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## GLOBAL AND NATIONAL SOURCES OF POLITICAL PROTEST: THIRD WORLD RESPONSES TO THE DEBT CRISIS\*

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*In recent years international financial institutions have required Third World debtor countries to adopt various austerity policies designed to restore economic viability and ensure debt repayment. The hardships created by these policies have provoked unprecedented protests in debtor countries, ranging from mass demonstrations to organized strikes and riots. We examine variation among Third World debtor countries in the presence and severity of protests against austerity policies. Results show that the principal conditions for the occurrence and severity of austerity protests are overurbanization and involvement of international agencies in domestic political-economic policy. We offer a theoretical interpretation that integrates global and national sources of contemporary political protest in the Third World.*

For more than a decade, the international debt crisis has provoked a wave of mass protests against austerity policies imposed on the developing countries. These protests are rooted in the global political economy, not in the singular dilemmas of Third World countries. With the possible exception of the European revolutions of 1848, these protests constitute an unprecedented wave of international protest. They provide a unique opportunity to evaluate sociological theories of political conflict in the contemporary world.

After 1971 and the collapse of the Bretton Woods accords on international monetary regulation, capital became increasingly internationalized. International bank capital expanded dramatically owing to the growth of petrodollar accounts and capital flight from advanced countries such as the United States (Block 1977; Brett 1983). Enormous accumulations of international bank capital led to an unprecedented rise in lending, especially the lending of private bank capital to Third World governments. From 1970 to 1984, the total external indebtedness of developing nations rose from \$64 billion to \$686 billion, and the proportion of that debt held by

private banks rose from one-third to over one-half (Moffitt 1983).

From the mid-1970s on, a few smaller countries (e.g., Peru and Jamaica) began experiencing severe balance of payment problems and threatened bankruptcy. However, the international debt crisis was not widely recognized as such until 1982 when Mexico announced the exhaustion of its foreign exchange reserves. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has responded to balance of payment problems of debtor countries by renegotiating the terms of their loans and rescheduling debt payments. The IMF is involved both as a policy adviser and as a credit rating service. Once the IMF approves the stabilization program of a borrower country, private bank capital to refinance the debt follows. IMF certification of a borrower usually entails the imposition on the debtor country of various conditions affecting national economic policies. Increasingly, debt rescheduling has occurred through the IMF. As a result, the IMF has had a growing influence on the economic policies of Third World countries.

The conditions for debt rescheduling urged by the IMF typically involve domestic implementation of market-oriented policies aimed at economic stabilization. The purpose of economic stabilization programs is to discipline Third World economies in which inflation, price distortions, excessive demand, industrial protection, and profligate government spending are alleged to cause the debt problem. These policies presumably provide the reforms necessary for economic recovery and debt repayment (Honeywell 1983; see also Williamson 1983; Cline 1983).

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Austerity programs typically include stern measures or "shock treatments" aimed at market mechanisms to stimulate export production and increase the foreign exchange reserves of governments. Thus, currency devaluations make Third World exports more competitive in international trade; reduced public spending curbs inflation and saves money for debt repayment; privatization generates more productive enterprise and reduces public payrolls; elimination of protectionism and other restraints on foreign investment lures more efficient export firms; cuts in public subsidies for food and basic necessities help to "get prices right," benefiting domestic producers; wage restraints and higher interest rates reduce inflation and enhance competitiveness; and import restrictions conserve foreign exchange for debt servicing (Killick 1984; Cline and Weintraub 1981).

These programs embody clear distributional implications. The urban poor and the working class are affected by a combination of subsidy cuts, real wage reductions, and price increases stemming from devaluations and the elimination of public services. A reduced share of national income for labor and greater income inequality are frequently documented ill effects. Domestic price increases may benefit rural producers, depending on their size and their degree of dependence on imports. The middle classes are hurt, especially public employees who face the elimination of their jobs. Consumer prices rise, and shopkeepers' sales volume suffers from diminished demand. Finally, certain sectors of the bourgeoisie are adversely affected: businesses and factories that rely on imports, domestic borrowers, and enterprises that depend on domestic mass consumption. Among the few beneficiaries of austerity programs are the firms and social classes connected with export production, foreign investors and transnational firms, large agricultural interests, and state managers (Bernal 1984; Cline 1983; Diaz-Alejandro 1981; Foxley 1981; Frenkel and O'Donnell 1979; Pastor 1987; Sutton 1984).

The political implications of austerity programs are rich and intricate. Because stabilization works a hardship on a majority of the population, albeit on classes with little political power, strong governments are necessary in order to implement the policies effectively, reinforcing the "bureaucratic-authoritarian" state (O'Donnell 1978; Kaufman 1986; Sheahan 1980). But austerity regimes are inherently unstable because they depend on results to sustain themselves while at

the same time generating elite factionalism and popular revolt (Frenkel and O'Donnell 1979; Petras and Brill 1986; Seddon 1984, 1986; Hon-eywell 1983).

In most countries, these new policies have met with stiff opposition, including mass political demonstrations, strikes, and riots. In fact, a wave of austerity protest has occurred in 26 of the approximately 80 debtor countries. Between 1976 and early 1989, some 85 protest incidents occurred, reaching a peak in the 1983-1985 period. Protests sometimes appear as classic food riots (e.g., Morocco, Brazil, and Haiti) and at other times as demonstrations that turn violent (e.g., Sudan, Turkey, and Chile) or as general strikes (e.g., Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia). Frequently, one type of protest is transformed into another—demonstrations turn into riots, spontaneous violence is rechanneled into political organization, and so on. Most participants are drawn from the urban poor (shantytown dwellers, unemployed youth, street vendors) and the working class (unions). Usually, these low income groups combine with other groups, e.g., students in Liberia, teachers in Guatemala, public employees in Bolivia, shopkeepers in the Dominican Republic, and professional groups from physicians to pilots in Sudan (e.g., see Seddon 1986). Middle-class consumers have supported demonstrations in Chile, and business organizations were part of the opposition in the Philippines. Church groups and Christian-based community organizations have coordinated protests in a number of Latin American countries. Once mass discontent is made evident by these coalitions, political parties often take up the anti-austerity cause in successful bids for national office (e.g., in Peru and Dominican Republic). In several countries, austerity protests have triggered political crises that sooner (e.g., Sudan and Turkey) or later helped topple the national government (e.g., Philippines and Haiti).

