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CONCESSIONS, REPRESSION, AND POLITICAL PROTEST IN THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION*

Karen Rasler

Indiana University

I investigate how and why the Shah's policies of accommodation and repression escalated the revolutionary mobilization of the Iranian population. Several major theories—micromobilization theory, value expectancy, and bandwagon (critical mass) models—are used to sort out the empirical relationships between protest behavior (violent and nonviolent), strikes, spatial diffusion, concessions, and repression in the year prior to the Shah's exit from Iran. Estimates from Poisson regression models show that repression had a short-term negative effect and a long-term positive effect on overall levels of protest via repression's influence on spatial diffusion. I infer that this pattern of effects stems from a combination of deterrent and micromobilization mechanisms. Concessions expanded the protests by accelerating massive urban strikes that in turn generated more opposition activity throughout Iran. Spatial diffusion was encouraged by government concessions and massive labor strikes. Mutually reinforcing relationships between concessions, strikes, and spatial diffusion indicate the significance of intergroup dynamics in the revolutionary process.

Few people were prepared for the sudden collapse of the Eastern European Communist regimes in 1989. How did seemingly stable, repressive political systems come to be undermined by initially small oppositions that quickly spread to the bulk of the population? Scholars and policymakers asked the same question when the Iranian Revolution occurred in 1979. How could the Shah's regime fall when his army and internal security apparatus were intact, when there was no defeat in war and no peasant insurrections?

One reason we fail to anticipate revolutions is that familiar theories of revolution underestimate the potential explosiveness of large-scale collective action. While we know that mass mobilization is a necessary component of successful revolutions, the contribution

that rapid escalation and diffusion play in them is sometimes overlooked. The literature is replete with bandwagon, threshold, and critical mass models that describe how and why individual actions can precipitate rapid unexpected levels of mass participation. But, models that explain the individual and combined effects of government concessions and repression on escalation processes are less convincing (Lichbach 1987).

I address the question of how and why the Shah's policies of concession and repression in 1977 and 1978 escalated the revolutionary mobilization of large numbers of people and assured the collapse of the regime in 1979. Why study the Iranian Revolution? Because it is an example of a regime's abrupt collapse that is brought about through rapid mass mobilization. Understanding the escalatory dynamics in the Iranian case can extend understanding to similar cases, like Nicaragua in 1979, the Philippines in 1986, and the East European Communist governments in 1989.

First, I put forth a model that specifies the links between concessions/repression and the increasing incentives for individuals and groups to participate in protest actions. Next,

*Direct all correspondence to Karen Rasler, Department of Political Science, Woodburn Hall, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN 47405 (Internet: krasler@ophelia.ucs.indiana.edu). I am grateful to William R. Thompson and the anonymous ASR reviewers for their comments and criticisms. [Reviewers acknowledged by the author are Charles Kurzman, Mark Lichbach, Wilbur J. Scott, and Charles Tilly. —ED.]

I test for these links via an analysis of government and opposition actions over the 58 weeks prior to the Iranian Revolution in February 1979. I discuss how and why these links appear in terms of the historical record of the revolution. The empirical findings are based on more than 1,300 events of repression, concessions, protest activity (violent and nonviolent), and labor strikes collected from the *Tehran Journal*, the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, the *Middle East Economic Digest*, *The New York Times*, and various historical works.

REVIEW OF THE THEORETICAL LITERATURE

The Effects of Repression

Empirical studies have documented the myriad effects of government repression on dissent. After testing theories that argue the effects are positive, negative, U-shaped, and inverted U-shaped, the overwhelming result is that repression has both positive and negative effects on government opposition.¹ But how repression *both* escalates and deters dissent is unknown (Lichbach 1987:271).

Opp and Ruehl (1990) find empirical support for the hypothesis that repression has a direct negative effect on protest because it is a cost; yet repression also has an indirect positive effect via micromobilization processes. The direct negative effect (deterrent) is predicted by resource mobilization and rational choice perspectives. Oberschall (1973), Jenkins and Perrow (1977), and Tilly (1978) maintain that government sanctions (bans, arrests, executions, and martial law) can impede the ability of groups to mobilize resources (people, money, guns, and ideas) and challenge the government. Rational choice theorists assert that if individuals expect repression for participation, they will be less inclined to join protest actions (Olson 1965; Hardin 1982).

However, Opp and Ruehl (1990:521–27) argue that this direct effect of repression can be nullified, or even reversed, if repression leads to micromobilization processes that raise incentives for protest.² These processes are launched if people are exposed to repression, if they consider the repression illegitimate, and if they are members of groups that support protest. Exposure to what people perceive to be illegitimate repression (either personally or via social ties) is likely to make them disillusioned with the established order and easily recruited for mass actions (Opp 1994:103). They are even more likely to participate if they belong to informal associations that support such action. Hence, repression indirectly escalates protest actions (White 1989).

This argument can be examined from a dynamic perspective. If Opp and Ruehl (1990) are correct in their analysis of the indirect effects of repression on protest, overall levels of repression should have a short-term negative effect on dissent because of the time lapse required for micromobilization processes to occur, but a long-term escalatory effect.

The next question is whether the deterrent or escalatory effects of repression are the same across low to severe measures of repression. Some analysts maintain that the negative effect is the result of severe repression (i.e., the costs are too high), while the positive effect is the result of less severe measures that incur fewer costs and enable groups to make demands on government leaders (Tilly 1978; Hechter 1984). Olivier's (1991) and Khawaja's (1993) analyses of collective action in South Africa and the West Bank do indeed find that severe levels of repression decrease collective action while low to medium levels escalate it.

Therefore, do the short- and long-term effects of repression hold across different measures of repression? If so, the Opp and Ruehl thesis will have stronger support; if not, then the short- and long-term effects of repression

¹ For recent empirical research on the relationship between repression and violence, see Davis and Ward (1990), Muller and Weede (1990), Henderson (1991), Olivier (1991), Hoover and Kowalewski (1992), Gupta, Singh, and Sprague (1993), Khawaja (1993), Koopmans (1993), Moaddel (1994), and Olzak and Olivier (1994).

² McAdam (1988:134–35) defines the micromobilization context as a small-group setting in which processes of collective attribution are combined with rudimentary forms of organization to produce mobilization for collective action. Examples include preexisting groups like unions, churches, fraternal/service organizations, and friendship networks.

may depend on the types of repression and their timing in the political process.

To complicate the issue further, Lichbach (1987:286) says that repression cannot be assessed independently from accommodation. Whether increases in government repression increase or decrease overall dissent depends on the efficacy of the opposition's tactics for obtaining government concessions. If a government increases repression of the opposition's tactics (e.g., street demonstrations) at the same time that the tactics benefit the opposition group, then the government's policies are inconsistent. The government would be engaging in accommodation and repression in response to a given opposition tactic. Dissent is likely to increase. Only consistent government accommodative and repressive policies reduce dissent; inconsistent policies increase it.

Choosing the correct mix of government concessions and repression is easier said than done. Prerevolutionary regimes are especially vulnerable to making mistakes. They tend to initiate political liberalization policies that both restrain repression and grant concessions to dissidents. Such actions create a more favorable political opportunity for the opposition (McAdam 1988). Dissidents quickly calculate that the prospects for successful collective action are better than ever. Their expectations ignite the participation of large numbers of people whose presence at one event fuels even greater turnouts at subsequent events, until a bandwagon effect diffuses throughout the population (Granovetter 1978; Salert 1982; Kuran 1989:17–25; Oberschall 1994:87–89).

