closure of publications either temporarily or permanently; bombings of offices, printing presses and newsstands; incidents of intimidation against publications and their employees; and other lesser used actions like lawsuits for published material "jeopardizing" national security or embarrassing the president. This variable sums the number of these incidents that took place in the 10 days prior to a coded issue, and is therefore a non-negative integer. The second of these variables measures actions taken against journalists, editors and media owners at a more personal level. Unlike the other actions, reserved almost exclusively for media outlets, these tactics (which I refer to in a broad sense as "attacks") were used against all citizens determined to be in opposition to the regime and include arrests, physical injuries, disappearances, kidnappings, torture and murder. This variable counts the number of journalists, editors and publishers who were reported subjected to these attacks in a particular issue. I do not adjust these reports by the date they were reported to have occurred. While some people may have witnessed such events, it is generally the reporting of these events that sends the message of risk. I removed obvious repeated references to the same incidents. Like the previously mentioned variables, this variable is also a count.

Since I theorize that the media serve as a barometer to anti-regime expression both through their content and in the government's reaction to challenges by the media, it is not the arrest of a journalist per se that sends a message to activists that it is unsafe to protest. Rather, it is viewing these actions against the media as a response to the amount of critical content they recently produced. Therefore I include interaction terms between taboo content and both anti-media actions and journalist attacks.

I also include two variables that assess how the government responded to protesters or strikers and their demands. One variable captures concessions made to the participants, while the other encapsulates repressive actions against them. For the former variable, concessions, if the government fully conceded to the demands, I scored it as 1.[23] If they complied with some but not all demands or offered only partial concessions, such as a lower raise than what was requested, I would have coded the concession as 0.5. If no resolution is reported or the government refused to give in, I scored it zero.[24] If no demands were reported, it was marked as not applicable, but eventually coded to zero for the purposes of a statistical analysis.[25] For the latter variable, repression, I coded 1 if the government used violence, made arrests, employed extreme measures like using tear gas, or completely stopped an event from taking place. If the regime reacted with a "show" of force, with a large police presence, or threatened to make arrests or prevent an act from taking place but did not proceed with these threats, then I scored repression as 0.5. I coded repression as zero if no actions were taken by the regime or none were reported. The variables in the analysis are the sum of these scores for all mass actions during that period. All of the previously mentioned independent variables

[23] Since, for the purposes of this paper, strikes were considered anti-government, concessions made by large corporations were coded equivalently to concessions made directly by the regime.

[24] I rely on the descriptions provided in newspaper articles, which are neither precise nor all-encompassing. Therefore, at times, I had difficulty assessing whether all or some demands were met, if they were reported at all.

[25] For the concession variable, I grouped together situations where it was reported that the government did not give in to demands with cases in which the government's response or the demands themselves were not reported. My focus is on how concessions in one protest may encourage others to engage in protest. This parallels the debate about whether or not a tree that falls in the middle of the woods makes a sound if no one is there to hear it. Potential protesters outside the group of participants in a particular action take cues from what they read in the paper or hear by word of mouth, not necessarily from what actually occurred. If the media do not report on concessions — even if they were made — the influence of these concessions would not extend beyond the original group of protestors.

were lagged by 30 days.[26] This gave activists sufficient time to observe and adapt to trends in the press and the government's reaction to the media's challenges.

I also include dummy variables that note whether the observed time period fell while the Fifth Institutional Act remained in place or after party-system reform switched Brazil from a two-party to a multiparty system. I believe that the extra-constitutional powers available to the regime via the Fifth Institutional Act would have deterred protests because the government could make arrests without cause and take other abusive measures. Also, as Brazil moved from a two-party to a multiparty system, a broader segment of the population viewed political parties, rather than civil society groups, as proper means for expressing their opposition to the regime. To control for economic conditions I include the monthly inflation rate for the municipality of São Paulo[27] and the annual growth in GDP/capita for all of Brazil.[28]

My analysis shows that throughout the period of political opening, from 1974 to 1982, the media in Brazil did in fact serve as a barometer for political activists planning mass actions (see Table 1, white column on left). According to the results of the negative binomial model with a lagged dependent variable over the entire period of political liberalization, when taboo content increased one month, the following month the number of protests tended to increase.[29] This supports my second hypothesis that political actions should trail trends in taboo content.