We attempt to document and explain the incidence and severity of austerity protests in a way that takes account of their global character and implications.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### *Relative Deprivation Theory*

Prior to the ascendance of resource mobilization and world-systems/dependency theories, a popular perspective for explaining variation in mass political action, especially at the national level,

was relative deprivation theory. This theory has loose ties to modernization theory and to a related Durkeimian tradition that Tilly (1978) traces through Johnson (1966) and Huntington (1968) to Gurr (1969) and Gurr and Duval (1973). In this perspective, social change, especially rapid change, is destabilizing and may spawn protest movements, primarily through psychological mechanisms of relative deprivation. In Third World countries, rapid change is thought to be especially destabilizing because it often occurs in a general context of social mobilization linked to economic development. Thus, other scholars (e.g., Cornelius 1969; Hibbs 1973) have linked mass political violence in Third World countries to the stresses and strains of development, urbanization, and other forces of change (e.g., commercialization, inflation, etc.).

In its most general, macro-level formulation, this perspective is clearly relevant to the phenomenon at hand — mass political action in Third World countries facing serious financial and economic problems in pursuit of economic development. We examine its macro-level implications in our analysis, with special attention to level of urbanization and to destabilizing factors such as inflation. Formulated at this level, relative deprivation arguments resemble Huntington's theory of modernization. Unfortunately, it is impossible to assess the social psychological mechanisms specified in these theories with aggregate-level data. In fact, in a thorough review of the relative deprivation literature, Zimmermann (1983) suggests that the theory is too vaguely specified to be tested. Recognition of its limitations explains the eclipse of relative deprivation theory in the 1970s by other perspectives.

### *Resource Mobilization Theory*

This perspective focuses on the normal recourse to contention in the presence of opportunity and organization (Tilly 1978). Protest in any country bears no systematic relationship to impoverishment or rapid change, but persistent discontent is likely to take overt political form when (1) struggles for power provide an opening for aggrieved groups, (2) the costs of acting are perceived as low, (3) sundry collectivities organize for their collective defense, or (4) authority begins to disintegrate, creating — in the extreme — a condition of multiple sovereignties (Tilly 1978; Jenkins and Perrow 1977; Jenkins 1983; McAdam 1982).

Factors external to a polity are important to resource mobilization theory, but are mediated

primarily through their impact on states and regimes. Changes in the state, the regime, or in national politics resulting from external pressures and events can create or extinguish opportunities for political mobilization and action by collectivities, both "members" of and "challengers" to the polity (Tilly 1978). The amount of external debt, for example, affects the fiscal viability and legitimacy of the state. A severe fiscal crisis can cause a regime to disintegrate and create opportunities for opponents. The focus, however, is on the political consequences of debt, not its direct impact on living conditions.

Differences among countries in structural conditions caused by external forces such as trade are also relevant to resource mobilization theory because these structural conditions affect the nature and size of contending collectivities and the potential for mobilization. Structural changes associated with urbanization and economic development, for example, increase the capacity for organization and action. Communication and coordination are facilitated as potential participants become available and accessible to one another. Further, the number of resources that may be mobilized for political purposes increases with changes in the economic environment. Generally, these basic structural differences between countries can be seen as variation in enabling conditions.

Another set of factors emphasized in resource mobilization theory is the degree to which different collectivities within the polity, both members and challengers, are mobilized. In the aggregate, this is captured by the general level of political contention. A high level of contention in a polity is thought to be evidence of a high level of organization and mobilization. Countries with a history of mass political mobilization and collective action, according to this reasoning, are much more likely to experience mass protest in response to state actions (e.g., an attempt to implement austerity measures) than those lacking such a history. This perspective also stresses the degree to which specific groups are organized, especially groups that have specific grievances or have suffered abuse. The groups hurt most by austerity measures are the urban poor, workers, government employees, sections of the middle class, and domestically-oriented economic elites. The urban poor and the working class are key groups because they provide the bulk of the personnel for mass demonstrations, strikes, and riots. While it is possible to assess indirectly the degree to which urban areas contain large surplus popu-

lations, it is difficult to assess the extent of organization by the urban poor. Indicators of the organization of workers — extent of unionization, for example — are readily available.

Finally, key internal conditions relevant to resource mobilization theory are state and regime characteristics. Many external influences (e.g., changes in the international economy) affect the state because it responds to external events and other changes in the external environment. These responses, in turn, are directed at different member and challenger collectivities — to the benefit of some and the detriment of others. Important considerations in the analysis of mass protests against austerity policies, therefore, are the accessibility of a state to contenders (i.e., the openness of the polity) and the relative strength of contending collectivities in shaping state action.

Generally, polity openness is reflected in the existence of formal political and civil rights. Countries with an open polity may experience more protest because demonstrations and other forms of protest may be part of the normal pattern of contention. Highly repressive regimes, by contrast, may be able to block collective action against austerity measures. However, a less open polity may experience explosive protest because of a lack of institutionalized channels for the expression of grievances. Thus, while the general expectation is that open polities should have more austerity protests, the relation between polity openness and protest requires careful examination.