I offer the following hypotheses:

- H₁: Government repression has a direct negative effect on protest actions.
- H₂: Government repression increases protest actions indirectly via its positive effect on spatial diffusion.
- H₃: Government repression has direct short-term negative and long-term positive effects on protest actions.
- H₄: The short-term and long-term effects are the same for low and severe levels of repression.
- H₅: Governments that apply both accommodation and repression to the opposition increase protest actions.

The Effects of Concessions

Value-expectancy models assert that people will rebel if they become convinced that dissent will achieve the collective good (Klandermans 1984; Muller and Opp 1986; Finkel, Muller, and Opp 1989). If the value of the collective good (e.g., overthrow of the Shah's government) is combined with a high expectation of success, people are likely to participate in mass actions. The variables that are likely to increase the expected value of a collective good are (1) individual assessments about whether their participation will make a difference in achieving the public good, and (2) expectations that group action will be successful. Government concessions to highly visible groups enhance their perceived influence and increase the probability that individuals will join them for mass action (Muller and Opp 1986:484). Diffusion to a wider array of people and places occurs when expectations about the number of participants in a mass action escalate. With each successive mass action, more and more people turn out because their expectations that others will be joining them have been substantiated by previous events (Klandermans 1984:585). Moreover, the rate of diffusion will be influenced by the ability of the opposition to wrest concessions from the government. Important victories assure people that their continued activism will pay off and participation will diffuse rapidly throughout the population (Chong 1991:151). Thus, I hypothesize:

H₆: Government concessions increase protest actions.

H₇: Government concessions also increase protest actions via their positive effects on spatial diffusion.

Bandwagon and Spatial Diffusion Effects

Bandwagon models, critical threshold models, or models of critical mass describe a chain reaction in which small numbers of people trigger the participation of larger numbers of people over time (Granovetter 1978; Salert 1982; Kuran 1991, 1989; Macy 1991; Marwell and Oliver 1993; Oberschall 1994).³

³ Another approach is Tarrow's (1991) protest cycle, which identifies diffusion as a key compo-

Small, relatively minor incidents rapidly turn into major episodes of dissent. What generates this process?

One factor is the assurance that people have about the willingness and commitment of others to engage in such actions. Social networks play a big role because most people decide to protest, not in isolation, but jointly with others. Formal or informal associations (as is likely the case in repressive regimes) enable people to exchange information, reduce their uncertainty about each other's intentions to act, and coordinate their plans for mobilization. This assurance process increases the sense of efficacy among group members who calculate that their chances for successful collective action are greatest when they act together as a team (Chong 1991: 116–25; McAdam and Paulsen 1993:641–45; Oberschall 1994:85–87).

Another consideration is the protestors' success in achieving government concessions. Because widespread protest puts enormous pressures on leaders to reduce dissent quickly, they are likely to adopt conciliatory policies. The result is more dissent because successful collective action sustains the involvement of old participants while convincing sideliners of the usefulness of protest and ensuring their future participation (Chong 1991:116–25). Moreover, as in the case of Iran, concessions can signal a regime's vulnerability, which suddenly increases the expected value of the collective good for many people at the same time (e.g., political concessions, the Shah's abdication), thus fueling the escalatory effect across time and space (Chong 1991: 116–25; Oberschall 1994:88).⁴

I hypothesize that:

H₉: Past levels of protest increase current protest activities (i.e., a bandwagon effect).

H₉: Past levels of protest increase the spatial diffusion of current protest activities.

H₁₀: Spatial diffusion has a positive direct effect on protest actions. There is also a positive indirect effect as a consequence of diffusion's influence on government concessions.

The Effects of Critical Events

One final factor that has been linked to the outbreak of rebellious collective action is a "critical or triggering" event that represents a significant turning point. Whether through accident or conscious design, events create grievances and attract attention and resources to related social movements. These events galvanize a coordinated response by large segments of the population that enable a critical mass of opposition to emerge (Macy 1991:732; Staggenborg 1993; Goldstone 1994:155). Thus:

H₁₁:Critical events increase the spatial diffusion and level of protest activity significantly beyond earlier levels.

Figure 1 summarizes the eleven hypotheses and the expected links between repression, concessions, spatial diffusion, and protest actions.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Data

Weekly data on the occurrence, participation, and duration of violent and nonviolent protest actions and government policies of repression and concession were collected for Iran from December 1977 through the first half of February 1979 from newspapers and historical accounts.⁵ Daily reports from the *Tehran Journal* (the English version of *Ettelaat* newspaper), the *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)* and *The New York Times* provided most of the data. but they were supplemented by the *Middle East Economic Digest* and historical accounts by

ment in a cluster of protest activities that may be transformed into a revolution. Diffusion across wide segments of the population and geographical terrain indicates a protest wave. What accounts for the rise and decline of protest cycles is a central question of this research (Tarrow 1989; Koopmans 1993).

⁴ Other approaches to the causes and effects of diffusion on dissent can be found in Paige (1971), Spilerman (1970, 1971, 1976), Dorien (1981), Markoff (1985), McPhail and Wohlstein (1987), and Lichbach (1992).

⁵ Data were collected as early as March 1977, but continuous protests do not appear until December 1977—a full year before the Shah's departure.

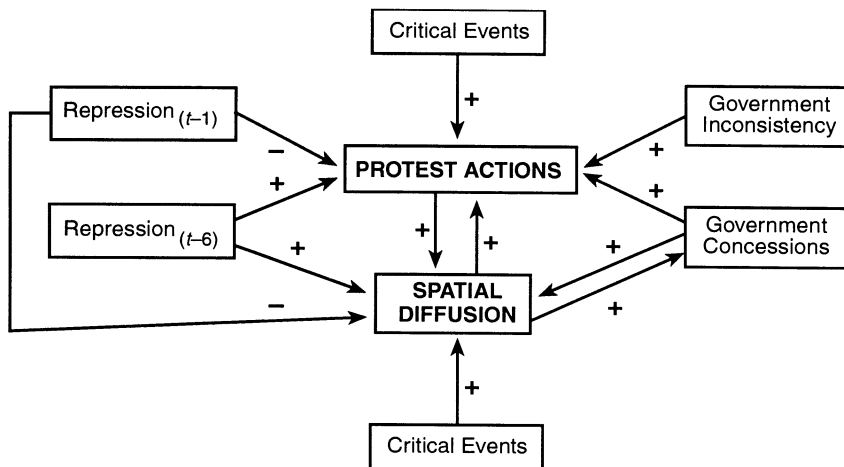


Figure 1. Hypothesized Effects of Concessions, Repression, and Spatial Diffusion on Protest Actions: Iran, December 1977–February 1979

Ludder (1979), Semkus (1979), Stempel (1981), and Abrahamian (1982).⁶

A general breakdown of the events data by sources shows that the *Tehran Journal* and the *FBIS* account for 90 percent of the events (each accounted for 45 percent of the data). The remaining 10 percent of the events were contributed primarily by historical sources, followed by *The New York Times* and the *Middle East Economic Digest*. While the *Tehran Journal* is a local news source, the *FBIS* is a synopsis of daily news reports provided by local and international sources.⁷

One problem may affect the validity of the data. During a two-month period (November 6, 1978 to January 5, 1979) Iranian newspapers shut down as a protest action. Bias may

be present if the data show a decrease in the number of daily protest events during this period in comparison to the periods immediately before or after the shutdown. Fortunately, the data compare favorably, primarily because of the *FBIS* news source, which contributed 93 percent of the data during this two-month period. The average number of weekly events from all data sources during the two months preceding the newspaper strike (i.e., September and October 1978) is 55 events. September and October are good reference points because protests begin to take off during this time (see weeks 37 to 44 in Figure 2). During the two-month strike period, the average number of weekly events reported (primarily by the *FBIS*) is 42, a slight decline. After the strike period (January 1, 1979 to February 11, 1979; weeks 53–58 in Figure 2), the average number of weekly events goes back to 55. Because the *FBIS* was able to rely on a variety of news sources (both inside and outside Tehran), the frequency-of-event data do not drop off precipitously.⁸

⁶ The strategy for coding collective actions follows standard methodologies for using newspapers to gather event counts (Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975; Tilly 1978; Tarrow 1991).