[26] I tried lags of 10, 20 and 30 days. While the 10-day lag showed some effect on protests of both taboo content and previous protests, the 30-day lag worked best. While elite cues in the press can have immediate effects, which rapidly decay, on shifts in public opinion (Zaller 1991), it makes sense that it would take longer for activists to assess new information they obtain from journalists' reporting and government reaction to this reporting and then to plan mass actions.

[27] DIEESE (http://www.dieese.org.br/cgi-bin/wwwi32.exe/[in=bmacessa.in])

[28] World Development Indicators (2000).

[29] The lag time between the dependent variable and independent variables was 30 days, not necessarily a month, per se. However for all intents and purposes this is the same time frame and so in the discussion of the results I refer to the lagged period as a month.

Table 1. Regression Output for Negative Binomial and Autoregressive Poisson Models by Time Periods

	Negative Binomial Regression with Lagged Dependent Variable			Autoregressive Poisson Regression		
	Full Period	Pre-Party Reform	Post-Party Reform	Full Period	Pre-Party Reform	Post-Party Reform
Lagged Mass Actions	0.1089**	0.1721	0.0488			
	(0.0522)	(0.1125)	(0.0521)			
Lagged Taboo Content	0.0848**	0.1507*	0.0119	0.0670**	0.1455**	0.0097
	(0.0366)	(0.0789)	(0.0295)	(0.0268)	(0.0559)	(0.0283)
Lagged Anti-Media Acts	0.4611**	0.4170*	0.2474	0.6642***	0.7566***	0.2284
	(0.2286)	(0.2134)	(0.2499)	(0.1235)	(0.1543)	(0.2445)
Lagged Journalist Attacks	0.1000	0.0618	-0.0436	-0.0055	0.0035	-0.1625
	(0.0790)	(0.1141)	(0.1070)	(0.0976)	(0.1120)	(0.1854)
Lagged (Taboo Content x Anti-Media Acts)	-0.0886**	-0.2074***	-0.0421	-0.1649***	-0.3075***	-0.0441
	(0.0414)	(0.0740)	(0.0372)	(0.0372)	(0.0693)	(0.0426)
Lagged (Taboo Content x Journalist Attacks)	-0.0326**	-0.0313	-0.0283	-0.0139	-0.0120	-0.0125
	(0.0166)	(0.0302)	(0.0298)	(0.0192)	(0.0241)	(0.0405)
Lagged Government Concessions	0.1110*	0.1683*	-0.7182**	0.0077	0.0928	-0.7371**
	(0.0589)	(0.0979)	(0.3067)	(0.0747)	(0.1017)	(0.3679)
Lagged Government Repression	0.0973	0.2315	0.3017	0.0895	0.1376	0.1697
	(0.1162)	(0.2363)	(0.2071)	(0.0995)	(0.1239)	(0.1545)
Lagged Monthly Inflation (SP municipality)	0.0418	0.2402***	0.0316	0.0042	0.1178	0.0305
	(0.0613)	(0.0749)	(0.0553)	(0.0544)	(0.0858)	(0.0629)
Lagged Annual Growth in GDP/capita	-0.0407**	-0.2751***	0.0009	-0.0539**	-0.2591***	-0.0120
	(0.0182)	(0.0609)	(0.0177)	(0.0211)	(0.0706)	(0.0174)
Fifth Institutional Act	-1.0773***			-1.2733***		
	(0.2597)			(0.2545)		
Multiparty System	-0.7564***			-1.0601***		
	(0.2498)			(0.2735)		
Autoregressive Term (1)				0.2563***	0.3095***	0.0251
				(0.0577)	(0.0730)	(0.0961)
Autoregressive Term (2)				0.2846***	0.2125***	0.3922***
				(0.0567)	(0.0610)	(0.0992)
Autoregressive Term (3)				0.0408	0.0227	0.1490
				(0.0593)	(0.0525)	(0.1100)
alpha	1.2205	1.8268	0.4713			
	(0.2026)	(0.3521)	(0.1311)			
lr test of alpha = 0 chibar^2	284.46***	241.10***	35.60***			
Adjusted R^2				0.2856	0.3205	0.1184
Wald chi^2 / F-test	79.20-***	135.96***	9.81	9.65***	8.35***	2.29**
Observations	316	200	116	312	196	116

Robust standard errors in parentheses, * significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%. Constants were included but are not reported here. When alpha = 0, the negative binomial distribution is equivalent to the Poisson distribution. Therefore, the likelihood ratio test for alpha=0 tests for overdispersion. These tests verify that overdispersion exists and that negative binomial regression is more appropriate than standard Poisson models.

