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No way out: travel restrictions and authoritarian regimes

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Why do some authoritarian regimes restrict their citizens' freedom to travel abroad? This article posits that there is an inverse relationship between the freedom of foreign movement and authoritarian stability. Authoritarian leaders recognize this and hence try to control foreign travel by their citizens, for two reasons. First, civil rights increase significantly when travel policies are relaxed. Secondly, opportunities for contestation increase in the presence of civil rights. We test these propositions using panel data and various indicators of regime performance. Our results strongly suggest that by restricting travel, authoritarian regimes inhibit civil liberties. By suppressing civil liberties moreover, these regimes buy themselves stability.

Keywords: travel restrictions; civil rights; political liberalization

The relationship between international travel and domestic politics has drawn increased interest in comparative politics in recent years. Despite this extensive treatment, scholars have not explicitly addressed whether authoritarian regimes differ in their propensity to allow their citizens to travel and move to other countries, and what effects these restrictions have on their stability.[1] This article asks if there is such a relationship. If there is, we assume authoritarian leaders suspect it and hence try to control the foreign movement of their populations. From the regime's standpoint, freedom of movement could bring some rewards, but it can also result in less domestic control as citizens connect the freedom of movement to other human rights such as the freedom of speech and assembly.

To be clear, we recognize the multiple causal paths that can explain regime stability and change. Thus, we view the putative causal mechanism between travel and regime stability through the lens of an exploratory model. The purpose of an exploratory model is to explore and, to some extent, to speculate (Clarke & Primo, 2012, p. 90). Our contribution is that we explore an element of regime stability that has been largely overlooked and that is its relationship with travel policy. We ask if there is any empirical evidence, *ceteris paribus*, that authoritarian regimes that control their population's outbound movements are more stable than those that do not. In other words, is it possible to identify a correlative relationship between travel restrictions and regime stability?

Beyond establishing this relationship, we also explain *how* travel restrictions make authoritarian regimes more stable. We argue that the freedom of movement destabilizes autocracies by prompting them to respect civil liberties more, in particular in electoral autocracies in which the distance between autocracy and a democratic breakthrough

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could be a clean election.[2] To characterize and determine the strength of the relationship between travel and regime stability (Clarke & Primo, 2012), we construct and evaluate an empirical model of these propositions.

We do not wish to imply that freedom of movement is a deus ex machina ushering in democratic regimes. Our view of the effect of travel policy is closer to that of early theorists' of regimes transitions (e.g. O'Donnell & Schmitter, 1986), in that we see the relaxation of travel as part of a process of liberalization that nonetheless lacks a defined end point. Liberalization can be reversed or lead to the installation of another authoritarian regime. Nevertheless, much research has established that autocracies provide few coordination goods, and those that do do so reluctantly (Conrad, 2011, p. 1170). The halfway house between autocracy and democracy, moreover, is not a stable one (Gates, Hegre, Jones, & Strand, 2006; Goldstone et al., 2010). In that sense then, travel openings decrease authoritarian stability.

Our article begins by illustrating the trade-offs authoritarian regimes confront in setting their travel policies. We provide country evidence as well as a discussion of the advantages of open and closed travel. The third section describes a model we have built to adjudicate among these propositions, as well as the data we use. A fourth section presents the results of our analysis. We conclude by drawing some general lessons from our findings.

To leave or not to leave: case and cross-country evidence

Authoritarian regimes have reasons to restrict travel despite the allures of freedom of movement. Permitting citizens to travel or even to reside abroad can make for a more compliant population at home, one less inclined to demand reforms or to overthrow the government (Brücker, Capuano, & Marfouk, 2013; Hirschman, 1978).[3] Allowing, encouraging, and even forcing some residents out may be less costly than continued repression or toleration. Economically speaking, international tourism and emigration can bring substantial benefits to an authoritarian regime, not only because of the knowledge and expertise the country can acquire from abroad, but also because of the remittances the diaspora sends home.[4]

Nevertheless, restricting travel allows elites to more easily control the population since the freedom of movement, like other human rights, is an emancipative good that enables citizens to coordinate their information, resources, and activities (Bueno de Mesquita & Smith, 2009, 2010). Once some residents have chosen to 'vote with their feet,' they not only serve as witnesses revealing that not all is well domestically (Hirschman, 1978, p. 95), but may even seek to influence the affairs of their countries from abroad (Bob, 2005; Hoffmann, 2008; Koslowski, 2005). As a result, regimes face a choice of whether to allow unrestricted travel and migration, control one or both to some extent, or ban both completely.

Figure 1 presents three plots of travel restrictions from 1981, the first year for which data is available, to the most recent year, 2011, for which we have data. The source of this information is the CIRI Human Rights Data Project (Cingranelli & Richards, 2013), the only repository of standardized comparative data on the freedom of travel. The plots display both the distribution of values as well as the average for a particular year, allowing a trend over time to be discerned. The plots thus capture global trends in the regulation of foreign travel, first for democracies, then for electoral autocracies, and finally for full autocracies.[5]

Figure 1. Freedom of movement in the era of democratization, 1981–2011.
Note: A score of 0 indicates that this freedom was severely restricted, a score of 1 indicates the freedom was somewhat restricted, and a score of 2 indicates unrestricted freedom of foreign movement.

