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Denunciation and Social Control*

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Abstract

It has long been observed that centralized social control requires some level of cooperation from the populace. Without such assistance, control agents are unable to acquire the local knowledge necessary to locate and prosecute deviants. Yet why citizens cooperate with authorities, especially in the most repressive regimes, remains a puzzle. This article develops two models of such cooperation: in the first, authorities actively use incentives to elicit denunciations from the populace, through either coercion or the promise of rewards. In the second, authorities passively gain access to local negative networks, as individuals denounce to harm others whom they dislike and to gain relative to them. Using internal variation in the early years of the Spanish Inquisition (1486 to 1502) and Romanov Russia (1613 to 1649), I demonstrate the differing effects of each model on patterns of denunciations. Paradoxically, social control is most effective when authorities provide individuals maximum freedom to direct its coercive power.

Every centralized authority requires some degree of cooperation from its citizens to enact social control, as such assistance is necessary to gain information about deviant behavior (Black 1970; Fitzpatrick and Gellately 1997). This can be especially true in more repressive societies, as the greater scope of laws and regulation of behavior requires additional intelligence. In Nazi Germany, for example, the Gestapo gathered most of their intelligence through the widespread participation of Germans willing to report deviance within their local communities. This is what led the Gestapo to be perceived as “omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent” (Mallmann and Paul 1994), despite there being only one officer for every 10,000 residents (Ayçoberry 2000; Gellately 1990; Johnson 1997). Although most of the files have been destroyed, Mallmann (1997) reports that there were more than 17,000 denunciations in 1937 alone for violations against one of the many laws that a person could be denounced for violating. He also cites 3 to 5 million letters of denunciation sent to Vichy authorities in occupied France.

Why did people cooperate so readily, and what were their motivations, especially when widespread participation undoubtedly gave support to a repressive regime? These questions are applicable to many repressive settings throughout history, and various answers have been proposed. Arendt (1973) argues for the power of propaganda to inculcate elite ideology in the masses. Ethnic conflict may also spur participation to harm members of an opposing group. Self-interest may lead to cooperation as a means of self-preservation or to gain monetary or other benefits. The variety of explanations largely reflects the opacity of motivations in such settings. Individuals who cooperate with

repressive authorities cannot be expected to state their true motivations when assisting the state, unless those motivations are in accordance with state ideology.

Taking a more holistic view of the interaction between authorities and the populace, this article develops two models of denunciation. In the first, direct incentives from authorities elicit participation through coercive pressure or the promise of rewards. Individuals cooperate to gain protection or benefits for themselves or their families. In the second, the lack of direct incentives allows authorities to access local negative networks. Individuals voluntarily denounce their rivals or negative ties in order to harm others and gain relative to them.

I evaluate these models across two repressive settings where citizen cooperation was prevalent in the form of widespread denunciations. Using internal variation in the early years of the Spanish Inquisition (1486 to 1502) and the first decades of the Romanov Dynasty in Russia (1613 to 1649), I show that the presence or absence of authority-based incentives has differing effects on patterns of denunciations. Paradoxically, social control is most effective when authorities provide ordinary citizens maximum freedom to direct its coercive power.

This article makes two key contributions. First, I use a comparative approach to explain how different institutional forms elicit widespread cooperation with authorities in repressive regimes. By modeling this phenomenon at the institutional and individual levels, one can gain a more complete understanding of how institutions affect patterns of denunciations. Second, although various historians have noted the existence of self-

interested behavior in repressive contexts, I distinguish between types of self-interest and evaluate the different macro implications of each.

SOCIAL CONTROL AND PARTICIPATORY REPRESSION

Although the concept of social control has been used to describe a variety of phenomena (Innes 2003), my focus here is on a particular aspect of social control: *formal social control*. Formal social control is the organized way in which authorities ensure compliance among a population through use of the legal system (Black 1976).¹ This includes the law, the police, and the courts and is a means of both deterring deviant behavior and punishing it (Cohen 1985).