The effect of taboo content on mass actions was mediated, however, by the number of incidents of censorship, confiscation of published material, closures of media outlets, among other anti-media actions. When increases in taboo content were accompanied by actions against the media, protesters reduced their tendency to protest in the subsequent month. This finding supports my fourth hypothesis, which predicted that when the government employed repressive actions against the media following increases in critical coverage, these actions would deter opposition leaders from organizing protests. Providing additional support for this hypothesis, the arrest, torture, imprisonment, etc., of journalists and editors also mediated the effect of taboo content, reducing future protests the following month. Interestingly, when anti-media acts such as censorship occurred unaccompanied by any increase in taboo material, activists took to the street more frequently in the following month, supporting my third hypothesis that anti-media actions that do not seem to be responding to journalists' coverage of taboo topics appear arbitrary and provide further incentive for opposition to the regime, thus increasing the number of subsequent protest activities. Similar to actions taken against media organizations, those that directly attack journalists and editors may have encouraged subsequent protests, though this coefficient was not statistically significant at the 0.10 level.

According to the same model, the response that the government took in dealing with the protesters' demands — either by making concessions or by repressing the protesters — did not deter future protests. In either case, the government further encouraged protests, though the coefficient for government repression was not statistically significant.

Annual growth in GDP per capita had a negative effect on protests; as GDP/capita increased, protests tended to decline. This reflects lower levels of popular dissatisfaction when the economy was growing fast. The Brazilian Military regime experienced high growth rates of 6.5 percent and 7.2 percent in 1974 and 1976, respectively. Monthly inflation, usually felt immediately by the public, did

not approach statistical significance and seemed to have little effect on actual protests. The fact that prices of many basic staples were indexed to inflation likely reduced the financial pressure on ordinary citizens normally associated with inflation.

The dummy variables for the period of the Fifth Institutional Act and for the period after Brazil moved to a multiparty system demonstrate that the 10 months between these two periods was the most intense period of protest. Both variables show a negative effect on the number of protests as predicted. Using an autoregressive Poisson model in place of negative binomial regression results in coefficients all in the same direction as the latter (see Table 1, white column on right).

As mentioned previously, the media's barometer effect diminishes after censorship is lifted from the media, and the government ceases, in large measure, to intimidate and repress journalists. To get a better grasp on this distinction, I ran the same model dividing the data into two periods: pre-party and post-party reform (see Table 1, gray columns). In order to break up the opposition party, which had gained substantial ground in the two prior elections, the government instituted party reform in November 1979, a little more than a year after the end of censorship and 10 months after the end of the Fifth Institutional Act. Although party reform did weaken the opposition MDB, it also offered new venues for people who sympathized with the opposition to express their grievances through the government's formal institutional system rather than taking to the streets in protest. Lifting censorship also evened the playing field by opening newspapers to the opposition's campaign, though the prohibition of electoral propaganda on radio and television persisted until 1985.

The model focused on the pre-party reform period accentuates the "barometer effect" of the media as the coefficient for lagged taboo content nearly doubled, though it loses some statistical significance perhaps as a result of the smaller sample size. The effect of anti-media acts and attacks on journalists in spurring subsequent protests diminished, though the interacting effect of anti-media acts accompanied by taboo content became even stronger in deterring future protests. The

coefficient for this interaction more than doubled. The coefficient for the second interaction term, taboo content along with journalist attacks, demonstrates a similar effect to that of the full model.[30]