Figure 1 very clearly establishes that full autocracies tend to restrict travel more than electoral autocracies, which in turn restrict travel more than democracies. The trend reflects a shrinking pool of autocracies over time with more restrictive policies. The pattern suggests fewer authoritarian regimes facing a less hospitable environment in an increasingly democratic world (Jansson, Lindenfors, & Sandberg, 2013, p. 2), a fact borne out by Figure 2.[6]

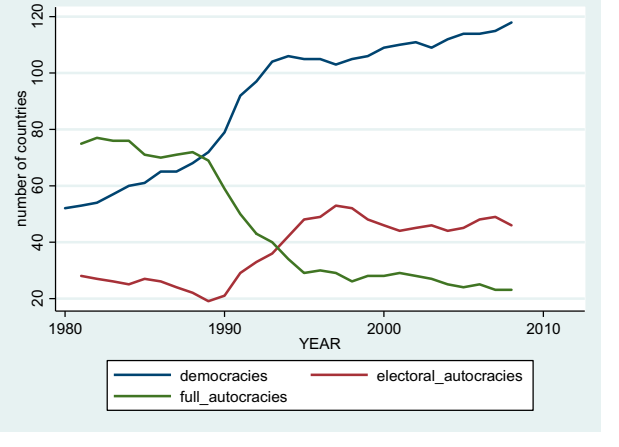

Figure 2. Distribution of regimes, 1981–2008.

When it comes to authoritarian governments, then, there is some variation in how they approach the question of travel policy. At one end of the spectrum, North Korea has one of the most restrictive exit policies in the world, going as far as executing anyone caught trying to flee the country. The regime rightly views exit as a signal to others of the existence of domestic dissent. East Germany allowed few of its citizens to emigrate permanently, but was open to tourism to and from West Germany (Brubaker, 1990, p. 13). In Cuba, the Castro government carefully controls travel and emigration, particularly of those it deems too skilled to leave the country (Pedraza, 2007).[7] The government, however, has tolerated and even encouraged sporadic exoduses to the United States, a country with very favorable immigration policies towards Cuban refugees (Colomer, 2000).

Finally, in China, the communist party permits its citizens to travel abroad for study, business, and tourism, but carefully controls travel visas for dissident intellectuals, academics, and members of ethnic and religious minorities.[8] Moreover, China attempts through various channels to control the way that Chinese citizens experience travel abroad. China's Approved Destination Status policy, for example, allows Chinese citizens to travel in organized group tours to countries the government has approved (Arita, Edmonds, La Croix, & Mak, 2011). The objective of the policy, adopted in 1995, is to accommodate the growing demand by Chinese to visit other countries and at the same time allow the government to have some control over which countries they visit and the duration and nature of those visits. The Chinese case suggests that the context in which authoritarian regimes formulate their travel policies has changed in the last four decades. The demise of superpower rivalry in particular created a world that is less hospitable to the policies of regimes that suppress human rights and restrict political competition (Boix, 2011).

Therefore, if authoritarian regimes still restrict travel (Breunig, Cao, & Luedtke, 2012), the question is whether these restrictions are having their intended effect on their stability. Our analysis indicates that civil rights – the freedoms of association, speech (which includes a free press), and religion – increase significantly when travel policies are relaxed. Autocracies that impose restrictions are also less likely to experience increases along a continuous one-dimensional indicator of the extent of 'democrativeness' of a political system. Civil rights, we suggest, are inherently destabilizing not just in competitive authoritarian regimes that violate them selectively, but also in regimes that restrict them severely.

The exploratory model

Authoritarian politics can be characterized as government by a narrow ruling coalition bent on thwarting challenges (Svolik, 2012). Because of their exclusionary nature, these governments can face demands for more public goods – whether in the form of policy outputs or citizenship rights – and elite grabs for power (Conrad, 2011). Should it face one or more of these challenges, the regime remains stable as long as incumbents can ignore, co-opt, or repress them. If the regime is not able to respond in a way that guarantees its own survival, it becomes unstable.

We suggest that authoritarian regimes restrict travel because travel openings entail a relaxation in political controls over the population, which results in more respect for civil liberties. In the presence of civil liberties, opportunities for contestation increase. Contestation allows citizens 'to formulate their preferences,' 'to signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and the government by individual and collective action,' and 'to have their preferences weighed equally in the conduct of the government' (Dahl, 1971, p. 2).[9] Because civil rights force incumbents to resort to overt repression, electoral fraud, and/or sham elections, they create a situation that is not self-reinforcing (Gates

et al., 2006, p. 894). Consequently, we argue that restricting travel allows authoritarian governments to more easily suppress contestation.[10] To put it differently, if freedoms giving citizens more 'space' follow from the freedom of movement, the process has the potential to destabilize autocracies.

We hew closely to the definition of freedom of movement provided by the CIRI Human Rights Data Project. The Project's 'freedom of foreign movement and travel' indicator embodies the notion that the freedom to leave one's country of origin *and* to return to that country whenever one pleases are fundamental human rights enshrined in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of these rights. As a result, the Project codes this right as severely restricted when countries restrict all or nearly all the foreign travel of its citizens (as in most communist countries), and when they 'do not respect the right of citizen refugees outside of the country's international borders to return to their homes.' (Cingranelli & Richards, 2014, p. 47). In addition, the freedom of movement is restricted when governments have policies making it impossible or very difficult for women to travel abroad alone or without a male relative (as in the Middle East), and when countries limit the movement of groups such as opposition political leaders, ethnic minorities, religious leaders, human rights activists, and journalists.[11]

Figure 1 suggests that closed travel makes more sense the more suppressed civil liberties are. That is, electoral autocracies tend to have more restrictive policies than democracies, but less restrictive policies than full autocracies. In all autocracies, incumbents need to balance the costs of suppressing opposition with the costs of tolerating it (Dahl, 1971). Thus, a partially liberalized regime may combine some travel openness with selective civil rights violations. Doing so is preferable to a wholesale suppression of civil, including travel rights, a course of action the regime may find too costly to sustain in the face of overt, coordinated opposition.[12]

Full autocracies have also tolerated, allowed, and even encouraged exit.[13] While these exoduses appear to contradict our argument, they constitute rare events not only in those particular countries but in the wider autocratic population. That said, a policy of denying the population oppositional spaces entails some risks, since it makes protest and rebellion more likely (Bueno de Mesquita, Smith, Siverson, & Morrow, 2003, p. 579). Autocracies are sensitive to these risks and simultaneously aware of the opportunities presented by globalization. Consequently, some could gamble on a loss of control in exchange for economic benefits.

