Neighborhood Watch: Spatial Effects of Human Rights INGOs

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This article examines the neighborhood effects of various activities of human rights international nongovernmental organizations (human rights INGOs or, as used hereafter, HROs). We argue that the presence of HRO members or volunteers "next door" increases the advocacy mobilization and resources of a domestic population, resulting in improvements in human rights performance. When contiguous countries have large numbers of HRO members within their borders, these members are able to mobilize resources that are either directly transmitted across borders or diffuse across state boundaries. Using spatial econometric techniques in a sample of 117 states from 1994 to 2003, we examine the effect of neighboring HRO membership, permanent location presence, and shaming on the probability of improvements in human rights practices. We find that the presence of neighboring HRO members increases the probability of human rights improvements, but that this is conditional on the ability of the groups to freely move across borders.

In 2007, American volunteers from a prominent human rights international nongovernmental organization (INGO or, as used hereafter, HRO) crossed the border of Sudan at Lokichoggio, Kenya with a mission to aid the Southern Sudanese population against horrendous human rights abuses perpetrated by their own government.[1] Although there were already many HROs and domestic organizations working within Sudan, by sneaking into the country, as one of the volunteers later recalled, the organization was better able to aid local populations in their advocacy attempts: "as far as the government of the north is concerned, we don't exist. And that is how [we] want it" (Matthews 2009, 6).

A similar dynamic is occurring in Cambodia, where HROs and domestic organizations have been severely restricted in their advocacy by governmental harassment and bureaucratic red tape (LICADHO 2008). Foreign HROs, especially organizations from Thailand, have tried to serve as a resource for the struggling domestic advocacy sector, even holding free training seminars for locals interested in advocating for democracy and greater respect for human rights (SERD 1998).

Anecdotes like these suggest that the effects of HROs may permeate across borders. Much like what is happening in Kenya or Thailand, do the effects of HRO activities create positive spillovers on the human rights situations of neighboring states? Or, are the activities of HROs only effective in the specific country in which they are based? If so, cracking down on HRO entry or workings could severely hinder the likelihood of any improvements to human rights performance in repressive states.

This article examines the neighborhood effects of the various activities of human rights INGOs. We argue that the presence of HRO members or volunteers "next door" increases the advocacy mobilization and resources of a domestic population, resulting

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[1] An online appendix with supplementary material for this article is available at http://journals.cambridge.org/jop. Data and supporting materials necessary to reproduce the numerical results will be made available at www.kchadclay.com no later than the publication date. Consistent with the larger literature, we define a human rights NGO as a nonprofit, legal, voluntary organization that focuses specifically on issues laid out in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To this basic definition, our focus here is on organizations with an international focus, typically thought of as those with members or volunteers in at least three countries (UIA 2008/2009).

in improvements in human rights performance.[2] When contiguous countries have large numbers of HRO members within their borders, these members are able to mobilize resources that are either directly transmitted across borders or diffuse across state boundaries. Thus, even if HRO advocacy is stymied within a repressive regime, HROs still have the ability to provide the resources necessary to increase domestic mobilization and advocacy indirectly through their members in neighboring countries. As we outline below, other activities of HROs, such as "naming and shaming" or "shaming and blaming" neighboring countries, do not have the same spatial spillover effect; it is specifically the work of HRO members from neighboring countries that matters for stopping repression.

While the spatial effects of HRO members should work across all regimes, we contend that the "neighborhood" effect of HRO members in contiguous countries will be greater when HRO members can freely travel abroad and aid neighboring repressed populations without fear of reprisal upon their return home. In other words, when the targeted state is surrounded by neighboring states that do not place restrictions on the freedom of their population to travel abroad, this effect will be heightened. If freedom of international movement is restricted in an HRO member's home state, the costs for that HRO member to travel into and return from a neighboring target state are increased. However, when high neighboring freedom to move internationally is combined with a robust neighborhood HRO sector, improvements in the human rights performance of target states are likely.

Using new data on various activities of HROs in contiguous countries, together with newly released data on freedom of movement, we test our propositions quantitatively from 1994 to 2003. Even after accounting for the human rights performance of neighboring countries, we find widespread support for our hypotheses: HRO members can form a powerful "neighborhood watch" that can lead to improvements in human rights performance.

This article proceeds as follows. First, we outline the various activities of HROs and the extant literature on how HROs work to improve human rights. After providing this background, we discuss the causal pathway through which certain activities of HROs could permeate across state boundaries. We then outline our

specific expectations for the spatial effects of HROs and provide our research design. After presenting our research findings, we conclude with a discussion of the implications of our research for both the scholarly and practitioner communities.

Theoretical Background

The Activities and Effects of HROs

Before outlining how some of the activities of HROs could have spatial effects across state boundaries, let us point out the myriad ways or activities through which HROs work to stop repression by a state. First, many HROs concentrate on gathering information about human rights abuses. Organizations strategically use this information to pressure a state regarding its repressive practices (Bob 2005; Franklin 2008; Hafner-Burton 2008; Murdie and Davis 2012; Schmitz 2002). By providing negative information to third parties outside of the state, HROs hope to "name and shame" or "shame and blame" a regime into making improvements in their human rights practices (Risse and Sikkink 1999). Empirical studies of the effects of HRO shaming on humans rights practices have yielded mixed results (Franklin 2008; Hafner-Burton 2008; Murdie and Davis 2012). Much of this research suggests that the effects of shaming are conditional on pressure from "above" or "below" (Brysk 1993; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Murdie and Davis 2012; Risse and Ropp 1999; Simmons 2009).

Though HRO shaming has received the bulk of the academic attention, HROs engage in many other activities to try to stop repression and lessen the repercussions of human rights abuses. For example, HROs in South Africa worked to organize and coordinate marches against apartheid (Taylor 2002). Organizations in Nigeria have provided draft legislation concerning human rights protection to governmental leaders and worked to educate local populations concerning the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Okafor 2006). After the genocide in Bosnia in the 1990s, HROs provided much needed legal and psychological assistance to abuse victims (Korey 1998).