In this period, prior to party reform, government concessions likely demonstrated that mass actions could achieve success, and mass actions tended to increase a month after the government made concessions to protesters or strikers. The coefficient for government repression increased substantially and remains positive, indicating that when the government repressed protesters, rather than journalists, this actually encouraged subsequent protests, but the coefficient remains statistically insignificant. This result coincides with findings made by Charles Brockett (1993), and by T. David Mason and Dale E. Krane (1989) who believed that protestors who already were invested would continue to participate because they viewed themselves as "marked men" by government.[31] Economic factors become highly significant in this period from January 1974 through October 1979. As inflation rose, mass actions increased the following month. On the other hand, when Brazil experienced periods of GDP/capita growth, protests tended to diminish. In the period following party reform, the only variable that is statistically significant is government concessions, which now has a negative effect on the level of subsequent protests.

To offer a more informative way to interpret the coefficients on the models presented above, I calculated the mean estimates for a change in the explanatory variables when moving from zero to one standard deviation above the mean (see Table 2 for means and standard deviations of the

[30] These results are from the negative binomial with lagged dependent variable model. The autoregressive Poisson models for pre- and post-party reform offer similar results to those of the negative binomial models for these same periods. In the autoregressive Poisson model for the period prior to party reform, the coefficient for government concessions is no longer statistically significant; however, the coefficient for government repression becomes significant at the 0.05 level. The other effects remain similar. In the period after reform, using the autoregressive Poisson model, only lagged concessions and lagged repression are significant.

[31] It is important to remind the reader that the data at hand represent the number and not the size of protests. While it could be that repression deters the masses from joining protest, those already engaged in protest might continue to protest or increase their protest in the face of repression. So it is feasible that the size but not the frequency of protests declined.

explanatory variables and Table 3 for the first difference mean estimates). [32] For example, in the model for the full time period, an increase from no taboo stories in an issue to about six taboo stories in an issue led to nearly two-thirds of an additional protest during the 10-day period 30 days later. Clearly there cannot be a partial protest, but this formula provides the average effect.

Table 2. Summary Statistics for (Non-Dummy) Explanatory Variables by Time Period

	Full Model				Pre-Party Reform				Post Party Reform			
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Lagged Mass Actions	1.764	3.166	0	37	1.562	3.543	0	37	2.129	2.301	0	16
Lagged Taboo Content	3.009	3.119	0	18	2.126	2.495	0	13	4.586	3.489	0	18
Lagged Anti-Media Acts	0.347	0.707	0	5	0.367	0.751	0	5	0.310	0.624	0	3
Lagged Journalist Attacks	0.395	1.352	0	13	0.457	1.521	0	13	0.284	0.976	0	6
Lagged (Taboo Content x Anti-Media Acts)	1.180	3.203	0	30	0.981	2.560	0	18	1.534	4.098	0	30
Lagged (Taboo Content x Journalist Attacks)	1.487	6.165	0	48	1.596	6.311	0	48	1.293	5.915	0	48
Lagged Government Concessions	0.102	0.657	0	11	0.095	0.784	0	11	0.116	0.332	0	2
Lagged Government Repression	0.252	0.642	0	4	0.226	0.633	0	4	0.297	0.656	0	3.5
Lagged Monthly Inflation (SP)	3.879	1.972	0.35	9.08	2.892	1.464	0.35	6.36	5.615	1.496	3.14	9.08
Lagged Annual GDP/Capita Growth	2.467	4.246	-6.6	7.2	3.912	2.339	0.8	7.2	-0.150	5.503	-6.6	6.6

In the pre-party reform period a move from no stories to a bit more than four-and-a-half stories had a larger effect than throughout the entire period of liberalization, leading to 1.15 additional protests. While a change from zero to one standard deviation above the mean for anti-media acts prior to party reform predicts an increase of .63 protests in the period that begins 30 days later, the decreasing effect of this move for the lagged interaction between taboo content and such acts, equivalent to -.54, cancels out most of this increase, reducing the impact taboo content has on subsequent protests. Like anti-media acts, attacks on journalists and editors, when interacted with taboo content and lagged, negatively affect the number of protests the subsequent month; a change in the interaction term from zero to one standard deviation above the mean more than cancels out the positive effect, small as it is, that attacks on journalists and editors have on the number of

[32] I calculated the move from zero to one standard deviation above the mean for the non-dummy explanatory variables. The dummy variables I calculated the expected change going from zero to one.

protests. Table 3 lists the substance of the effects for the remaining explanatory variables both during the entire liberalizing period and for the subset of this time prior to party reform. For the variables noting the Fifth Institutional Act and multiparty system, the figures presented show the mean difference from not occurring during this period to occurring during this period, ceteris paribus.