The empirical model

Our empirical model focuses on three variables – travel policy, emigration rates, and regime stability – in a panel of 61 countries from 1982 to 2008 (see Appendix 1). This time frame creates an ideal sample for our empirical analysis since it encompasses a period of time beginning roughly after travel regulations in some ex-communist countries were relaxed following the East–West détente of the 1970s. Our dependent variable is the sum of country-year scores on the three civil rights coded by the CIRI Human Rights Data Project: the freedom of assembly, the freedom of religion, and the freedom of speech.[14] The index has a minimum value of 0 and maximum value of 6. In this data-set, freedom of the press is coded as part of the freedom of speech.[15] Our main independent variable, as already indicated, is the CIRI Human Rights Data Project's 'freedom of foreign movement and travel' indicator.

We exclude democracies and countries undergoing civil war, foreign occupation, and a protracted regime transition from our analysis, limiting it to country-year observations

with stable authority characteristics. To delineate our population of autocracies, we rely on a commonly used indicator of regime type, Cheibub's democracy/dictatorship dichotomy. Cheibub, Gandhi, and Vreeland (2010, p. 3) define a democracy as a country where the chief executive is chosen 'by popular election or by a body that was itself popularly elected,' the legislature is popularly elected, there is more than one party competing in elections, and 'an alternation in power under electoral rules identical to the ones that brought the incumbent to office must have taken place.' To be an autocracy then, a country had to have a value of '0' in Cheibub et al.'s dichotomous coding of regimes, which is obtained when one or more of the conditions they specify is negated.

We opt for a dynamic approach that is able to assess the effect of travel regulations on changes in a country's respect for civil liberties, controlling for civil liberties in the previous year.[16] Unfortunately, most models designed to evaluate temporal relationships (such as differences-in-differences or lagged dependent variable models) prove inadequate to such a task because the speed with which travel restrictions, and changes in those restrictions, affect a political regime is not known a priori. To give one example, data given in yearly increments may be too short a time interval to register significant effects.[17] Consequently, we adopt an approach that distinguishes, for the time varying variables, between levels of these variables and how they explain levels of the dependent variable ('between-cluster' effects), and changes in these variables and how they explain changes within countries over time in the dependent variable ('within-cluster' effects) (Bartels, 2008). This important distinction is lost in most analyses of panel data since commonly used specifications evaluate either levels or changes, or do not distinguish between both types of clustering. Since our formulation allows intercepts to be explained by observed and unobserved heterogeneity at the cluster level, they are said to vary randomly.

The result is a random intercepts model with two quantities of interest, the cluster-specific mean of an independent variable and deviations in units of measurement from this mean (the within-cluster operationalization). The model presents several advantages when compared to its alternatives. First, it accounts for unobserved heterogeneity at the country level by specifying random intercepts for countries. Second, it includes within- and between-cluster transformations of time varying variables. This removes the correlation between country-level variables and the random effects. Finally, specifying random effects allows the inclusion of time constant or slow moving variables, since the latter would not be correlated with the country-level indicators. For a model with two time varying variables and a time invariant one, the specification estimated is of the form:

$$Y_{it} = \gamma_{00} + Y^{w}_{it(t-1)} + \beta_1 X^{w}_{1it} + \beta_2 X^{w}_{2it} + \gamma_{01} Z_{1i} + \gamma_{02} \bar{X}_{1i} + \gamma_{03} \bar{X}_{2i} + \mu_{0i} + \varepsilon_{it},$$

where t represents measurement occasions (or years) nested within i countries, $Y^{w}_{it(t-1)}$ is the within-cluster operationalization of the lagged dependent variable, β_1 and β_2 are the within-cluster effects of X_1 and X_2, respectively, and Z_1 is a time-constant variable. γ_{02} and γ_{03} are the between-cluster effects of X_1 and X_2. The first set of coefficients then represents longitudinal effects, while the second cross-sectional effects. Strictly speaking, only the first set of coefficients can be interpreted as causal, since they are instances in which we observe a change in the independent variable leading to a change in the dependent variable. It is important to clarify also that all independent variables in the analysis vary to some extent within countries.

It could be argued (e.g. Huntington, 1991) that democratization comes in temporal waves or affects countries in particular parts of the world.[18] In that case, our observations of regime scores could be affected by contemporaneous correlation and panel

heteroskedasticity. We provide panel-corrected standard errors (Beck & Katz, 1995, 1996) that take into account these sources of heterogeneity. In addition, we use a first-order autocorrelation correction to remove the serial correlation present in our models.[19] Appendix 2 provides a description of the remaining independent and control variables as well as our expectations regarding their effects.

Caveats

The simple exploratory model we proposed yielded several robust assumptions concerning the putative relationship between the right to travel and regime stability. We provided an authoritarian logic that could explain why authoritarian regimes might want to restrict travel. There are important caveats, however, in regards to the data.

Our results would be biased if emigration rates are endogenous to the political regime. Poverty and autocracy tend to be the handmaidens of emigration (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 552), but there is enough variation in the population of autocracies to void the issue of endogeneity. A lowess smoother plot (not shown) reveals in this respect no apparent relationship between the index of civil rights and emigration. Instead, emigration rates tend to depend on other-country characteristics such as geography. The countries with the highest rates, for example, are almost exclusively islands (Kapur, 2014, p. 488; Moses, 2012, p. 127).