All of these examples of HRO activities require HROs to have an active presence within a country, typically measured either in the form of a volunteer/ membership base or a permanent office location (Cardenas 2007; Landman 2005; Murdie and Bhasin 2011). Landman argues that an INGO membership base serves to connect the domestic population of the

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[2]We use the term "member" or "membership base" to reflect the larger sociology literature on the INGOs and their activities (Smith and Wiest 2005; Tsutsui and Wotipka 2004) and to be consistent with the term used in the Union of International Association's *Yearbook of International Organizations*, the reference book from which data on INGO activities typically originates.

state to others, creating "some form of internation-alization and interdependence through the prolifer-ation of such organizations" (2005, 168). According to Cardenas, HROs with a membership base within a country "compels social groups to mobilize and challenge the state" (2007, 113). Despite these strong theoretical arguments, neither Landman (2005) nor Cardenas (2007) find a robust positive impact of HROs/INGOs on either the level of human rights performance within a state or on improvements in human rights practices.

Perhaps the lack of evidence for a unilateral effect of HRO domestic membership could be due to limi-tations imposed on the workings of HROs in many repressive regimes (ICNL 2009). Several states, includ-ing Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Egypt, Russia, and Yemen, have enacted laws limiting what INGOs can do within their borders. Though these laws are often justified as steps to combat terrorism or money laundering, many contend that these laws are to stop outside support for domestic groups and individuals interested in advocacy against the repressive regime (ICNL 2009; LICADO 2008; Samath 2008). Worth mentioning, Murdie and Davis (2012) do find that HRO members or volunteers, when coupled by HRO shaming and joined with other third party advocacy, lead to future improvements in human rights performance.

Moreover, Murdie and Bhasin (2011) have found that increases in HROs with members or a permanent office location within a state leads to more domestic pro-test, supporting the mobilization mechanism through which these organizations could facilitate pressure for human rights improvement "from below" (Brysk 1993). Domestic presence of HROs allows for "field building," or actions taken to connect the domestic population to the larger "field" of goods and services that other advocacy actors can bring (Bartley 2007; Murdie and Bhasin 2011). Bueno de Mequita and Downs (2005) refer to these goods as "coordination goods" and identify them as the goods that make it easier for political opponents to pressure their governments for change. Consistent with the larger literature, increases in protest could lead to future tactical concessions by the repressive regime (Cardenas 2007; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Rasler 1996; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999).[3]

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[3]We will note, however, that some literature has found that certain types of protest lead to more state repression. For example, Carey (2010) finds that guerilla warfare leads to the onset of repression. In Carey (2010), other forms of protest, like riots and strikes, do not appear to cause repression. Earlier work that did find an endog-enous relationship between repression and protest is typically at the very microlevel, capturing a limited number of countries and events at the daily or monthly level (see Carey 2006; Moore 1998).

In short, the extant literature on the activities and effects of HROs has highlighted the role that both HRO shaming and HRO presence within the state has on improvements in human rights practices. Though the empirical findings are somewhat mixed, the theoretical potential of HRO activities to lead to improved human rights practices appear strong.

The Spatial Effects of HROs

Despite the recent growth in literature with regards to HROs, no existing quantitative work examines the potential effects of HROs across state boundaries. In other words, the quantitative literature has focused solely on the ability of HRO activities to influence hu-man rights practices exclusively within the state targeted by HRO shaming or within the state where there is an active HRO presence. On one hand, the lack of focus on potential spatial effects of HROs makes sense: it seems pretty straightforward that HROs based in a certain locale work mainly for improvements on human rights situations within that locale. Moreover, it seems quite natural that shaming by Amnesty International, for example, concerning Chinese human rights should impact repression in China, not in China's neighbors. Given this, it would appear that HROs might have little, if any, interest or effect on human rights in neighboring countries.

However, as hinted at above, there are many other examples of potential cross-border effects of these organizations. Particularly, we are concerned with the ability of HROs to have effects, not just in the state in which they are based, but also in neighboring states. There are many pathways through which these types of organizations can influence the policies of another state. Regardless of whether it is through volunteers next door or a permanent location next door, we expect that the presence of these actors in neighbor-ing states will make mobilization of groups within society more likely, increasing the pressure on govern-ments to improve their human rights performance. Indeed, we find a great deal of anecdotal evidence supporting the assertion that individuals connected to HROs in one country often work with individuals and groups in neighboring states to improve human rights. For instance, after success in South Africa, some HROs expanded their operations to call for changes in human rights practices in Zimbabwe; these organizations took the tools and strategies they had used in South Africa and "migrated" with them northward (Davis 2011). A similar dynamic occurred in Argentina after the successful convictions of human rights perpetrators in the 1990s. As Keck and Sikkink point out, HROs

specializing in "human rights forensic science" that worked on the Argentina case "later carried out exhumations and training in Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, and Guatemala" (1998, 110).

Cross-border HRO work is being encouraged by organizations in the European Unions' "border-lands" of Central and Eastern Europe; by working with organizations in neighboring states, HROs should help mobilize the domestic population in its own struggle against a repressive regime (Batt 2003). Also, as mentioned with regards to Sudan, some of these operations can be covert, involving members crossing borders secretly to try to embolden and mobilize groups that have been severely limited in their right to associate (Matthew 2010). Regime supporters in Pakistan even warn of the possibility of U.S.-supported HROs sneaking into the country from neighboring states:

> "If the conditions in the target country are deemed unfavorable, NGOs based in neighboring countries are used by the US to monitor and influence the situation." (IPS 2007)

Further, it seems quite likely that HROs in domestic locales would have a desire and self-interest in helping stop abuses next door. As the executive director of Amnesty International USA William Schultz has famously said:

> "Caring about the fate of our 'neighbors' is far more than a matter of conscience. It is in truth a matter of survival – our own survival." (2001, xviii)

Many activists have made the case that human rights improvements have positive spillovers in the activist's own wellbeing (Korey 1998; Hopgood 2006; Schultz 2001).

In addition to the plethora of anecdotal evidence, there are theoretical reasons to expect a spatial effect of HROs on improvements in human rights practices. First, in the most basic sense, the boomerang and spiral models of human rights improvement all involve the work of HROs from states with high respect for human rights aiding the domestic advocacy efforts of those under repressive regimes (Keck and Sikkink 1999; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999). To the extent that the "first responders" to an outside call for assistance against a repressive regime would be from neighboring states, we should expect a geographic or spatial component to advocacy success.

