TRANSPARANCY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND THE COMPLETENESS OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS RECORDS

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ABSTRACT

Human rights scholars have explored measurement challenges that impede accurate human rights measurement. They assert that those commit human rights violations often take measures to hide the atrocities, leaving information gaps in human rights records. In this article, I argue that the completeness of human rights records is a function of the transparency and accessibility of a given government. By testing government transparency data and Amnesty International access against the completeness of 24 years of Amnesty International Country Reports, I illustrate the effect that the concepts of transparency and accessibility have on the completeness of human rights records. I hypothesize that as the independent variables of transparency and accessibility improve, the completeness of human rights records increases because the information production process is more effective when access and observation are not inhibited. Additionally, three measures of completeness are utilized to measure this complicated concept. This finding likely holds important implications for human rights scholars and monitoring agencies seeking more complete human rights information.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Since the 1960s, Amnesty International and now other human rights monitoring agencies as well, work to generate lists of prisoners of conscious and facilitate campaigns to see their release. However, it is unclear how comprehensive these lists actually are and, for analysts, it is unclear if the lists are comparable from country to country or even from year to year. Why is there so much variation in the measurement of political imprisonment? To narrow the scope of this thesis, I ask more specifically, why are some Amnesty International Human Rights Reports more complete than others? Human rights violations occur daily, and in a perfect world they would all be observed and recorded accurately. In reality, we have evidence that some countries work to restrict information access about human rights, and a variety of measurement challenges lead to imperfect and incomplete records. (Clark) Human rights measurement is politically framed and the completeness of human rights reports varies dramatically over time and space, painting an inaccurate picture of the state of human rights around the world. Quantifying event based reports, such as those from Amnesty International, with a detailed coding process is one potential way to learn about political imprisonment and avoid measurement error in the study of human rights.

Human rights records critical in many arenas and is utilized in research by governments and human rights organizations alike. Their accuracy is important, however even flawed reports are used, and are best sources researchers have to work with. Therefore, understanding systematic bias in the completeness of human rights records is critical. When you understand the trends in missing data and bias in completeness, you can use flawed measures to advance the study of human rights.

Over the last two years, I have assisted in compiling and coding over 14,000 human rights reports to improve the availability of human rights information. As I became more and more familiar with the
content and structure of Amnesty International Human Rights reports, I observed that the quantity and quality of information varied greatly. What was different about the circumstances under which these reports were researched and produced, and what measurement challenges were interrupting the information production process?

I begin this study by summarizing and synthesizing human rights reporting to identify and explore the root causes of measurement challenges. I then test several measures of completeness of data sets compiled from 24 years of Amnesty International Human Rights Reports. Multiple measures of completeness improves the construct validity of the completeness variable. Next I will introduce two data sets that measure accessibility and transparency of human rights data and measure the effect of both on the completeness of Amnesty International Human Rights Reports. Finally, I conclude by summarizing my findings and discussing their important for human rights measurement and the larger human rights community.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

Human rights statistics are complicated to measure, but are used for important purposes. Oftentimes, human rights statistics impact domestic human rights policies, foreign aid, and foreign policy. Credible human rights data creates awareness of human rights violations and legitimizes human rights as a foreign policy concern. For example, the measurement of human rights and the atrocities committed during the Holocaust influenced the outcome of the Nuremberg trials and the creation of the state of Israel (Brysk, 1994). Three major challenges to human rights measurement are political obstacles, social trends and information, and comparison challenges.

First, political obstacles impede the measurement of human rights violations. Regimes who violate human rights are most often aware of the data used to measure human rights, and often try to distort the data or suppress its production altogether. Records can be destroyed, withheld, or tampered with, painting inaccurate pictures of human rights in a given country. For example, in the 1970’s the U.S.S.R. stopped publishing infant mortality data because the rates began to suddenly increase after a long period of decline. It was later discovered that this increase was due to flawed data collection, but this example demonstrates that regimes are sensitive to information and data that reflects poorly on them (Spirer, 1992). Political obstacles create problems of observation as well. A lack of behavioral indicators does not necessarily mean that a human rights violation is not occurring; it could just as easily mean that a regime is effective in hiding the behavior (Stohl, 1992).