It could also be argued that the number and characteristics of those who emigrate mediate the effect of travel policy on authoritarian stability. There is some evidence to the effect, since countries with restrictions on travel have lower rates of emigration than countries without such restrictions, controlling for population and income levels (McKenzie, 2007, p. 2027). If the main mechanism connecting travel restrictions to authoritarian stability is the number and characteristics of those who emigrate, the coefficient on travel policy should drop considerably in the presence of emigration rates. We thus present three sets of models: Model 1 includes *freedom of movement* but excludes *emigration rate*, Model 2 includes *emigration rate* but excludes *freedom of movement*, and the third model adds both to the specification.

Finally, it could be that social globalization is itself a product of emigration, or that it should at least mediate its effect on authoritarian stability. This would imply that authoritarian regimes would want to limit social globalization. We have no way to evaluate this hypothesis directly, but the two variables are conceptually distinct enough to allow us to examine travel policy *and* social globalization independently. The index of *social globalization*, for example, includes data on the foreign resident population and tourist arrivals and departures in a given country, but not on emigrants, whether temporary or permanent. Emigration at time t–1 could certainly affect some of the components of the social globalization index at time t. Based on their pairwise correlation ($r = 0.315$; $p < 0.000$), we cannot rule out a dynamic relationship between the two, but this does not prevents us from saying something about the independent effects of travel policy and social globalization.

Findings

At the outset of the article, we posited that restricting travel facilitates state control over the population. Table 1 presents the results of our random effects analysis of travel policy and civil rights.

Table 1. Determinants of civil rights, 1982–2008.

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Freedom of movement (between)	0.742***		0.749***
	(0.127)		(0.135)
Social globalization (between)	−0.049***	−0.046***	−0.049***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Economic globalization (between)	0.032***	0.032***	0.032***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Political globalization (between)	−0.020***	−0.016***	−0.020***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Market inequality (between)	0.027***	0.038***	0.026***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)
Oil rents (between)	−0.017***	−0.021***	−0.017***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
GDP growth (between)	−0.172***	−0.195***	−0.175***
	(0.020)	(0.017)	(0.018)
Electoral autocracy (between)	0.752***	0.745***	0.772***
	(0.155)	(0.158)	(0.154)
Population density (between)	0.000	−0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Neighborhood (between)	0.887***	0.931***	0.899***
	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.135)
Lagged dependent variable (within)	0.068	0.053	0.061
	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.050)
Freedom of movement (within)	0.203**		0.194**
	(0.089)		(0.090)
Social globalization (within)	−0.032**	−0.038**	−0.035**
	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.014)
Economic globalization (within)	−0.007	−0.006	−0.007
	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Political globalization (within)	−0.002	−0.003	−0.002
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Market inequality (within)	0.021**	0.020*	0.021**
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.010)
Oil rents (within)	−0.004	−0.007	−0.004
	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.009)
GDP growth (within)	−0.006	−0.005	−0.006
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Electoral autocracy (within)	0.684***	0.774***	0.708***
	(0.196)	(0.197)	(0.195)
Population density (within)	−0.000	−0.000	−0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Neighborhood (within)	0.159	0.047	0.110
	(0.265)	(0.259)	(0.270)
Emigration rate (between)		3.746**	1.219
		(1.873)	(2.532)
Emigration rate (within)		11.877	13.484
		(10.561)	(9.803)
Constant	1.039**	1.153***	1.045**
	(0.448)	(0.434)	(0.439)
R^2	0.41	0.38	0.42
N	786	786	786

*$p \leq 0.1$; **$p \leq 0.05$; ***$p \leq 0.01$, two-tailed tests.
Coefficients reported with panel-corrected standard errors in parentheses.

Table 2. Determinants of UDSs, 1982–2008.

Independent variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Freedom of movement (between)	0.293***		0.312***
	(0.025)		(0.026)
Social globalization (between)	0.011***	0.013***	0.012***
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
Economic globalization (between)	−0.001	−0.001	−0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Political globalization (between)	−0.002***	−0.000	−0.002***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Market inequality (between)	0.011***	0.014***	0.010***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Oil rents (between)	−0.003**	−0.005***	−0.003**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
GDP growth (between)	−0.021***	−0.030***	−0.024***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)
Electoral autocracy (between)	0.232***	0.205***	0.205***
	(0.046)	(0.055)	(0.045)
Population density (between)	−0.000	−0.000**	−0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Neighborhood (between)	0.103***	0.142***	0.129***
	(0.034)	(0.035)	(0.030)
Lagged dependent variable (within)	0.221***	0.155***	0.275***
	(0.055)	(0.055)	(0.053)
Freedom of movement (within)	0.034**		0.033**
	(0.016)		(0.017)
Social globalization (within)	0.003	0.003	0.002
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Economic globalization (within)	0.001	0.001	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Political globalization (within)	0.002	0.001	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Market inequality (within)	0.000	−0.000	0.000
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Oil rents (within)	−0.002	−0.003	−0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
GDP growth (within)	0.002	0.002	0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Electoral autocracy (within)	0.096**	0.105**	0.113**
	(0.045)	(0.049)	(0.047)
Population density (within)	−0.000**	−0.000**	−0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Neighborhood (within)	0.214***	0.215***	0.218***
	(0.065)	(0.064)	(0.069)
Emigration rate (between)		−0.607	−1.567*
		(0.685)	(0.878)
Emigration rate (within)		1.288	1.922
		(1.905)	(1.648)
Constant	−1.357***	−1.258***	−1.317***
	(0.075)	(0.083)	(0.071)
R^2	0.47	0.38	0.51
N	783	783	783

*$p < 0.1$; **$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$, two-tailed tests.
Coefficients reported with panel standard errors in parentheses.