Moreover, the literature on mobilization highlights that the coordination resources useful in advocacy are rarely constrained to one local political arena (Bartley 2007; Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2005; Haines 2006). Instead, resources provided by

HROs diffuse, creating increased mobilization around the relevant advocacy issue (Bartley 2007; Murdie and Bhasin 2011). As Bartley points out, international NGOs provide goods and services that "field build" local mobilization about an issue; they serve to create a network of individuals joined on a common cause (2007, 231). Further, Haines (1984) argues that the resources provided to aid one domestic group can also diffuse to aid in the mobilization of groups with similar or related goals. It follows, therefore, that "field building" resource mobilization activities of HROs would permeate borders either directly by work across states or indirectly through the movement of resources from HRO-supported domestic groups and individuals to groups with related goals elsewhere.

Given this literature on diffusion of resources mobilized by HROs, when should we see spatial effects of HROs on improvements in human rights? At the most basic level, it appears that those activities of HROs that include an active presence on the ground in a country should be the most likely to have a positive impact on its neighbor. It is these activities that involve resources necessary for domestic mobilization (Murdie and Bhasin 2011). As such, we should expect HRO members and volunteers or HRO permanent office locations to be more important to a neighbor's human rights performance than HRO shaming of neighbors, which would not involve the actual resources on the ground that could be diffused across borders. Though HRO shaming may be important to get third-party advocacy attention, as Murdie and Bhasin (2011) point out, HRO shaming does not typically involve an active "boots-on-the-ground" presence of HRO volunteers; shaming can be done remotely from offices in developed countries. As such, HRO shaming may be less likely to lead to the spatial diffusion of HRO resources necessary to lead to an emboldened domestic advocacy effort for improvements in human rights practices (Bueno de Mesquita and Downs 2005).

This dynamic seems to be consistent with the anecdotal evidence, which suggests that, in particular, it is the movement of HRO *volunteers* across borders, rather than the HRO shaming of neighbors, that aids in the quest for improved human rights practices. As such, though permanent office locations can be important for resource mobilization domestically, the presence of members or volunteers might actually be the most important form of HRO activity for a country's neighbors. Therefore, HRO membership/ volunteers are unique among the various HRO attributes outlined above: a membership base brings together activists with the most likely way for resources

to travel directly or indirectly across borders, i.e., the activists themselves.

Given the restrictions on HRO activities in repressive regimes, discussed above, it also follows that HRO members in neighboring countries may even have a greater impact than domestic-based HRO members on the likelihood of human rights improvements. In order to keep the costs of repression low, many countries have limited the workings of HROs formally within their borders. Thus, it seems likely that resources from neighboring HRO activists could be important in increasing pressure for human rights improvements.

In summary, we believe that neighboring HRO membership is likely to be related to improvements in human rights practices as such members' presence is capable of increasing the domestic cost of repression, even in states that restrict domestic HRO activities. This logic supports the following empirical implication:

> *Hypothesis 1*: HRO presence, particularly in the form of HRO members/volunteers, in neighboring countries will increase the probability of improvements to basic human rights.

In addition to this hypothesized relationship, we also realize that the mechanism through which this spatial effect occurs hinges on the ability and willingness of HRO members in neighboring states to travel between their state of residence and the target state. When movement out of and back into the home state is restricted, even HRO members with a glut of resources to aid a neighboring repressed population will be less likely to cross borders in order to aid that population. A HRO's primary mission is likely to be oriented towards the state in which they have members on the ground. Although they might like to operate in bordering states, they may jeopardize their efforts in their home state by coming and going illegally.

As such, the ability to leave and return, without reprisal, to the state in which they are based should matter for HRO members interested in helping their neighbors. When such freedom of movement is high in a state's neighbors, it is likely that HRO resources will be able to diffuse across state boundaries. As such, we are arguing that there is a conditional relationship between neighboring states' respect for citizen movement internationally, often called freedom of foreign movement, and neighboring HRO presence on improvements in human rights in a targeted state. By looking at this conditional relationship, we are able to evaluate a more direct test of the mechanism that we specify to be at work. If we find that the effect of HROs next door is conditional on the level of neighboring freedom of movement, this suggests that the effect of

neighboring HROs is likely a result of the HRO volunteers or members actually moving resources across borders and engaging in bottom-up field building. In other words, controlling for this conditional effect allows us to operationalize the costs involved for HRO members to move across borders. HROs may be willing at times to skirt the rules of the state they are located in, but they will certainly be more likely to move across borders when the costs of doing so are lower, as when there are fewer formal restrictions on movement across borders.

This relates to Risse's concept of "access" and domestic structures and their importance in advocacy (1995, 25). HROs need access to each other and to the government. When domestic structures are such that civil society can be "easily mobilized for political causes," HROs are better able to advocate for changes (22). We think this access to each other is less costly when the costs of foreign movement are lower in the state sending HRO members or volunteers. This logic would imply the following empirical pattern:

> *Hypothesis 2*: The effect of neighborhood HRO presence on increasing the probability of improvements to basic human rights is conditional on a state's neighbors' freedom of foreign movement.

Research Design

In order to test our hypotheses, we create geographically weighted data of HRO activities, as well as newly released data on government respect for freedom of foreign movement, to take into account the spatial nature of our theoretical expectations. These geographically weighted data are then used to determine if neighborhood HRO activities and neighborhood freedom of foreign movement are systematically associated with improvements in a government's respect for human rights. As such, the unit of analysis is the country-year and the dependent variable (described in more detail below) is whether the state experienced an improvement in human rights practices. With this unit of analysis, the independent variables that we include are all either characteristics of the state itself or characteristics of its neighboring states. Our estimation sample consists of country-years for 117 states from 1994 to 2003.[4]

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[4]As mentioned below, our sample is restricted to only states with no neighbors that were previously coded for HRO presence by Smith and Wiest (2005) and for HRO shaming by Murdie and Bhasin (2011) and do not have a perfect human rights scores. This sample, however, includes a large cross section of states, from states with near perfect human rights conditions, like the United Kingdom, to states that are frequent abusers of human rights, like Yemen and the Democratic Republic of Congo. A list of countries in the sample is included in our online appendix.