When scholars write about formal social control, however, they tend to neglect the critical role that ordinary citizens play in facilitating such controls. Social control is generally described in relation to specific laws and police activity, not ordinary citizens' everyday reporting of deviant behavior to the authorities. This reporting of crimes is in fact a "critical component in activating the criminal justice system" (Liska 1992:21). As Warner (1992:72) asserts even more emphatically, "the reporting of crime may be the most influential decision in the criminal justice system . . . those who report crime are the true 'gatekeepers.'" Studies that look at the percentage of police mobilizations instigated by citizens find it to be upward of 70, 80, and even 90 percent (Black and Reiss 1970; Lundman 1980; Reiss 1971).

This phenomenon is not exclusive to particular forms of government. As Black (1970:747) observes, complainants are the "prime movers of every known legal system."

Even the most repressive regimes acquire a large amount of information from the general populace. In fact, “[n]o police force in modern European history has been able to function without the cooperation or participation of the population in its efforts” (Fitzpatrick and Gellately 1997:220). Repressive societies actually tend to require greater participation, as they regulate more behavior than do less repressive systems.

Yet participation in repressive settings is particularly puzzling. Repressive states tend to restrict civil liberties, violate due process, and deny personal integrity rights (Davenport 2007). By cooperating with the authorities in such settings and providing information about deviant behavior, individuals undoubtedly facilitate greater levels of overall repression and social control.² I refer to these dynamics as *participatory repression*.³

Before proceeding, a note on terminology is required. The primary way in which individuals cooperate with authorities to enact social control in repressive settings is through *denunciations*.⁴ A denunciation occurs when an individual reports an act of wrongdoing by another individual to the authorities. Particularly in repressive settings, denunciations tend to be for political, or victimless, crimes. Such crimes are statements or actions that indicate some degree of disagreement or non-compliance with state or religious orthodoxy. Because denouncers do not tend to be victims, denunciations are often presumed to be impersonal and disinterested in nature.

THEORIES OF DENUNCIATION

There are several broadly relevant explanations of why people cooperate with the authorities and provide information about their neighbors’ deviant behavior. Initially,

scholars tended to attribute this behavior to ideology and the power of propaganda. Racial dynamics have also been noted in some settings. More recent microanalyses of denunciations find self-interest to be the prevailing motivation.

Ideology

If the authorities and populace share a common ideology, they may act in concert to enact a unified agenda and punish deviants. This ideology can either emerge from popular support or elites may impose their preferences on the rest of the populace (Gramsci 1992). In the latter case, the masses may not even realize they are being controlled in such a way. This leads to notions of crime being constructed to serve the interests of the powerful and used to control the powerless (Wellford 1975).

These dynamics are most commonly attributed to totalitarian regimes. In such settings, the imposition of elite ideology may be accomplished through the use of propaganda, which may be especially fruitful under conditions of mass alienation (Arendt 1973). Leaders' charisma can also play a role in this process (Andreas 2007). Linz (2000) emphasizes that effective propaganda does not necessarily require the alienation of individuals looking for a cause, but points to the use of personal networks and the co-optation of already formed civil groups. This politicization of all aspects of society leads to constant exposure through ideologically infused activities; apathy or non-involvement is severely discouraged. In fact, many scholars have described totalitarianism as being akin to a religion (Borejsza and Ziemer 2006; Maier 2004). Denunciation is thus one way in which individuals can express this pervasive ideology and political fervor.

However, there are several reasons to be skeptical of this account of denunciation as a widespread phenomenon. Even in regimes where propaganda is considered to be particularly sophisticated, historians note a lack of ideological motivation in the reporting of deviance. For example, in reviewing denunciations across a wide range of settings in modern Europe, Fitzpatrick and Gellately (1997:10) note “relatively few cases where denunciations seemed to be motivated by genuine ideological fervor, and only a minority of the denunciations...are even couched in the language of devotion to the national or party cause.” Even in highly repressive settings, individuals may interpret prohibitions and propaganda as indicators of elite inferiority and defensiveness, undermining their effectiveness in shifting beliefs (Glaeser 2011). Individuals may also react negatively against attempts to constrain their freedom of belief (Miron 2006).

Furthermore, historians have noted the prevalence of false denunciations in totalitarian settings, as determined by authorities’ investigations, such as in Nazi Germany (Gellately 1990; Mann 1987) and the Soviet Union (Fitzpatrick 1996). False denunciations, in particular, belie the importance of ideology as a motivation for denunciations. Although ideology may explain some denunciations, it is unlikely to provide a general account of why people denounce in repressive settings.