#### *World-Systems/Dependency Theory*

These two traditions are similar for present purposes in that they view the social structures of Third World countries as shaped by the historical experience of colonialism, the timing and manner of incorporation into the global capitalist system, and the perpetuation of dependency ties through transnational corporations, unequal exchange, and political domination. World-systems and dependency theories address social conflict generally as a problem of understanding the transformation from class inequality to class action. The structure of social classes in peripheral societies is the key link with the world political economy: The general pattern in dependent countries is one of income inequality, class polarization, unemployment and underemployment, “tertiarization,” and surplus population in the urban labor market (Chilcote and Johnson 1983; Evans and Timberlake 1980; Rubinson 1976).

Despite different ideas about the key mediat-

ing conditions, a general portrait of the perspective would include four concerns. The first is the degree of international economic dependence as indicated by the presence of foreign capital (investment dependence) and the survival of colonial trading patterns (e.g., import and export partner concentration, raw material specialization, etc.). The second embraces long-term social structural consequences of dependency — distortions of dependent countries’ social and economic development. These include obvious consequences such as long-term mass deprivation and underdevelopment, but also subtle consequences such as tertiarization and overurbanization. The third includes direct consequences of trade and investment dependence — an increased debt burden and associated economic hardship. These economic conditions are more transient than basic social structural conditions and include such factors as the sheer weight of the debt (as indicated, for example, by debt payments as a percentage of exports) and the difficult economic conditions that accompany a high debt load such as inflation or high consumer prices (Rubinson 1976; Petras and Brill 1986). The fourth concern is the political consequences of dependency.

The political consequences of dependency are complex and have not been addressed adequately in quantitative cross-national research. While the theory argues that dependency forcefully affects the state in peripheral societies, authors differ on whether the state is weakened or strengthened as a result. One argument is that international dependence weakens states in terms of penetration of the domestic economy, legitimacy, and international autonomy (Wallerstein 1974). States with questionable legitimacy may be more likely to experience protests against austerity measures (Petras and Brill 1986). Dependency may also cause divisions among politically dominant collectivities, especially between those with economic interests in the international economy (e.g., exporters) and those with interests in the domestic economy (e.g., industrialists who produce for local markets; cf. Singer 1985). Political unrest is more likely when these “distributive coalitions” (Haggard 1986) or social classes (Bernal 1984) are polarized with respect to the costs and benefits of austerity programs.

Another strand of world-systems theory sees increased state strength, especially the capacity for coercion, as the key to development and upward movement in the international hierarchy (i.e., from periphery to semiperiphery or from semiperiphery to core). This view is compatible

with a theoretical tradition within the dependency school that emphasizes the development of bureaucratic-authoritarian states in dependent Third World countries (O'Donnell 1988). Generally, Third World countries with the greatest debt burdens (e.g., Brazil) are aggressively developmental. These countries may be more authoritarian and thus suffer more mass protests in the wake of austerity programs. Authoritarian states may find it difficult to keep a lid on such protest because the links between international demands and regressive state actions are clearly visible to political actors (Frenkel and O'Donnell 1979; Kaufman 1986; Sheahan 1980; Haggard 1986) and the domestic population has experienced considerable economic and political burdens prior to the imposition of austerity measures.

### *Bridging the Perspectives*

While the two major perspectives, resource mobilization theory and world-systems/dependency theory, differ in the causes they emphasize, various strands of the two theories can be knitted together once they are jointly applied to the research question: explaining variation in austerity protests. An important strand of dependency theory, for example, emphasizes associated-dependent development, an externally-oriented path to economic development implemented by Third World regimes in collaboration with dominant economic interests in core countries. This model admits that substantial development in the form of increased per capita GNP can occur within a context of investment, trade, and debt dependence (Warren 1973), but not without political and social costs. Generally, this path entails depopulation of rural areas as the agricultural sector becomes more export-oriented; excess population in urban areas; increased inequality as commercialization of the economy deepens and the subsistence sector declines; an inflated tertiary sector — especially in large urban areas; increased employment in foreign-owned, export-oriented manufacturing firms; a growing public sector to meet escalating needs for public services; a deeper penetration by the state into all spheres of the economy (see Evans 1985, pp. 194-207); and the development of a more bureaucratic, authoritarian, and repressive state apparatus to cope with problems generated by these changes. Debt-induced austerity accelerates many of these processes while limiting the fiscal capacity of the state to address the problems these processes exacerbate. A hallmark of debt-induced austerity programs is a reduced public sector.

This view of the consequences of debt and austerity dovetails with arguments central to the resource mobilization perspective. First, the structural changes specified in the associated-dependent development perspective (overurbanization, declining subsistence sector, increasing inequality, etc.) are likely to increase the salience of grievances and to increase the potential for mass mobilization. Second, in situations of debt-induced austerity, specific targets of mobilization are easy to identify: the IMF, international banks, and domestic political actors who have collaborated with international actors (sometimes corruptly). Finally, the implementation of austerity policies is far-reaching and likely to affect virtually all currently mobilized collectivities, providing them with an opportunity to act in concert. Austerity may forge broad political alliances that would be impossible to sustain otherwise. In short, there is a near-perfect fit between debt-induced austerity as conceived in world-systems/dependency theory and the ingredients central to broad-based political mobilization as conceived in resource mobilization theory, especially in a context of associated-dependent development.

We explore these perspectives in our statistical analysis. Much of the analysis is exploratory; the theories are too general to permit precise specification. Because our analysis uses aggregate data, we are limited to snapshots of broad structural patterns. Examination of some of the key theoretical issues (e.g., regarding the state as an actor) would require a case-oriented comparative analysis (Ragin 1987). With these limitations in mind, our statistical analysis should spur more in-depth investigation of the issues we raise.

