Dynamics of Repressions: Continuous Effect of Economic Growth

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

DEFINITION

Repressions are varying in intensity techniques, all of which are practiced by the authorities: arrests and political imprisonments, beatings, torture, mass killings, disappearances and extrajudicial executions (Fariss, 2014).

Focus: violations of physical integrity rights during economic downturn.

INTRODUCTION

The problem: specify the relationship between economic growth and repressions in dynamics.

- **H1:** continuous hostile economic conditions can influence an increase in repressions, especially in autocratic regimes.
- **H2:** since the impact of macroeconomic factors comes rather delayed into the political scene, we should account for its lagged effect on repressive politics.

Table of Contents

Data

Merged time-series cross-section data bases. Available for 160 countries from 1963 to 2013 year: 91% of the data.

- **Human Rights Scores**: level of repressions (DV). Continuous, posterior mean, measured by the Bayesian dynamic item-response function in Fariss (2014).

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- **Maddison Project**: economic variables. Controls: log GDPpc, log population. Economic growth:

$$\text{GDP growth} = \frac{\text{GDPpc}_t - \text{GDPpc}_{t-1}}{\text{GDPpc}_{t-1}}.$$

DATA

- **Varieties of Democracy**: policy variables.
  - *electoral democracy* index. Continuous.
  - *media censorship* by the government. Converted to continuous by the measurement model.
  - political *corruption* index. Continuous, from low to high (0-1). Control variable.

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- **Cross-National Time-Series Data Archive**: *riots* and *anti-government demonstrations* (both ordinal), derived from The New York Times.

Table of Contents

Fixed Effects

Within-group transformation without lags, Beck-Katz panel-corrected errors.

1. The baseline model:

$$\text{repressions}_{i,t} = \beta \text{GDP growth}_{i,t} + \alpha_i + \theta_t + \epsilon_{i,t},$$

2. includes media censorship, riots and electoral democracy index.

3. interaction between economic growth and electoral democracy index.

Fixed Effects

	Dependent variable:		
	repressions		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
GDPpc growth	0.205*	0.140	0.424**
	(0.108)	(0.100)	(0.169)
Media censorship		0.115***	0.115***
		(0.012)	(0.012)
Riots		−0.022***	−0.022***
		(0.004)	(0.004)
Elecotral democracy		0.934***	0.960***
		(0.077)	(0.078)
log POP	−0.475***	−0.378***	−0.374***
	(0.046)	(0.043)	(0.043)
log GDPpc	0.445***	0.458***	0.459***
	(0.025)	(0.023)	(0.023)
GDPpc growth:electoral democracy			−0.999**
			(0.479)
Observations	6,990	6,990	6,990
R^2	0.082	0.203	0.203
Adjusted R^2	0.054	0.177	0.178
F Statistic	202.710***	286.879***	246.641***
	(df = 3; 6777)	(df = 6; 6774)	(df = 7; 6773)

Note: $^{*}p<0.1$; $^{**}p<0.05$; $^{***}p<0.01$

Autocorrelation in FE
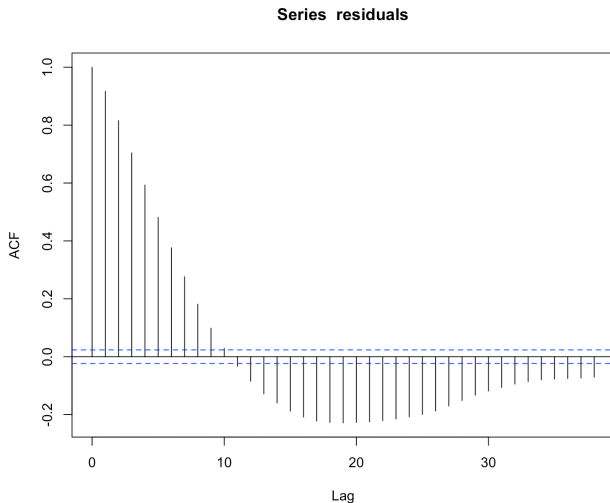

Series residuals

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dynamic models

- Dynamics – any process where some variable has an impact that is distributed over time (Beck & Katz, 2011).
- Assumptions: TSCS with large T, continuous DV, exogenous IVs.
- LDV models with iid erros ($\epsilon_{i,t}$).
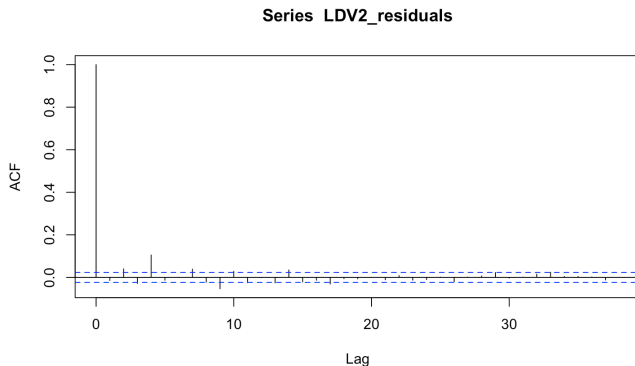- The baseline LDV model:

$$\text{repressions}_{i,t} = \beta^{LDV} \text{GDP growth}_{i,t} + \gamma \text{repressions}_{i,t-1} + \epsilon_{i,t} \quad (1)$$

$$= \beta^{LDV} \frac{\text{GDP growth}_{i,t}}{1 - \gamma L} + \frac{\epsilon_{i,t}}{1 - \gamma L}, \quad (2)$$

Autocorrelation in LDV

Series BaselineLDV_residuals
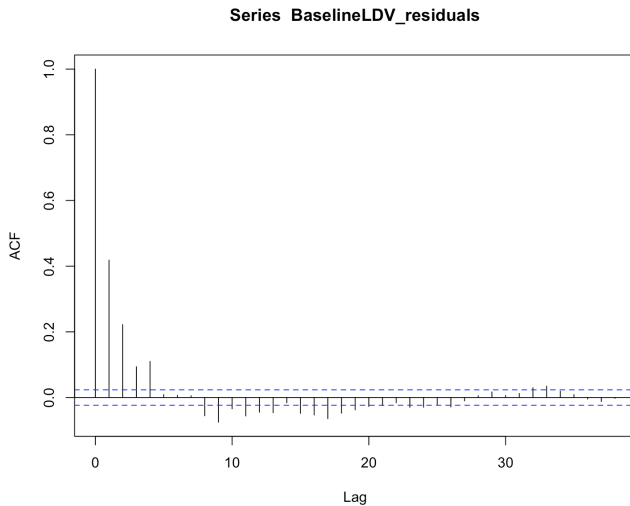
Autocorrelation in LDV, 2lag

Autocorrelation in the LDV with second-order lag

Dynamic models

GDPpc growth	0.220***	0.206***	0.286***	0.164***
	(0.028)	(0.028)	(0.047)	(0.025)
LAG repressions	0.976***	0.975***	0.975***	1.411***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.011)
LAG2 repressions				−0.438***
				(0.011)
Media censorship	0.014***	0.015***	0.014***	0.012***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Electoral democracy	0.010	0.010	0.015	0.002
	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.015)	(0.014)
log popultaion	−0.009***	−0.008***	−0.008***	−0.009***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
log GDPpc	0.006***	0.006***	0.006***	0.006***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
GDPpc rowth:Media cens		−0.028		
		(0.021)		
GDPpc growth:Demo			−0.248*	
			(0.132)	
Corruption	−0.027***	−0.031***	−0.031***	−0.030***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.007)
Riots		−0.005***	−0.005***	
		(0.001)	(0.001)	

Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Evidences
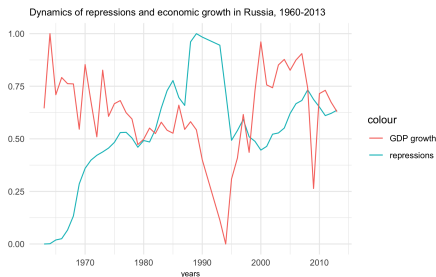
(A) Russia

(B) Saudi Arabia

Evidences

(c) USA
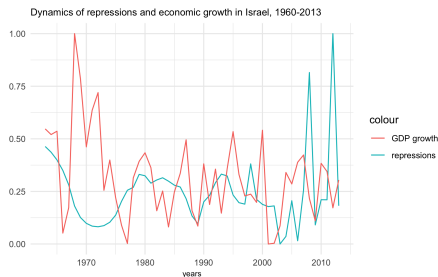
(d) Israel

Table of Contents

RESULTS

- significant long-run cumulative effect of GDP on repressions,

$$\frac{\beta^{LDV}}{(1-\gamma)_L + (1-\gamma)_{2L}} = 0.159,$$

  given GDP growth, and the disturbance unchanged.

- (4) is the best fit model with AIC = -8255.

- no autocorrelation = effective estimates.

- no selection or instrumental bias.

Results

- Repressions are not a peculiar feature of autocracies.

- Delayed positive effect of economic growth on repressions, though it decays quite fast in the following periods.

- Media censorship has a significant effect, though quite small, on repressions in dynamics.

Table of Contents

DISCUSSION

- Simulations to account for uncertainty, captured by the standard deviation of repressions.

- Robustness check with multilevel specification.

- Control for endogeneity with instrumental variables.

- Trace the effect of economic growth on repressions interacted with natural resources and high economic inequality. Account for a possible non-linear effect of the latter.