Intergroup Conflict

A second explanation derives from ethnic or intergroup conflict. Many repressive settings have important ethnic tensions, and in such environments individuals may denounce to harm members of the opposing group. This may be particularly likely if there is inter-ethnic competition for resources (Nagel and Olzak 1982), especially if one or more

groups perceive resource allocations as unfair (Eder et al. 2002). This may give rise to resentment, which could in turn lead to denunciations of members of the opposing group. Other emotions may also lead to intergroup denunciations: fear may arise from security threats from the other group, hatred may grow out of past injustices, and rage may prompt inter-ethnic conflict to become the outlet for personality disorders (Petersen 2002).

As a motivation for reporting denunciations, however, ethnic conflict as a general explanation is unlikely. Recall that citizen participation in social control occurs across settings, including settings without a salient ethnic or intergroup dimension. Even in contexts that have an important ethnic conflict, there are often a large percentage of intra-ethnic denunciations. This was the case in Nazi Germany, where many “good” Germans denounced each other, much to the dismay of the authorities. This was also the case in the Spanish Inquisition, as the following case study will show. Although intergroup conflict may give rise to some portion of denunciations, it is unlikely to explain their occurrence more generally.

Self-Interest

The most common argument for why people denounce in repressive regimes is self-interest, a finding that has been established by various historians evaluating specific settings. In her study of the Soviet Union, Fitzpatrick (1996:853) observes the prevalence of “denunciation writers with personal agendas.” Gross (1984), in his study of Poland during World War II, similarly reports the prevalence of denouncing to settle personal scores, as do various historians of Nazi Germany (Diewald-Kerkmann 1995; Dörner 2000; Johnson 2000; Mann 1987; Ruckenbergel 2005).

Self-interest is also often found to be the primary motivation in studies of collaboration, a closely related topic exploring why individuals cooperate with foreign occupying forces.⁵ A common finding is that people collaborate because they prioritize their own and their family's well-being and survival (Thiranagama and Kelly 2011). In his study of Chinese collaboration with the Japanese occupation during World War II, Brook (2005:23) highlights how strategic actors competed to obtain scarce political and economic resources from the occupying forces. These collaborators were not cowed by the Japanese military might or swayed by their ideology: "If occupation creates collaboration from below, collaboration demands compromise from above."

Within both of these literatures, self-interest is generally treated as monolithic. Yet, different types of self-interested behavior might arise from divergent institutional conditions. I build on this idea by articulating two models of participation that should occur in different environments. Whereas both tend to lead to widespread denunciations, the predicted motivations and patterns differ, which should have broad implications for the enactment of social control and repression. I call these the *coercion model* and the *volunteer model*.

TWO MODELS OF DENUNCIATION

Below I present the two general models of denunciation, describing how a key institutional difference leads to different individual dynamics. These models should be considered as ideal types, as developed by Weber (1978). These are analytic constructs that do not perfectly reflect any particular setting in history; in reality, cases may vary in the

extent to which they reflect one type versus the other. Some settings may contain mixed forms of the models. Nevertheless, these ideal types illustrate key institutional variation that recurs across settings and that should elicit contrasting motivations to denounce. Through these ideal types, it is possible to derive testable hypotheses of behaviors that should emerge under each model.

The Coercion Model

In the coercion model, authorities elicit denunciations through the use of incentives. These incentives are usually negative: explicit or implicit threats are made against individuals. These incentives often entail threats of direct harm or are grounded in commonly held beliefs that denouncing provides protection against subsequent suspicion. Occasionally, incentives can be positive, promising monetary rewards or career advancement.⁶ Incentives may be targeted, where they are applied to particular individuals, or diffuse, where all members of a community feel coercive pressure to denounce. Regardless of the valence or extent of targeting, the presence of authority-based incentives leads potential denouncers to orient toward the authorities in their decision-making process. In other words, individuals primarily decide whether to denounce based on the strength of the incentives.

Within such an environment, individuals denounce primarily to avoid negative consequences or to gain positive rewards. Denouncers seek to appease the authorities and remove any coercive pressure from themselves and their families. This is not to argue that everyone will therefore denounce, but rather that most people who do will be motivated primarily by the nature and strength of the authority-based incentive structure.

