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# *Sources of Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes\**

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All authoritarian governments attempt to control the flow of news and information to the public—but with what effect? To answer this question, we adapt an existing model of opinion formation to conditions in authoritarian countries, validate that model on opinion data collected in Brazil during its authoritarian period, and, finally, use the model to derive expectations about patterns of regime support that exist in different kinds of authoritarian systems.

The paper shows that support for regime policies depends heavily on citizens' level of political awareness. In general, highly aware persons are more heavily exposed to government-dominated communications media, but are also better able to resist the propaganda they encounter. As a result, people in the broad middle ranges of awareness—who pay enough attention to be exposed but are not sophisticated enough to resist—typically are most susceptible to government influence.

All authoritarian governments attempt to manage the flow of news and political information to the public. They seek, on one side, to fill the mass media with a steady stream of progovernment messages and, on the other, to stifle independent criticism and analysis. By these means authoritarian governments attempt to shape the political attitudes of their citizens.

Since these governments rarely permit the conduct of independent survey research, no one really knows how successfully they indoctrinate their citizens. Can people who have been fed a steady diet of government-controlled information maintain critical attitudes toward their government? What kinds of citizens are most susceptible to government influence, and what kinds are least susceptible? What theories can account for the observed patterns of susceptibility?

Using opinion data collected in Brazil at the height of its authoritarian period, we develop answers to these questions. We find that support for the government's authoritarian policies tends to be greatest among citizens who

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are moderately sophisticated about politics—people, that is, who pay enough attention to be heavily exposed to the government line but who are not sophisticated enough to be able to resist it. Those most resistant to persuasion are people who are both highly attentive to politics and who are predisposed (because of economic interest, prior politicization, or personal values) against authoritarianism.

Although we have data from only one authoritarian country, we develop and test propositions that are entirely general. Indeed, the central finding of the paper is that opinion formation in Brazil conforms in detail to the principles that have been found to hold in democracies and in laboratory experiments on persuasion. This generality enables us both to place the Brazilian case in a broader context than is usual and to verify that existing theories of opinion formation hold in authoritarian as well as democratic nations. It also enables us to develop a typology of how regime support is likely to vary in several different kinds of authoritarian systems.

### **Past Research and Theory**

A common argument in studies of public opinion in the United States is that better-educated and more politically aware citizens are more likely to embrace prevailing regime norms than are the less educated and aware. This argument has been applied to public attitudes on civil liberties (Key, 1961; McClosky and Brill, 1983), foreign policy (Gamson and Modigliani, 1966; Mueller, 1973; Sigelman and Conover, 1981), and capitalist ideology (Chong, McClosky, and Zaller, 1985). As Key writes, “Probably a major consequence of education for opinion consists in the bearing of education on the kinds of influences to which a person is subjected throughout his life. The more extended the educational experience, the more probable it is that a person will be exposed to the discussions of issues as they arise. When, as so often occurs, the current discussion is heavily loaded on one side, it might be expected that this educationally conditioned exposure would have some bearing on the direction of opinion” (1961, p. 341). Noting that education was associated with greater support for racial equality, tolerance of nonconformists, and certain free enterprise ideas, Key argued that “formal education may serve to indoctrinate people into the more-or-less official political values of the culture” (1961, p. 340).

The central idea in these and other studies is that exposure to political communications—whether exposure is measured by a respondent’s level of education, information about politics, or political involvement—tends to promote support for the “mainstream” political norms embedded in those communications. Hereafter, we shall refer to this as the mainstream model.

The mainstream model, however, applies only in cases in which mainstream norms exist. When political elites disagree, or when norms are

changing (as they were, e.g., on Vietnam policy in the United States in the 1960s), the effects of exposure to public discourse are quite different from the effects when a settled elite consensus exists.

Converse (1962) was the first to propose a dynamic model of mass response to partisan (i.e., nonmainstream) communications. His model, initially developed to explain attitude change in election campaigns but since extended to other types of attitude change, is based on two assumptions: that *exposure* to political communications is positively associated with general levels of political awareness and that *uncritical acceptance* of such messages is negatively associated with awareness. Given these assumptions, it follows that people *in the middle levels of awareness* will be more susceptible to change than people at either extreme. The most aware citizens are heavily exposed to political communications, but, just because they are highly aware, they scrutinize them in light of prior beliefs and may then reject them. The least aware, in contrast, pay so little attention to politics that they are likely to escape influence. Finally, people of moderate awareness are fairly heavily exposed to political communications, but are unable to subject them to real scrutiny; hence, their susceptibility to persuasion is greatest.

The key to the model is the selective resistance of highly aware persons to the messages which they encounter. Recent research has shown that if a new idea is consistent with their general values, highly aware people may not resist it at all (Zaller, 1987). For example, if a conservative politician gives a speech, conservative individuals may simply accept its message (if they happen to hear it). Here the exposure-acceptance model reduces to a single factor—effective exposure; the most aware are then most persuadable because they are most likely to hear the speech. Only within groups predisposed to resist the partisan speech (in this example, liberals) should we expect the nonmonotonic pattern of responsiveness that arises from the resistance of the highly aware to discrepant ideas.

Variants of this two-factor model, which we hereafter refer to as the exposure-acceptance model, have been used in laboratory studies of attitude change (McGuire, 1969), studies of the effects of mass election campaigns (Converse, 1962; Dryer, 1971; Zaller, 1989) and of news coverage on the salience of issues in the public mind (MacKuen, 1984), and analysis of mass attitude formation on such issues as the nuclear freeze, defense spending, school desegregation, the Vietnam War, and gay rights (Zaller, 1987). We can best illustrate the dynamics of the model by using McGuire's (1969) formulation, as follows:

$$\text{Pr}(\text{Support}) = \text{Pr}(\text{Exposure}) \times \text{Pr}(\text{Acceptance}|\text{Exposure}) \quad (1)$$

where,

$\text{Pr}(\text{Support}) =$  Probability an individual will support a policy

$\text{Pr}(\text{Exposure}) =$  Probability of exposure to a message favoring the policy

$\text{Pr}(\text{Acc.}|\text{Exp.}) =$  Probability of accepting the message, given exposure to it

We further assume that the probability of exposure to a given message increases with general levels of awareness and that resistance to a message (given exposure) will be greatest when a person has enough political awareness to think critically about it and is predisposed (by values, interest, or prior belief) against the message. Neither awareness alone nor dispositional factors alone can induce resistance to persuasion.

These simple ideas have interesting formal implications, as we illustrate in Table 1. Suppose again that a conservative politician gives a speech favoring a new conservative idea and that we examine support for the new idea separately in samples of conservatives, centrists, and liberals. The first row of Table 1 shows exposure to the conservative idea among conservatives who differ in their average levels of awareness. These exposure probabilities *increase* as awareness increases (from 27 percent of the least aware to 87 percent of the most aware). Meanwhile, row 2 of the table shows acceptance probabilities, which conform to the model by *decreasing* (from 100 percent to 81 percent) as awareness rises. By multiplying the exposure probabilities (row 1) by the corresponding acceptance probabilities (row 2), we obtain the support scores for the message in row 3. Multiplication of these two sets of probabilities, as specified in equation 1, is the central feature of the exposure-acceptance model used in this paper.