⁷ The *FBIS* is a synopsis of the daily news reports collected by the following sources: the *Tehran Domestic Service* (in Persian), the *PARS News Agency* (in English), the *Paris Domestic Service* (in French), the London *BBC Domestic Television Service*, the *Paris Le Monde* (in French), the *Paris Le Matin*, the London *Reuter*, the *Paris AFP* (in French), and Hamburg *DPA* (in German). There are more, but these are the most frequently cited news sources for the *FBIS*'s coverage of Iran during this period. The *FBIS* relies on both local and international sources for its news reporting, unlike the *Tehran Journal*, which is an English translation of the *Ettelaat*.

⁸ Another potential problem is that English editions of the Tehran newspapers may not be as complete as the Farsi language papers (Badii and Atwood 1986). Snyder and Kelly (1977) argue that it is unrealistic to assume that all newspaper sources will report the same events. Differential news reporting depends on event intensity (how big or small it is) and media sensitivity (the editors' willingness to print). In short, "less sensi-

However, sensitivity tests were conducted to assess the degree to which the two-month strike period affects the results. Initially, the analysis proceeded as though there was no problem. Then, a partial reanalysis was conducted excluding the two-month strike period. Finally, the data were analyzed a third time, including a dummy variable representing the weeks of the two-month strike period.

Conflict Variables

Violent and nonviolent protest actions. A *protest action* is defined as an event that involves 20 or more people who are advancing social, economic, or political claims. In Iran, a large portion of the protest actions occurred at mourning ceremonies (a 40-day period of private mourning is often followed by a public memorial observance), religious gatherings, holidays, and processions. These events were recorded if they involved 20 or more people who were articulating social, political, or economic demands from the government. The protest actions almost exclusively targeted the Shah's government. They involved violent and nonviolent incidents. Nonviolent incidents were typically demonstrations that did not result in clashes with security forces or property damage. A significant proportion of the violent incidents were large-scale attacks on liquor stores, res-

ative" news media are likely to print events of high intensity in size, duration, and violence, whereas "more sensitive" media are likely to print a wide range of low to high intensity events. It is safe to assume that Farsi-language newspapers may be more sensitive than the *Tehran Journal* and the *FBIS*, but that does not nullify the validity of the data because events significant in size, duration, and violence were more likely to have been covered consistently over time than were smaller events. As Snyder and Kelly (1977) say, as long as the reporting mechanisms consistently cover the same event characteristics over time, the data are reasonably valid. Moreover, Snyder and Kelley (1977:117–21) maintain that "form-specific" data, such as demonstrations or riots, collected in a specific unit (or country) over time probably yield valid data in comparison to multiple conflict indicators over large numbers of units. The limitation of this approach is that the study cannot be generalized to a wider range of cases—a constraint that I accept (for an opposing view, see Franzosi 1987).

taurants, cinemas, banks, beauty shops, and state party headquarters—typically in the aftermath of a religious gathering. Fifty-six percent of the protests were nonviolent and 44 percent were violent.

A six-week lagged endogenous variable is introduced in the Poisson regression models to estimate the effects of the 40-day mourning cycle on internal conflict. All of these indicators, as well as those described below, are measured on a weekly basis. The escalation process is not as visible on a daily basis and a monthly count would obscure it altogether. Figure 2 plots the weekly data from December 1, 1997 to February 14, 1979.

Strikes. I collected data on the frequency and duration of *strikes* in public and private sectors of the economy including school and university boycotts. The estimated duration of each strike is somewhat unreliable because of the on-again, off-again nature of the strikes and the absence of consistent coverage by the newspapers.⁹ Consequently, I use only the frequency of strikes. Strikes are not treated as protest actions for two reasons. First, strikes began with economic demands and only broadened to include political demands late in the revolutionary period. Second, a significant portion of strikes, particularly strikes in the oil fields, were conducted by local workers and were not under the leadership of the clerics, bazaaris,¹⁰ or intellectuals. (However, bazarris did provide monies for striking oil workers.)

Spatial diffusion. *Diffusion* is defined as the geographic spread of protest activity and is measured as the number of cities involved in protest activity in a given week.¹¹ When used as an independent variable, diffusion is

⁹ Determining the frequency and duration of bazaar closings was also a problem. Hence, these events were excluded.

¹⁰ "Bazaaris" refers to merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans. Bazaaris controlled most of the national trade in the 1970s, including more than two-thirds of the nation's domestic wholesale trade and more than 30 percent of all imports (Graham 1979:221). Bazaar moneylenders, comprising several hundred individuals, controlled approximately 15 percent of the private-sector credit (Graham 1979:221).

¹¹ Diffusion can also be measured as a time-varying process that increases the rates of some collective actions. Olzak (1992), for instance,

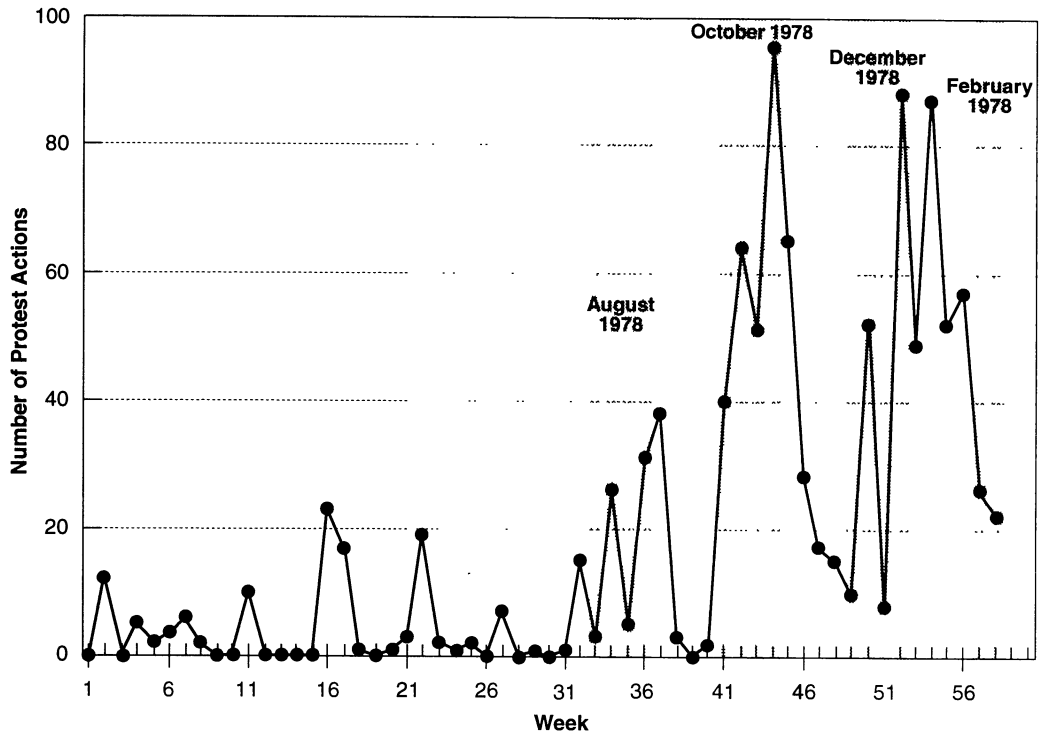


Figure 2. Number of Protest Actions by Week: Iran, December 1, 1977–February 14, 1979

lagged one time-period because I assume that protests are more likely to generate subsequent protest events in different urban centers. A one-week lag as opposed to a longer lag is used in the absence of information about the diffusion process. A six-week lag is also introduced to ascertain the extent to which diffusion coincides with the 40-day mourning cycle. The data indicate that at least 136 cities were involved during the course of the revolutionary challenge from December 1977 to mid-February 1979.