Table 3. Table of First Difference Mean Estimates (Mean to Standard Deviation Shift)

	Full Model				Pre-Party Reform			
	Mean	Standard Error	95 percent confidence interval		Mean	Standard Error	95 percent confidence interval	
Lagged Mass Actions	0.6776	0.3816	0.0316	1.4836	1.1512	0.9878	-0.2136	3.6090
Lagged Taboo Content	0.6131	0.2731	0.1316	1.2338	0.6944	0.3658	0.0056	1.4557
Lagged Anti-Media Acts	0.6279	0.3543	0.0224	1.3816	0.5060	0.2915	-0.0081	1.1183
Lagged Attacks on Journalists	0.2173	0.1758	-0.1009	0.5687	0.1140	0.1837	-0.1984	0.5060
Lagged Interaction (1)	-0.5428	0.2331	-0.9859	-0.0387	-0.7156	0.2266	-1.1783	-0.2661
Lagged Interaction (2)	-0.3398	0.1668	-0.6508	-0.0130	-0.2283	0.2207	-0.6149	0.2300
Lagged Government Concessions	0.0971	0.0501	0.0001	0.1978	0.1481	0.0863	-0.0284	0.3286
Lagged Government Repression	0.1084	0.1221	-0.1279	0.3493	0.2205	0.2299	-0.1986	0.7305
Lagged Inflation Rate	0.3305	0.5066	-0.7501	1.2755	0.6533	0.2050	0.2591	1.0958
Lagged GDP/Capita Growth	-0.2034	0.1075	-0.4305	-0.0243	-1.3732	0.4213	-2.3158	-0.6436
Fifth Institutional Act (AI-5)	-2.1827	0.6744	-3.6906	-1.0486				
Multi-Party System	-0.5857	0.1961	-1.0061	-0.2119				

Note: The figures for any one variable are the change that occurs in the dependent variable when changing the corresponding explanatory variable, holding all other factors constant.

Other variables included in some models not presented in full detail here generally were not significant or concealed the effects of many of the other variables because they corresponded too closely with particular years. For example the inclusion of a variable for Jimmy Carter's presidency canceled out the effects of all but a few other explanatory variables. While it is likely that President Carter had some influence over the situation in Brazil through pressuring the military regime to

reduce its human rights violations, it is hard to imagine that Carter was the primary influence on mass actions in Brazil.

In an attempt to measure directly changes in the regime's attitude toward public contestation, I introduced Freedom House measures of political rights and civil liberties to the base model for the full time period. Over the period from 1974 to 1982, both of these variables ranged between five and three on a seven-point scale, classifying Brazil as "partly free" according to Freedom House standards. Seven, on either scale, denotes a country with a complete lack of either political rights or civil liberties. The scoring of these two variables did not move together, and while political rights only improved over time, civil rights improved and then worsened before improving again. At the beginning of political détente in 1974, Brazil scored five in both categories. It improved to four in both categories in 1975. However, Brazil's civil liberties regressed to five from 1976 through 1978, and only improved again after the Fifth Institutional Act expired in December 1978. Civil liberties improved to three in 1980, as the major protest movements began to wane. By 1982, political rights also were scored three. The measure for political rights did not prove statistically significant. The measure for civil liberties revealed that when the situation with civil liberties worsened according to Freedom House, people responded with more protests or other mass actions. The other variables in this model maintained their statistical significance and lost little of their strength. On the face of it, this finding seems to demonstrate that citizens did not wait for periods of reduced risk to participate in mass actions. However, this finding may be a greater reflection of problems with Freedom House's measures than a revelation about citizen behavior. Freedom House only varies annually and thus coincided with many other changes that occurred on an annual basis. Secondly, the measure of civil liberties includes four broad categories: Freedom of Expression and Belief, Associational and Organizational Rights, Rule of Law, and Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights.[33] Brazil would

[33] For more information on Freedom House's methodology, go to http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=

have scored poorly on all but the last of these categories, yet only the third category, Rule of Law, would capture the kind of repression that might intimidate potential protesters, such as unjustified arrest, torture, etc. When Brazil relapsed on its civil rights score in 1976, the mass opposition movements were on the verge of exploding. Brazil's declining score may reflect more its restrictions on the media, intervention in the educational system and prohibition on association and protest itself rather than increasing physical repression. The corresponding increase in protest may, in part, reflect citizen disgust with their lack of liberties.