Dependent Variable: Improvement in Physical Integrity Rights Practices

In our hypotheses, we are primarily concerned with the ability of HRO members and their activities to improve human rights practices in neighboring states. Thus, rather than focus on the *level* of respect for human rights, we focus on the likelihood of an *improvement* in human rights. This variable is constructed using the physical integrity rights index from the CIRI Human Rights Data Project (Cingranelli and Richards 2010). The physical integrity rights index is calculated using data on the degree to which governments violate their citizens' rights not to be subjected to torture, extrajudicial execution, political imprisonment, and disappearance, based on information collected from a combination of Amnesty International and U.S. State Department human rights reports. The CIRI dataset gives each country a score for each physical integrity right, ranging from 0 to 2, based on the approximate number of confirmed allegations that occurred in that year. In this scale, a score of 0 represents "frequent violations," a score of 1 represents "some violations," and a score of 2 represents "no violations" (Cingranelli and Richards 1999a, 409). These measures are then summed to develop the aggregate measure, the CIRI Physical Integrity Rights Index, which varies from 0 to 8.[5]

We create our measure of improvement in physical integrity rights by scoring a state "1" if it demonstrates any increase from the previous year *(t-1)* in the CIRI physical integrity rights index to the present *(t)* and a "0" if the state's physical integrity rights index remains the same or decreases from the previous year's level to the current year. Because we are interested in states improving their human rights, our analyses focus only on those states that had less than perfect human rights scores. We also include the level of physical integrity rights as a control in all models.[6]

Because of the nature of this dependent variable, we estimate a series of probit generalized estimating equations with an AR (1) correlation structure. This estimator allows us to account for correlation within the cross-sections and any potential autocorrelation (Zorn 2001).

Independent Variables

Hypothesis 1 requires an independent variable that captures spatially weighted HRO activities. Similarly, Hypothesis 2 requires an interaction term between these spatially weighted HRO variables and a spatially weighted measure of respect for foreign movement. Below, we first outline the procedure used to generate these spatially weighted variables before discussing the various measures and controls in detail.

Spatial Weighting Method

As mentioned, the independent variables of chief interest in this article are our neighborhood measures of HRO activities and neighborhood freedom of foreign movement. In this article, we treat contiguous and near-contiguous states (i.e., states whose minimum distance between borders is less than 50 km) as the relevant neighborhood for our analyses[7]. In order to create contiguity-weighted versions of each of these measures, a row-standardized connectivity matrix, **w**, is used to weight each variable according to (1) whether or not two states, i and j, have borders that are within 50 km of one another and (2) the total number of states that have borders within 50 km of state i. That is,

$$w_{ij} = \frac{c_{ij}}{\sum_{j=1}^{n} c_{ij}},$$

where c_{ij} equals 1 if i and j have borders that are within 50 km of one another and 0 if they do not. Thus, by multiplying **w** by the data vector of any independent variable, we can calculate the average level of the independent variable in states within 50 km of every referent state i. For example, if state i has 2 neighbors, states r and q, within 50 km of its borders, then the value of the neighborhood version of variable x for state i would equal $\frac{1}{2}x_r + \frac{1}{2}x_q$.

Since international borders change from year to year, we used a separate connectivity matrix for every year of our analysis, multiplying each only by the vector of data for the particular year to which it

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[5]Our results are consistent when the level of human rights abuses from the Political Terror Scale is used as a robustness test. See the online Appendix for this discussion and test.

[6]As a robustness check we also tested our hypotheses using the level of physical integrity rights and a change in any direction in a state's physical integrity rights. When estimating our models with these dependent variables, our substantive results remain unchanged. Please see the online Appendix.

[7]We also implement a robustness test that increases the minimum distance to 950 km. While our findings are fairly robust to this specification, the general effect of neighboring HRO activities is lessened in both substantive size and statistical significance. This is to be expected, as this operationalization includes HRO members that may simply be too far away to have a "boots on the ground" impact on the target state.

applied. Our connectivity matrices were created by generating adjacency matrices for each year under analysis with the CShapes package in R (Weidmann and Gleditsch 2010; Weidmann, Kuse, and Gleditsch 2010), which were then row-standardized using the spatwmat command in Stata (Pisati 2001). Finally, it is important to note that this method yields a value of 0 for all states that have no neighbors within 50 km of their borders; however, in a strict sense, the neighborhood average for such states should really be treated as undefined. As such, we include only states with defined neighborhoods in our analyses.

Key Independent Variables – Neighborhood HRO Measures

We generate neighborhood weighted variables for three indicators of HRO activities implemented in Murdie and Bhasin (2011): HRO shaming, HRO membership, and HRO permanent office/secretariat presence. The HRO shaming variable is an indicator of the number of shaming events directed at a state in a given year as reported in Reuters Global News Service. These shaming events can come from any of 432 human rights INGOs identified by the authors from the *Yearbook of International Organizations*. We then apply the neighborhood average weighting scheme discussed above to create a neighborhood version of this measure. Thus, *Neighborhood HRO Shaming*, provides us with the average count of HRO shaming events that a state's neighbors are targeted with in a given year.

Second, we generate the geographically weighted measure of *Neighborhood HRO membership/volunteers*. The unweighted measures come from Smith and Wiest (2005), who count the number of HROs (natural log) that have members or volunteers within the borders of a state in a given year, also based on the *Yearbook of International Organizations*.[8] This provides us with a measure of the number of HROs having boots on the ground, in terms of volunteers or members, in a state's neighbors.

Finally, we use a measure that captures the number of *Neighborhood HRO secretariat locations* in a given year. By secretariat location this measure captures the total number of HROs that have a permanent office location within a state. It is also based on organizational listing of the *Yearbook of International*

Organizations. This variable provides an indicator of a more permanent presence by an HRO in states (Murdie and Bhasin 2011). This measure varies greatly from the membership measure (correlation less than 0.40); the presence of members/volunteers does not guarantee the presence of a secretariat and, likewise, an HRO can report having a permanent location within where it does not have a volunteer/ membership base. Again, this variable is operationalized as the neighborhood average.