Government Response Variables

Government concessions. The frequency of *concessions* is based on two types of government responses—procedural and substantive. Procedural concessions involve low-level ac-

finds that rates of ethnic collective action decline with the passage of time since the previous event.

Diffusion data are derived from the newspaper sources listed earlier. Only those events that were linked with participants and geographic places (e.g., cities) were coded. Newspaper accounts that had unclear references to either were excluded.

commodations that reflect the government's attempt to negotiate with designated leaders of the opposition (Gamson 1990:32–33). Examples are the release of political prisoners, mass pardons or amnesties, reshuffling of administrative personnel, or arrests of controversial government figures. Substantive concessions reflect high-level accommodations. Here, the regime attempts to co-opt the challenging group leaders and their political platforms (Gamson 1990:32–33). In Iran, examples are announcements of press freedom, the scheduling of free elections, the appointment of a new Prime Minister with ties to the clergy, promises of adherence to Islamic principles, and the closure of casinos.

Government repression. *Repression* is measured as the frequency of actions taken to coercively demobilize the opposition. Less severe or *low* levels of repression include the breakup of assemblies, mass arrests during and after demonstrations, or the arrest of a major opposition leader. *High* (severe) forms of repression involve general policies, such as bans on assemblies, press censorship, and martial law.

The short-term effects of repression are represented in a ($t-1$) lag structure (a one-week time lag), while the long-term effects are measured as a ($t-6$) lag (a six-week time lapse) that coincides with the 40-day mourning cycle.

Government inconsistency. *Inconsistency* is based on the possible combinations of high and low levels of concessions and repression. High levels of concessions refer to “substantive” gains achieved by challengers, while “procedural” gains are low levels of concessions. High (severe) repression refers to population-wide policies such as martial law, press censorship, or bans on assemblies. Low (less severe) repression refers to the presence of mass arrests, the arrests of major opposition leaders, or the breakup of assemblies. Combining these high and low levels of government responses yields four possible values of inconsistency for a given week, as shown in Figure 3. High numerical values indicate high government inconsistency.¹²

Critical Events

Four major events are hypothesized to have increased the escalation of protest actions (Stempel 1981; Abrahamian 1982; Parsa 1989): the *Qum demonstration* on January 7, 1978 (week 53 in Figure 2), when many theological students and clerics protested an inflammatory anti-Khomeini article in the national newspaper resulting in the deaths of 60 to 120 people; the burning down of the *Abadan cinema* on August 19, 1978 (week 35 in Figure 2), which resulted in the deaths of 400 people; the selection of a new *reform-minded Prime Minister* on August 27, 1978

¹² The coding for any given week is based on the following definitions: (1) *High repression* is the presence of one or more events of severe repression or the number of severe repressive events is greater than the number of less severe events; (2) *Low repression* is the presence of one or more events of low repression or the number of less severe repressive events is greater than the number of severe events; (3) *High concession* is the presence of one or more events of high concession or the number of high concessions is greater than the number of low concessions; (4) *Low concession* is the presence of one or more events of low concession or the number of low concessions is greater than the number of high concessions.

Inconsistency Value	Concessions	Repression
3	High	High
2	High Low	Low High
1	Low None Low or High	Low Low or High None
0	None	None

Figure 3. Intensity Scale of Government Inconsistency

(week 36 in Figure 2); and “*Black Friday*” on September 8, 1978 (week 38 in Figure 2), when Iranian security forces fired on 5,000 to 20,000 Tehran residents resulting in more than 500 deaths. These events preceded the escalation of the Iranian protest movement in the fall of 1978 and are likely candidates as critical events.

Each critical event is treated as a dummy variable. The six weeks following the event are coded 1 and compared against other periods of protest action which are coded 0. Because the two August events occur close together, they are treated as a single dummy variable. The six-week time lapse incorporates the 40-day mourning cycle.

Poisson Regression Models

Event counts of protests, concessions, repression, strikes, and spatial diffusion are viewed as discrete random variables. The most common method for studying the dynamic processes of event counts is the Poisson regression model, which treats the dependent variable as a Poisson random variable (as opposed to a normally distributed variable). Maximum-likelihood techniques are used to estimate the models (King 1989).¹³

Five regression models are estimated. Statistical significance tests are based on one-tailed tests because I predict the direction of the relationships: (1) Model 1 regresses total

¹³ Negative binomial regression models were used to test the possibility that the variance of each dependent variable was greater than its mean—an indication of overdispersion in the data. In some cases, overdispersion was present. However, results for these models did not differ significantly from the Poisson models.

protests, violent and nonviolent protests on spatial diffusion $_{(t-1)}$, strikes $_{(t-1)}$, concessions $_{(t-1)}$, government inconsistency $_{(t-1)}$, repression $_{(t-1)}$, repression $_{(t-6)}$, and a lagged endogenous (dependent) variable $_{(t-6)}$. Lagged and nonlagged variables were compared; the strongest relationships are reported. (2) Model 2 regresses spatial diffusion in addition to the three protest variables on six lagged ($t-1$ to $t-6$) variables of repression, plus a lagged ($t-6$) endogenous dependent variable. (3) Model 3 regresses total protest and spatial diffusion on six lagged ($t-1$ to $t-6$) variables of low repression, plus a lagged endogenous dependent variable ($t-6$), and then again on six lagged variables ($t-1$ to $t-6$) of severe repression with a lagged endogenous dependent variable ($t-6$). (4) Model 4 regresses concessions, strikes, and diffusion on concessions $_{(t-1)}$, strikes $_{(t-1)}$, diffusion $_{(t-1)}$, total protests $_{(t-6)}$, repression $_{(t-1)}$ and repression $_{(t-6)}$ with a lagged endogenous dependent variable for diffusion only. (5) Model 5 regresses total protests and spatial diffusion on three dummy variables, the six weeks following the three critical events in January, August, and September 1978, in addition to a lagged ($t-6$) endogenous dependent variable.

Models 1 through 5 were estimated with an additional dummy variable for the two-month *news strike* (coded 1 for weeks of November 6, 1978 through January 5, 1979 and 0 otherwise). Models 1 and 4 were estimated with the two-month period omitted from the data set. Results for the dummy variable estimation are reported here (the initial results and results with the omitted data are available upon request).

FINDINGS

Results of the Sensitivity Tests

Three strategies are employed to assess the influence of the two-month strike period on the data results. Estimations are made on the data with and without the two-month strike period and then again with a dummy variable included to control for the effects of the two months. On the whole, results remain the same across the three strategies. Inclusion of the news strike dummy variable for Models 1 through 5 produces some differences from

the equations that do not control for the two-month strike period. For instance, when spatial diffusion is introduced as a lagged endogenous variable (Tables 2 and 5) for the spatial diffusion equation, the parameter estimate is not statistically significant. Also, the parameter estimate for total protests becomes statistically insignificant in the strikes equation (Table 4). Nevertheless, these differences do not alter the outcome of the tests of the hypotheses. The results in Tables 1 through 5, which include the "news strike" dummy variable, do not differ from Poisson regression estimates based on data that omit the two-month period.