Secondly, political and social trends also challenge human rights measurement. When a government or human rights group focuses on a trending issue or group, data can be distorted or measured differently. Not all data are created equal, and although it may be painful to admit, some data receives far more attention than others. In the case of the disappeared in Argentina from 1976 to 1983, more than
30,000 people are thought to have been the victims of forced disappearance (Spirer, 1992). A human rights group called the Grandmothers emerged to find missing children (Brysk, 1994). The human-interest factor in their story gave them extra political and social capital. As they received financial and social support, measurement of this particular issue improved. Additionally, the women and children demographic had significant weight in the foreign policy arena. Concentration on trending social issues can easily distort data. The Argentina example also raises the issue of double counting data. The disappeared in Argentina were often recorded as dead or disappeared, only to be found in prisons at a later date, resulting many instances of double counting the same person. The National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons did attempt to cross check prison records (Brysk 1994). Disappeared children were often raised by other families and sometimes never counted at all. (Brysk, 1994).

Thirdly, human rights measurement in Argentina demonstrates comparison challenges. In Argentina, kidnapping and torture in prisons were, though legally human rights violations, were not counted. “Incidents of kidnapping and torture which would count as human rights violations elsewhere did not count in Argentina. The volume of worse abuses set a perverse benchmark and absorbed monitoring capabilities” (Brysk, 1994). In most other countries, these are considered substantial human rights violations, and are recorded as such. Additionally, Amnesty International does not compare human rights from country to country and encourages others to not make comparisons. They assert that government secrecy stops the flow of accurate information. Amnesty International often cannot corroborate information, which makes and unreliable basis for comparisons (Stohl, 1992).

Although three categories of measurement challenges are outlined above, the root of what stops the flow of human rights information is the transparency and accessibility of a government and information. Transparency is a government’s willingness to share information with citizens, and accessibility refers to how easily accessible a country is to those looking to gather information. The examples outlined above demonstrate cases where human rights measurement was challenged due to limited transparency and access issues.
Amnesty International, a well-known nongovernmental organization was founded in 1961 to call attention to human rights abuses around the world. Amnesty International is an organization dedicated to turning human rights principles into action. Their stated objective is to “to conduct research and generate action to prevent and end grave abuses of human rights, and to demand justice for those whose rights have been violated” (Amnesty International). The main product of Amnesty International’s monitoring is country reports, which are produced every year and document the state of human rights around the world. These reports disseminate information to other nongovernmental organizations, individual nation’s governments, and international organizations such as the United Nations, academics, and the general public. These reports are researched through interviews with victims and officials, observing trials, work with local human rights activists, and media monitoring. Amnesty International aims to turn this research in advocacy, lobbying, campaigns, and ultimately any action that will improve respect for human rights.

Although Amnesty International has one stated objective, their goals are twofold. As a strategic organization, they must balance two often competing goals: (1) accurate reporting to maintain their deserved credibility, and (2) the need to maintain incoming donations and enthusiastic volunteer labor. (Conrad) Given these competing goals, Amnesty International is not likely to give the same amount of attention to all regions, or to distribute their resources equally.
Chapter 3

Theory

Why is there so much variation in the measurement of political imprisonment? Given the challenges outlined above, how do we accurately assess the human rights situation in different countries, over time? We have evidence that some countries work to restrict access to information about the human rights situation on the ground, while others are less guarded. This makes assessing the big picture and comparing human rights environments across countries difficult. For example, there is a large amount of variance in the completeness of Amnesty International’s political imprisonment records, with no explanation as to why.

There are many steps between a human rights violation occurring and it being published in an Amnesty International Country Report. I will refer to this as the information production process. In a given country, repressive events happen or do not happen. These events are then observed imperfectly. This is known as monitoring. One such monitoring group is Amnesty International. They produce information on human rights from the information they observe. This information is passed on to academics and researchers who research and analyze human rights and is turned into data, and the general public to create awareness.
Next, I will explain the information production process in greater detail and break down the four steps: 1) Access 2) Observation 3) Information Dissemination 4) Data. In order to clearly demonstrate this process, follow the example of an Amnesty International Country Report from start to finish. A repressive event occurs, for example in Myanmar, where over 1 million people have been disenfranchised and a long running government assisted campaign of crimes against ethnic groups has led to sexual violence, force labor, and the use of child soldiers (HRW). In order to assess the situation, Amnesty International must first achieve step 1), access. Gaining access is not simple, as governments committing human rights violations have no incentive to allow access to Amnesty International.