### POPULATION OF OBSERVATIONS

The identification of the subset of debtor countries that have experienced international pressure to implement programs of economic austerity can be done only indirectly because the precise terms of negotiations between debtor countries and the IMF are secret. We used gross measures to identify countries that have experienced pressure from the IMF for economic reform as a condition for the renegotiation or rescheduling of debt repayment. Fortunately, a variety of records indicate IMF pressure or "conditionality," i.e., policy prescriptions that all parties (borrower countries, IMF advisers, and potential lenders whether they be banks or the IMF itself) formally agree to as a condition for new or renegotiated loans. IMF conditionality was assumed under any of the fol-

lowing circumstances: (1) the country was involved in an "extended fund" arrangement with the IMF at some point in the 1975-1986 period; (2) the country was involved in a multilateral debt "renegotiation" at some point in the 1975-1984 period; (3) the country was involved in a "restructuring" of its debt at some point in the 1978-1985 period; or (4) the country's ratio of borrowed funds to its IMF quota was greater than 125% in 1985.

Applying these criteria to all debtor nations produced a set of 59 countries that satisfy at least one of the conditions. (Of course, we restrict our analysis to debtor countries with adequate representation in cross-national data compendia; this eliminates some smaller countries.) One anomaly results — these procedures indicate that Tunisia has not been subjected to serious IMF conditionality, yet Tunisia has experienced austerity protests. This suggests that our procedures for delimiting the set of countries are conservative and that few, if any, irrelevant nonprotest cases are included. With the inclusion of Tunisia, the total number of cases was 60, with 26 protest debtor countries (Zaire, Ghana, Liberia, Morocco, Sierre Leone, Sudan, Tunisia, Egypt, Zambia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Philippines, Turkey, Poland, and Yugoslavia) and 34 non-protest debtor countries (Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Togo, Uganda, Costa Rica, Cuba, Honduras, Nicaragua, Uruguay, Venezuela, Burma, Sri Lanka, India, Jordan, South Korea, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Hungary, Portugal, and Romania).

## MEASURES

Many cross-national variables have been mentioned as candidates to explain variation in austerity protests. Many of these familiar variables (e.g., level of development, level of urbanization, size of the tertiary sector, etc.) are based on widely accepted measures (e.g., GNP per capita, percent living in urban areas, percent employed in service occupations). Three of our independent variables — debt, degree of IMF pressure, and overurbanization — require special attention. Our dependent variable in the main statistical analyses — variation in austerity protests — also must be explained and justified.

### *IMF Pressure*

Among countries likely to have experienced IMF conditionality according to our four indicators, there is considerable variation in the extent of involvement with the IMF. Some countries experienced many renegotiations and restructurings. A measure of the extent of IMF conditionality is necessary to test the simple hypothesis that countries that have experienced the most pressure from the IMF are more likely to have had protests or to have had the more severe protests. To measure the degree of IMF pressure, we factor analyzed the four indicators of IMF conditionality. The results show clear unidimensionality and strong factor loadings for all four variables on a single factor. To create an index of IMF involvement, we transformed countries' scores on these four variables to standard (z) scores and summed them.

In analyses not reported here (available from authors on request), we compared the results using this index with the results of analyses substituting "number of debt renegotiations" (one of the components of the index) for the index. "Number of debt renegotiations" is the strongest correlate of the index and has the additional advantages of unambiguous interpretation and measurement at the interval level. These alternate specifications did not alter our findings.

### *Debt*

There are many possible measures of the size of a country's debt and of the magnitude of its debt service. There are six possible direct measures of the severity of a country's debt problems: debt or debt service standardized on population, GNP, or exports. Our goal is to measure the degree to which debt is a burden to a country. This burden is both political — because the state is in fiscal crises — and economic — because some kind of austerity program is seen as a prerequisite for debt repayment. Debt service is a better starting point than absolute debt because debt service indicates directly the amount of economic pressure. The most commonly used denominator for debt service is exports. This is preferred to debt service/population and debt service/GNP because the primary source of hard currency for debt repayment is exports. One drawback to the debt service/exports measure is that it can vary widely from year to year for a given country because, in the short run, debt service and exports can move in opposite directions. To control these fluctuations,

we averaged debt service/exports over a seven year period, from 1976 to 1982. This period was chosen because it roughly represents the first half of the period under study.

### *Overurbanization*

An important thread of world-systems/dependency theory emphasizes structural distortions associated with dependency. A primary distortion is the massing of surplus population in urban areas due to both push factors (e.g., export-oriented agriculture) and pull factors (e.g., availability of government services).

The notion that many less developed countries contain excess urban populations is often challenged by those who see urbanization as a key feature of economic development. The problem is to measure urbanization in a way that takes level of development into account. In cross-national studies of the degree to which less developed countries are excessively urbanized, the usual practice is to regress level of urbanization on GNP per capita and use the residuals as a measure of overurbanization (see, e.g., Bradshaw 1987). Large positive residuals indicate that a country is excessively urbanized relative to its level of economic development. We follow previous research in using this approach to assess overurbanization. Both components are measured circa 1980.