If the reader now examines the three panels in Table 1, he or she will see that, at given levels of awareness, *exposure* rates are identical in all three populations. *Acceptance* rates in the three populations, however, vary greatly. Among conservatives (panel A), acceptance rates decline only modestly with information, whereas among liberals (panel C), acceptance of the conservative message (given exposure to it) declines sharply with information. As a result, the "message support" levels (shown in row 3 of each panel) also differ, though not in a straightforward way. Among conservatives, a strong positive relationship exists between awareness and support. Thus, the mainstream model of policy support emerges as a special case of the exposure-acceptance model. But where, as in the case of centrists or liberals, acceptance rates decline more sharply as awareness rises, the relationship between awareness and support is nonmonotonic.

If these ideas, which originated in studies of public opinion in the United States, are applied to the Brazilian case, what patterns of regime support do they lead us to expect? On certain issues the military regime simply car

TABLE 1  
Three Patterns of Policy Support

		Level of Information				
		Low	Middle	High		
<i>Panel A:</i>						
Low resistance pattern	Prob. of exposure	.27	.41	.58	.75	.87
	Prob. of acceptance	1.0	.99	.98	.93	.81
	Prob. of support	.27	.40	.57	.70	.71
<i>Panel B:</i>						
Moderate resistance pattern	Prob. of exposure	.27	.41	.58	.75	.87
	Prob. of acceptance	.99	.98	.95	.85	.66
	Prob. of support	.27	.40	.55	.64	.57
<i>Panel C:</i>						
High resistance pattern	Prob. of exposure	.27	.41	.58	.75	.87
	Prob. of acceptance	.83	.61	.34	.15	.05
	Prob. of support	.22	.25	.20	.11	.05

NOTE: Although the numbers appearing in this table are intended only to illustrate the model, those in panels A and B are derived from an actual estimate of the relationship between support for authoritarian policies and three independent variables: political awareness, education, and religiosity. These variables are described in the text below; the model used to estimate the relationship is equation 2, also shown below. The figures in panel A show estimated exposure, acceptance, and policy support rates for a person who has only four years of education and who attends church weekly; those in panel B show estimated rates for a person who has four years of education and never attends church. The figures in panel C show the same exposure rates as in A and B, but acceptance rates similar to those of the "resistant" type of Brazilian, as described in the text.

ried forward the settled policies of previous regimes (more on this below); in these cases, we would expect the mainstream pattern of policy support to occur (as in panel A). But for many other issues, the regime sought to build support for policies that departed from those of Brazil's democratic past. Here we would expect the dynamics of the two-factor model to apply. Within subgroups of the Brazilian public predisposed toward conservative values (e.g., the conventionally religious), we would expect the monotonic pattern of support shown in panel A: the heavier the exposure to the government line, the greater the support for it. Within subgroups predisposed against conservative values (e.g., persons rejecting traditional religious belief), we would expect the nonmonotonic patterns of policy support, as in panels B and C, that arise from the resistance of the highly aware.

Our expectation, then, is that opinion formation occurs in much the same way in authoritarian systems as in democracies. Exposure to an elite discourse that is “heavily loaded on one side” tends, however that one-sidedness arises, to induce mass support for the values embedded in the discourse—except among well-informed people who are predisposed against those values.

In order to test this expectation, we must establish the elements of both Brazil’s mainstream tradition and the specific departures from it under authoritarianism. We must also describe the data used in the study.

### **Brazilian Political Traditions and the Authoritarian Intrusion**

For 20 years following World War II, Brazilian democracy was based on a multiparty system with widespread but not universal suffrage. Unionization and worker participation in politics—though always dependent on state patronage and leadership—were at least tolerated and often officially encouraged (A. Rodrigues, 1968; L. M. Rodrigues, 1970, 1974; Weffort, 1973; Erickson, 1977). The press and other media were uncensored and vigorous in attacking political opponents, including incumbent authorities. During this time political leaders stressed economic development as the country’s primary national task (Láfer, 1975; M. L. Cardoso, 1978). In social policy Brazil in the 1950s espoused an official ideology of racial equality.

Brazil was, to be sure, never an ideal democracy. *De facto* racial discrimination was widespread, and illiterates, a large fraction of the population, were excluded from the franchise. Corruption, electoral fraud, state paternalism, and clientelism regularly influenced election outcomes. Nonetheless, from the end of World War II to the early 1960s, Brazil was a nation in which competitive elections, the right to criticize government policy, and an official commitment to racial equality were accepted by virtually everyone in public life as mainstream ideals.

After two decades of rapid if somewhat erratic economic progress, a severe economic crisis, accompanied by strikes and widespread political agitation, reached a peak in 1964 during the administration of João Goulart (Skidmore, 1967). The military, expressing fears of a leftist takeover, seized power in a coup. Promising a return to democracy as soon as the political situation stabilized, the new leadership initially tolerated a certain amount of press freedom and organized opposition. After its candidates fared poorly in the 1965 legislative elections, however, the military shifted course. It canceled the upcoming presidential election, banned most forms of opposition, instituted strict censorship of major media, and asserted firm control over labor unions. The military government also replaced the existing political parties with two new government-sponsored parties, controlled the selection of governors and presidents, and sharply curtailed or eliminated the powers of the remaining elected officials (Lamounier and F. H. Cardoso,

1976; Skidmore, 1977). The regime also resorted to abductions, torture, and murder to deal with outspoken opponents. On only one major democratic value—namely, racial equality—did the military regime make no public effort to reverse mainstream policies.

On the economic side the military regime aggressively pursued developmentalist policies, as had previous democratic regimes. The military did initiate important changes in economic policy, including reductions in real wages and various measures to encourage exports. Yet the general strategy of state activism and heavy reliance on foreign investment—a strategy that was the hallmark of postwar Brazilian policy—remained unchanged (Baer, 1983).

During this period the government-controlled media depicted the military regime in glowing terms. The regime was portrayed as leading the nation to spectacular economic growth, providing for the laboring poor more effectively than the “demagogic” politicians of the past, and coping resolutely with urban terrorists who threatened the nation with chaos. The implication of this coverage was that the military and its stern policies were, after all, good for Brazil.

The media did not emphasize the antidemocratic side of the government’s program. It announced antidemocratic policies as they were promulgated, but did not carry a daily stream of stories on the need to censor the news, stifle debate, and control election outcomes. Rather, the press trumpeted the regime’s accomplishments as proof that the government’s policies were working, while denying access to anyone wishing to dispute that view. The effects of this one-sided coverage in a context in which the economy was performing well will be apparent shortly.<sup>1</sup>

Nearly nine years after the military came to power, independent researchers from the Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro and the University of Michigan conducted the public opinion survey on which this paper is based. At that time the military was seeking to build support for a two-pronged program: economic policies that largely continued the nation’s mainstream goal of heavy investment and industrial growth and political policies that represented a sharp break from the country’s democratic past.

### Data and Measures

The data used in this study are drawn from a public opinion survey conducted in Brazil in late 1972 and early 1973.<sup>2</sup> The study included more than

<sup>1</sup>We know of no detailed content studies of the Brazilian media in this period. This characterization is based on our informal analysis of leading print media and on Dassin (1982).

<sup>2</sup>The principal investigators on the study were Youssef Cohen, Philip Converse, Amaury de Souza, and Peter McDonough. Conducted in 1972–73, the study drew a sample of 1,314 persons from southeastern Brazil, the most developed part of Brazil, and a supplementary sam-



450 questions on a wide range of politically sensitive topics and constitutes perhaps the highest quality public opinion survey ever conducted in an authoritarian country.