The quality and quantity of incidents observed (step 2) varies dramatically over time and space. A lack of behavioral indicators of human rights abuses may be due to government secrecy and the withholding of information, and does not necessarily mean that human rights abuses are not occurring. The concept of transparency (the amount of information that flows freely from a government) is used to explore whether or not accurate observation is possible. Observing can also be though of as checking the quality of human rights systematically, over a period of time. These reports result in information (Step 3) that is passed on to the public, world governments, nongovernmental organizations, and academics, all of who have an interest in human rights. This information is used to build data and create statistics about the state of human rights around the world. It is the job of researchers and academics to produce meaningful
data from information in the Amnesty International Human Rights Reports, ending the information production process with (step 4), data.

Through the four steps of the information production process, there are many opportunities for error, and possible explanations for variation in the measurement of political imprisonment. There is variation in the completeness of Amnesty International Records of political imprisonment because of the strains that a lack of transparency and access put on the information production process. Transparency and accessibility directly affect the completeness of political imprisonment records because they affect access and observation, the first two steps in the information production process. A different amount of human rights information comes out of different contexts because the accessibility and transparency of governments varies. Without access, the violations are not observed in the first place. Transparency refers to the amount of information that flows freely from a government, and institutional transparency is a function of the resources that a government invests in making allegations of government violations of human rights publicly accessible. Therefore transparency is a function of both the capacity of the government to make the allegations known and the willingness to do so.

Amnesty International maintains, “Government secrecy and intimidation obstruct the flow of information from many countries and can impede efforts to corroborate allegations” (Stohl). The completeness of human rights records is a function of the transparency and accessibility of a given government. As the independent variables of transparency and accessibility improve, the completeness of human rights records increases because the information production process is more effective when access (1) and observation (2) are not inhibited.

To understand how variation in access and transparency influence the quality and content of Amnesty International reporting over 14,000 human rights reports have been digitized and analyzed (Fariss). I hypothesize that the completeness of human rights records is a function of the transparency and accessibility of a given government. As the independent variables of transparency and accessibility
improve, the completeness of human rights records increases because the information production process is more effective when access (1) and observation (2) are not inhibited.

Chapter 4
Research Design and Data Analysis

In this chapter, I first describe the data collection procedure I used to construct an original dataset of political prisoners across eleven different countries (Data Collection Strategy). Second, I describe the measurement strategies I used to construct different measures of the information content available for each of these countries (Dependent Variables). Third, I compare these different dependent variables together to understand if they are empirically related (Construct Validity). Fourth, I introduce several independent variables, which I hypothesize should be associated with the different measures of my dependent variables (Independent Variables). Finally, I describe the modeling choices I made to understand the patterns of information in terms of how the vary across these eleven distinct political contexts (Analysis).

Data Collection Strategy:

The data were coded from the Amnesty International dossiers, which were available from UC San Diego on microfilm/microfiche. (As a note, I had originally started with the electronic documents available on Amnesty International's website, but found that the collection was not as extensive as the one on microfilm/microfiche). Amnesty International has reports that are filed each year for each country, and the dossiers were organized by year and then country name (for example, all of the European countries were grouped together). I have attached an example of what a dossier/report looks like from Myanmar, covering events from January-December 1990. Within each year, there can be anywhere from
5-100+ pages of information for a given country, and I went through each page for the years 1989-2012 to gather data on individual and groups of dissidents. Data were collected from annual country reports, press releases, and all other special reporting from eleven countries during that time period. Incidents of political repression were recorded and organized by dissident, either individual or in groups. In the attached Excel spreadsheet, you will see that each row is a new dissident. For each dissident (or sometimes groups of dissidents), I included the following information: (Incident number, name, dissidents in row (qualitative), dissidents in row (number), total dissidents in incident, gender, age, where, date punished, date released, how punished, why punished, non-political (dichotomous), ethnicity related (dichotomous), occupation, group, notes, and source.

Name of the dissident is a seemingly simple category that reveals important information about the country dossiers. Names were recorded in three ways: 1) true name, 2) pseudonym, or 3) blank, recorded as “one woman,” “one man,” etc. The real name was used most often. Pseudonyms were employed when the dossiers were telling stories with a more personal human interest element, when the victim wished to remain anonymous, or if Amnesty did not know the victims name. Sometime, the name category was left blank. This was often true if the dissident or their families were still imprisoned or at risk of further harm if they publicized their mistreatment. This occurred most commonly in Myanmar.