### *Presence of Protest*

The 26 countries that experienced austerity protests are treated as a universe. Once we became interested in recurrent journalistic accounts of strikes and riots that followed the implementation of austerity programs in a number of Third World countries, we set about identifying all such instances. The literature on the debt crisis provided an initial list. Next we combed guides to periodical literature and *The New York Times Index* using subject headings such as "debt crisis" or "riot" and also examining all entries for countries that we suspected may have had austerity protests. A set of criteria emerged for defining an austerity protest: (a) mass actions that (b) specifically addressed austerity policies (e.g., food subsidy cuts, price increases stemming from devaluation, cuts in government jobs or services), and (c) stemmed from actions by governments that were strongly urged by international institutions (typically the IMF) in connection with the debt problem. Once this operational definition of

an austerity protest was developed, a wide range of periodical sources was explored for further instances and descriptions (e.g., *The New York Times*, *Latin America Weekly Report*, *The Economist*, *South*, and *African Business*). Because the data file and coding of each case on a number of protest features was begun in 1984, many of the protests occurred after the study was under way and were added to the analysis. In our correlational analysis, presence of protest was coded 1 if a country experienced a protest, 0 otherwise.

### *Protest Severity*

Among the 26 countries that experienced mass protests against austerity programs, there was considerable variation in the severity of these mass actions. In some countries, the protests were limited to a few demonstrations; in others, there was widespread rioting with many deaths and arrests. For each protest event, we gathered all the accounts in the periodical literature and developed a description of each case.

It is difficult, however, to measure severity of protests directly because (1) there are many possible indicators of severity, and (2) most of the available indicators are qualitative because journalistic accounts are the primary source of data. This combination (multiple indicators, each with relatively low reliability) dictates use of a factor analytic approach to combine correlated measures and increase reliability. We selected four indicators of severity: (1) an ordinal measure of size of protests (with countries sorted into four ranked categories) based on reported numbers of deaths and arrests (which are often vague and imprecise); (2) an interval-scale measure of number of distinct episodes of austerity protest events over the period of observation 1976-1988 (ranging from one to more than 10 for volatile countries); (3) a dichotomous measure of the presence of rioting; and (4) an interval-scale measure of the extent of the protests — number of cities reporting protest events.

We factor analyzed these four indicators of protest severity and found a strong one-factor solution, with all four variables registering substantial loadings on a single factor. These four variables were standardized (converted to z-scores) and summed to form a single index of protest severity. Unit weighting was used so that the composite measure incorporated the four substantively different components equally. (The alternative of using weights reflecting factor loadings and commonality scores resulted in an

index that correlated almost perfectly with the one we used.) In the TOBIT analysis of protest severity, nonprotest cases are coded 0 on protest severity; the severity scores for protest cases are in the positive range.

In analyses not reported here, we compared the results using our severity index with the results of analyses substituting "number of protest events" (one of the components of the index) for the protest severity index. "Number of protest events" is a strong correlate of the severity index and has the additional advantages of unambiguous interpretation and measurement at the interval level. These alternate analyses did not alter our findings.

## RESULTS

### Simple Correlations

Table 1 presents zero-order correlations between the presence of protest (maximum N = 60) and severity of austerity protest (maximum N = 26), on the one hand, and major explanatory variables, on the other. The significance test for the correlation between an interval scale variable and a dichotomy (e.g., the correlation between the presence of protest and GNP per capita) is identical to the test for the significance of the difference between the means of two groups on the interval scale variable. Thus, the significance tests reported for the presence of austerity protests are the same as would be obtained from t-test analyses of the same data.

Many of the correlations for the presence of protest variable are significant. The four variables that make up the index of IMF pressure as well as the index itself are all highly correlated with the presence of protest. The correlation with severity of debt, measured by average debt service/exports over the 1976-1982 period, is also significant. These results support the common sense notion that austerity protests occur where debt and IMF pressure are most pronounced. These correlations are also consistent with world-systems/dependency theory because our measure of debt is also a good indicator of debt dependence, and our measure of IMF pressure reflects the actions of a major international institution charged with maintaining the world capitalist economy. The presence of protest is not associated with conventional indicators of international economic dependency — the correlations with five measures of economic dependence are all very weak and not significant. Two hardship variables, in-

Table 1. Correlations of Presence of Austerity Protest (All Countries) and Severity of Austerity Protest (Protest Countries) with Various Indicators of Political and Structural Conditions

Independent Variables	Presence of Austerity Protest		Severity of Austerity Protest	
	Correlation	N	Correlation	N
<i>Indicators of IMF Conditionality/Debt Dependence:</i>				
Number of renegotiations	.319**	60	.278	26
Number of restructurings	.414***	60	.310	26
Use of extended fund	.317**	60	.204	26
Loans/IMF quota	.247*	60	.015	26
IMF pressure index	.448***	60	.285	26
Average debt service/exports	.368***	56	.380*	25
<i>Indicators of Trade and Investment Dependence:</i>				
Multinational penetration, 1973	.082	56	-.159	25
Export commodity concentration, 1980	.084	56	.042	26
Export partner concentration, 1980	.149	59	-.369*	26
Import partner concentration, 1980	.118	59	-.243	26
Raw material export, 1980	-.057	59	.217	26
Domestic investment/ GNP, 1980	.024	57	-.033	25
<i>Indicators of Hardship:</i>				
Consumer price index, 1983	.336**	54	.180	25
Average inflation, 1973-1984	.316**	57	.138	26
Urban growth rate, 1970-1980	-.159	58	-.036	26
<i>Social Structural Indicators:</i>				
GNP per capita, 1981	.112	58	.004	25
Urbanization, 1980	.391***	59	.236	26
Overurbanization, 1980	.484***	58	.423**	25
Tertiary employment, 1980	.269**	59	.094	26
Manufacturing employment, 1980	.254**	59	-.061	26
<i>Indicators of Mobilization/Political Conditions:</i>				
Unionization, c. 1975	-.037	43	.296	21
Protest events/ population, 1948-1977	.145	60	.124	26
State sanctions/population, 1948-1977	.187	60	.051	26
Civil rights index, 1973-1979	.203	59	.142	26
Political rights, 1973-1979	.114	59	.017	26
Government revenue/ GNP, 1980	.067	52	.303	25
Direct taxation/revenue, 1980	.142	50	.099	24

\*  $p < .10$     \*\*  $p < .05$     \*\*\*  $p < .01$



flation and a high consumer price index, are strongly correlated with the presence of protest, consistent with relative deprivation theory and world-systems/dependency theory. Among social structural variables, the strongest correlations are with overurbanization, urbanization, tertiary sector employment, and employment in manufacturing. The substantial correlation with overurbanization offers strong support to world-systems/dependency theory; the other correlations are consistent with relative deprivation theory and resource mobilization theory. Finally, none of the measures of political conditions and factors affecting mobilization shows a significant correlation with the presence of protest. Examination of possible curvilinear relationships with these factors revealed no significant effects.