Although it is natural to wonder whether respondents to this survey might have been afraid to express antiregime attitudes to the poll takers, we do not believe this possibility poses a serious threat to our analysis. First, the interviewers were college-age people who mainly opposed the regime; yet, in personal conversations, several of them told us they believed their interviewees (who mainly expressed support for the regime) were sincere in their attitudes. Second, using the interviewers' rating of each subject's level of apparent sincerity, we found that "sincere" respondents were no more likely to oppose the regime (at comparable levels of exposure to its policies) than were "insincere" ones. Finally, and most important, our analysis focuses on *patterns* of support for regime policies rather than on absolute *levels* of support. We are unable to see how the complex pattern of regime support to be described below could be an artifact of the untruthful answers of fearful respondents.<sup>3</sup>

As indicated, "political awareness" functions in our model as a determinant both of exposure to public affairs and of capacity for critical scrutiny of the ideas to which one is exposed. In tests of the model that follow, we shall use respondents' levels of political information as our measure of awareness. We do this because past research indicates that, of the several possible measures of political awareness, information is the most generally valid and reliable.<sup>4</sup>

The Brazilian survey contained more than a dozen items designed as tests of political information. They ranged from relatively easy—the name of the current president, which was known by about 75 percent of the

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ple of 352 union members. The former involved a multistage probability sample of dwellings; the latter was selected from membership lists of the 12 largest unions in the region. We have pooled the two samples in order to maximize the number of cases available for analysis; the larger sample improves the statistical precision of estimates but does not affect the substantive conclusions we reach. For further information on sample characteristics, see Cohen (1982).

<sup>3</sup>The possibility that fear may distort survey results has been a major concern of government poll takers in communist countries. In a Bulgarian study of this problem, researchers found that when party officials and representatives of academic institutions conducted parallel studies, the expressed levels of regime support were, on average, 15 percent higher among respondents who had been interviewed by party officials. These "interviewer effects," however, were roughly equal across all categories of respondents, so that overall *patterns* of regime support were the same in both studies (Welsh, 1981, p. 192).

<sup>4</sup>Education, political interest, media exposure, and political participation have been used by researchers as measures of what we call political awareness. An examination, based on U.S. data, of the relative performance of such measures over a variety of criterion variables found that information consistently outperformed all rivals (Zaller, 1990).

respondents—to rather difficult. One of the most difficult asked the meaning of SUDENE, which was known by fewer than 10 percent of the respondents.<sup>5</sup> From such questions we constructed an awareness index that ranges from zero points, a score achieved by about 5 percent of the sample, to 16 points, a score achieved by about 2 percent.<sup>6</sup>

### Initial Tests of the Model

Our principal finding is that both the mainstream and exposure-acceptance models work well in their respective domains. We make that point first with some simple tabular results and later by estimating a multivariate version of equation 1. The first two items in Table 2 illustrate the mainstream model. For these issues on which the military essentially carried forward “mainstream” policies, political awareness is monotonically associated with policy support.

The basic pattern of support for the regime’s antidemocratic policies is illustrated by the final two items in Table 2. As can be seen, moderately well-informed respondents (i.e., people in the 65th through the 94th percentiles on awareness) are more likely than the less informed to favor censorship of the press and the prohibition of strikes. Yet, notwithstanding this, support for government policies falls off in the top 5 percent of the awareness index. These results confirm the expectations of the exposure-acceptance model.

In observing that more politically aware respondents are more likely to support government policies, we do not imply that the less aware opposed these policies. As Table 2 shows, few respondents at low levels of awareness opposed official policies, and, in many cases, they expressed no attitudes at all. We infer, therefore, that the principal effect of exposure to progovernment communications is to persuade the politically apathetic to become at least passive (i.e., verbal) supporters of government policy. In some cases increases in awareness lead both to greater policy support and to greater opposition, but (except among the most aware) increases in government support are greater than the increases in opposition, usually by wide margins.

More rigorous tests of these claims will come shortly. In the meantime it is clear that our argument gives the military a great deal of credit for shap-

<sup>5</sup>SUDENE is the acronym for the Superintendency for the Development of Northeast Brazil, an important and widely publicized government agency.

<sup>6</sup>The scale has an alpha reliability of .88. Four of the items were double-weighted because they dealt directly with national politics or political opposition; these items, scored between 0 and 2, were v134 (president’s name), v141 (nature of Institutional Acts), v352 (number of official parties), v353 (name the official opposition party), where variable numbers refer to the ICSPR codebook. The other eight items, scored between 0 and 1, dealt with more general governmental matters (e.g., the SUDENE item). They are v130, v132, v135 to v140. We awarded half credit for answers rated by interviewers as vague.

TABLE 2  
Attitudes on Selected Policy Items

		Level of Political Awareness				
		Low	Middle	High		
		(92) <sup>a</sup>	(488)	(583)	(421)	(81)
<i>Brazilian mainstream issues:</i>						
It's not proper for a black woman to marry a white man.	Strongly agree	36 <sup>b</sup>	33	27	24	7
	Slightly agree	10	9	6	6	4
	Slightly disagree	8	6	8	6	4
	Strongly disagree	41	43	50	57	74
	Unsure	4	6	7	6	10
To what extent are you opposed to or in favor of giving illiterates the right to vote?	Completely oppose	21	34	41	63	63
	More or less oppose	12	10	10	8	13
	Neutral	4	4	5	5	4
	More or less favor	15	13	13	8	5
	Completely favor	33	29	27	15	14
	Don't know	14	8	2	1	—
<i>Departures from Brazilian mainstream:</i>						
To what extent do you favor censorship for newspapers, radio, and television?	Completely favor	14	30	42	50	31
	More or less favor	8	14	19	18	28
	Neutral	—	3	6	6	5
	More or less oppose	5	6	4	7	10
	Completely oppose	11	13	12	4	22
	Don't know	61	32	15	4	3
As compared with the situation in Brazil today, do you think it would be better if . . . the government had much more control over the unions? A little more control? etc.	Much more	16	24	27	20	5
	A little more	15	17	19	18	9
	Keep situation as is	9	13	21	33	49
	A little less	—	1	2	3	9
	Much less	1	1	2	6	15
	No interest	59	39	27	17	12

NOTES: <sup>a</sup>Figures in parentheses are numbers of respondents in each category.

<sup>b</sup>Cell entries are percentages, but owing to miscellaneous responses (e.g., both, refuse), columns do not always sum to 100 percent.

ing the attitudes of ordinary Brazilians. Is it not possible, however, that the military regime inherited a public that already supported authoritarian policies—so that the regime was more the effect than the cause of mass attitudes? Before continuing our analysis, we digress to assess this possibility.

### Popular Support for Authoritarianism

Many accounts of Brazilian political culture stress its authoritarian roots. Yet much evidence indicates that popular support for democratic institutions was widespread in Brazil in the mid-1960s. Just before the military decided to cancel the presidential election, for example, residents of Belo Horizonte were asked in a poll whether the election "ought to take place . . . (or would it) be better if there were no election?" Sixty-five percent said they wanted the election to occur, and only 22 percent favored canceling it.<sup>7</sup> In response to a somewhat more general question, 83 percent said that "it is important to hold elections." Finally, when asked "what type of government do you regard as the best to solve Brazilian problems?" 70 percent favored "a government elected by the people," and only 12 percent wanted "a strong military government."