The results largely confirm our expectations, since the *freedom of movement* is positively and significantly associated with higher levels of and changes over time in civil rights scores, whether or not *emigration rate* is present in the model. This is not due to collinearity between the two variables since the pairwise correlation between their within-cluster means is small ($r = 0.115$; $p < 0.001$). More significantly, the within-cluster coefficient for *freedom of movement* drops slightly when *emigration rate* is introduced into the model, indicating that the effects of the former are not significantly mediated by the latter. Finally, the fit of the model, as judged by the R^2, barely improves when *emigration rate* is introduced into the model, but it drops somewhat when *freedom of movement* is removed, indicating the substantive contribution that travel openings make to liberalization. To put these findings into context, an increase of two points over time in the freedom of movement increases the civil rights index by approximately 10%. As hypothesized, we also observe that electoral autocracies are more likely than full autocracies to respect civil rights. The effect is large, in the order of 21.9%.

Higher levels of *social globalization* correlate with lower civil rights scores, while increases within countries over time in social globalization result in declines in civil liberties. A lowess scatter plot makes clear that autocracies with high levels of social globalization are responsible for this effect. At low levels of the variable, increases in social globalization lead to improved civil rights. Autocracies that are more economically globalized also tend to respect civil rights more. This indicates that globalization's effects on authoritarian stability are Janus-faced: in the short term, autocracies attempt to benefit from globalization, while trying to contain its long-term effects. This makes the effect of travel openings on authoritarian stability all the more significant, since they can potentially lead to more social globalization.[20]

Turning our attention now to other important covariates, countries with higher levels of *inequality* tend to respect civil rights more, casting doubt on recent work on inequality and political regimes (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006; Boix, 2003). The relationships between the level of democracy in the *neighborhood* and a country's respect for civil rights is in line with expectations, although it is interesting that higher levels of *economic growth* tend to be associated with less civil rights protection.

To ensure that our findings are not an artifact of our sample, we decided to replicate them using the Boix et al. (2013) dichotomous coding of democracy. With 773 observations, our population of country-year observations is substantively the same. In the interest of saving space, we do not report these results (although they are available upon request). Suffice it to say that the story they tell is similar. The main differences are that the R^2 drops slightly, to 0.38, 0.35, and 0.38 for Models 1, 2, and 3, respectively; civil rights in the previous year are significantly predictive of civil rights in the current year; and increases in the democratic composition of the neighborhood are also predictive of changes over time within countries in respect for civil rights. For all other variables, the results remain alike both with respect to the direction of the coefficients and their level of significance.

To verify that the mechanism that explains changes in regime stability is changes in the protection of civil rights, we regress our covariates on an indicator of overt political oppression, an index that takes higher values the more protected physical integrity rights are. Physical integrity rights refer to the use of torture, disappearance, extrajudicial killings, and political imprisonment. This index is also created by the CIRI Human Rights Data project. In particular, we entertain the possibility that regimes could attempt to mitigate the effect of increased civil liberties by violating the physical integrity of their citizens. The results, not presented here but available upon request, indicate quite the opposite. That is, not controlling for civil rights, opening up travel also increases respect

for physical integrity rights within countries over time. Tellingly, however, and contrary to the effect of travel policy on civil rights, the effect may not be lasting. That is, while the within-cluster coefficient for *freedom of movement* is positive and significant, its between cluster equivalent is insignificant and its sign changes.

An objection might be raised that civil and physical integrity violations do not occur in isolation and hence cannot be modeled separately. To really capture the extent to which an authoritarian regime uses them strategically, one has to find a way to incorporate both into the same model. We thus present a second set of models with the same covariates, but this time we use as our dependent variable a country's Unified Democracy Score (UDS). UDSs combine scores from 13 different regime indicators. In so doing, they provide information on a range of political characteristics, both institutional and behavioral (Pemstein, Meserve, & Melton, 2010). Scores range from a low of –1.48 to a high of 0.60.

One caveat is in order before proceeding to the presentation of these results however: the freedom of travel is also a component, albeit a minor one, of the Freedom House indicator of civil liberties, which in turn is one of the underlying scores used to build the UDS. This minute amount of endogeneity notwithstanding, UDSs seem a convenient way to capture stability by registering changes along a continuous one-dimensional indicator of the extent of 'democrativeness' of a political system. Table 2 presents this second set of models.

Substantively speaking, the results reported in Table 2 are remarkably similar across models and consistent with those reported in Table 1. The amount of variation explained by the models has also increased as judged by their coefficients of determination (or R^2). The only difference is that the between-cluster effects of *social globalization* have become consistently positive and significant.

Finally, it could be argued that one reason autocracies may want to restrict travel is to prevent the flight abroad of personnel that serve in vital economic sectors and hence are integral to a country's economic development. The correlation between freedom of movement and public spending on education as a percentage of GDP in our sample is actually the reverse of what one would expect it this were to be true ($r = 0.211$; $p < 0.000$). To put it differently, it is actually the autocracies with more restrictive travel policies that spend the least on public education.

Another way to test this argument indirectly is to look at passport costs as an indication of formal and informal barriers to emigration. Controlling for indicators of governance such as government effectiveness, regulatory quality, and the rule of law, countries with higher skilled migration levels have lower passport costs (McKenzie, 2007, p. 2031).

Conclusion

Scholars studying travel and regimes have long sought to establish a connection between exit – in particular regime policies surrounding foreign travel – and regime stability (Hirschman, 1993; Pfaff, 2006; Pfaff & Kim, 2003). The question is particularly relevant as autocracies in the Middle East grapple with popular revolts motivated to some extent by societal influences emanating beyond their borders. Our article is motivated by these concerns in particular the need to understand to what extent democratization affects the way in which less-democratic regimes formulate policies on foreign travel, and what effect such policies have on these regimes.

Perhaps, the most important paradox we have uncovered is that although travel restrictions increase popular grievances against autocracies, regimes that impose restrictions on travel are more stable than those that do not. This is because travel restrictions reduce civil

rights, decreasing the costs of repression for regimes. In the words of Bueno de Mesquita et al. (2003, p. 544), '[w]hen the press, speech and assembly are free, government finds it much more difficult to use oppression to quash opposition.' With our exploratory analysis tethered to an empirical model, we believe we have gained a deeper and richer understanding of the relationship between travel policy and regime stability.