In a separate model, I tested whether or not reports of attacks against other groups, such as students, union members, or activists affected protests in the same manner as those against journalists and editors. The only category that proved statistically significant was for people like priests and MDB politicians, who were categorized in a miscellaneous category. The expectation for a change from a report of one or two arrests to a report of about eight arrests would lead to about three-quarters of an additional protest in the period beginning thirty days after these newspaper reports appeared. Attacks against journalists in response to increasingly critical coverage of government indicated a high level of risk to potential protestors. On the other hand, citizens viewed "unprovoked" attacks against journalists or an attack against very visible priests and politicians as fodder for more protests. These attacks likely occurred outside of the context of mass actions. Alternatively, students, union members, and activists were the major participants in mass actions. Government attacks against these groups, more often than not, occurred during the protests and strikes themselves, when participants already were committed to taking action, and thus attacks against students, activists and union members did not affect the subsequent level of protest.

I ran a separate model including variables accounting for the number of attacks against all opposition groups broken down by category of attack (e.g., arrest, injury, kidnapping, etc.) to see if

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any particular type of attack had a greater impact than any other method. The reporting of arrests proved statistically significant and had a positive impact on future protests. If the media reported that the government increased their arrest rate from approximately 5 to 17.5 arrests, one could expect an additional protest during a 10-day stretch about thirty days after the report of those arrests. It is important to reiterate that this captures the number and not the size of protests.[34] While neither coefficient was statistically significant, the model suggests that the murder or torture of activists — more severe forms of repression — would deter future protests. This dichotomous finding—that arrests provoke protest whereas murder and torture deter it—supports the findings of other scholars who found an inverted-U relationship between repression and protest. The relative rarity of government killings and the secrecy surrounding incidents of torture, which could have prevented reports from reaching the press, might account for the lack of statistical significance of these variables.

Looking at the data on repression broken down by type of attack provides a better indication of why attacks against non-journalists did not account for future protest. These results indicate that reports of repression, in general, led to indignation. When government repression took the form of arrests, people were willing to act on their indignation; however, when the regime resorted to murder and torture, people were far less willing to react. This finding contradicts the anecdotal evidence regarding journalist Vladimir Herzog's death and the government murders of two union members. It may be that in the immediate aftermath of these deaths, people were willing to take to the streets en masse, under a watchful international eye, but that these deaths, in the longer run, made people think twice about their participation in mass actions.

[34] Due to the irregularity and inaccuracy of newspaper reports of turnout at mass actions, it would be quite difficult using these data to assess with any certainty whether or not protests attracted more or fewer participants at any given time.

Mass versus Non-Mass Actions

The last issue that I address in this paper is the difference in opposition leaders' need to evaluate risk before planning mass and non-mass actions. Figure 5 illustrates the opposition groups' reliance on non-mass versus mass actions over time. The solid black portion of a column illustrates the percent of total opposition actions in a given month that could be categorized as non-mass actions. The remaining portion of a given column shows the percent of a month's political actions that involved mass participation. The heavier density of solid black columns during the first five years of political liberalization, when the Fifth Institutional Act (AI-5) was still in place demonstrates that the opposition relied more heavily on the low-risk than high-risk methods of anti-regime expression during the regime's more repressive period. In the period leading up to and following the abolition of AI-5, the opposition began to utilize riskier but presumably more effective public actions, demonstrating its resistance through the physical presence of sympathizers.