These data, combined with the embarrassment suffered by the military in the 1965 legislative elections, make it clear that whatever cultural predisposition toward authoritarianism may have existed in Brazil prior to the coup did not manifest itself in widespread public support for authoritarian political institutions. Yet, by the time of the 1972-73 survey, Brazilian attitudes had changed dramatically. Although a survey immediately prior to the coup had shown that Brazilians were wary of nearly all social and political institutions, including the military,<sup>8</sup> the military stood out in the 1972-73 survey as the one institution in the country which enjoyed extraordinary public confidence. Some 59 percent said they could "always trust" the military or "trust (it) in most cases," while only 12 percent always or mostly distrusted it. No other group or institution, including the Roman Catholic church, rated nearly as high.<sup>9</sup>

More directly political questions reinforce the impression that the military and its policies had become widely popular by 1972. At a time when the military's domination of politics was nearly complete, 41 percent declared themselves "completely in favor" of "military involvement in national politics," while another 17 percent "more or less" favored such in-

<sup>7</sup>The remaining 22 percent were undecided. These data are available through the ICPSR, study 7613, "Political Behavior and Attitudes in a Brazilian City, 1965-66."

<sup>8</sup>A survey of residents of Rio de Janeiro, "World War II: Attitudes toward Domestic and Foreign Affairs," ICPSR study 7048, was conducted only weeks before the coup. Asked about the amount of influence the military should have in national affairs, 11 percent said it had too little; 32 percent said the right amount; 20 percent said too much; and the rest were undecided. These ratings, which are similar to those given other major political actors, betray little indication of a population predisposed toward authoritarianism.

<sup>9</sup>Figures for "co-workers" are 45 percent trust and 22 percent distrust; for politicians, 20 percent and 47 percent; for friends, 40 percent and 30 percent; for priests, 47 percent and 27 percent. The only group more trusted than the military was "the government," which the military then controlled.

volvement, and only 16 percent opposed it. Moreover, 81 percent said they were completely or mainly satisfied with "government policy," and only 5 percent indicated any degree of dissatisfaction.<sup>10</sup>

Because the 1972–73 survey failed to repeat any of the earlier questions, we cannot know exactly how much attitudes had changed since the mid-1960s. But there is little doubt that much change had occurred. How can it be accounted for?

### Sources of Resistance to Persuasion

According to our model, support for regime policies depends jointly on the chances that individuals will be exposed to progovernment messages and the probability that they will accept them, given exposure. We initially assumed that general levels of political awareness would be a major determinant of both exposure and acceptance, but that other factors, especially personal values, would also play a role. We now consider these additional factors in detail.

#### *Exposure Factors*

From prior research we expect the most effective measure of exposure to politics to be political awareness (Zaller, 1990). The Brazilian survey also contains two more direct measures of exposure to government communications: items asking whether individuals watch television news or read a daily newspaper. (Both media were heavily censored in this period.) The two media variables and the awareness scale will therefore constitute measures of exposure to authoritarian values.

#### *Resistance Factors: Economic Interest*

As noted, the military seized power during a period of economic chaos and political unrest. As part of its effort to stabilize the economy, it held down wages and suppressed union activity. During the first years of military rule, these policies led to a 25 percent decline in real wages. The benefits of rapid development, when they began to appear in 1968, accrued disproportionately to the middle and upper classes. One might therefore expect that, at comparable levels of exposure to regime policies, union members, unskilled and semiskilled workers, and low-income persons would be most resistant to regime policies and that blacks, who are disproportionately concentrated in these groups, would also be resistant. On the other hand, members of the middle and upper occupational classes and people with high incomes might be expected to be most receptive.

<sup>10</sup>Other leading accounts also stress the popularity of the military government in this period (Cohen, 1982; McDonough, 1982, 1984).

*Resistance Factors: Politicization*

A central assumption of the model is that the greater one's attention to politics (or any subject), the greater one's capacity for critical scrutiny of ideas relating to it. Political awareness is the best indicator of such capacity for critical scrutiny, but anything that denotes greater levels of politicization ought to have similar effects. Interest in politics is one such factor. Education, which is widely thought to impart a generalized capacity for critical scrutiny, may also promote scrutiny of political communications.

The 1972–73 survey contains several other measures of politicization. One is activity as a union officer, which might multiply the simple effects of union membership (de Souza, 1979). Since political activity is more intense in urban areas than rural ones, one might expect that growing up in an urban area would be a resistance factor. Finally, one might expect Brazilians who had “grown up with democracy” (i.e., people who came to political maturity in the democratic period between 1945 and 1964) would be more resistant to authoritarian departures from democracy. In contrast, those who “grew up with authoritarianism” (i.e., came to maturity before 1945 or after 1964) might be less resistant to the military's policies.

*Resistance Factors: Personal Values*

The survey carried several measures of personal values that may predispose people for or against authoritarianism. One is church attendance, which roughly measures the extent to which people hold conventional religious beliefs. Such religiosity may indicate predispositions toward the kind of conservative values favored by the military.<sup>11</sup>

In a related vein it has been argued (Adorno et al., 1950) that some individuals possess personalities that predispose them toward authoritarianism. The Brazilian survey carried several items, known technically as F-scale items, designed to measure these predispositions. The items cover such matters as obedience to parents, respect for elders, and contempt for weakness.<sup>12</sup> By summing up each person's answers to these questions—none of which contains manifestly political content—we obtained a measure

<sup>11</sup>At the time of the survey, the Roman Catholic church had not yet become a force of opposition to the regime. Had the survey been taken later, our expectations concerning the effects of church attendance might have been different. It is interesting, however, that even in Poland, where the Roman Catholic church is a focal point of resistance to the government, church attendance is correlated with support for regime policies (Ryszka, 1987).

<sup>12</sup>In addition to these items (v300, v311, and v305, respectively), the other items in the scale involved assertions that “the world is divided between the weak and the strong” (v307) and that employers should be tough on their workers (v303).

which could be expected to tap psychological predispositions to favor or to oppose authoritarian policies (given exposure to them).<sup>13</sup>

Finally, respondents who could recall the names of the political parties from the country's democratic period were asked which of them best reflected their views. We expected people who preferred the more conservative parties, the UDN and the PSD, to be more receptive to authoritarian policies than people preferring the principal labor party, the PTB.

### **Preliminary Testing for Resistance to Persuasion**

The exposure-acceptance model creates very strong expectations about how these resistance factors ought to affect support for regime policies. Within groups predisposed toward conservatism (e.g., those scoring high on the F-scale items), we expect a positive relationship between political awareness and support for authoritarian policies (as in panel A of Table 1). Only within groups whose propensity against authoritarianism is strong (e.g., low scorers on the F-scale) should we find nonmonotonic patterns of policy support (panels B and C).

To test these expectations we created a summary scale of Support for authoritarian policies. The scale has eight items on such matters as press freedom, the need to combat subversion, and suppression of union activity. The items, each coded either 1 for support or 0 for nonsupport, were averaged to create a 0–1 scale. Thus, a score of .625 would indicate support for the government position on five of eight items and nonsupport (either neutral, opposed, or uninterested) on the other three.

We also created a scale measuring average levels of Opposition to authoritarian policies. The scale includes the same items as in the Support scale, except that here they are coded 1 for opposition and 0 otherwise.<sup>14</sup> Thus, a person who opposed the government on all policies would have a score of 1.0 on the Opposition scale and 0.0 on the Support scale. A person who expressed neutrality on all eight items would score 0.0 on both the Support and the Opposition scales. As will be seen, the two scales enable us to

<sup>13</sup>Measures of authoritarian predispositions have often been criticized on the grounds that they suffer from an acquiescence response bias that is correlated with education and that they measure subcultural values rather than individual attitudes (see Altemeyer, 1981). To insure against these difficulties, we used multiple regression to remove statistically the effects of education, age, race, place of residence, and political information from the measure. Thus, our authoritarian dispositions measure is uncorrelated with measures of individuals' subcultural milieu.