Repression

On the one hand, resource mobilization and rational choice models suggest that repression raises the costs of participation and consequently depresses protest action. Opp and Ruehl (1990) argue, on the other hand, that repression can stimulate protest behavior by launching micromobilization processes that bring people to the streets. Repression delegitimizes the government and makes people more recruitable for mass action, particularly if they belong to informal associations that support such action.

In the Iranian case, the Opp and Ruehl hypothesis provides the stronger explanation. Table 1 shows that initially (a one-week lag) government repression has a strong negative effect on all three protest variables, while six weeks later, repression has a positive effect. Given that the lagged effects of repression show the same patterns for spatial diffusion (see Table 4), I infer that repression in Iran was more important in stimulating the diffusion of protest as opposed to suppressing it. The timing of this positive effect coincides with the 40-day mourning cycle when many people come to the streets to protest the deaths in earlier events. Table 1 confirms this link via the significant parameter estimates for the lagged endogenous variables for total protests and nonviolent protests.

The full significance of these six-week relationships can best be understood from a historical vantage point. Political mobilization against the regime began with the secular democratic opposition of writers, lawyers, judges, intellectuals, publishers, and stu-

Table 1. Coefficients for Poisson Regression of Protest Actions on Concessions, Repression, Strikes, and Spatial Diffusion: December 1, 1977–February 14, 1979

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable		
	Total Protests	Violent Protests	Nonviolent Protests
Constant	1.778** (24.068)	1.433** (14.684)	.546** (4.426)
Spatial diffusion _(t-1)	.019** (6.908)	.002 (.362)	.029** (8.597)
Strikes _(t-1)	.012** (2.516)	-.004 (-.480)	.004 (.608)
Concessions _(t-1)	.173** (10.383)	.129** (5.111)	.201** (9.216)
Government inconsistency	.220** (4.001)	.248** (3.089)	.693** ^a (9.399)
Repression _(t-1)	-.312** (-6.164)	-.269** (-3.598)	-.676** (-7.541)
Repression _(t-6)	.113** (13.115)	.167** (12.887)	.077** (5.826)
Lagged dependent variable _(t-6)	.010** (7.545)	-.001 (-.241)	.014** (4.059)
News strike	.099 (1.157)	.389** (2.659)	.317** (3.031)
Log likelihood	-401.992	-290.536	-222.077
Number of weeks	52	52	52

Note: Numbers in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

^a Government inconsistency is lagged one week for the nonviolent protests model.

p* ≤ .05 *p* ≤ .01 (one-tailed tests)

dents. Most of this activity did not extend much beyond Tehran because of the government’s long-term policy of repression. Successful large-scale mobilization occurred through the mosques. Because the mosques had been used exclusively for religious purposes over the years, they remained open and available for gatherings and religious ceremonies without government interference. By 1977, the mosque was the only viable institution that was available for mobilizing the opposition on a national scale. Studies estimate that nationwide there were between 20,000 and 80,000 mosques—including 5,000 urban mosques (Halliday 1979:19; Akhavi 1980:187; Denoux 1990:459).

In the initial stages and after much pressure by local leaders, moderate to conservative religious leaders supported “mourning ceremonies” around which many people could demonstrate their opposition to the government. Radical clerics, supported by

Ayatollah Khomeini, found active allies among bazaaris, students, and moderate politicians who were also highly involved in mosque activity. Meanwhile, many Iranians were connected to the mosques through neighborhood religious associations (*hay’ati madhabi*), many of which were coincidentally run by bazaar merchant. These local groups would meet periodically with a cleric to discuss religious and political issues. In addition to the *hay’ats* of the urban poor, there were the *hay’ats* of the bazaaris that met several times a week to exchange information about business, government policies, and the political situation in general. They also collected funds to finance charitable institutions, schools, hospitals, mosques, and welfare assistance to the poor. It was at these *hay’ats* that interpersonal, political, and social networks forged the national alliance between radical clerics (*ulama*), bazaaris, and the intelligentsia. There were 12,000 *hay’ats*

Table 2. Coefficients for Poisson Regression of Protest Actions and Spatial Diffusion on Short-Term and Long-Term Repression: Iran, December 1, 1977–February 14, 1979

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable			
	Total Protests	Violent Protests	Nonviolent Protests	Spatial Diffusion
Constant	2.392** (46.480)	1.629** (21.338)	1.762** (25.022)	1.956** (29.868)
Repression _(t-1)	-.483** (-8.254)	-.269** (-3.419)	-.712** (-7.950)	-.350** (-5.017)
Repression _(t-2)	-.214** (-4.128)	-.115* (-1.942)	-.289** (-4.092)	-.156** (-2.592)
Repression _(t-3)	.064** (4.557)	.101** (5.955)	.002 (.071)	.057** (3.195)
Repression _(t-4)	.139** (13.887)	.081** (3.913)	.181** (15.540)	.139** (10.686)
Repression _(t-5)	.111** (9.413)	.086** (4.360)	.141** (9.513)	.112** (7.001)
Repression _(t-6)	.169** (20.562)	.181** (16.802)	.158** (12.700)	.136** (11.542)
Lagged dependent variable _(t-6)	.005** (2.804)	-.003 (-.650)	.016** (4.356)	-.003 (-.562)
News strike	1.186** (12.782)	.844** (6.043)	1.502** (12.407)	1.167** (9.924)
Log likelihood	-470.268	-282.677	-349.231	-291.540
Number of weeks	52	52	52	52

Note: Numbers in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

p* ≤ .05 *p* ≤ .01 (one-tailed tests)

in Tehran alone (Sreberny-Mohammadi and Mohammadi 1994:85). These bazaari-ulama networks mobilized most of the demonstrations reported during the revolutionary period (Ashraf and Banuazizi 1985:559). The most popular form of protest was the "mourning ceremony"—a 40-day period of mourning followed by a memorial observance. These observances produced violent clashes between security forces and the public and generated new deaths and a new cycle of mourning throughout the country. Each mourning cycle culminated in the participation of greater and greater numbers of people protesting the government's use of force. These demands would eventually expand to include the overthrow of the Shah (Ashraf and Banuazizi 1985).

Table 2 shows the dynamic relationship between repression and protest actions and spatial diffusion. Initially, repression substantially depresses protest actions and spatial

diffusion. Over time, that influence becomes positive. Four, five, and six weeks later, repression increases protests and diffusion.

The next question is whether the repression/protest and repression/diffusion links hold while controlling for level of repression. Perhaps the short-term negative effects are influenced by high levels of repression while the long-term positive effects are caused by low levels of repression. This is certainly a plausible scenario if the Iranian government started using strong repressive measures and gradually eased them as protest actions spread across the country. However, Table 3 shows this is not the case. Table 3 displays results from regressing total protest actions and spatial diffusion against low and severe repression at (*t*-1) through (*t*-6) time lags. The initially negative, then positive patterns established in Tables 1 and 2 are repeated for low and severe levels of repression. *Both* levels of re-

Table 3. Coefficients for Poisson Regression of Protest Actions and Spatial Diffusion on Repression, by Level of Repression: Iran, December 1, 1977–February 14, 1979