The correlation of these same explanatory variables with severity of protests for the 26 countries that experienced austerity protests produces associations that are in the same direction but weaker, less systematic, and less often significant than those for the presence of protest, with the exception of the correlation between overurbanization and protest severity. The correlations between protest severity and indicators of IMF pressure (including the composite index) are consistently positive, and the correlation between protest severity and average debt service is strong and significant. There are weak negative correlations between protest severity and import and export partner concentration, indicating that countries suffering from colonial-type trading patterns had less severe protests. This result is inconsistent with world-system and dependency theories, which predict a positive correlation between trade dependence and protest severity. While percent urban, percent unionized, and government revenue/GNP show moderate correlations with protest severity, they are not significant. Overurbanization, by contrast, is strongly and significantly correlated with severity, consistent with the findings for presence of protest. Finally, examination of possible curvilinear relationships between political factors and conditions and protest severity showed no significant relationships.

#### *TOBIT Analysis*

The correlations presented in Table 1 provide several strong leads for a TOBIT regression analysis of variation in austerity protest. A TOBIT analysis is appropriate for these data because some of the debtor countries had austerity

protests with varying levels of severity (from scattered demonstrations to mass riots) and some had no austerity protests, at least not severe enough to be recorded in international media. Thus, the nonprotest cases are *censored* on the dependent variable (severity of protest) because they fall below the value necessary to be recorded. The standard zero, lower bound TOBIT model was designed for this type of dependent variable. Most important, by adjusting for censoring, this model allows inclusion of negative cases in the analysis of variation in severity among positive cases, which greatly enhances degrees of freedom. This approach keeps the population *Third World debtor countries* primary in the analysis of reactions to austerity programs.

Four types of variables in Table 1 had a strong impact on the occurrence of austerity protest: variables indicating IMF pressure, degree of debt, economic hardship, and basic social structural conditions. While variables indicating features of regimes and states were not strongly associated with presence of protests, the three political indicators with the strongest correlations are included in the TOBIT analysis because (1) they are key variables for resource mobilization theory and are also important to world-systems/dependency theory, and (2) they may have significant effects once other variables (e.g., IMF pressure) are controlled.

Our rationale for the equations estimated in Table 2 is: While IMF pressure is most relevant to world-systems/dependency theory, all three perspectives predict a strong impact of IMF pressure on austerity protests. Thus, this measure is included as a predictor in all equations. To operationalize concerns central to the relative deprivation perspective, we use level of urbanization and average rate of inflation, 1973-1984. Level of urbanization captures the general context of social mobilization, while rate of inflation measures destabilizing economic changes. Table 1 shows that both measures are associated with the presence of austerity protests. (Consumer price index was not used because it is highly correlated with the average rate of inflation and the inflation measure is available for more countries.) The concerns of the resource mobilization perspective are captured in four variables: level of urbanization and percent employed in manufacturing (measures of structural conduciveness), the civil rights index (an indicator of polity openness), and protest events per capita (log), 1948-1977 (an indicator of previous levels of contention). Both measures of structural conduciveness

Table 2. Unstandardized Regression Coefficients (TOBIT Analysis) Predicting Severity of Austerity Protests: 56 Debtor Countries

Independent Variables	Relative Deprivation Theory		Resource Mobilization Theory		World-Systems/Dependency Theory		
	1a	1b	2a	2b	3a	3b	3c
IMF pressure index	.932** (.389)	.953** (.380)	1.221** (.441)	1.148** (.446)	.893** (.438)	.959** (.389)	.844** (.390)
Average debt service/exports	—	—	—	—	.070 (.146)	—	—
Average inflation, 1973-1984	.014 (.058)	—	—	—	.013 (.057)	—	—
Urbanization, 1980	.114** (.058)	.126** (.055)	.059 (.069)	.092* (.053)	—	—	—
Overurbanization, 1980	—	—	—	—	.235** (.099)	.263** (.089)	.291** (.096)
Tertiary employment, 1980	—	—	—	—	-4.066 (7.396)	—	—
Manufacturing employment, 1980	—	—	.113 (.140)	—	—	—	—
Protest events/pop., 1948-1977	—	—	1.422 (1.022)	1.377 (.991)	—	—	—
State sanctions/pop., 1948-1977	—	—	—	—	1.916 (1.243)	1.633 (1.169)	—
Civil rights index, 1973-1979	—	—	-.006 (.722)	—	—	—	—
$\chi^2$	-93.345	-93.440	-91.601	-92.063	-87.635	-88.036	-90.152

\*  $p < .10$     \*\*  $p < .05$

Note: Coefficients for constant and sigma are not reported; standard errors are in parentheses.

show significant correlations in Table 1. Finally, the concerns of the world-systems/dependency perspective are captured through five variables: overurbanization and employment in the tertiary sector (indicators of major structural distortions associated with dependency), average debt service (an indicator of debt dependence with a direct impact on austerity protests), state sanctions per capita (log), 1948-1977 (an indicator of authoritarian practices relevant to associated-dependent development arguments), and average rate of inflation (a measure of hardship).