In order to asses the validity of this observation I ran difference of means tests (t-tests) on both the variable for mass actions/10 days and non-mass actions/10 days broken down by the period of AI-5 and the period after AI-5 (see Table 4). The purpose of this test is to see whether the existence of this authoritarian measure had any effect on activists' decisions with regard to what method of anti-regime expression they selected. The null hypothesis for the t-test is that the means of a given variable (in this case either "mass actions/10 days" or "non-mass actions/10days") in two samples (during and after AI-5) are equal to one another, implying that the samples are from the same population.

Figure 5. Comparison of Monthly Ratios between Political Action Methods both during and after the Fifth Institutional Act

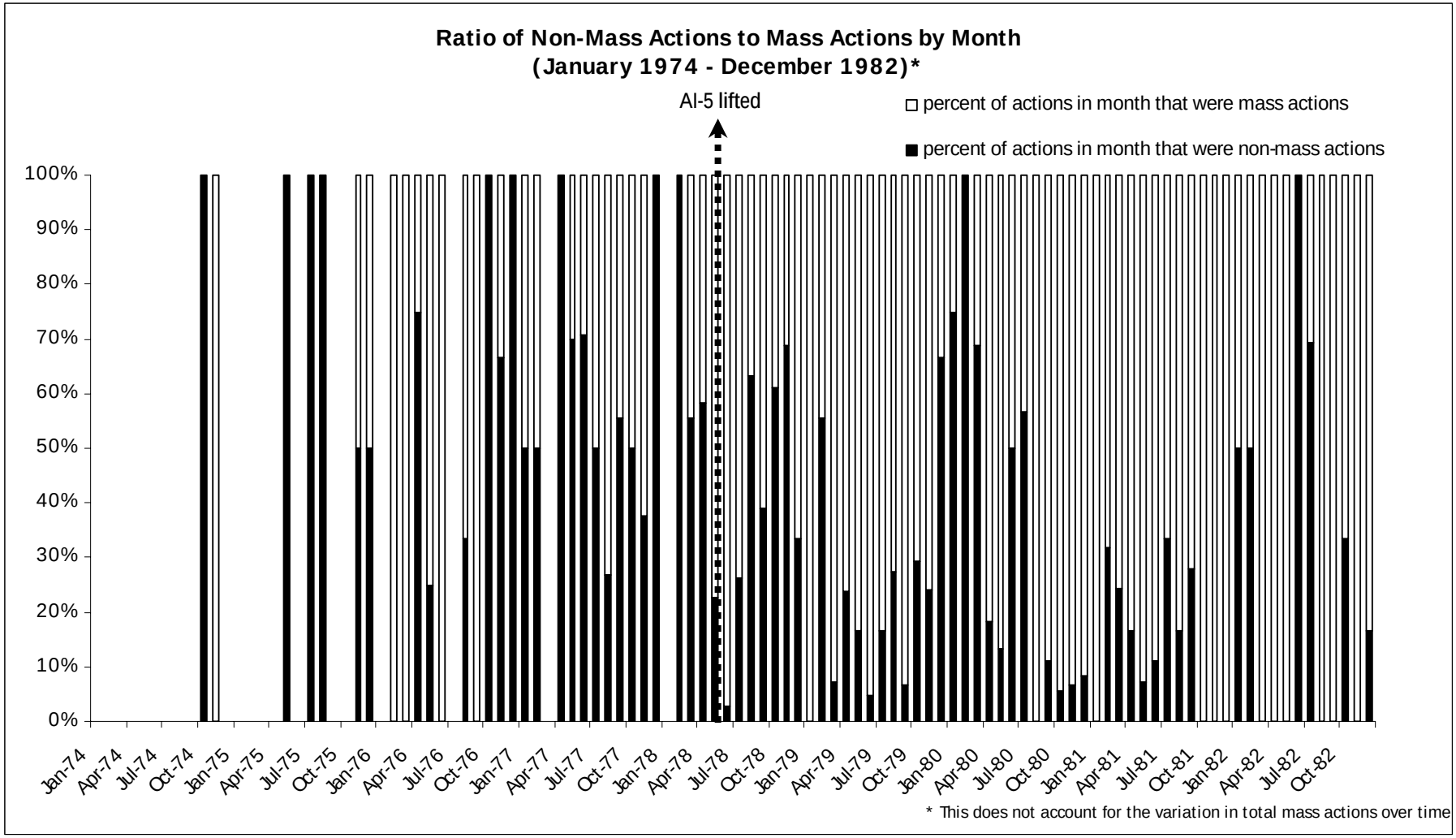

Table 4. Differences of Means of Mass and Non-Mass Actions during and after AI-5

		Observations	Mean	Standard Error	Standard Deviation	t-statistic	degress of freedom	Probability that the difference between the means = 0
Non-Mass Actions per 10 days	AI-5	182	0.604	0.084	1.131	t = 0.547	325	58.5%
	Post AI-5	145	0.669	0.080	0.965			
Mass Actions per 10 days	AI-5	183	1.158	0.252	3.412	t = 3.938	327	0.0%
	Post AI-5	146	2.507	0.217	2.619			

According to the results of these t-tests, when evaluating the number of non-mass actions in a 10-day period, the period of AI-5 and the period after its dissolution are statistically indistinguishable ($t = 0.547$, $p < 0.585$). However, when evaluating the number of mass actions in a 10-day period, there was virtually no possibility that these two periods were equivalent ($t = 3.938$, $p < 0.0001$). Given that the periods (i.e., samples) in both cases are the same — during AI-5 and post AI-5 — I interpret the difference in probabilities as showing the substantial effect that the authoritarian regulation had on activists' decision whether or not to initiate mass actions. This policy had little to no effect, however, on the opposition's decision to employ non-mass actions, supporting my first hypothesis that during periods of heightened repression, activists would prefer not to use tactics requiring mass participation.

The data from the coding of *A Folha de São Paulo* revealed a great deal of information about the role of the press in informing political activists. These data confirm that the information the media provided extends well beyond the news that they cover. When journalists and editors test the waters by trying to publish content normally considered taboo, they force the government to decide whether to suppress, repress or ignore this challenge. In making this decision, the government reveals to political activists its tolerance for anti-regime expression and/or its ability to combat these

trials. Using this information, opposition leaders tended to plan protests following successful challenges by the media in which the media suffered few or no repercussions for their actions.

Conclusion