Incident number was recorded in the format year.countrycode.number. For example, 1989.01.001 is the first incident of 1989 in Kyrgyzstan. If multiple dissidents are punished in the same incident, which typically occurs on the same date, they receive the same incident number. This allows dissidents who were part of the same incident to be easily grouped. If the dossier gives a long range of dates beginning in one year and ending in another (such as October 2005 to June 2006), use the year that is at the middle of the date range (February 2006, use 2006.XX.XXX).

Dissidents in row (qualitative) indicates whether the row contains an individual or a group. A 0 is entered for one person, 1 represents more than one person, and 2 represents and organization. Dissidents in row (number) is the total number of incidents in an individual row. If the number is expressed with an
adjective, describe this category according to the language in the dossiers, for example “several.” Total dissidents in incident is the total number of dissidents who were punished in the same incident (usually on the same date).

Gender is a categorical variable, recorded as male or female for individuals, and left blank for groups where the gender is not homogeneous. If the gender ratio of a group was known, the group would be split in two, and recorded with the appropriate incident number to clearly indicate the gender breakdown within a group, while still indicating that they were all part of the same incident. Age is recorded as the age at the time of the incident, not the time of the report. The where category refers to the location of the incident. The date punished category is recorded in M/D/YY and date released is also included for dissidents with prison sentences where the release date is known. The release date is not estimated based on the length of the original sentence and is only recorded if the release date differs from the end of the sentence. If someone was sentenced to ten years imprisonment and released after 5, the sentence length would not be updated, but the release date would reflect the shortened sentence.

The how and why punished categories are descriptive and vary based on the content in the report. How punished describes the punishment (either official or unofficial) that a dissident was subjected to. Examples of “how punished” include detained, sentenced to X years imprisonment, beaten, and missing. Why punished describes the reason the dissident received the punishment. The why category describes, as comprehensively as possible given the information in the reports, what the justification or reasoning for a punishment was.

Next, whether or not the dissident entry was political is included as a dichotomous variable. This allows for all incidents to be included and for non-political incidents to be filtered out easily. Some individuals may be punished for a seemingly non-political reason such as “petty hooliganism”, but if they have a political-related occupation or ideology or are part of a political group, then it should be counted as political. Cases with individuals who are “former police officers” “former military” or “former government officials” are counted as political. Additionally, a prisoner who faces ill-treatment in jail
(human rights abuse), but the prisoner was jailed for murdering their neighbor (non-political reason) and not for participation in a protest or complaining about the government, both of which would be political reasons.

The last few categories are intended to describe the person/people involved in each incident. Ethnicity Related is a dichotomous variable. Any incident where human rights abuses occurred for an ethnicity related reason is considered political. Occupation is coded numerically and includes official government member, journalists, those in legal professions, medical professionals, and more (see appendix). The group category indicates any groups (political, student, professional) that a dissident is a member of. The group is recorded regardless of whether or not the punishment is directly related to the group. This dataset also contains a section for notes, which often includes follow up on individual cases from later reports, extenuating circumstances (such as legal history or a pre-existing medical condition), and describes and clarifies relationships between dissidents. If a dissident is punished again in a new incident, a new category is created for them and the name then includes “second time punished.” If there is an update on the original incident it is included in the notes section. The source is clearly recorded so that the report each dissident is found in can be easily identified.
Table 1- Components of Measuring Completeness of Human Rights Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incident Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Where</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>How Punished</th>
<th>Why Punished</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000.10.035</td>
<td>Tint Wai</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing propaganda graffiti with the intent of misleading and agitating people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993.10.001</td>
<td>Daw Aung San</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Dagon</td>
<td>1/25/93</td>
<td>7 years imprisonment</td>
<td></td>
<td>Political Party X</td>
<td>teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990.09.001</td>
<td>Murray Hiebert</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Maungdaw</td>
<td>9/11/99</td>
<td>3 months imprisonment (served 1)</td>
<td>Exercising freedom of expression. Wrote and article about the judges son being kicked out of school for cheating on the debate team. The article was read aloud, and he was held in contempt of court.</td>
<td>Politic al Party Y</td>
<td>Politician</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This fictitious example shows visual to demonstrate what complete vs. incomplete records look like. The first dissident entry is not complete. The only available information is that a dissident named Tint Wai was punished in the year 2000. The second dissident entry is complete. There is a dissident name, date, location, how and why punished, group, and occupation. The third dissident entry is also complete, but the why punished includes a higher level of detail that of dissident two.