The results of the TOBIT regression analyses are reported in Table 2. Three sets of equations are presented, one set for each theory: relative deprivation, resource mobilization, and world-systems/dependency.

Equation 1a, which assesses relative deprivation arguments, shows strong effects for the IMF pressure index and urbanization. However, the failure of the inflation rate to display a strong or significant positive effect in this relatively uncomplicated analysis casts doubt on the relative deprivation argument. The idea that rapid, destabilizing change causes mass protest is central to this perspective. Equation 1b reproduces equa-

tion 1a with the inflation rate omitted to produce a better fit. While providing improved fit (removing rate of inflation saves a degree of freedom with little change in the chi-square), this simpler equation is consistent with all three perspectives.

Equation 2a tests resource mobilization theory, with urbanization, the IMF pressure index, past protest events, percent employed in manufacturing, and the civil rights index as predictors. Only IMF pressure has a significant effect in this equation, suggesting excessive collinearity. Equation 2b shows estimated effects when 2a is simplified by removing the weakest independent variables. The simplified equation, which has about the same chi-square and saves two degrees of freedom, shows a strong effect of IMF pressure and a moderate effect of level of urbanization. Past protest events has a weak effect approaching .10 significance ( $p = .165$ ). These results lend only weak support to resource mobilization theory.

Equation 3a assesses world-systems/dependency theory and includes overurbanization, the IMF pressure index, average debt service, inflation rate, state sanctions, and percent employed

in the tertiary sector as predictors. The results show strong significant effects for the IMF pressure index and overurbanization and insignificant effects for the other predictors. Removing the weakest independent variables (average inflation, tertiary employment, and average debt service) produces 3b, which has about the same chi-square and saves three degrees of freedom. The simplified equation shows very strong effects of IMF pressure and overurbanization, and an effect for state sanctioning that approaches .10 significance ( $p = .163$ ). Equation 3b supports world-systems/dependency theory because of the strong effect of overurbanization, one of the key structural distortions following from international economic dependence. Removing state sanctions from equation 3b produces equation 3c, which shows again the strong effects of overurbanization and IMF pressure. This last equation produces the best chi-square with the smallest number of predictors.

Comparing across the three sets of equations, world-systems/dependency theory receives the strongest support. Equations 1b (for relative deprivation theory) and 2b (for resource mobilization theory) do not contain any statistically significant predictors with special substantive relevance for their respective perspectives. Equation 3c, however, shows a strong effect for overurbanization, a predictor that is strongly rooted in the world-systems/dependency tradition and is given special theoretical status by comparative historical and quantitative researchers (e.g., see the review of comparative urbanization offered by Smith forthcoming).

Still, it could be argued that equation 3c is equation 1b in disguise, and that the two are indistinguishable. Equation 3c can be tested against 1b because 1b is nested within 3c. Because the measure of overurbanization is based on the relation between urbanization and GNP per capita, equation 3c, in effect, adds a constrained effect for GNP per capita to equation 1b. Thus, the difference between chi-square values for the two equations can be tested with one degree of freedom. This difference is significant at the .05 level. Thus, equation 3c is superior to equation 1b, providing additional support for our interpretation of these results as supporting world-systems/dependency theory.

These results are not due solely to the presence of nonprotest cases in the analysis or to the substantial variability in protest severity displayed by the protest cases. Logistic regression analyses of the presence of austerity protests dichotomy

mirror the TOBIT results, as do ordinary least squares regression analyses of variation in severity of austerity protests computed for the 26 protest cases. In short, overurbanization and the IMF pressure index explain variation in austerity protests, regardless of the sample (all debtor countries or only protest countries) or the estimation technique.

#### *Case-Level Support*

While consistent across different analytic formulations, the support for world-systems/dependency arguments is coarse. Overurbanization is deeply rooted in dependency, but is also relevant to other perspectives. Followers of the relative deprivation perspective, for example, might find evidence for their theory in the overurbanization finding. Hibbs (1973, pp. 50-1), for example, examines cross-national variation in the ratio of urbanization to GNP per capita as a way to address the effect of "imbalances in urbanization and economic development" on mass political violence. He links these imbalances to relative deprivation, arguing that "when the level of urbanization outruns the level of economic development, satisfaction tends to lag behind aspirations, and frustration-induced discontent is a probable consequence."

Unfortunately, Hibbs offers no evidence of massive disjunctures between aspirations and satisfaction under conditions of overurbanization. His mechanisms remain hypothetical and his statistical analysis problematic. (In any event, he finds no effect of urbanization "imbalance" on collective protest; see Hibbs 1973, p. 52.)

To fill this empirical void, we offer the following rank-ordered list of countries with the 10 highest scores on both protest severity and overurbanization (weighting both measures equally): Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Argentina, and Zambia. If the mechanisms linking overurbanization to austerity protests are the ones we claim, they should be evident in these cases. In fact, the research literature shows a high degree of urban social organization, particularly in working class communities, in these countries. Peru, for example, is a country in which the social integration and political activism of squatter settlements was initially demonstrated (Mangin 1967) and subsequently analyzed as a style of popular organization compatible with the political system (Leeds and Leeds 1976). Similarly, Chile has had one of the strongest traditions of urban community or-

ganization (Goldrich, Pratt, and Schiller 1967-68; Portes 1972), and the pattern is repeated in the other Latin American countries (e.g., see Portes and Walton 1976).