In this paper I proposed that in authoritarian regimes, activist leaders must rely on indirect sources of information to gauge the level of risk of participation in mass political actions. I specifically argued that these leaders used mainstream newspaper coverage as a barometer of the government's mood and tolerance for anti-regime expression.

Opposition leaders have the incentive to plan protests, rallies and such at times when the risk of reprisal from the government is relatively low because they hope to encourage participation among the public. The public often will refrain from participation if they fear retribution for their actions. Authoritarian regimes commonly influence the media and control the flow of information to the public. I argued that in these situations the tug of war between journalists hoping to publish information and governments hoping to impede publication reveals to opposition leaders the relative level of risk. Journalists' coverage and the government's reaction to it serve as a barometer of the regime's tolerance for anti-regime expression and the regime's ability and/or willingness to quash such expression.

Using data from coding a primary São Paulo daily newspaper during the period of political liberalization, I illustrated that in the period prior to party reform, most of which coincided with censorship and "legitimized" repression of opposition forces via the Fifth Institutional Act, trends in reporting preceded trends in mass actions by opposition groups. The media's challenges to government and the government's subsequent treatment of the media and individual journalists and editors indicated to opposition leaders the relative degree of risk for anti-regime expression. The media's role as a barometer of government disposition dissipated soon after the end of censorship. When the media no longer needed to battle with government over their content, less information

about the regime's changing mood and strength was revealed through the press's interaction with the regime. The reporting by the media became more thorough and accurate, but was a less useful tool to anticipate regime behavior.

Opposition leaders concern themselves with the government's tolerance for anti-regime expression far more when planning actions that require that a group's membership or the public at large participate actively in the action. When relying on less participatory forms of expression, the leaders worry significantly less about the regime's tolerance and strength and, therefore, the media's "barometer effect" is less relevant to the planning of these actions.

This relationship, in which the media help guide activists in planning their opposition tactics, should interest scholars and policymakers interested in democratization. It implies that by encouraging journalists to challenge government and supporting the development of a free press, NGOs and foreign governments can help inform activists. This information can serve to improve the planning and thus the participation in mass opposition actions, which eventually may turn political liberalization into full-blown democratization.

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