**Dependent Variables:**

As Table 1 demonstrates, the completeness of human rights records is not always clear or easy to measure. Different amounts of information are present in different categories. My definition of completeness is twofold, and includes how much information is in the reports, and how many categories are accounted for. Three measures of completeness were used in order to be as comprehensive as possible. The first measurement of completeness is a simple ratio of complete categories out of total categories. Not all columns count towards completeness, because some are always complete. The
columns that count towards this ratio are gender, date, age, where, how, why, group, and occupation. This measure of completeness is a quick measure of how many categories are complete, and can easily be aggregated into an average by country/year. By this measure, Taiwan had the least complete country reports from 1998-2004, with a median of 6 out of a missing pieces of data per entry. The most complete were Laos in 1991, and Uzbekistan in 2008, both with a median of 0 pieces of missing data per entry. The following histogram illustrates the distribution of missing data points, by country year.

![Mean Missing Data in AI Country Reports](image)

Completeness is also measured by average character count for the how and why punished categories. Average character count measures the level of detail in dissident entries, and reflects the difference in completeness between dissident entries 2 and 3, in Figure 2 above. The how punished category explains what happened to a given dissident. This can range from physical harm and intimidation, to official imprisonment, to disappearance. The most complete country year by this measure
was Kyrgyzstan in 2011, averaging 294 characters per entry. The least complete were Uzbekistan in 2008, and Taiwan in 1999, 2001, and 2004, with average character counts of 8 per entry.

The why punished category was also measured by average character count, and described the reason a dissident was subjected to a particular punishment. At first look, Kyrgyzstan is the most complete in 2007, with a mean character count of 468. However, it is important to recognize that only one incident was recorded in that specific country year, so this number is not necessarily an accurate representation of completeness. The mean character count for Kyrgyzstan in 2007 shows that there was one incident recorded with a character count of 468. Again, by this measure Taiwan is least complete, with an average character count of 0 for both 1998 and 2010. By all three measures, Taiwan had the least complete Amnesty International Records for eleven out of twenty four years.

**Construct Validity:**

This section explores the correlation between three different measures of completeness. Negative correlation coefficients exist between the three measures of completeness of human rights records—average missing data and the mean character counts for why and how punished. The correlation coefficient between average missing data and mean length how is -.173, a weak correlation. The correlation coefficient between average missing data and mean length why is -.473. This demonstrates that as the average number of missing pieces of data increases in given country year, the mean character counts for the why and how punished categories decrease. The negative correlation coefficient is stronger for the why punished than how, indicating that this relationship is stronger. The how and why punished categories have a correlation coefficient of 0.418.
### Table 2: Construct Validity, Correlation Coefficients Between Measures of Completeness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How Punished</th>
<th>Why Punished</th>
<th>Average Missing Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Punished</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>0.418</td>
<td>-0.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why Punished</td>
<td>0.418</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>-0.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Missing Data</td>
<td>-0.173</td>
<td>-0.473</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Independent Variables:**

I introduce independent variables that I hypothesize are associated with completeness of human rights records. I used the Ill-Treatment and Torture Data Collection project to measure the concept of access (Conrad). For the purpose of this paper, access is defined as the ability of Amnesty International to collect information. Access is the first and necessary step for the information production process to continue. This data set has coded whether or not Amnesty International was allowed physical access to every country in a given year, and is another dichotomous variable. The ITT data are not representative of a definitive level of torture used by states, and operates on the assumption that actual levels of torture are unobservable. Instead, this data measures Amnesty International’s allegations against states because those allegations can be measured reliably and with a high degree of validity. The coded variable for AI access was used to measure the concept of access, a crucial part of the information production process. I hypothesize that as access decreases, the completeness of country reports will decrease as well.

The other independent variable is transparency. I used the Political Origins of Transparency dataset (Berliner). I define transparency as the amount of information that flows freely from a government. This dataset has coded transparency data from the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), and whether or not a country has passed FOI in a given year. FOI is a law that grants the right to access information from federal governments. Whether or not a country has passed FOI in a given year indicates whether
transparency. Again, I hypothesize that as transparency decreases, the completeness of country reports will decrease as well. It is important to note that there are no country years where Amnesty International experienced restricted access, and FOI was passed.