Neighborhood Foreign Movement

As noted in Hypothesis 2, the ability of neighborhood HRO activities to generate improvements in government respect for physical integrity rights should, to some extent, be conditional on the degree to which the neighborhood states respect their citizens' right to freely travel abroad. Therefore, in order to measure the degree to which a government allows its citizens this freedom, we rely on the recently released Freedom of Foreign Movement and Travel measure from the CIRI Human Rights Data Project (Cingranelli and Richards 2010). Based on information contained in the U.S. State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, this measure varies from 0 to 2, where a "0" indicates that foreign movement is "severely restricted," a "1" indicates that such movement is "somewhat restricted," and a "2" indicates that foreign movement is "unrestricted" (Cingranelli and Richards 2010). As with the HRO variables, neighborhood values of this measure were created using the method outlined above.[9] To test for the conditional relationship between each of the neighborhood HRO variables and neighborhood foreign movement, we also generate multiplicative interaction terms for each of the HRO measures with foreign movement. We discuss how these interactions test Hypothesis 2 more fully below.[10]

[8]This measure was gathered every two to three years by Smith and Wiest (2005). Following other uses of this data, years not originally gathered by Smith and Wiest (2005) for this measure were linearly interpolated (Murdie and Bhasin 2011; Murdie and Davis 2012).

[9]It is important to note that, unlike unweighted measures of the CIRI variables, neighborhood averages of such variables are continuous.

[10]In the online appendix, we include an alternative coding of "mobile HRO" presence that does not rely on an interaction term but instead is a spatially weighted measure of HROs in neighboring countries where freedom of foreign movement is a "1" or greater on the CIRI Freedom of Foreign Movement and Travel scale. The results of this measure are consistent with our results of the interaction term: having neighboring states with high numbers of HRO members in states with a high degree of freedom of foreign movement increase the likelihood of improvement in a targeted state's human rights practices. These results are available in our online appendix, and we think highlight the robustness of this check on our theoretical mechanism connecting neighborhood HRO presence to improvements in human rights practices.

Controls and Model Specification

For our analyses, we also control for factors other than neighborhood HRO activities and neighborhood foreign movement that have previously been found to share an association with government respect for physical integrity rights. There are two groups of control variables: those that are characteristics of individual states and neighborhood controls.

There are a number of variables at the state level that have been previously linked to human rights and human rights improvements. Economic development has been found to have a positive effect on both human rights level and the probability of human rights increases (Poe and Tate 1994; Richards, Gelleny, and Sacko 2001). To capture this potential effect of economic development a measure of logged *GDP per capita* is included across all the models (WDI 2010).

The presence of consolidated democracy is also frequently tied to state human rights performance, with the expectation that democratic states are less likely to violate the human rights of their populations (Davenport and Armstrong 2004; Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999). We control for this possibility with the conventional -10 to 10 autocracy-democracy Polity score (Marshall and Jaggers 2009). We use the Polity2 version of the data, which imputes missing values.[11]

As discussed above, there is literature tying shaming of a state to changes in human rights behavior. Although the findings in that literature have been mixed, we think that it is necessary to control for the level of shaming that a state itself is experiencing. Therefore, an unaltered measure of *HRO shaming* implemented in Murdie and Bhasin (2011) and discussed above is used.

Recent work by Murdie and Davis (2012) also demonstrates that this effect of shaming is conditional on HRO shaming being coupled with shaming by third parties and/or the presence of HRO volunteers/members in the state. Murdie and Davis (2012) produce an additive advocacy index that combines both forms of advocacy effort (*third-party shaming and HRO member presence*) and, in their analyses, include an *interaction between HRO shaming and the third-party shaming and HRO member presence additive index* as well as the constituent terms. Likewise, we include the constituent terms and the interaction

between them in our empirical models. In other words, this serves as the nonspatial control versions or our spatially weighted key independent variables.[12]

Both interstate and intrastate conflicts have been tied to increased repression and decreases in the probability of human right improvements (Poe and Tate 1994). Experiencing either an interstate or intrastate conflict can provide leaders with the incentive to engage in repression to avoid challenges from a population dissatisfied with the consequences of war. To control for this possibility we include an indicator of *war* on location, a dummy variable that takes on a value of 1 in any country year where there is an interstate or intrastate war, based on data from the UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Database (2008).

The final individual state level control variable is *population* (natural log), with that expectation that larger populations will make improvements in human rights less likely (Poe and Tate 1994; WDI 2010). With each additional person in a state, there is an increased opportunity, and possibly an increased motivation, for the state to engage in repression.

Additionally, we include a control for one characteristic of the neighborhood that a state is present in, *neighborhood physical integrity index*. Similar to the above geographically weighted measures, this is a weighted continuous measure of the average level of physical integrity rights of neighboring states and can vary between 0 and 8. It is necessary to control for this variable to ensure that the improvement in human rights are not the result of simply being in a region that is dominated by states that have high levels of respect for human rights. This is especially important given the focus here on the role of HROs in neighboring states. It is possible that HROs are more likely to be present in states with strong human rights records. If that is the case and we do not control for the neighboring state human rights record, it is possible that any relationship found between neighborhood HRO activities and human rights improvement is really the result of being pressured to increase human rights by neighbors with strong human rights records. Controlling for the neighborhood human rights level allows us to rule out this possibility.

As mentioned, we are primarily focusing on increases in physical integrity rights as our dependent variable. Therefore, it is also necessary to control for

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[11]Following Davenport and Armstrong (2004), we also utilize dummy variables to capture whether a country is a consolidated democracy. The results as to our key independent variables are largely consistent in sign and significance with the baseline model presented here and can be found in our online appendix.

[12]In our online appendix, we also include models with an additional control for HRO secretariats in the targeted state. The results as to our key independent variable are consistent as to sign and significance with the baseline models and can be found in our online appendix.

the lagged level of respect for *physical integrity rights* in each case.