<sup>14</sup>In addition to the items in Table 2 (v145, v341), these were to allow strikes or not (v313); more/less opposition to government (v157); more/less effort to combat subversion (v165); respect for individual rights (v298); favor/oppose military involvement in politics (v343); favor/oppose indirect elections of state governors (v344); favor/oppose parties having more power (v345); favor/oppose a third (i.e., not government-sponsored) party (v356).

track trends in support and opposition separately; because of neutral and “no interest” responses, the two indicators are far from mirror images of one another.<sup>15</sup>

Note that all items in these two scales involve policies on which the military departed from the mainstream democratic policies of the prior regime. Thus if, for example, a person scored high on Opposition and low on Support, it would indicate tenacious support for democratic ideas and resistance to authoritarian ones.

Finally, we created a six-item index of support for mainstream policies such as economic development and racial tolerance.<sup>16</sup> These are policies on which the military government continued policies of previous regimes. The index measures average levels of support for mainstream policies on a 0–1 scale.

By way of illustration, Figure 1 shows how one resistance factor, education, affects regime support. In the top panel we see that among persons with four or fewer years of school—about 60 percent of the general population in the survey area—there is a strong positive relationship between awareness and support for authoritarian policies. Support for government in this group rises from an average level of about 25 percent to an average of 68 percent. Meanwhile, among moderately to highly educated persons, the relationship between support and awareness is, as expected, nonmonotonic.

The lower panel of Figure 1 shows Opposition scores. As can be seen, awareness is associated with opposition to regime policies, but only among better-educated persons (i.e., those with some capacity for critical scrutiny of political ideas).

The effect of awareness on support for mainstream policies is shown in Figure 2. Here greater awareness is associated with steadily greater support for official policies, and the highly educated are, if anything, less resistant to persuasion than the poorly educated. Because this pattern of support for mainstream policies holds no matter which resistance factor—education, F-scale scores, religiosity—is used as the control variable, we shall devote no further attention to mainstream policies. The story here is simply that exposure across several regimes to a discourse that is “heavily loaded on one side” tends, as in the United States, to induce support for the policies embedded in that discourse.

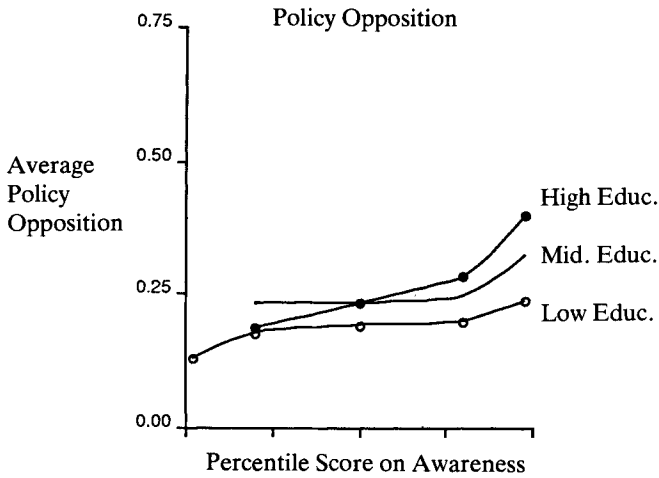
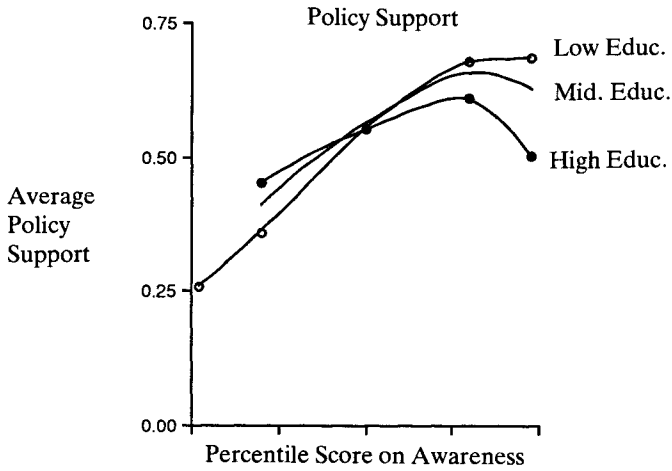
<sup>15</sup>There is, however, a price for dividing the items into two scales. The division, in conjunction with heavy skews on many of the 0–1 items, yields an alpha reliability of .63 for the Support scale and .55 for the Opposition scale. The scales may nonetheless function well as measures of average levels of support for a range of government policies.

<sup>16</sup>The mainstream items were those in Table 2 (v312, v397) plus: encourage foreign investment (v149); build factories/raise minimum wage (v288); allow black man to marry white woman (v299); favor/oppose death penalty for ordinary crimes (v395).



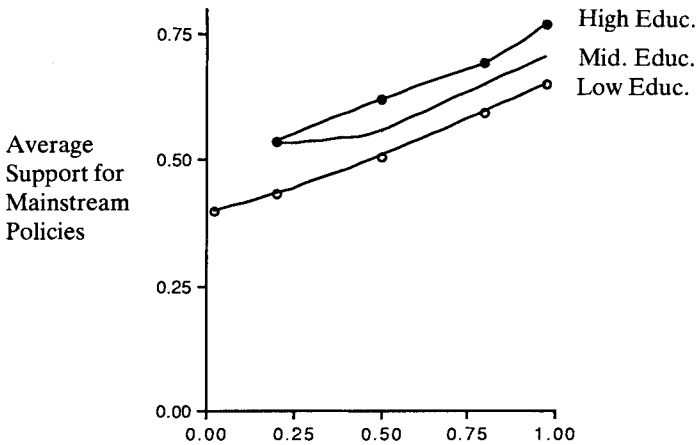
FIGURE 1

Mean Levels of Support and Opposition by Education and Political Awareness



N =	9	48	116	46
	80	219	180	26
	85	394	310	119
				10

FIGURE 2  
Mean Support for Mainstream Policies by Education and Political Awareness



See Figure 1 for cell frequencies.

Attitudes toward nonmainstream policies, however, require more attention. Figure 1 shows the effect of just one factor, education. What is needed is a way to take into account how exposure simultaneously interacts with several resistance factors. For this we return to the formal statement of our model.

### A Fully Specified Model

The basic model is summarized in equation 1. To estimate it one must specify a functional form for the exposure and acceptance functions. Since the model deals in probabilities of exposure and acceptance, the functions can vary only between 0 and 1. They must also be monotonic. The logistic functional form is the most tractable of the commonly used functional forms meeting these requirements. If we assume that the individual-level variables affecting exposure are  $(x_1, x_2, \dots, x_n)$  and that the individual-level variables affecting acceptance|exposure are  $(y_1, y_2, \dots, y_n)$ , we can rewrite equation 1 in terms of logistic functions as follows:

$$\text{Support} = \left( 1 - \frac{1}{1 + F + \exp[A_0 + A_1x_1 + A_2x_2 \dots + A_nx_n]} \right) \times \left( 1 - \frac{1}{1 + \exp[-\{B_0 + B_1y_1 + B_2y_2 \dots + B_ny_n\}]} \right) \quad (2)$$

The first term in equation 2 is a monotonically increasing function of individual-level exposure variables in  $X$ , while the second is a similarly decreasing function of resistance variables in  $Y$ .<sup>17</sup>

We have estimated equation 2 for both the Support and Opposition scales.<sup>18</sup> The results, given in Table 3, provide complementary perspectives on the regime's success in shaping mass attitudes. The results for the Support scale capture the process by which individuals came to support such anti-democratic policies as a censored press, indirect elections, and so forth. Results for the Opposition scale describe persistence of prodemocratic attitudes in the face of the regime's efforts to induce change.