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Notes

1. Recent work has addressed the effects of emigration on political development (Lodigiani & Salomone, 2012; O'Mahony, 2013; Pfutze, 2012; Spilimbergo, 2009). This literature is concerned, generally speaking, with the democratizing potential of outbound migration (Moses, 2011, 2012). These works notwithstanding, 'one cannot really talk about a developed literature on sending-state *emigration* or practices in the way one can cite myriad works on receiving-state *immigration* policy [original emphasis]' (Brand, 2006, p. 2).
2. Electoral autocracies can be divided into hegemonic and competitive authoritarian regimes. The latter differ from regimes that are more hegemonic in that 'opposition forces use democratic institutions to contest seriously for executive power' (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 16). Since our interest is in authoritarian regimes in general, we only distinguish between full autocracies and electoral autocracies, that is, between closed regimes and regimes that are 'minimally pluralist,' 'minimally competitive,' and 'minimally open' (Schedler, 2006, p. 3).
3. Restricting travel can also prove unpopular among those unable to exercise this right.
4. Fargues (2011, p. 5) observes in this regard that 'North African governments long distrusted their migrant communities in Europe, suspecting them of being centers of political opposition, before coming to court them for their remittances'.
5. The coding is based on Cheibub et al. (2010) democracy/autocracy dichotomy, with autocracies in turn subdivided into full and electoral autocracies (Boix, Miller, and Rosato, 2013, p. 18). In full authoritarian regimes, political competition is suppressed. To be sure, regimes can allow participation even while suppressing contestation, as in communist one-party autocracies. Dahl (1971) labels these regimes inclusive hegemonies. In these countries, everyone votes but participation is meaningless since there is no alternative to the ruling party slate. These regimes are thus treated as full autocracies in the literature (e.g. Goldstone et al., 2010, p. 195). Electoral autocracies allow multiple parties to take part in electoral competition, but deny a level playing field to the opposition or violate the civil rights of their opponents (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 7).
6. As of 2009, 20 countries placed restrictions on the ability of women to legally obtain a passport or to travel out of their country, including Afghanistan, Burma, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Swaziland, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen (United Nations Development Programme, 2009, p. 40). As of 2005, 11 countries required government permission or an exit visa for all citizens to travel: Belarus, Burma, Cuba, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Iran, Laos, Libya, North Korea, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan (McKenzie, 2007).
7. On 14 January 2013, however, the Cuban government enacted the most comprehensive changes in its travel policies in over five decades. See http://www.ibtimes.com/cuba-travel-restrictions-lifted-us-wet-foot-dry-foot-policies-remain-same-1013514#.

8. See the article appearing in the New York Times on 22 February 2003 titled 'No Exit: China Uses Passports as Political Cudgel', available at http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/23/world/asia/chinese-passports-seen-as-political-statement.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.
9. Civil rights have been empirically related to this dimension in Dahl's theoretical work. Of the two dimensions Dahl identified, contestation explains most of the variation in regime scores. See Coppedge, Alvarez, and Maldonado (2008).
10. Some also argue that restricting travel allows autocracies to prevent brain drain, that is, the flight abroad of qualified professionals on whom they have invested significant resources in training (Hirschman, 1978, p. 101). Breunig et al. (2012, p. 8) cite Cuba, Belarus and Turkmenistan in this regard. What is primarily an economic problem becomes political as well, since many autocracies are less-developed countries (LDCs) struggling to build viable nation-states in a difficult domestic and international environment. We assess this argument empirically but find it wanting in our analysis.
11. Restrictions in the Middle East may have had their origins in beliefs about gender differences. There is no reason to expect, however, that what is at issue in these countries is simply gender discrimination. Once restrictions are in place, they demobilize citizens politically. Consequently, unrestricted travel poses a threat to Middle Eastern governments. One indication of how threatening foreign travel remains to these governments is that, in some countries restrictions apply not only to married women, but also to unmarried ones.
12. Milošević's Socialist Party regime consolidated power over its opposition thanks in part to the exodus from Serbia of many young educated Serbs (Moses, 2011, p. 12).
13. Examples include Cuba in 1965, 1980, and 1995 and East Germany in 1989.
14. We conducted a factor analysis to verify that the scores all reduce to one dimension or concept and hence can be used as an additive index. The results confirmed our expectation.
15. Freedom House also codes civil liberties worldwide. We opted not to use this index, however, since it also contains information on the independence of the judiciary and other social and economic liberties that in our view belong in a separate category of rights. For an overview of the Freedom House index, see http://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2013/checklist-questions-and-guidelines#.U1Uf1tJDuSp.
16. This is so as to avoid endogeneity, that is, a situation in which travel policy is not only or primarily affecting civil rights, but the reserve is also at work.
17. An alternative is an error correction model (ECM), which allow analysts to examine effects that can be permanent or transitory (DeBoef & Keele, 2008). The problem with these models is that they assume a long-run equilibrium between a dependent variable Y and an independent variable X. The goal is to estimate how quickly Y returns to equilibrium after a shock (i.e. a change in X). The problem with such a formulation is that travel restrictions may have precisely the effect an ECM is not equipped to evaluate, a change in the regime equilibrium.
18. Witness, for example, the color revolutions in the post-communist world (Diamond, 2008, p. 191) and the Arab Spring that began in North Africa in 2011 and is still being felt throughout the Middle East.
19. A Wooldridge test demonstrates the presence of serial correlation in the idiosyncratic error term.
20. One good example of this in our data is Jordan, a dictatorship with restrictions on travel and very high levels of social globalization. Jordan nonetheless appears stable politically.
21. See http://www.iab.de/en/daten/iab-brain-drain-data.aspx. While the calculations exclude tourists and asylum seekers, they include immigrants that entered these countries illegally intending to stay. The 20 countries are: Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States.
22. When data is normally distributed, the coefficient of variation is given by the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean. When the mean equals the standard deviation, the coefficient of variation equals 1. This value is thus an anchor point between a low-variance and a high-variance series. See http://www.readyratios.com/reference/analysis/coefficient_of_variation.html. Our data is log-normally distributed. Consequently, the identity of the standard deviation and the mean will not provide the same intuitive interpretation. Nevertheless, the within-country coefficient of variation for *emigration rate* is only 0.54. This compares to the between- country coefficient, which amounts to 3.38.