In the models testing Hypothesis 2, where the focus is on the conditional impact of neighborhood freedom of movement, we also control for the state's level of *freedom of foreign movement*. Our primary theoretical expectations are for the weighted average of neighboring freedom of foreign movement, but it is also possible that restrictions on movement into the potential target states of NGOs can have an effect on the probability of an increase in human rights, which we would want to separate from the effect of this measure in neighboring states. All the independent variables included in are lagged one year.[13]

Results and Discussion

Our results provide much support for Hypotheses 1 and 2: HRO members/volunteers in neighboring states increase the probability of improvements in human rights. This impact is the greatest when a state is surrounded by neighbors with high levels of respect for freedom of movement. The models estimated in Table 1 provide tests of Hypothesis 1; each model provides a test of a different measure of neighborhood HRO activities, as discussed above. Model 1 focuses on the neighborhood HRO shaming variable, Model 2 focuses on the neighborhood HRO secretariat measure, and Model 3 focuses on the neighborhood HRO volunteer/membership variable.[14]

Likewise, the models in Table 2 provide a partial test of the theoretical mechanism that we specify to be at work. Specifically, the idea tested is that HRO activities in neighboring states impact other states' human rights practices through actual movement across the borders. Any restrictions on moving in and out of the neighboring states increase the cost for HROs seeking to cross borders. These additional costs make it less likely that HROs next door will exit the state they are in and engage in activism in the state next

door. The test of that mechanism is operationalized through the interaction terms included in the models in Table 2 between the various HRO activity measures with the neighborhood foreign movement variable. Model 1 includes the neighborhood HRO shaming variable along with neighborhood foreign movement, an interaction term between the two variables, and the control variables discussed above. Model 2 includes the neighborhood HRO secretariat measure and Model 3 substitutes the neighborhood HRO member presence for our indicator of HRO activity.

There is much support for Hypothesis 1 from the models estimated in Table 1. In Model 1, the coefficient on neighborhood HRO shaming does not have a statistically significant effect on a state's human rights. This is not entirely surprising, as past research on the effects of shaming has been mixed (Hafner-Burton 2008) or have demonstrated that the effect of shaming on the targeted state is usually conditional on other factors (Murdie and Davis 2012). Furthermore, as discussed above, there is little reason to expect that shaming one country should have any effect on neighboring states, as such shaming typically does not involve "boots on the ground" and can be conducted from offices in other countries far away.

On the other hand, our theoretical mechanism leads us to expect more of an effect for HRO permanent offices and HRO membership, as both of these imply, at least to some degree, a HRO member presence in neighboring states. In Model 2 in Table 1, the coefficient on neighborhood HRO secretariats is positive but is not statistically significant at conventional levels. However, as shown in Model 3 in Table 1, the coefficient on logged neighborhood HRO membership presence is positive and statistically significant. This coefficient suggests that it is HRO members next door that leads to an increased probability of human rights improvements. These results make sense within our theoretical framework; while HRO secretariats demonstrate that there is *some* HRO activity in a state, it says little about how much activity is occurring and whether there are members to aid neighboring populations as well as repressed populations in the home state. On the other hand, states with large numbers of HROs with members in their borders can be expected to have enough members to help both domestic and neighboring states' repressed populations.

The substantive effect of HRO membership on the likelihood of human rights improvements is demonstrated in Figure 1. This figure is produced with all control variables held at their means or modes, depending on whether the variable is continuous or dichotomous.

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[13]In our online appendix, we also include models with a neighborhood version of the dependent variable, which is similar to the concept of a spatial lag (e.g., Beck, Gleditsch, and Beardsley 2006; Buhaug and Gleditsch 2008; Franzese and Hays 2007). The models indicate that the spatial lag is not significant. Thus, we see little reason to worry about potential spatial autocorrelation beyond that which our spatial HRO variables are explaining, and it is unnecessary to control for it in these included results. When the spatial lag is included, it does not change the sign or significance of our key independent variables.

[14]In an online appendix, we also include these variables in one model. Results are statistically and substantively consistent.

TABLE 1   Neighborhood Effects of HROs on Improvement in Physical Integrity Rights, 1994–2003

Variables	(1) Neighborhood HRO Shaming		(2) Neighborhood HRO Secretariat		(3) Neighborhood HRO Membership	
Neighborhood HRO Shaming$_{t-1}$	-0.028	(0.034)				
Neighborhood HRO Secretariat$_{t-1}$			0.008	(0.008)		
Neighborhood HRO Membership$_{t-1}$					0.209**	(0.094)
Interaction of HRO Shaming and Index of HRO Membership and Third Party Advocacy$_{t-1}$	0.004***	(0.001)	0.004***	(0.001)	0.004***	(0.001)
Neighborhood Physical Integrity Index$_{t-1}$	0.000	(0.026)	-0.001	(0.027)	-0.002	(0.027)
Physical Integrity Rights Index (CIRI)$_{t-1}$	-0.265***	(0.025)	-0.268***	(0.026)	-0.277***	(0.026)
Index of HRO Membership and Third Party Advocacy$_{t-1}$	-0.045***	(0.016)	-0.048***	(0.016)	-0.053***	(0.017)
HRO Shaming$_{t-1}$	-0.055	(0.038)	-0.058	(0.038)	-0.062	(0.038)
Population (ln)$_{t-1}$	-0.137***	(0.032)	-0.142***	(0.032)	-0.134***	(0.032)
GDP Per Capita$_{t-1}$	0.075**	(0.031)	0.068**	(0.031)	0.082***	(0.031)
Polity2$_{t-1}$	0.023***	(0.007)	0.023***	(0.007)	0.018**	(0.007)
War$_{t-1}$	-0.283*	(0.162)	-0.285*	(0.163)	-0.322*	(0.165)
Constant	2.462***	(0.555)	2.594***	(0.567)	1.742***	(0.650)
Observations	1001		1001		1001	
Number of Countries	117		117		117	

Note: Probit generalized estimated equation with AR(1) correlation structure. Standard errors in parentheses.
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$ (two-tailed tests)

A shift from one standard deviation below the mean level of HROs with members in neighboring countries to one standard deviation above the mean increases the probability of a human rights improvement from 25.8% to 33%.

Thus, the results outlined in Table 1 provide a good first cut at assessing the role that neighboring HROs play in improving a state's human rights practices. In support of Hypothesis 1, HROs with membership or volunteer bases within neighboring states lead to improvements in human rights. We now turn to the results of empirical tests of Hypothesis 2, a more direct test of the mechanism that we expect to be in play.

In order for neighboring HROs to have the hypothesized effect on human rights, it is necessary that HRO members move across borders into neighboring states. The models estimated in Table 2 allow us to draw inferences about this process. Specifically, the interaction terms between the neighborhood HRO member presence, secretariat, and shaming variables with neighborhood foreign movement allow us to test whether easier cross border movement leads to an increase of the positive effect of HRO member presence that we find in Table 1, Model 3.