We begin with an examination of exposure effects. (To facilitate comparisons among coefficients, all variables have been coded to a 0–1 range.) Political awareness is clearly the dominant exposure variable,<sup>19</sup> having roughly the same effect in both the Support and Opposition models.<sup>20</sup> Although variables measuring exposure to television news and newspapers are statistically significant in the Support model, their effects are modest. Each of these dichotomous variables has about the same effect as a movement of one step on the 17-step awareness scale.

We turn now to resistance effects. Positive resistance coefficients in the Support model indicate high resistance to messages favoring authoritarian policies; positive coefficients in the Opposition model indicate resistance to the democratic ideas of previous regimes and readiness to abandon them in the authoritarian period.

<sup>17</sup>One interpretation of the floor parameter,  $F$ , in equation 2 is that it captures the effects of guessing. Another is that the reading of a question constitutes a message in its own right and that this sort of exposure (understood as both encountering and comprehending the message) is captured by the floor parameter. On either interpretation the parameter should be equal in both the Support and Opposition equations. In estimating the model we have imposed this constraint.

<sup>18</sup>We used the nonlinear regression with numerically calculated derivatives. To check robustness, we estimated the model numerous times. With starting values in the neighborhood of those in Table 3, SAS reconverged to the initial solution. For arbitrary values distant from those in Table 3, SAS either failed to converge or converged on a much inferior fit. In addition, we successfully replicated the principal substantive results in Table 3 with a more cumbersome interactive regression model.

<sup>19</sup>The awareness coefficient in the Opposition scale reflects the extent to which people were exposed to prodemocratic ideas from any source. We suspect that much of this exposure occurred in the previous, democratic regime, but it may have occurred via word of mouth, the schools, or uncensored, small-circulation publications in the years in which the military was in power.

<sup>20</sup>The similarity between these coefficients does not imply that overall exposure levels were the same in both models. All else equal, the intercept shift described at the bottom of Table 3 implies that exposure to democratic ideas was much lower (at least during this period) than exposure to authoritarian ones.

TABLE 3  
Estimated Coefficients for Exposure-Acceptance Model<sup>a</sup>

	Policy Support	Policy Opposition
<i>Exposure variables:</i>		
Political awareness <sup>b</sup>	4.25 (.49)	4.57 (1.3)
Watch TV news (v62)	0.33 (.09)	Inapp.
Read daily newspaper (v70)	0.29 (.09)	Inapp.
<i>Resistance factors: politicization variables:<sup>c</sup></i>		
Political awareness <sup>b</sup>	1.78 (.54)	2.68 (.76)
Middle education (5–11 years on v75)	0.18 (.18)	-0.47 (.17)
High education (12+ years)	0.58 (.15)	-0.96 (.25)
Grow up in city (v418)	0.22 (.11)	-0.35 (.14)
Interest in politics <sup>d</sup>	-0.27 (.16)	-0.62 (.24)
Union officer (v195)	0.79 (.26)	-0.92 (.53)
Political generation (18–28, 47+ yrs.)	0.04 (.10)	0.11 (.12)
<i>Resistance factors: variables measuring personal values:</i>		
Religiosity (v440)	-0.49 (.16)	0.88 (.29)
F-scale <sup>b</sup> (liberal scored high)	1.60 (.29)	-1.34 (.42)
Prefer UDN party (v359)	-0.45 (.17)	0.18 (.18)
Prefer PSD party (v359)	-0.32 (.16)	0.13 (.18)
Prefer PTB party (v359)	0.09 (.12)	-0.60 (.21)
<i>Resistance factors: economic interest variables:</i>		
Income (logged) (v254)	-0.75 (.61)	-1.03 (.78)
Union member (v170)	-0.36 (.10)	0.17 (.13)
High occupational status (1, 2 on v443)	0.01 (.13)	0.09 (.18)
Low occupational status (7, 8 on v443)	0.13 (.12)	-0.48 (.17)
Nonwhite (v408)	0.00 (.13)	-0.21 (.17)

(Table 3 continued)

Constants (see eq. 2):

$A_0$	-1.89 (.23)	-3.78 (.78)
$B_0$	-2.57 (.70)	-0.17 (.73)
Floor parameter <sup>e</sup>	.26 (.05)	.26 (.05)
Variance explained (percentage)	31.4	12.3
Standard error of estimate	.21	.18

<sup>a</sup>All variables are coded to a 0–1 scale. Standard errors, which should be considered approximate estimates, are reported in parentheses below the coefficients.

<sup>b</sup>Variable is described in text.

<sup>c</sup>A positive coefficient on a resistance variable indicates that the variable is associated with resistance to the given type of policy.

<sup>d</sup>The following variables were summed and recoded to a 0–1 “political interest” scale: v107 (talk politics), v346 (very interested in political issues), v347 (very interested in government).

<sup>e</sup>Constrained to be equal in both models.

The big story here is the strong effects of the “politicization” and “personal values” variables in contrast to the weak showing of “economic interest” variables. Among the politicization variables, awareness is clearly the most important. It has large positive resistance coefficients in both equations and is the only variable to do so. Thus, the most aware persons are most selective in the ideas they will accept, regardless of ideological content. This is a strong and nonobvious finding and indicates that awareness is a value-free indicator of critical responses to politics.<sup>21</sup>

In contrast, the other politicization variables tend to have different effects in the two models: education, socialization in an urban area, and activity as a union officer are associated with greater resistance to authoritarian ideas and greater susceptibility to democratic ones. In addition, political

<sup>21</sup>This finding is more subtle than it may seem. Since the model in equation 2 is highly interactive, the effect of any one variable depends on the values of all others. Suppose, then, that awareness had no effect in the Opposition model. If this were true, it would imply that other resistance factors (education, religiosity, etc.) would be equally effective in inducing resistance to democratic values at all levels of awareness. Such a counterfactual finding, though easily imaginable, would violate a basic supposition of the model, namely, that resistance to persuasion depends on *both* the capacity for critical thinking (as measured by awareness) *and* one or more factors predisposing one toward resistance. Note also that the large coefficient on awareness does not mean that the highly aware necessarily resist either democratic or authoritarian values; they resist only when one or more other predisposing factors are also present (see Figure 3).

interest has an important effect in the Opposition model. Thus, the politicization experience captured by these variables appears—unlike that of the awareness variable—to be a value-laden one. Of the politicization variables, only “political generation” entirely fails to perform as expected.

The variables measuring “values” also work well. The performance of the F-scale is especially strong, approaching even that of political awareness. Religiosity is also important, and, like conservative scores on the F-scale, it induces susceptibility to authoritarian ideas and resistance to democratic ones. Preferences for a labor party (PTB) or a more conservative party (UDN), which we take as indicators of general ideological orientation, also have effects in the expected directions.

Meanwhile, just two of the “economic interest” variables have statistically significant effects, and one of these has the wrong sign. The variable that conforms to expectations is low occupational status, which has a moderate prodemocratic effect (but not an anti-authoritarian one). The variable that baffles expectations is union membership, which induces greater susceptibility to authoritarianism. The effects of the economic variables, however, tend to be small. The only large effect is that of income, but, despite our best efforts, that effect runs nonsignificantly in an unexpected direction. Thus, despite their supposed vested interest in the regime, high-income persons in the Opposition model are more prodemocratic than low-income persons.