Table 3- Frequency of Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Restricted Access NO</th>
<th>Restricted Access YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOI Pass NO</td>
<td>1124</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOI Pass YES</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis:

In order to examine the effects of the independent variables on the completeness of AI Human Rights Reports, I performed a comparison of means across the presence of FOI data and the Restricted Access data.

Comparison of Means:

The follow table provides a comparison of the means of the three measures of completeness, based on the presence of Freedom of Information laws, and the presence of Restricted Access. Table 4 shows the means of the dependent variable of completeness, measured three ways (Average Missing Data, and Mean Character Count of How and Why Punished). The table demonstrates the change in the means when Freedom of Information laws have been passed or not, and when access has been restricted, or not. The highlighted numbers illuminate the difference in means for which the results were expected. The mean of “Why Punished” increased by 68.37 characters when FOI laws were in place in a given country. The “Average Missing” pieces of data decreased by .36 when FOI laws were passed.

The “How Punished” character count saw its mean decrease by 6.55 when “Restricted Access” was true. Similarly, “Why Punished” had a mean that was 3.04 characters shorter when “Restricted
Access” was true. Lastly, the only statistically significant result (Average Missing/Restricted Access) is denoted with an asterisk. “Average Missing” pieces of data increased by .61 when “Restricted Access” was positive.

| Table 4- Comparison of Means |

**Comparison of Means Across Presence of FOI Pass**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How Punished</th>
<th>Why Punished</th>
<th>Average Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FOI Pass- NO</td>
<td>57.12</td>
<td>79.35</td>
<td>2.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOI Pass- YES</td>
<td>51.97</td>
<td>147.72</td>
<td>2.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>-5.15</td>
<td>68.37</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Test-</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Value</td>
<td>0.7949</td>
<td>0.5696</td>
<td>0.7695</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*statistically significant

**Comparison of Means Across Presence of Restricted Access**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>How Punished</th>
<th>Why Punished</th>
<th>Average Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Access- NO</td>
<td>54.61</td>
<td>69.41</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Access- YES</td>
<td>48.06</td>
<td>66.37</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difference</td>
<td>-6.55</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T Test-</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.2967</td>
<td>-3.17*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P Value</td>
<td>0.3802</td>
<td>0.7695</td>
<td>0.00455*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*statistically significant

Overall, an increase in transparency leads to an increase in mean character count of how and why punished, and reduces the number of pieces of missing data. When access is restricted, the length of mean character count in how and why decreases, and the number of pieces of missing data increases. Although only one comparison of means was statistically significant, observing that five out of six comparisons moved in the direction I expected is an indication that transparency and accessibility do affect the quality of Amnesty International Human Rights Reports.
Chapter 5

Conclusion

This thesis has begun exploring why there is variation in the measurement of political imprisonment. An exploration between several measures of completeness and the independent variables of accessibility and transparency and coding three different measures of completeness are important parts of this research. These findings may suggest to scholars, monitoring agencies, governments, and all others looking to improve human rights around the world that accessibility and transparency could be important factors in the accurate measuring and reporting of human rights. Although a small sample size of cases where FOI and Restricted Access were both true led to statistically insignificant results, the exploration and research on this topic is valuable. Understanding barriers to inaccurate and incomplete human rights reporting may in time improve the quality of human rights reports, and in turn better reporting and monitoring may lead to improved human rights around the world. Clearer research on what hinders human rights reporting is important to revealing and recording cases of political imprisonment.

Although there was insufficient data to prove a relationship between completeness and accessibility and transparency, the three different measures of completeness contribute to human rights research. A single measure of completeness of human rights reports is not comprehensive enough to capture the quality of the reports. It is critical to capture both the quality and quantity of information, and to achieve a high degree of construct validity between these measures. Multiple measures of completeness enhances the credibility of human rights reports and provides a solid foundation for further analysis of human rights data.

Additionally, value in this research comes from the vast amount of digitized and organized human rights reports that were previously not easily available. Coded Amnesty International Country Reports from 24 years are now available online, as part of a larger set of digitized human rights data.
This data can be used to continue research on the information production process and the steps of access, observation, information dissemination, and data—all of which are critical to accurate and complete human rights reporting.