Independent Variable	Low Repression		Severe Repression	
	Total Protests (Model 1)	Spatial Diffusion (Model 2)	Total Protests (Model 3)	Spatial Diffusion (Model 4)
Constant	2.425** (49.113)	1.951** (30.550)	2.519** (51.437)	2.043** (32.071)
Repression _(t-1) ^a	-.464** (-6.428)	-.451** (-5.031)	-.113** (-3.038)	-.139** (-2.648)
Repression _(t-2)	-.512** (-8.059)	-.593** (-6.948)	-.173** (-3.687)	-.122** (-2.405)
Repression _(t-3)	-.735** (-7.929)	-.709** (-5.928)	.082** (7.038)	.083** (5.499)
Repression _(t-4)	.337** (7.945)	.394** (7.174)	.120** (11.491)	.136** (9.757)
Repression _(t-5)	.477** (9.761)	.382** (5.934)	.129** (10.854)	.139** (8.604)
Repression _(t-6)	.341** (10.436)	.209** (4.712)	.144** (16.164)	.116** (9.046)
Lagged dependent variable _(t-6)	.013** (8.531)	.024** (5.399)	-.001 (-.368)	-.010** (-2.497)
News strike	1.069** (9.731)	1.213** (8.883)	.953** (10.458)	1.097** (9.208)
Log likelihood	-505.421	-304.118	-618.775	-346.222
Number of weeks	52	52	52	52

Note: Numbers in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

^a Low repression is the lagged variable for Models 1 and 2; severe repression is the lagged variable for Models 3 and 4.

p* ≤ .05 *p* ≤ .01 (one-tailed tests)

pression have short-term negative influences, but by the fourth, fifth, and sixth weeks they have strong positive influences on total protests and spatial diffusion. Moreover, the pattern stays the same when total protests are disaggregated into violent and nonviolent protests (results not shown).

In summary, repression decreased Iranian protests in the short term, but in the long run repression helped launch micromobilization processes that rapidly brought large numbers of people into the streets. Repression directly influenced the escalation of protest and indirectly influenced escalation via its positive influence on spatial diffusion. However, since I have no direct measure of micromobilization, the inference that these relationships between repression and protest and diffusion result from micromobilization processes is speculative.

Exactly what kind of micromobilization process accelerated the Iranian protests is difficult to pinpoint. The statistically significant results for the lagged endogenous variables for total protests and nonviolent protests during the sixth week suggest that the cultural circumstances of the 40-day mourning cycle may be responsible for the escalation. According to Moaddel (1993), “Shi’i metaphors, symbols and ceremonies transformed the general social discontent into a revolutionary crisis by providing not only an effective channel of communication between participants in the revolution and their leaders but also a mechanism for the political mobilization of the masses against the state” (p. 163). This suggests that the micromobilization process may be unique to the Iranian experience.

On the other hand, the more general Opp and Ruehl (1990) argument, that repression

decreases protest actions in the short term and increases them in the long term, is also supported by the significant short-term and long-term effects of repression after controlling for the cultural influences of the Islamic calendar (e.g., the 40-day mourning cycle). Which micromobilization process best explains the Iranian situation? There may be no specific answer. According to Khawaja's (1993) analysis of the repression/dissent link in the West Bank from 1976 to 1985, social movement leaders use

... authorities' provocations and harmful reactions to protesters as assets for long-term mobilization. Specifically, in their micromobilizational efforts to gain popular sympathy for the collective cause, [they] point to repeated acts of repression, as these acts ease their task of constructing a 'bad profile' of the authorities. Furthermore, social movement organizations and their agents call into question authorities' repressive actions by giving them different meanings. They reframe the repressive actions of authorities in different language, giving them political significance. Such actions are depicted not as a means of punishment or control but as political ends in themselves, endangering people's existence and survival. (P. 67)

Further analysis is not likely to reveal the form and type of micromobilization process at work. As Lichbach (1994:27) argues, there are too many potential solutions to the "rebel's dilemma" (e.g., how to mobilize dissent) and too many contexts in which they can operate to make the process predictable. Nevertheless, the empirical and historical record makes the micromobilization thesis a plausible explanation for the escalation process in Iran.

Inconsistent Accommodation and Repression

Lichbach (1987) argues that it is not just the level of repression that matters, but whether the government is consistent in its application of repression. Inconsistency occurs when a government increases its repression of an opposition group's tactic at the same time that it yields a concession. This combination encourages more protest because dissidents perceive that the prospects for successful collective action are better than they

have been in the past and that the costs of collective action are more acceptable. Table 1 confirms the hypothesis. Government inconsistency in the use of repression and concessions accounts for a statistically significant increase in the three protest variables, after controlling for the individual effects of repression and concessions, spatial diffusion, strikes, and past protest actions.

Examples of the Shah's inconsistency began with his appointment of a new reform-minded Prime Minister (Sharif-Emami) who made major concessions to the opposition during August of 1978. The response was larger crowds of demonstrators chanting for an Islamic Republic. Convinced that the situation was getting out of control, the Shah decreed martial law in Tehran and 11 other cities in September. He also banned all street demonstrations and issued warrants for the arrests of eight major opposition leaders. The next day a prearranged demonstration of 20,000 people ended in deadly clashes with security troops. Black Friday (September 8), as it was called, "enflamed public emotions, intensified popular hatred for the regime and thereby further radicalized the population" (Abrahamian 1982:515-16). Black Friday undermined political moderates who called for a compromise with the monarchy and ended the possibility of gradual concessions. Moreover, Black Friday generated a barrage of demonstrations and working-class strikes that shifted political discussions from the negotiating table to the streets and slums of Iran's major urban centers (Abrahamian 1982:516).

In October and November of 1978, more street demonstrations and escalating urban strikes pushed the Shah to replace Sharif-Emami with a military government. Martial law was then extended to more cities; the army was ordered to take over the major newspapers; and moderate opposition leaders were arrested, as were strike committees elected by refinery workers. Yet the Shah also offered concessions at the same time. He pardoned 1,126 political prisoners; withdrew military officials from the newspaper offices; arrested 132 former government leaders; dissolved the national political party; met many of the economic demands made by government employees and industrial workers; declared that all exiles, including Khomeini,

Table 4. Coefficients for Poisson Regression of Concessions, Spatial Diffusion, and Strikes on Selected Independent Variables: Iran, December 1, 1977–February 14, 1979

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable		
	Concessions	Spatial Diffusion	Strikes
Constant	-.324 (-1.574)	1.453** (16.592)	.361* (2.349)
Concessions _(t-1)	—	.173** (8.271)	.146** (3.676)
Strikes _(t-1)	.037** ^a (2.581)	.027** (4.688)	—
Spatial diffusion _(t-1)	.026** (3.152)	.017** (4.516)	.022** (3.427)
Total protests _(t-6)	.004 (.859)	.009** (5.534)	.001 (.260)
Repression _(t-1)	—	-.173** (-3.618)	-.037 (-.698)
Repression _(t-6)	—	.074** (5.999)	.152** (8.987)
News strike	.459 (1.670)	.128 (1.189)	-.107 (-.491)
Log likelihood	-85.347	-254.200	-187.977
Number of weeks	52	52	52

Note: Numbers in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

^a The strikes variable was not lagged for this equation.

p* ≤ .05 *p* ≤ .01 (one-tailed tests)

were free to return home; and on national television committed himself to free elections.

The opposition, particularly Khomeini, rejected the Shah's concessions and demanded abdication. The Shah's erratic behavior expanded political demands and escalated the conflict in the streets (Abrahamian 1982: 518–19).

Concessions

Concessions, along with spatial diffusion and strikes, are treated as dependent variables in Table 4 in order to find indirect effects that could escalate protest actions. The first link involves the role of concessions. Value expectancy models argue that when people become convinced that their participation in collective action is likely to achieve a collective good they are more likely to dissent. Government concessions enhance this perception and increase the probability that

people will join in mass actions. Moreover, as people turn out for successive events, more people are encouraged to participate and a bandwagon effect occurs.