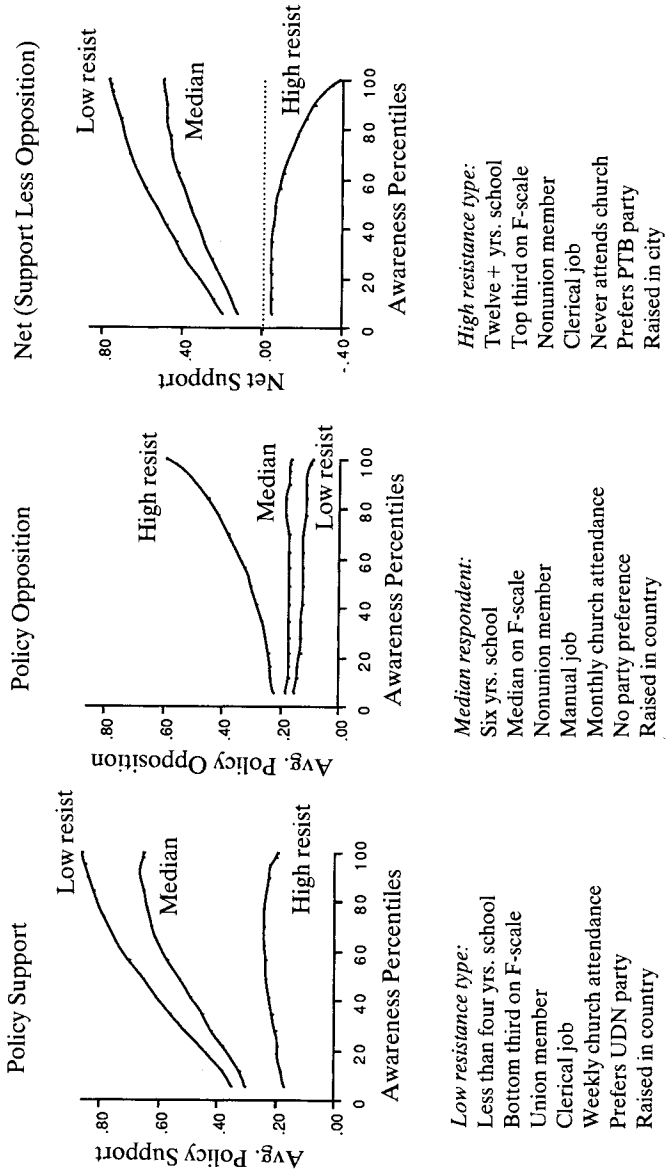
These results, taken together, confirm the general tendency of “symbolic” concerns—value attachments and politicization experiences—to dominate narrowly “self-interested” concerns in most attitude research (Sears et al., 1980; Kinder and Kiewiet, 1981).<sup>22</sup>

Raw coefficients are, of course, difficult to interpret, especially in a highly interactive model such as this one. For example, one can see in Figure 1 that education has a much greater impact at high than at low awareness, and the same is true for every variable in the model. Therefore, we have prepared Figure 3 as an aid to interpretation of the results.

Figure 3 presents estimated Support scores and Opposition scores for a median survey respondent. It also presents net scores, which have been obtained by subtracting estimated Opposition scores from estimated Support scores. In addition, Figure 3 presents estimates for “types” who are either especially susceptible or especially resistant to authoritarian policies; these types represent extreme but not unlikely combinations of important

<sup>22</sup>Although individual-level measures of economic interest fare poorly, the strength of the Brazilian economy in the early 1970s is, as we have emphasized, almost certainly the reason the government enjoyed the strong overall support that it did. This argument is consistent with the notion that, as Kinder and Kiewiet (1981) maintain, the economy affects individual attitudes sociotropically via their evaluations of the national economy.

FIGURE 3  
Estimated Patterns of Policy Support



variables. The “low-resistance” type is a person who has no more than four years of education, was raised in the country, works at a nonmanual but routine occupation, attends church at least once a week, scores conservative on the F-scale, and feels close to the UDN party. The “high-resistance” type is a person who has gone to the twelfth grade in school, grew up in a city, holds a middle-status job, never attends church, scores liberal on the F-scale, and feels close to the PTB, the Labor party.

The most obvious point in Figure 3 is that the cumulative effects of the resistance factors are very large. Support for authoritarian policies in the low-resistance group rises from .35 at low awareness to .83 at high awareness; among members of the high-resistance group, by contrast, the pattern of support is gently nonmonotonic and never exceeds about .20. The effects of the resistance factors on the net scores are still larger.

Note, however, how strongly the various resistance factors interact with information. At low information, there is little difference between the low-resistance and high-resistance types; at high information, the differences are dramatically large. This interaction occurs because the politically unaware, though having predispositions similar to those of others, typically fail to encounter the communications (or propaganda) necessary to convert the predispositions into actual policy preferences. Only the highly informed are able reliably to translate their predispositions into conventionally appropriate policy preferences.

The final point in Figure 3 is how little opposition to regime policies existed in 1972–73. In only one small segment of the Brazilian public—members of the high-resistance group who scored in the upper half of the awareness scale—does one find that net support for government policies is negative. A median Brazilian was almost as supportive of the government as the “low-resistance” type. We conclude that, under the prosperous conditions in Brazil at the time of the survey, most Brazilians were highly susceptible to authoritarian appeals—provided that they paid enough attention to politics to find out which particular policies the government supported.

### **Variations in Popular Support for Authoritarian Regimes**

We began this paper by asking which kinds of people are most likely to support authoritarian governments and which are least likely. We can now suggest definite answers to this question. Support is likely to be strongest among people, such as the better-informed members of the working class, who are both heavily exposed to government-controlled communications and lack the education and other internal resources for resisting them. Support is likely to be weakest among those who either pay no attention at all to politics (e.g., most illiterates) or who pay a great deal of attention *and* are predisposed by virtue of personal values or past politicization against authoritarianism. These generalizations, we believe, should apply in any au-



thoritarian country in which the government appears to perform well and achieves control or near control over the flow of political communications.

One should not, however, place too much emphasis on the particular patterns of regime support found in Brazil. The model leads us to expect significant variation in these patterns from one country to another. We set out these expectations in Figure 4, a typology claiming that variations in regime support depend on how vigorously governments seek to indoctrinate their citizens and how much access to alternative values their citizens possess.