Understanding trends in the completeness of human rights reports allows for better utilization of current records. When researchers understand the biases in human rights reports they can use imperfect reporting to understand and advance the state of human rights around the world. Knowing which circumstances lead to more complete comprehensive human rights reports allows the incomplete reports to paint a more accurate picture about human rights.
Appendix A

Country Dossier Example

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT**

This report covers the period
January to December
1990

1991

MYANMAR (BURMA)

More than 350 prisoners of conscience and possible prisoners of conscience were
known to be among thousands of people
believed held for political reasons. Many
were detained without charge or trial but
others were sentenced after unfair trials
by military tribunals. Torture and ill-treat-
ment of prisoners were reportedly com-
mon. There were continuing allegations
of extrajudicial executions by government
troops in ethnic minority areas affected by
armed insurgencies. At least 100 people
remained under sentence of death, but it
was not known if any executions took
place.

The ruling State Law and Order Restora-
tion Council (SLORC), headed by General
Saw Maung, continued to enforce Martial
Law Order 2/88, which prohibits gatherings
of more than five people, and Notification 8/88, which prohibits public
criticism of the military. Scores of people
were arrested for demonstrating against these provi-
sions and Order Number 3/90, issued in
February, which severely restricts freedom
of expression during election campaigning
activities.

Parliamentary elections were held in 27
May. The opposition National League for
Democracy (NLD) won an overwhelming
majority, despite the detention or impris-
onment of its leaders. However, by the end
of the year the NLD had not announced a
timetable for convening the National
Assembly or for handing over power to the
elected civilian government.

More than 350 prisoners of conscience
and possible prisoners of conscience had
been identified by the end of 1990, but the
actual number of people held for political
reasons was thought to be in the thou-
sands. Hundreds of people were arrested
for their peaceful election campaigning
activities or for protesting against the
military's refusal to hand over power and its
continuing repression of government crit-
icists. In February, at least 25 parliamentary
candidates were reportedly arrested in the
Yangon area. It was not known whether any of them were released. Thirty
other political activists were arrested in
April and May during the election cam-
paign. By April, a candidate for the
Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS),
was reportedly arrested at his home by 40
armed security officials on the day before
the election. He was apparently still in
detention at the end of the year. U Nyo, a
former prime minister, and the NLD's lead-
er, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Tin Oo,
remained in custody throughout 1990 and
were officially barred from participating in
the elections. Many other people arrested
in 1990 apparently remained in prison
throughout 1990.

Zar Gana, a former prisoner of con-
science, was arrested in May apparently
for saturating on stage the military author-
ities. He was said to have been sentenced
to at least five years' imprisonment and
held at Insein Prison, near Yangon. Another prisoner of conscience, Nga Ma, a
lawyer sentenced to 14 years' imprison-
ment in 1989, was reported to be suffering
from an acute heart ailment. Torture with
electric shocks may have exacerbated his
condition.

Further political trials occurred after the
May election. Kyi Maung, the acting
Chairman of the nLD, and the nLD's acting
Party Secretary, Chit Khin, were arrested
in September. They were reportedly
accused of passing sensitive information to
unauthorized recipients, and in November
were both convicted of violating the 1923
Official Secrets Act. Kyi Maung was sen-
tenced to 10 years' imprisonment and Chit
Khin to seven years. Other political
activists were arrested in September for
writing, possessing or publishing antigu-
overnment material. Those held included
NLD information officer Kyi Hla, and two
news leaders, Kyi Win and Ye Naing. Kyi
Win and Ye Naing were each sentenced to
seven years' imprisonment. All were con-
sidered to be prisoners of conscience.

It was unclear in many cases whether
individual political prisoners were being
detained without charge or trial under the
1975 State Protection Law or just been
tried and sentenced. However, some were
known to have been tried by military tri-

dunals which were established in July 1989
in order to try alleged martial law offend-
ers. Such tribunals used summary trial pro-
cedures which contravened international
fair trial standards; they could waive
"unnecessary" witnesses and defendants had no right to judicial appeal. Those con-
icted were liable to one of three sen-
tences: at least three years' hard labour, life
imprisonment, or the death penalty.

Among the prisoners of conscience who
were sentenced was U Thein Hla, a law-
ner and nLD candidate from Pabedan
Township, who was arrested in February
and sentenced to three years' imprison-
ment with hard labour. Another was 67-
year-old Oo Tha Tun, a well-known
Arakan historian and election candidate for the Arakan League for Democracy. He
was reportedly sentenced to three years' imprison-
ment with hard labour under Section 531
of the 1950 Emergency Provisions Law,
which prohibits promoting disloyalty to
the state. In addition, two nLD leaders, Ohn
Myint and Ohn Min, were sentenced to
three years' imprisonment in October by a
military tribunal at Insein Prison. They
had reported the alleged killings of two
Buddhist monks and two students by
security forces during a demonstration on
8 August in Mandalay.