If this pattern comes as no surprise to students of Latin American urban politics, unexpected corroboration is found in the North African cases that rank high on the list. Recent research on urban politics in North Africa (e.g., Tunisia and Morocco) demonstrates a distinctive yet analogous pattern of communities actively organized in labor unions, occupational associations, opposition parties, student associations, and Islamic brotherhoods (Seddon 1986). Finally, the seemingly incongruous case of Zambia also fits the pattern because austerity protests occurred in the nation's copperbelt towns where miners are the key occupational group and organize in politically active labor unions (see Zuckerman 1986). Our interpretation is that the particularly explosive combination in these cases lies in the depredations of austerity policies visited upon the urban poor who are already organized and oriented to political action.

## DISCUSSION

The principal conditions for the occurrence and severity of austerity protests are overurbanization and the involvement of international agencies in domestic political-economic policy. Countries with large, poor urban populations experience protests when governments impose policies with regressive social class consequences in the interest of servicing foreign debts.

Our multivariate analyses offer the most consistent support to world-systems/dependency theory. The single best predictor of austerity protests is overurbanization, a feature that has been linked consistently to dependency in both the theoretical and empirical literatures. While this finding provides clear support for world-systems/dependency theory, it does not exclude resource mobilization theory. In fact, the two perspectives can be joined to bring greater clarity to the issue, especially when arguments drawn from the literature on associated-dependent development are brought to bear.

Our focus on overurbanization and the global political economy as causes of political unrest in the Third World is buttressed by three mechanisms documented in recent research on underdevelopment and observed in the general conditions of austerity protests. First, during the last decade Third World political struggles have

shifted from the countryside to the city as a result of structural economic change (e.g., Armstrong and McGee 1985; Roberts 1978) and deliberate policies — such as increasing the earnings of rural producers by eliminating wage food subsidies in the cities (e.g., de Janvry 1981; Zamosc 1986). Second, as we know from repeated refutations of “marginality” (e.g., Perlman 1976), the new urban groups are organized in their neighborhoods, churches, political associations, and labor unions. These groups can act in response to burdensome policies. Third, structural and organizational factors are mediated by a “moral economy” of the urban poor (Scott 1976; Thompson 1971). Austerity protests are not blind rages, but expressions of a collective sense of injustice. From North Africa to Latin America, protest slogans say “Out With the IMF,” “We Won’t Pay the Debt — Let the Ones Who Stole the Money Pay.” Riot targets are selective — buses were burned in Rio and Caracas when subsidized transportation was cut, price increases in Morocco produced looting of food stores and attacks on travel agencies and foreign automobiles. Our theoretical account of protests against austerity programs relies on the relationship between the politics of international involvement and the social ramifications of overurbanization. On one side, international agencies, banks, and states negotiate the implementation of reform — reflected here in the elements of IMF pressure. On the other side, a distinctive pattern of Third World urbanization, revealed in extensive research, establishes the terrain of protest — organized segments of the poor and underemployed experiencing hardship.

A comprehensive explanation of austerity protests, and probably other forms of political action in underdeveloped countries, requires an integrated consideration of international factors and local capacities for political mobilization. The need to combine “external and internal” determinants of social structure and action has long been a fundamental tenet of more refined versions of dependency theory. Cardoso and Faletto (1979, p. xvi), for example, develop a “historical-structural” method that sees “the relationship between external and internal forces as forming a complex whole whose structural links are not based on mere external forms of exploitation and coercion, but are rooted in coincidences of interests between local dominant classes and international ones, and, on the other side are challenged by local dominated groups and classes . . . [external domination] implies the possibility of the ‘internal-

ization of external interests” (cf. Dos Santos 1973; Evans 1979).

The “complex whole” that Cardoso and Faletto speak of embraces the changing relationship between advanced and Third World countries. At the outset, the debt crisis was a crisis of accumulation for the advanced countries themselves and has since evolved into a precariously vulnerable situation for international financial institutions as well as for hard-pressed Third World countries. In this new and interdependent context, domination persists. Governments of advanced countries and international agencies press for conditions that will “stabilize” the crisis and return the economy to profitable practices of uneven development by urging market mechanisms, free movement of capital, privatization of state enterprise, and fiscal discipline for debtors regardless of social costs. All of this is buttressed by supportive political and financial arrangements. To the extent that these policies fail or engender social contradictions in Third World countries, ideologies clash, social classes struggle, and hegemony is contested. Austerity protests are the microcosm in which overt struggles over the direction of the contemporary global econo-

my take place.

While the long run consequences of this scenario are unclear, social unrest provides a motive and an opportunity for certain Third World states, especially the new democracies, to reassert an economic nationalism based on reduced dependence. Our evidence shows that class action and popular protest are among the key conditions that shape the global political economy.

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#### Appendix. Sources of Data

Measure	Source
Number of renegotiations, 1975-1984	World Bank 1976-1982.
Number of restructurings, 1978-1985	IMF 1985.
Use of extended fund, 1975-1986	IMF 1985-1986b, 1985-1986c.
Loans/IMF quota, 1985	IMF 1985-1986c.
Debt service/exports, 1976-1982	World Bank 1976-1982.
Multinational penetration, 1973	Ballmer-Cao, Thanh-Huyen, and Scheidegger 1979.
Export commodity concentration, 1980	U.N. 1980-1985.
Export partner concentration, 1980	"
Import partner concentration, 1980	"
Raw material export, 1980	World Bank 1978-1986.
Consumer price index, 1983	IMF 1985a.
Average inflation, 1973-1984	World Bank 1978-1986.
GNP per capita, 1981	World Bank 1984.
Urbanization, 1980	"
Tertiary employment, 1980	"
Manufacturing employment, 1980	"
Unionization, c. 1975	Taylor and Jodice 1983.
Protest events, 1948-1977	"
State sanctions, 1948-1977	"
Civil rights index, 1973-1979	"
Political rights index, 1973-1979	"
Government revenue/GNP, 1980	World Bank 1984.
Direct taxation/revenue, 1980	"

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