The Volunteer Model

The second model is the volunteer model. In contrast to the coercion model, authorities in the volunteer model offer no direct incentives to denouncers. Instead, authorities encourage denunciations without compelling them. Although authorities tend to be equally as eager and receptive to denunciations as in the coercion model, their methods are more passive. Authorities who believe they have widespread ideological support and that citizens will freely participate may be most likely to use this model.

This combination of receptivity and passivity by the authorities allows individuals to consider the indirect benefits they may derive from denouncing others, not from the authorities themselves, but within their local communities. Every community has an underlying network of negative relationships, or negative ties. Negative ties are an “enduring, recurring set of negative judgments, feelings and behavioral intentions toward another person—a negative person schema” (Labianca and Brass 2006:597). Such ties often arise out of social, economic, or political rivalries, and although negative ties tend to occur less frequently than positive ties, they constitute a fundamental aspect of social experience (Cosser 1956) and are present wherever they have been evaluated (Gersick, Dutton, and Bartunek 2000; Labianca, Brass, and Gray 1998). This is the “dark side of intimacy” (Geschiere 1997) and denunciations provide the means by which individuals can harm others whom they dislike and gain relative to them within their communities. This is especially important because people tend to assess their own well-being relative to those around them (Frank 1985). Social status and economic competition are primarily local in

nature. Denouncing becomes a way of harming others within a community and gaining in relative status.

The volunteer model therefore contrasts with the coercion model in that the orientation of denouncers is directed internally toward their local communities and not externally toward the authorities. By remaining passive, the authorities are able to access the underlying networks of negative ties within local communities, which provides a self-sustaining population of volunteers eager to report on their neighbors' behavior.⁷

This model contradicts one of the tenets of Black's (1976) theory of law. Black argues that the closer the relationship between two people, the more likely they are to use informal means to resolve conflicts. However, the volunteer model can be appealing, because "in ordinary life, we avoid conflict and fear to do violence to each other; in times of conflict, we are relieved when another supralocal actor performs his violence against those with whom we have disputes" (Thiranagama and Kelly 2011:15). By providing access to such a supralocal actor, the volunteer model offers the opportunity for the "privatization of politics" (Kalyvas 2006), in which dispute resolution can be as simple as making a brief report to the secret police.⁸

Although the motivation of denouncers in this model may appear orthogonal to the interests of the state, the authorities nevertheless accrue certain benefits. Cooperation, even for personal reasons, is a tacit acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the authorities to investigate and adjudicate a complaint. Widespread denouncing may therefore give the impression of popular support for the authorities and their agenda. Also, even if much of the information provided is self-serving, true denunciations still allow the authorities to

punish deviant behavior, which increases social control. Widespread denouncing also serves as a deterrent against deviant behavior, as individuals will want to avoid giving others an easy opportunity to denounce them, regardless of the motivation.

HYPOTHESES AND METHODS

The two models specify a key institutional difference that leads to different motivations to denounce, both of which are fundamentally self-interested. Whereas denouncers in the coercion model orient themselves to the demands of the authorities and try to appease or satisfy those desires, denouncers in the volunteer model orient toward their community and the ways they can harm particular others. This leads to differing hypotheses about the patterns of denunciations that should be observed. I construct these hypotheses comparatively, because the analysis focuses on within-case variation, which is the primary source of causal inference within comparative historical analysis (Lange 2012; Mahoney and Rueschemeyer 2003). By comparing subgroups within cases that reflect either a coercive or a volunteer environment, I can assess hypotheses that reflect differences in institutional conditions. The disaggregation and testing of the same theoretical constructs across disparate cases then provides greater generalized support for the mechanisms being studied (Rueschemeyer 2003; Smelser 2013).

Hypothesis 1: In the volunteer model, compared to the coercion model, denouncers will tend to be geographically closer to the people they denounce.

Because the volunteer model involves a local orientation in which individuals seek advantage within their communities, denunciations in this model should be highly local in

nature. Denouncing someone farther away is less likely to confer status or other benefits. In contrast, the coercion model does not have any particular prediction about the nearness of the two parties, so in comparison to the volunteer model, denunciations should be less local.

Hypothesis 2: In the volunteer model, compared to the coercion model, denouncers will tend to have closer relationships to the people they denounce.