The demonstration, led by monks, com-
memorated mass anti-government protests
in 1988 during which hundreds of demonstra-
tors were shot dead by security forces.
At the 1990 demonstration, at least 17
monks were beaten or arrested, and eight
others were shot by security forces. The
four alleged killings, which the SLORC
denied, could not be confirmed.

Following the 1990 demonstration, Bud-
dhist monks in Mandalay and other cities
refused to provide religious services
for military personnel and their families,
and demanded that General Saw Maung
apologize for the injuries inflicted on
monks at the demonstration. They also
Appendix B

Codebook

- **Country code**
  - 1 - Kyrgyzstan
  - 2 - Ukraine
  - 3 - Belarus
  - 4 - Kazakhstan
  - 5 - Georgia
  - 6 - Uzbekistan
  - 7 - China
  - 8 - Laos
  - 9 - Malaysia
  - 10 - Myanmar
  - 11 - Taiwan
  - 12 - Thailand
  - 13 – Vietnam

- **Incident Number** – format is year.countrycode.number (EX: 2015.02.001 for the first incident in 2015 for Ukraine); include non-political cases
  - If multiple dissidents are punished in the same incident (usually on the same date), then use the same incident number
  - If the dossier gives a long range of dates beginning in one year and ending in another (such as October 2005 to June 2006), use the year that is at the middle of the date range (February 1996 so use 1996.XX.XXX)

- **Occupation**
  - 1 – Official government member; political party member; opposition party leader
  - 2 – Civil society organization group member; activist
  - 3 – Religious group member
  - 4 – Journalism (journalist; editor)
  - 5 – Legal (lawyer; legal consultant)
  - 6 – Education (professor/teacher; headmaster/headmistress; academic)
  - 7 – Medical (doctor; nurse)
  - 8 – Civilian
  - 9 – Police officer/prisons official/special forces
  - 10 – Student
  - 11 – Writer; poet; blogger
  - 12 – Military
  - 13 – Businessperson; economist; accountant
  - 14 – Science and technology (scientist; physicist; engineer)
• **Dates**
  o If the dossier only gives a year (such as 1998), enter it as the middle of the year (7/1/1998).
  o If the dossier gives a short range of dates (such as March 19-25, 2007), enter it as the middle of the date range (3/22/2007).
  o If the dossier gives a long range of dates (such as between January to March 2005), enter it as the middle of the date range (2/15/2005).
  o If it gives a month but no date (such as April 1998), enter it in as the first of the month (4/1/1998).
  o If it says "early April 1998" or "beginning of April 1998", enter it as 4/1/1998.

**Dissident Entry**

• For certain individuals, the Amnesty International dossiers will say they were detained during a demonstration and "may face imprisonment of 7 years". If there is no information on actual imprisonment in later dossiers, code only the Punishment1 of detained. Do not assume that they eventually received the 7 years’ imprisonment if not explicitly stated.
• For individuals who have a punishment of "fined or given administrative sentence", code it as both punishments
• Some of the dissident entries are groups of dissidents, such as "several demonstrators", "25 protestors", "200 people", or "100s of demonstrators". We would group those dissidents together rather than put 25 individual rows for the "25 protestors".
• Some dissidents were punished multiple times for different reasons, and each new punishment would be its own row and we would note this by entering "name of protestor (1st time)" and "name of protestor (2nd time)".
• **Non-political reasons**
  o Note individuals who do not have their human rights abused due to political reasons with a “non-political” in the “non-political reason” column, but do not code these cases.
  o Some individuals may be punished for a seemingly non-political reason such as “petty hooliganism”, but if they have a political-related occupation or ideology or are part of a political group, then it should be counted as political.
  o Cases with individuals who are “former police officers” are counted as political.
  o EX: a prisoner who faces ill-treatment in jail (human rights abuse), but the prisoner was jailed for murdering their neighbor (non-political reason) and not for participation in a protest or complaining about the government, both of which would be political reasons.
• **Ethnicity**
  o Note individuals who had their human rights abused due to their ethnicity with a “yes” in the “ethnicity-related” column, and do code these cases because they count as political.
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