The empirical evidence indicates that government concessions by the Shah had three major effects. First, as Table 1 indicates, concessions had a direct effect on escalating all three protest variables. Second, Table 4 indicates that concessions increased the frequency of strikes, which in turn forced more concessions from the government. Strikes then produced more protest behavior (Table 1), which subsequently spread to other Iranian cities (Table 4). Finally, concessions encouraged protest behavior indirectly via their positive influence on spatial diffusion.

How and why this occurred is best explained by historians. In August 1978, Prime Minister Sharif-Emami supported a liberalization program that played an important role in generating both dissent and massive urban strikes by government employees and indus-

trial workers. Only a few days after Sharif-Emami's appointment and his announcement of major concessions combined with a policy of relaxed repression, industrial workers embarked on massive strikes. The retreat of the government from its traditional policies of repression provided the opportunity for workers and white-collar employees to mobilize and act collectively. Workers who previously had been involved in strikes or subjected to arrests and imprisonment used their informal networks in the workplace to form secret cells and committees with trusted co-workers. Later, they seized the initiative and organized workers' collective actions. Furthermore, the lifting of media censorship, especially vis-à-vis radio and television, allowed broadcast coverage of most strikes and strikers' demands. This communication generated solidarity among different groups of strikers, especially among oil workers, railway workers, copper, coal and steel workers, electrical workers, and white-collar employees (Parsa 1989:145-52).

As the scale of the strikes increased, the regime opted for economic concessions instead of repression. However, by that point strikers had broadened their demands for political concessions. They demanded the unconditional release of all political prisoners, the dissolution of martial law, the expulsion of foreigners from the workplace, freedom of expression and the press, dissolution of SAVAK, disbandment of state-run unions, and the formation of independent workers' organizations (Parsa 1989:152-67).

In response to the rising wave of strikes and demonstrations, the Shah suspended Sharif-Emami's rule and imposed a military government. Despite the subsequent repression, newly formed networks and increased solidarity made it difficult for the military regime to force people back to work. Moreover, the bazaaris shut down the bazaars throughout the country in support of the strikers. Bazaaris also provided considerable financial support to many striking workers both inside and outside the bazaars. As a consequence, the strikes, together with the bazaar shutdowns, led to more nationwide protests, which eventually disrupted all social and economic activities in Iran and paralyzed the government (Ashraf 1988:558-59; Parsa 1989:152-68).

Spatial Diffusion and the Bandwagon Effect

Theorists argue that spatial diffusion and bandwagon effects are most likely when people are assured of the willingness and commitment of others to engage in risky collective action. Social networks play a critical role in reducing uncertainty because they provide a forum for exchanging information and coordinating protest actions. If protests are successful, the spread of the protest movement to a wider array of people and places is virtually assured (unless the severity of the repression is too high). The bandwagon effect encourages spatial diffusion and vice versa.

The empirical evidence in Tables 1 and 4 shows that past levels of total protests and nonviolent protests are positively associated with current levels (lagged dependent variable in Table 1); that spatial diffusion had a direct positive effect on escalating these political protests (Table 1); and that past levels of total protests encouraged spatial diffusion (Table 4). Clearly, both bandwagoning and spatial diffusion were present. Moreover, the spread of protest actions indirectly brought about an escalation of the protests via diffusion's significant impacts on government concessions and strike behavior at ($t-1$), as shown in Table 4 by the coefficients of .026 and .022 (both significant at $p < .01$). Likewise, strikes and concessions accelerated the spread of protest actions.

The concessions/strikes→diffusion→protest action link is more understandable given the historical consequences associated with the Shah's decision to appoint a new Prime Minister in the presence of major political unrest. Prime Minister Sharif-Emami immediately met with top opposition leaders of the clergy and liberal political organizations. He reintroduced the Islamic calendar, released many of the high-ranking clergy imprisoned since 1975, closed down 57 gambling casinos, dismissed more than 30 SAVAK officers, abolished the post of Minister for Women's Affairs, set up a Ministry of Religious Affairs, and cut off state subsidies to the National Resurgence Party. He also endorsed free elections, tax concessions, press freedom, and civil rights guarantees. Sharif-Emami attempted to appease religious lead-

Table 5. Coefficients for Poisson Regression of Total Protests and Spatial Diffusion on Critical Events: Iran, December 1, 1977–February 14, 1979

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable			
	Total Protests		Spatial Diffusion	
Constant	2.792** (61.498)	2.494** (51.610)	2.228** (36.113)	2.009** (31.903)
Qum demonstration	-1.529** (-6.376)	—	-1.361** (-4.621)	—
Abadan and new Prime Minister	.343** (3.693)	—	.498** (4.220)	—
Black Friday	—	1.186** (14.939)	—	1.103** (10.212)
Lagged dependent variable _(t-6)	.005** (3.429)	.003** (2.256)	.004 (1.077)	.000 (.044)
News strike	.623** (7.552)	.981** (11.373)	.735** (6.520)	1.043** (9.014)
Log likelihood	-759.771	-708.070	-409.570	-392.504
Number of weeks	52	52	52	52

Note: Numbers in parentheses are *t*-statistics.

p* ≤ .05 *p* ≤ .01 (one-tailed tests)

ers and the political opposition. However, these concessions provided new opportunities for the opposition, particularly, the pro-Khomeini clergy, who began to challenge the existing political order (Abrahamian 1982: 514).

Prior to Sharif-Emami's government, some 70 cities had experienced some form of collective action. By the end of his time in office (August through November 1978), roughly 100 cities had been rocked by anti-government protests. The scale of these incidents mushroomed as well. Prior to Sharif-Emami's government, mourning ceremonies and demonstrations in large cities had drawn tens of thousands of people. In Tehran, for example, between 30,000 and 50,000 people took part. After Sharif-Emami took office, the number of participants swelled to hundreds of thousands. At this point, the content of the demonstrations changed from a defensive protest against earlier killings to an offensive attack on the Shah and his rule (Parsa 1989:211–25).

By early November, the Shah abandoned the concessions Sharif-Emami had begun and embarked on a course of repression, replacing the Prime Minister with a military government. According to Parsa (1989:224),

the new policy was doomed to failure because by November the vast majority of Iranians, including bazaaris, white-collar employees, and industrial workers had mobilized and had developed at least some degree of organization, solidarity structures, and networks to bring about social change.

The Impact of Critical Events

Critical or "triggering" events represent important turning points in rebellious collective action. Through accident or design, these events propel large numbers of people into collective action. Table 5 summarizes the impact of four major events at the start of the Iranian escalation process. The August (Abadan cinema burning and the appointment of a reform-oriented Prime Minister) and September (Black Friday) events are highly correlated. Therefore, a separate model was estimated for the Black Friday event.