Negative ties and rivalries likely require regular contact to be sustained. Therefore, denouncers in the volunteer model will tend to denounce people they commonly interact with. This does not mean people will denounce those closest to them, such as family members, but rather they will not denounce distant acquaintances. Similar to the previous hypothesis, there is no strong prediction for the coercion model. Denouncers in coercive environments are primarily trying to appease the authorities, so the closeness of the relationship is not particularly salient. However, in comparison to the volunteer model, relationships should be more distant.

Hypothesis 3: In the volunteer model, denouncers and the people they denounce will tend to be of similar status. In contrast, status differentiation between denouncers and the people they denounce should be greater in the coercion model.

Social or economic competition suggests that a rival's position is attainable if that rival is harmed. This requires rivals to be similar in social status; harming someone with significantly higher or significantly lower status is less likely to confer advantage.

Similarly, negative ties between individuals are most likely to develop between people of similar status. As Simmel (1904:514) argues, “An enmity must excite consciousness the more deeply and energetically the greater the similarity between the parties among whom it originates.” Gould (2003) further theorizes that conflict is most likely to occur in symmetrical relationships where there is ambiguity between actors concerning their relative social rank. Because of this ambiguity, actors’ statements can be interpreted and misinterpreted in various ways and thus conflict is more likely. In asymmetrical relationships where ranks are differentiated and distinct, this ambiguity is less likely because roles are well understood. Gould applies his theory to homicide, but it should be applicable to negative ties more generally. In contrast, the coercion model does not have a clear prediction about relative status; in comparison to the volunteer model, denouncers and those they denounce should be more differentiated in status.

Hypothesis 4: In the volunteer model, denouncers will tend to denounce one individual; in the coercion model, denouncers will tend to denounce multiple individuals.

In the coercion model, denouncers are more likely to appease the authorities the greater number of people they denounce. With more information provided, the likelihood of satisfying the authorities increases. In contrast, research shows that negative ties are sparse (Gersick et al. 2000; Labianca et al. 1998), and therefore denunciations in the volunteer model should be more targeted.

Hypothesis 5: In the volunteer model, compared to the coercion model, denunciations will tend to be less prototypical.

Because denouncers' primary objective in the coercion model is to appease the authorities, they are likely to denounce individuals who closely match the prototypical deviant from the authorities' perspective. In many settings, authorities are particularly interested in learning about deviant behavior by members of a particular subgroup of the population or about particular crimes. Thus, individuals in the coercion model are more likely to appease the authorities if they denounce members of those groups or those crimes. In contrast, negative ties should be relatively idiosyncratic (Leskovec, Huttenlocher, and Kleinberg 2010) and independent of prototypicality; such ties generally arise from highly personalized conflicts, misunderstandings, and rivalries.

Hypothesis 6: Both the volunteer model and the coercion model will have many false denunciations.

Because both models specify self-interest as the key motivation for denouncers, both cases are likely to have a substantial number of false denunciations. In the coercion model, this will occur when denouncers want to appease the authorities, but they either do not have any relevant information or want to protect the individuals whom they could honestly denounce. In the volunteer model, this will occur when an individual wants to harm a particular target but does not have any information about deviant behavior by that individual. The models do not have implications as to the relative numbers of false denunciations, simply that they should be present in both cases.⁹

I now turn to a comparative analysis of two historical cases—the Spanish Inquisition and Romanov Russia—to test these hypotheses. These cases are ideal for this analysis because both contain internal variation that allows for a direct comparison between the two

models, helping to isolate the institutional mechanism affecting patterns of denunciations. Furthermore, the two settings represent very distinct contexts, taking place over 100 years and thousands of miles apart. Comparing such disparate cases provides a difficult test for the generalizability of the theory.

THE SPANISH INQUISITION

Until the middle of the fifteenth century, the Iberian Peninsula was divided into several kingdoms. The two largest of these—Castile and Aragon—were united for the first time in 1469 through the marriage of Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon. Despite this consolidation, neither ruler was in a particularly strong position. Isabella fought a two-year civil war to maintain her claim, and Ferdinand fought a similar war in Aragon. Together, they faced the task of uniting a diverse territory while maintaining and strengthening their tenuous grip on power.