The interactive effects presented in Models 1 and 2 in Table 2 between neighborhood HRO shaming (Model 1) and HRO secretariats (Model 2) and neighborhood foreign movement are not statistically significant.[15] Given the results in Table 1 as to these variables, this lack of significance is not surprising. More importantly, however, as shown in Table 2, Model 3, the interaction term between neighborhood HRO volunteers/members and neighborhood foreign movement is statistically significant and positive, providing initial support[16] for Hypothesis 2.[17]

[15]The constituent coefficients for both the neighborhood shaming and secretariat measures are negative and statistically significant, indicating that the effects of both of these variables are statistically significant when neighborhood foreign movement is 0. However, observations with neighborhood foreign movement coded as 0 are very rare in the data. For the majority of the range of neighborhood foreign movement, both variables do not attain statistical significance at conventional levels.

[16]As Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2005) tell us, we cannot conclude statistical significance of an interaction term solely from the product term. We need to look towards the marginal effect of neighborhood HRO membership at varying levels of neighborhood foreign movement.

[17]It is important not to be misled by the null result on the neighborhood HRO membership constituent term's coefficient. Again, that is just the level of significance when neighbor foreign movement is 0.

TABLE 2   Neighborhood Effects of HROs, Conditional on Foreign Movement, on Improvement in Physical Integrity Rights, 1994–2003

| Variables	(1) Neighborhood HRO Shaming		(2) Neighborhood HRO Secretariat		(3) Neighborhood HRO Membership	
Interaction of Neighborhood HRO Shaming & Foreign Movement$_{t-1}$	0.117	(0.075)				
Interaction of Neighborhood HRO Secretariat & Foreign Movement$_{t-1}$			0.048	(0.031)		
Interaction of Neighborhood HRO Membership & Foreign Movement$_{t-1}$					0.256*	(0.144)
Neighborhood Foreign Movement$_{t-1}$	-0.095	(0.094)	-0.073	(0.091)	-0.971*	(0.495)
Neighborhood Physical Integrity Index$_{t-1}$	-0.010	(0.030)	-0.021	(0.031)	0.001	(0.030)
Foreign Movement$_{t-1}$	0.228***	(0.074)	0.227***	(0.075)	0.224***	(0.074)
Neighborhood HRO Shaming$_{t-1}$	-0.163*	(0.093)				
Interaction of HRO Shaming and Index of HRO Membership and Third Party Advocacy$_{t-1}$	0.003***	(0.001)	0.004***	(0.001)	0.004***	(0.001)
Physical Integrity Rights Index (CIRI)$_{t-1}$	-0.277***	(0.026)	-0.278***	(0.026)	-0.287***	(0.026)
Index of HRO Membership and Third Party Advocacy$_{t-1}$	-0.046***	(0.016)	-0.049***	(0.017)	-0.053***	(0.017)
HRO Shaming$_{t-1}$	-0.034	(0.039)	-0.051	(0.039)	-0.051	(0.039)
Population (ln)$_{t-1}$	-0.132***	(0.032)	-0.133***	(0.033)	-0.120***	(0.032)
GDP Per Capita$_{t-1}$	0.090***	(0.032)	0.075**	(0.033)	0.067*	(0.035)
Polity2$_{t-1}$	0.010	(0.008)	0.010	(0.008)	0.008	(0.008)
War$_{t-1}$	-0.314*	(0.164)	-0.277*	(0.165)	-0.331**	(0.167)
Neighborhood HRO Secretariat$_{t-1}$			-0.067	(0.053)		
Neighborhood HRO Membership$_{t-1}$					-0.062	(0.180)
Constant	2.207***	(0.594)	2.343***	(0.613)	2.385***	(0.866)
Observations	1001		1001		1001	
Number of Countries	117		117		117	

Note: Probit generalized estimated equation with AR(1) correlation structure. Standard errors in parentheses.
*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$ (two-tailed tests)

In order to fully interpret this interactive effect, it is necessary to look at the substantive effect and statistical significance of neighborhood HRO membership across the entire range of neighbor foreign movement. Figure 2 demonstrates that at low levels of neighborhood foreign movement, the effect of neighborhood HRO membership is not statistically significant, but as neighbor foreign movement increases to approximately 1.1,[18] the effect of neighborhood HRO membership becomes positive and statistically significant. This is consistent with our hypothesis stating that, when foreign movement into and out of the home state of a HRO member is restricted, HRO members will be less likely to travel

across borders into their neighboring states and work to improve respect for human rights. Once the freedom to travel in and out of the home state is adequately high, HRO membership bases start to have a positive effect on the likelihood of human rights improvements in neighboring states. Substantively, when the interactive effect is taken into account and when neighbor foreign movement is set at 2, a change from one standard deviation below the mean to one standard deviation above the mean leads to a change in the probability of human rights improvement from 18.7% to 33.1%. The probability of an improvement in human rights nearly doubles at these high levels of neighborhood foreign movement. Thus, this model not only demonstrates the conditional effect of neighboring HRO members but also demonstrates a substantively larger effect than the

[18]Since this is a geographically weighted average, the value 1.1 does actually exist in the data.

FIGURE 1 Effect of Neighboring HRO Membership on Probability of Human Rights Improvement

FIGURE 2 Marginal Effect of Neighboring HRO Membership on Human Rights Increase As Foreign Movement Changes
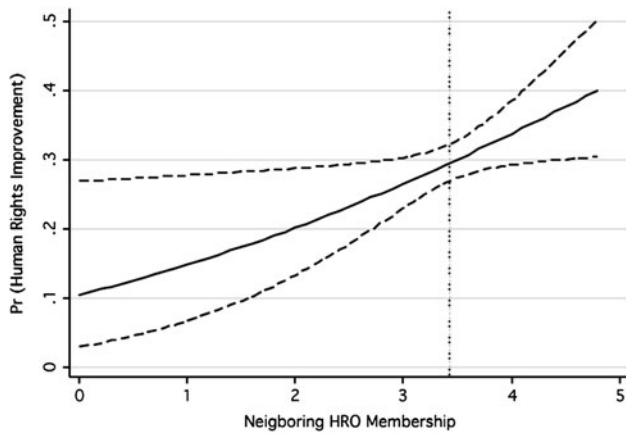

noninteractive model. We believe this provides more direct evidence of the causal mechanism that we suggest is at work, i.e., that HRO members are impacting neighborhood human rights practices by moving across borders.[19]

The control variables across the variables are consistent with the current findings in the literature. The results on the population, regime type, GDP per capita, and war are consistent with much of the current literature that looks at level of human rights abuse and are statistically significant across models (Poe, Tate, and Keith 1999). Consistent with Murdie and Davis (2012), it appears across models that while HRO shaming does not have its own independent effect on improvement in human rights, HRO shaming significantly increases the probability of human rights improvements when coupled with high levels of HRO membership and shaming from other states, as captured with the advocacy index.