23. The UN recognizes the problem. See its methodology for estimating the international migrant stock by country of origin, available at http://esa.un.org/unmigration/Documentation.pdf.
24. For a typology of the effects of outbound migration on home country politics, see Kapur (2014) and a special issue of the journal *Studies in Comparative International Development* (Meseguer & Burgess, 2014).
25. Examples include remittances and foreign aid.
26. A better approach in our view would have been to use public opinion data from sources such as the World Values Survey to establish empirically the existence of cultural proximity. We, however, chose not to pursue this approach for two reasons: first, personal contacts and information flows are much closer to what we think of as social globalization, leading to some extent to the cultural proximity among some nations that we observe. National cultures and any similarity among them, moreover, is also a function of important variables such as socio-economic development. We do observe that social globalization mostly depends on a country's level of development, a finding confirmed by a recent study of visa restrictions placed on country nationals by destination countries. For more information, see Henly and Partners' Visa Restrictions Index (available at https://www.henleyglobal.com/index.php). Whereas citizens of wealthy countries face few barriers to travel, citizens of poor, autocratic, or unstable countries are virtually trapped in their own countries by strict visa requirements, at least if they want to travel legally. Our data invariably confirms this, as the pairwise correlation between GDP per capita (in 2005 constant purchasing power parity dollars) and *social globalization* is high and statistically significant ($r = 0.762$; $p < 0.000$). We thus exclude economic development from our models. To retain the first two subcategories of *social globalization* while excluding the third, we rescaled the original index by multiplying it by their combined weight, 69%, or 0.69.
27. Brinks and Coppedge (2006) code 17 regions in their analysis, but several of their country classifications appear to be typos, so we corrected them using Wikipedia. The changes are as follows: Turkey from 'Southern Europe' to 'Middle East', Solomon Islands from 'Sub-Saharan Africa' to 'Pacific', Sao Tome and Principe from 'Caribbean' to 'Sub-Saharan Africa', Singapore from 'East Asia' to 'Southeast Asia', Maldives from 'Sub-Saharan Africa' to 'South Asia', Lesotho from 'Sub-Saharan Africa' to 'Southern Africa,' and Chad from 'Northern Africa' to 'Sub-Saharan Africa'.

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Appendix 1. Countries included in the analysis, 1982–2008

Algeria	Kyrgyzstan
Angola	Malaysia
Argentina	Mexico
Azerbaijan	Morocco
Bangladesh	Mozambique
Belarus	Namibia
Botswana	Nepal
Brazil	Nigeria
Bulgaria	Pakistan
Cambodia	Panama
Cameroon	Peru
Chad	Philippines
Chile	Russia
China	Senegal
Congo, Republic of	Singapore
Ecuador	South Africa
Egypt	Syria
Ethiopia	Tajikistan
Gabon	Tanzania
Georgia	Thailand
Ghana	Togo
Guatemala	Tunisia
Haiti	Turkey
Hungary	Turkmenistan
Indonesia	USSR
Iran	Uruguay
Ivory Coast	Vietnam
Jordan	Yemen
Kazakhstan	Zambia
Kenya	Zimbabwe
Korea, Republic of	

Note: Some countries on this list may not have been authoritarian throughout the period of analysis. Only country-year observations that are authoritarian according to the criteria laid out above are included in the analysis.

Appendix 2. Independent and control variables

Emigration rate

Although authoritarian instability is not synonymous with democratization, recent work has found that at a significantly high threshold, emigration contributes to democratization (Moses, 2011, p. 2012). We rely on ratios of emigrants over the age of 25 to total population computed by Brücker et al. (2013). The measures are calculated in five-year intervals from 1980 to 2010, using census data from 20 OECD countries that serve as destinations for a particular country's migrants.[21]

This measure is duly advantageous for two reasons: first, it is clear from the literature that it is emigration to the advanced democracies of the West and North that produce the most significant changes in the sending countries of the East and South (e.g. Spilimbergo, 2009). Secondly, having the emigration rates depend on the immigrant population in select destination countries allows for a more accurate estimation of the causal effect of travel policy, since many emigrants who leave their LDC of origin do

so illegally and may not be counted in the emigration statistics of their countries of origin (Moses, 2011, p. 61).

Since the data is available in half-decadal intervals, it would severely limit our ability to use it in the analysis. Consequently, we use information on the years for which we do originally have data to compute the 'between' and 'within' coefficients of variation in emigration rates. The coefficient of variation is a measure of volatility in a series, and as such allows us to evaluate how variable emigration is within countries over time. A coefficient of variation below 1 indicates the data is low in variance, whereas coefficients above 1 indicate the data varies considerably.[22] Since our data do not vary very much over time within countries, we use the following rule to impute the missing years: for 1981 and 1982, we use the information for 1980, for 1983–1987, the information for 1985; for 1988 to 1992, we use values for 1990; for 1993 to 1997, the values for 1995; for 1998 to 2002, the data used is from 2000, and for 2003 to 2007, data is for 2005.