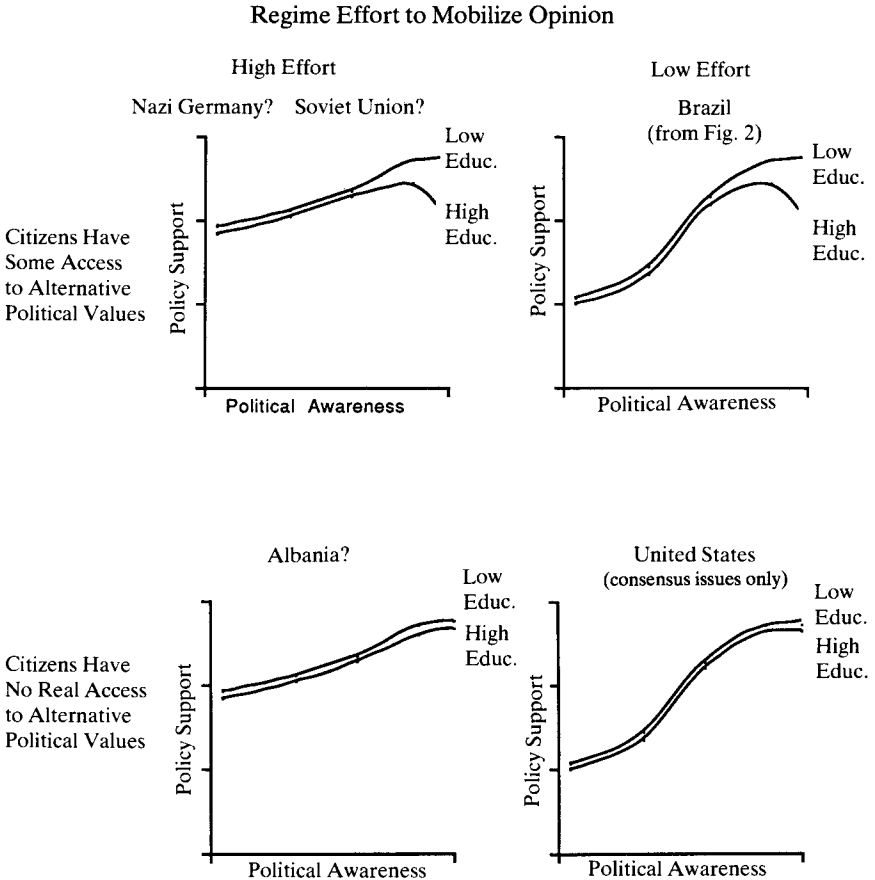
In countries in which the government makes energetic efforts to indoctrinate its citizens (the governments of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union<sup>23</sup> are examples) even the least politically informed members of society may (in comparison with the least-informed Brazilians) exhibit moderately high levels of support for regime norms (compare the cases in the right-hand column of Figure 4 to those in the left-hand column). A second source of variation in popular support for authoritarian regimes is the access of citizens in different countries to alternative sources of values. Many citizens in authoritarian Brazil retained access to books and other small circulation publications that carried alternative values; some also remembered the democratic norms of the previous regime. In other authoritarian countries, however, (Albania comes to mind) scarcely any segment of the population has either personal memory of, or access to, sources of antiregime values. In consequence, the decline in regime support that we found among the best-informed Brazilians should show up more weakly, or perhaps not at all, among the best-informed citizens of countries such as Albania (compare cases in the top row of Figure 4 to those in the bottom row).

It is difficult to think of modern authoritarian countries that fall clearly into the lower right cell of Figure 4. However, one might reasonably consider the United States an example of a nonmobilizing regime whose elites have achieved high levels of voluntary agreement on certain norms relating to capitalism, democracy, and, at times, foreign policy. The works of Key (1961), Mueller (1973), and Chong, McClosky, and Zaller (1985) indicate that when such elite consensus exists, U.S. public opinion indeed conforms to the pattern in the lower right cell.

In proposing this typology, we have in mind cases in which the government maintains at least the appearance of competence and effectiveness. Certainly this was true of the Brazilian regime at the time of our survey. For

<sup>23</sup>In developing this typology, we assume that authoritarian regimes espouse authoritarian policies. The Gorbachev government in the Soviet Union, however, is a partial exception. Its *glasnost* and *perestroika* policies must be viewed, in the context of Soviet history, as nonauthoritarian. We would therefore expect patterns of support for these policies to differ from those forecast for other cases.

FIGURE 4  
A Typology of Support for Mainstream Policies



cases in which governments are markedly less effective (or less lucky with the economy), one would expect more resistance to government policies. The model readily accommodates the effects of such heightened resistance. Returning to Table 1, we see that as resistance increases, patterns of policy support become nonmonotonic and perhaps negative. Hence, for the case of an ineffective government, we would expect, *ceteris paribus*, a gently nonmonotonic pattern of support among the moderate to poorly educated

and a nearly flat or negative relationship with awareness among the better educated. (It is straightforward to redraw Figure 4 to illustrate such cases.)<sup>24</sup>

The exposure-acceptance model thus specifies the ways in which a variety of factors—a nation's prior experience with alternative ideologies, the intensity of the regime's efforts at public mobilization, the access of citizens to alternative sources of ideas, and the regime's performance—interact to affect overall patterns of regime support. One would have great difficulty developing such a model on the basis of the scanty opinion data that is available from most authoritarian nations. But now that the exposure-acceptance model has been tested on the excellent data available from authoritarian Brazil, it can be a useful tool for interpreting the more fragmentary evidence from other authoritarian countries. For example, Philip Roeder (1985) reviews evidence showing that, although opposition to the Soviet regime is greatest within the best-educated segments of society, education is positively associated with individual susceptibility to indoctrination programs in factory settings. In other words, support for the regime seems to rise with education—except at the very highest levels of education, where support declines somewhat. On the basis of this and other provocative evidence, he suggests that “the relationship between dissent and social mobilization is curvilinear, declining with early social mobilization under Party tutelage, but rising as education and urbanization become still more advanced” (Roeder, 1985, pp. 5–6). Such findings, we believe, can readily and usefully be interpreted in light of our model.

Two surveys conducted in Poland in the aftermath of the Solidarity movement provide additional evidence concerning our theory. A 1984 study by researchers at the University of Warsaw found that support for martial law and opposition to Solidarity were greatest among people at low-to-middle levels of education. In 1985, when the government had begun to promote a return to normalcy, many low-education respondents had lapsed into no opinion, so that support for martial law was then greatest among people at middle levels of education (Ryszka, 1987, p. 253).<sup>25</sup>

An important caveat is in order at this point. In some authoritarian countries, opposition activists develop unofficial networks to challenge regime domination of political ideas. This happened in the Philippines during

<sup>24</sup>It is interesting to note that when the Brazilian economy faltered, support for the regime collapsed first in just those quarters in which our analysis would lead us to expect it: among the most highly educated and politically involved segments of the population (Alves, 1984; Lamounier, 1980). See Zaller (1987, p. 823) for further analysis of the patterns that can be generated by the model.

<sup>25</sup>We wish to thank Stanislaw Gebethner for bringing these data to our attention.

the Marcos regime and recently in South Korea.<sup>26</sup> It is obviously important to understand how and when alternative political networks arise. Our paper, however, has not addressed this vital problem. It seeks only to account for the patterns of regime support that occur when regimes are successful in asserting control or near control over the dissemination of news and analysis.

### Concluding Remarks

This paper has attempted to advance the understanding of public opinion in several ways. First, it has shown that a set of models—the mainstream model and the exposure-acceptance model—that originated in U.S. politics and U.S. social psychology can be put to effective use on mass opinion data from an authoritarian nation. In so doing, it not only confirms but extends these models. The public opinion field has few models that have survived tests under such diverse conditions. Second, the paper provides a more rigorous and general account of the patterns of mass support for the Brazilian regime than has previously been available; in particular, it has been able to uncover and explain patterns of regime support that would seem likely to defeat more standard class-based approaches to the understanding of Brazilian opinion. Third, the paper provides a basis for anticipating the patterns of popular support that exist in several different kinds of authoritarian regimes. These expectations may prove useful to scholars attempting to make sense of the limited opinion data available from such regimes. Finally, the paper advances an important substantive finding about support for authoritarian regimes of the type that existed in Brazil: support will be strongest among citizens in the broad middle ranges of political awareness—among people, that is, who are informed enough to be fairly heavily exposed to government indoctrination programs but who are not sufficiently sophisticated or motivated to resist them.

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<sup>26</sup>In the latter case, the government, although authoritarian, allowed the mass media a fair amount of latitude for criticizing its policies.

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