Additionally, as to control models, in the three models in Table 2 that include neighborhood foreign movement, the results consistently indicate that increases in freedom of foreign movement domestically increase the probability of human rights improve-

[19]Robustness tests suggest that this finding holds in a non-interactive framework that measures the average number of neighboring HRO members that are "mobile," i.e., located in states that display a freedom of foreign movement score greater than or equal to 1. See the online Appendix. Also, worth noting, when neighborhood freedom of foreign movement is replaced with neighborhood democracy, the interaction term does not hold. We think this provides some evidence that it is actually the costs of movement across borders that matter here, as would be suggested by our theoretical argument. We thank anonymous reviewers for these suggestions.
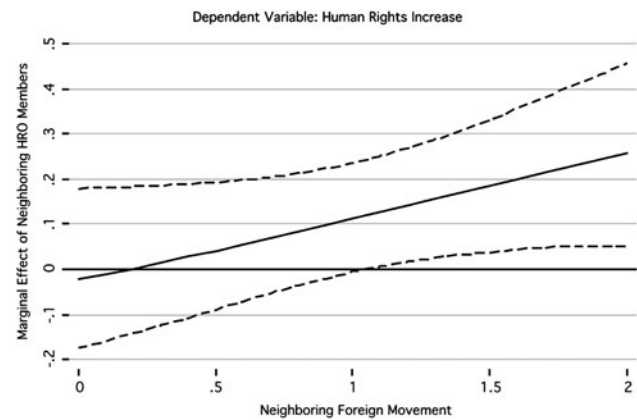
ments, as would be expected by proponents of an indivisible and interdependent view of international human rights (Donnelly 2002). Finally, across all the models estimated, there is not a statistically significant relationship between the neighborhood physical integrity rights measure and improvements in human rights. This suggests that only having neighbors with high (but potentially static) levels of human rights does not make a state any more likely to improve its own level of human rights. This also allows us to say with some confidence that the relationship between HRO members next door and improvement in human rights is actually the result of HRO members traveling across borders and not the result of experiencing neighboring government influence.

Conclusion

How can improvements in human rights be achieved in repressive states? Theoretically and practically, this question is often answered with reference to HROs. These organizations can provide the international attention and domestic tools to make repressive regimes think twice about using human rights abuses against their population. However, the work of HROs has often been severely restricted in repressive states, limiting the potential impact these organizations could have. While the findings in the recent wave of empirical research on HROs has led to, at best, cautious optimism about the effectiveness of HROs in improving state human rights practices, most of these studies have assumed that states must have a strong domestic advocacy sector through which

HROs can work (Franklin 2008; Hafner-Burton 2008; Murdie and Bhasin 2011; Murdie and Davis 2012). This, of course, could limit the likelihood of HROs to matter where they are needed the most. Unlike this approach, we argued here and found that HRO membership in neighboring states can serve much the same function, providing the "boots on the ground" to promote human rights improvements. This could be increasingly important given trends in government crackdowns on domestic HRO activity.

Further, our findings suggest that HRO members in states that allow their citizens to freely travel abroad are likely to take advantage of that freedom to act on behalf of nearby repressed populations. As such, our study supports the idea that, when they are reasonably free to be so, HRO members are truly "activists beyond borders" (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

We believe that our findings demonstrate the utility of looking at various HRO attributes and activities. Previous quantitative studies have primarily focused either solely on Amnesty International (Hafner-Burton 2008; Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers 2005), on the activity of "naming and shaming" (Hafner-Burton 2008), or on domestic HRO membership (Cardenas 2007; Landman 2005). In combination with other recent studies (Franklin 2008; Murdie and Bhasin 2011; Murdie and Davis 2012), we believe our study demonstrates the value of looking at the activities of the many different HROs (more than 400 in our study) that could be working to improve human rights practices globally. Further, these studies demonstrate the utility of attempting, to the degree possible, to test models of HRO activity that more closely replicate the mechanisms delineated in theory. Neither domestic HRO activities nor HRO shaming are theorized to have an independent effect in the most popular theories on NGO advocacy activities and policy outcomes (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999). As such, we believe there is a great deal of value to be found in modeling the conditional relationships presupposed by such theories, and the findings in this article seem to support such an approach.

Furthermore, our analyses also provide a much needed empirical test of the idea, common in the literature on advocacy mobilization, that field building and mobilization diffuse across physical space (Bartley 2007; Haines 2006). While we do not directly test this proposition, our analyses provide empirical support to the idea that HROs, as advocacy mobilizers, work beyond the states where they are located or targeting. Finally, this article also serves to provide more evidence of the degree to which human rights practices form an interdependent and indivisible whole worldwide (Donnelly 2002; Schulz 2001), as respect for HRO members' rights to associate and travel significantly affect respect for human rights in neighboring states.

There is much work that remains to be done to determine the ways in which HRO activities affect nearby states. While our findings are consistent with the theoretical mechanism described, further work examining how neighborhood HRO activities impact domestic mobilization would be beneficial. It is likely, for example, that HRO activities in one state may lead to similar activities in nearby states due to the local accumulation of resources and the ability of HROs to learn from each other's experience, i.e., there is likely to be a spatial diffusion of HRO *strategies* as well as HRO advocacy. Likewise, by utilizing spatial methods that allow for the capturing of HRO effects across borders, we may truly get a handle on the degree to which the "neighborhood watch" formed by HROs in nearby states functions to improve respect for human rights worldwide.

Acknowledgments

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