The United Nations population division also produces data on emigration for countries around the world. The problem with this data is that it is available since 1990 but not earlier, and only every 10 years. In addition, to calculate a country's emigrant stock, the UN is forced to rely in many cases on information on residents' country of citizenship, an accounting procedure that overestimates a country's emigrant stock if any of its foreign citizens was born in the country of residence. They are classified as emigrants even though they may have never lived abroad.[23] Conversely, Brücker et al. (2013) computed emigrant stocks using information almost exclusively on the country of birth.

In addition to their direct effects, emigrants may affect politics in their countries of origin indirectly.[24] Though our model cannot estimate these causal mechanisms, it can capture at least three main indirect effects. The first involves ties between emigrants and their compatriots back home through exchanges of people, monetary transfers, and communication flows. Another possible channel of influence is through the number and composition of those who emigrate. Whether because of their level of education and hence their propensity to engage politically, or because of their skills and thus their ability to send remittances back to the home country, emigrants change the demographic composition of the home country population (Docquier, Lodigiani, Rapaport, & Schiff, 2014). Finally, once settled in their country of destination, emigrants may use its political process to exert pressure on the host government to change the policies and/or the political system of their country of origin.

The processes that we aim to capture have been subsumed under various labels in the literature, from linkage to social globalization. Linkage refers to 'the density of ties (economic, political, diplomatic, social, and organizational) and cross-border flows (of capital, goods and services, people, and information) between particular countries and the United States and the EU' (Levitsky & Way, 2010, p. 23). The indicator we use captures some of the channels important to linkage. We nevertheless prefer the concept of social globalization since it is related to a concept that has gained causal import in the literature – social remittances – or 'ideas, behaviors, identities, and social capital that flow from receiving to sending country communities' (Levitt, 1998, p. 927).

Social globalization refers to telephone, letters, and information flows into and out of countries, flows of 'goods, services, income, or financial items without a quid pro quo'[25], international tourist arrivals and departures, the foreign or foreign-born population in a country, and cultural proximity. Data on this indicator is derived from the KOF Globalization project (http://globalization.kof.ethz.ch/) (Dreher, 2006; Dreher, Gaston, & Martens, 2008). We transform the original index including subcategories for personal

contact, information flows, and cultural proximity into a new index that excludes the third subcategory. In our view, two of the proxies used to represent this subcategory, the number of McDonald's restaurants and Ikea stores located in a country, lack validity because such number could be more a function of that country's openness to and ability to attract foreign direct investment.[26]

Economic globalization

There is no scholarly consensus on the effect of trade and capital flows on authoritarian regimes (Coppedge, 2012, pp. 301–302). Tariff and other revenue from financial transactions could lower repression costs for governments. Trade in goods and services, however, can generate wealth and goods that empower citizens economically and make them less dependent on their government. Consequently, our expectations with respect to this variable are mixed. The index of economic globalization we use groups data on flows of trade, stocks of foreign direct investment, portfolio investment, and income payments to foreign nationals, all as a percentage of GDP. It is also from the KOF Globalization project.

Political globalization

This variable refers to the extent of formal penetration by other governments, international organizations, and the United Nations in the affairs of a particular country. It is expected to result in more respect for civil liberties if a majority of states in the international system are democracies. As with the previous two indexes, the indicator is also a composite index produced by the KOF Globalization project. Specifically, it refers to embassies in a country, membership in international organizations, participation in U.N. Security Council Missions, and international treaties ratified.

Inequality

Great gaps in the income different classes receive may create grievances that make the poor prone to rebel and the wealthy less likely to tolerate competitive politics (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2006; Boix, 2003). As a result, market inequality could lead the government to repress or suppress civil liberties. Although focused on democratic transitions, more recent work has found no robust relationship between inequality and correlates of democratization such as increases in civil and political rights (Acemoglu, Naidu, Restrepo, & Robinson, 2013). For data on inequality, we rely on the pre-tax, pre-transfer Gini coefficient from the Standardized World Income Inequality Database (Solt, 2009).

Oil rents

The unusually large rents oil generates reduce the costs of repression for authoritarian regimes by making it easier for governments to support large security and military apparatuses (Ross, 2012). We use an indicator of oil rents from the World Development Indicators that measures the difference between the value of crude oil production at world prices and total costs of production (as a percentage of GDP).

GDP growth

Unusually poor (negative) or unusually positive economic growth may destabilize autocracies by setting in motion a process of political liberalization (Gasiorowski, 1995; Haggard & Kaufman, 1995; Przeworski, Alvarez, Cheibub, & Limongi, 2000, p. 111). Our indicator of economic conditions is the inflation-adjusted rate of economic growth from the World Development Indicators, expressed in annual percentage points.

Electoral autocracy

We use a dummy variable that takes a value of 1 for electoral autocracies, and a value of 0 for full autocracies. To avoid reducing the regime in power to its current civil rights practices, we lag this variable by one year.

Population density

One of the most solid findings from the literature on state repression is that more populous countries have governments that are more repressive because there are more people whose behaviors have to be controlled (Bueno de Mesquita et al., 2003; Davenport, 2007). But as important as the total number of people is their concentration, since high densities facilitate collective action. Consequently, we rely on densities rather than absolute counts. Population density refers to people per square kilometer. Information on this variable comes from the World Development Indicators.

Neighborhood level of democracy

According to diffusion theorists, demonstration effects in neighboring countries and/or imitation by the home country should increase a country's propensity to liberalize (Brinks & Coppedge, 2006; Gleditsch, 2002; Gleditsch & Ward, 2006). But one could just as easily envision the opposite effect, that is, that the more the political distance between North and South Korea grows – to take a particularly poignant example – the more strongly North Korean elites seek to block the diffusion of democratic norms and practices from their Southern neighbor (Gunitsky, 2013). We follow Brinks and Coppedge's (2006) classification of contiguous neighbors and like them, also average regime scores for a country's neighbors in a given year.[27] We, however, average over Unified Democracy Scores instead of Freedom House indexes.