The results indicate that the six-week periods following the Abadan cinema burning, the appointment of a new Prime Minister, and Black Friday are associated with a substantial increase in total protests and spatial diffusion. The January event (the Qum dem-

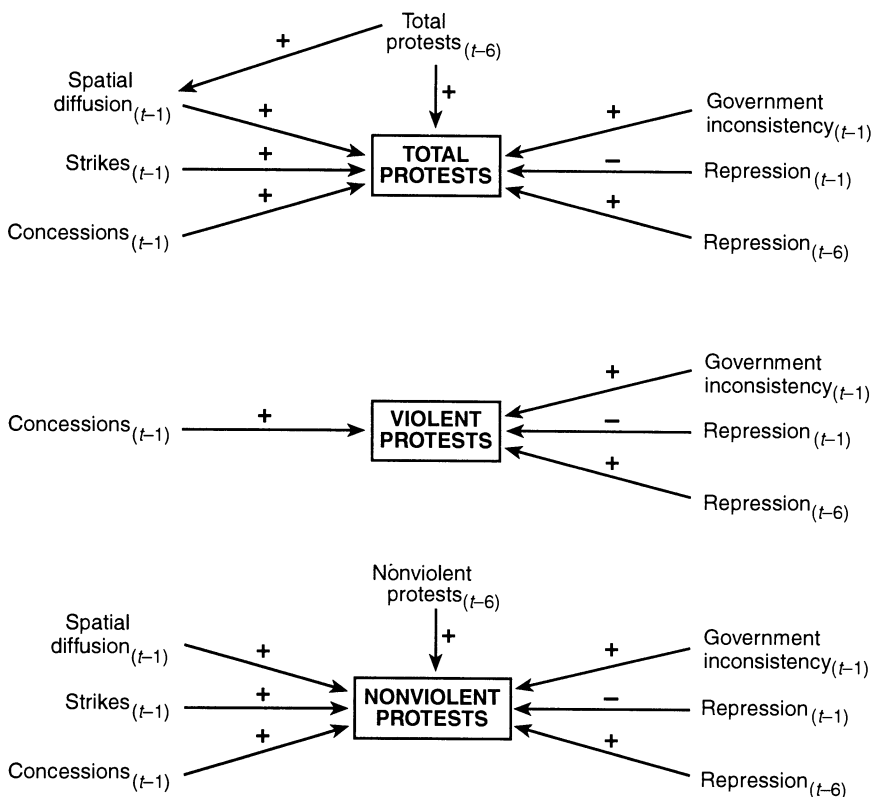


Figure 4. Summary of the Effects of Spatial Diffusion, Strikes, Government Inconsistency, Concessions, and Repression on Protest

Note: Arrows reflect statistically significant parameters from the Poisson regression analysis in Table 1.

onstration in week 5) is associated with a major decrease in subsequent protest actions and spatial diffusion. Figure 2, which plots protest actions over time, indicates that protests occurred after the Qum demonstration. However, none of them escalated to a significant level in comparison to the fall 1978 protests (weeks 41 to 44). Clearly, the Abadan/Prime Minister and Black Friday events represent major turning points in the escalation process.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this analysis is to link government policies of concessions and repression with the escalation of rebellious collective actions in the Iranian Revolution of 1978–1979. Figures 4 and 5 summarize the direct and indirect effects that are responsible for the acceleration and expansion of

the protest movement. The results suggest several implications for theories and research concerning collective action.

First, the results provide additional empirical evidence for the Opp and Ruehl (1990) thesis that repression sets off micro-mobilization processes that expand opposition. This evidence remains consistent after controlling for the changing influences of time and type of repression. Second, the results lend credibility to Lichbach’s (1987) argument that inconsistent government policies of concessions and repression intensify dissent. This relationship also holds up when the individual effects of repression and concessions are taken into account. Third, the evidence provides further support for the value expectancy and bandwagon models that stress the importance of concessions and spatial diffusion in broadening protest movements.

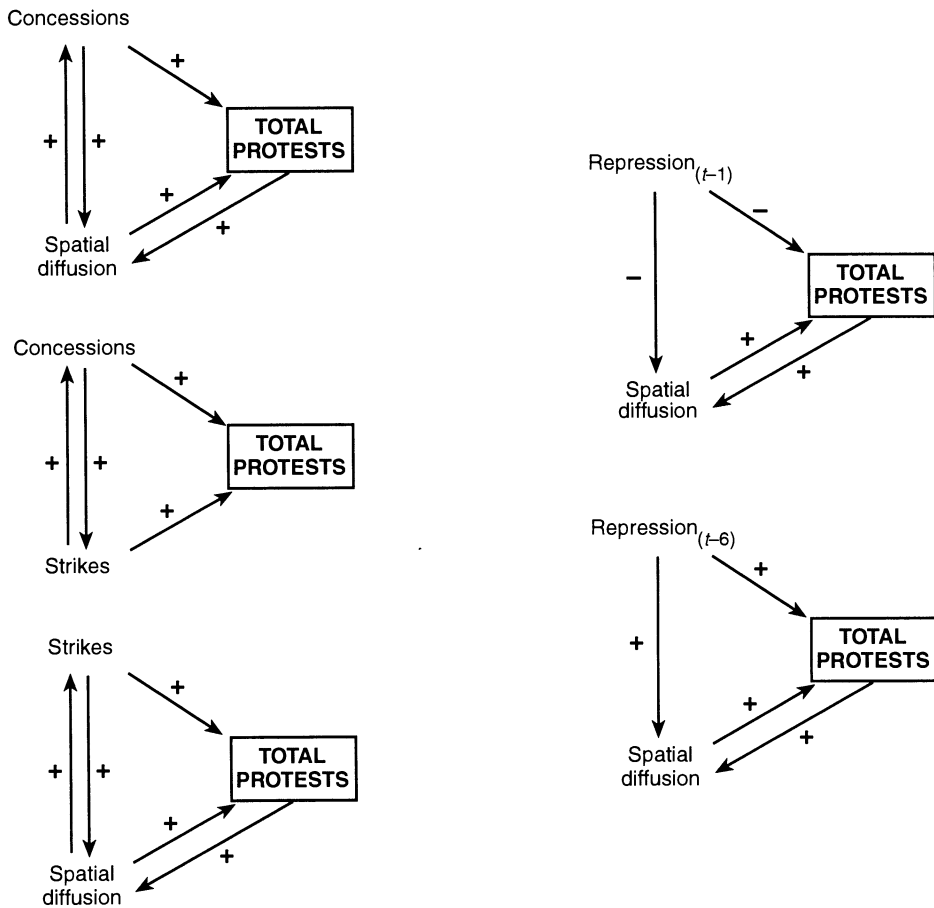


Figure 5. Summary of the Relationships between Total Protest and Selected Variables

Note: Arrows reflect statistically significant parameters from the Poisson regression analyses in Tables 1 and 4.

Finally, the results yield other interesting insights. For instance, the changing effects of repression over time suggest the need to examine dynamic relationships between governments and challengers over time. The evidence in Figure 4 also points future research in this direction. There are important reciprocal relationships among concessions, strikes, and spatial diffusion that suggest interactive relationships between government and nongovernment actors. In other words, there was a fluid and multifaceted dynamic of action and reaction among the Shah and his government, the radical clerics, bazaaris, liberal politicians, and the working classes.

Prevailing theory tends to see the expansion of collection action in terms of grievances and resources of the government and the opposition (Hoover and Kowalewski 1992:

151–52). This view overlooks the pattern of tactical moves and countermoves among contending parties as an explanation for the escalation of collective action. Although this is not a new argument (Snyder 1979; McAdam 1983), it does testify to the importance of providing more empirical evidence about intergroup dynamics.

Another area that needs more research is the decision-making process of besieged leaders who mix strategies of concessions and repression. Is the phenomenon a trial-and-error process in which leaders desperately struggle to find the right formula to defuse the opposition? What are leaders thinking when they switch from one type of government response to another? Is it possible to model the decision process? These questions are best answered through a compara-

tive analysis in which cases of leaders who successfully defuse opposition through a mix of concessions/repression strategies are compared with leaders who are unsuccessful. This kind of analysis would reveal a great deal about decision-making in a revolutionary situation and the effects of mixed strategies on escalation processes. Such analysis would also extend our knowledge about collective action in general.

Karen Rasler is Associate Professor of Political Science at Indiana University in Bloomington. Her recent works include *Ascent, Decline and War: The Political Economy of Violent Structural Transitions* (with William R. Thompson, University of Kentucky Press, 1994). She is studying collective action problems pertaining to the Intifada and long-term links between U.S. foreign policy behavior and American public opinion.

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