Within this context, Isabella and Ferdinand instituted policies to control three minority groups within their territory. The first population the Crown sought to control was the *conversos*, that is, Jews who had converted to Christianity or whose ancestors had converted to Christianity. To achieve this, they requested and received dispensation from the Pope to begin the Spanish Inquisition, whose mandate was to identify *conversos* who were secretly following Jewish precepts and punish them.¹⁰ Unlike other inquisitions in Europe, Isabella and Ferdinand gained control of the Spanish incarnation themselves, including the power to select their own inquisitors. This furthered their program of political control, and they appointed the first inquisitors in 1480. In 1492, they moved to control

another subpopulation—the Jews—by expelling them from Spain unless they converted to Christianity. A similar law was implemented regarding Muslims in 1502.

Inquisitorial Institutions

Tribunals were set up in select cities around Spain to conduct trials, but the inquisitors of the Spanish Inquisition were itinerant. They spent much of the year traveling as they went from village to village collecting confessions and denunciations. When an inquisitor arrived in a new village, he first gave a sermon describing broadly what was considered a crime and exhorting the villagers to confess and denounce.

For the first two decades of the Spanish Inquisition, this sermon was followed by the Edict of Grace. The Edict of Grace guaranteed a grace period—customarily 30 days—in which any villagers who came forward and freely shared everything they knew with the inquisitor would not be taken to trial and were not eligible for the Inquisition's worst punishment, burning at the stake (Kamen 1999). Instead, so long as the inquisitors believed penitents had disclosed all they knew—including denouncing others—those individuals escaped with minor penalties or penances. There was thus intense pressure on *conversos* to speak to the inquisitor during this time period, as not cooperating would put them at risk. Any cooperation that occurred after the grace period afforded no protection.

The Edict of Grace created a highly coercive environment, which fits well with the coercion model. *Conversos* faced strong incentives from the authorities to cooperate and denounce; otherwise they could face extreme consequences. Indeed, 99.4 percent of individuals brought to trial in the tribunal of Valencia between 1478 and 1530 were found guilty (Haliczer 1990).

Importantly, in 1500 the Edict of Grace was replaced by the Edict of Faith, while all other institutional features of the Inquisition remained constant. The Edict of Faith instituted only one change: participants were no longer offered protection in exchange for their cooperation. Individuals were still encouraged to come forward and denounce, but there were no longer costs associated with not doing so. The strong incentive to denounce was no longer in effect, and the environment changed to correspond with the volunteer model.

Why did the Edict of Grace transition to the Edict of Faith? In essence, the grace period was always a false promise. Most people who came forward to cooperate were brought to trial years later, as happened to 88 percent of individuals in Valencia who cooperated during the Edict of Grace (Haliczer 1990). The inquisitors simply had to say that they did not believe cooperators had shared everything they knew and were withholding information. Previous confessions could then be used as evidence against such individuals at trial. By 1500, this practice was widely known throughout the Kingdom and the pretense was dropped.

After a denunciation was made, an investigation ensued. Although the stated purpose of the Inquisition was to find and punish *conversos* who had reverted to Judaism, the scope of crimes of interest to the inquisitors was far broader. Heretical statements or anything not fully in line with Christian dogma were investigated. Even curse words spoken in the heat of anger were considered sufficiently blasphemous for conviction. Such actions were “devoid of any heretical intent” (Rawlings 2008:117), yet they were the most widely persecuted crimes in the early modern period (Flynn 1995).

After being accused of a crime, denounced individuals were typically arrested. They were then jailed for the duration of the trial and their possessions were auctioned off, one by one, to pay for their incarceration.^{11, 12} Throughout this process, defendants never learned exactly what they were charged with; to protect the anonymity of the denouncer, when and where the alleged crime had taken place was kept purposefully vague (Melammed 2002). Defendants were also sometimes tortured to elicit confessions.

Once a trial commenced, the possibility of escaping unscathed was almost nonexistent. This is partially because an acquittal was a sign of dishonor to the inquisitors. At minimum, the convicted were humiliated during a public ceremony and required to wear a yellow smock, known as a *sanbenito*, for a period of time, broadcasting their shame. They also forfeited all property acquired since their indiscretion and could no longer hold certain occupations, wear certain clothing, or ride in carriages, in carts, or on horses. Violation of any of these conditions could result in a new trial, where the automatic punishment was burning at the stake.

The Soria Files

The set of denunciations I analyze consist of 554 complaints recorded by the inquisitors' notaries from 1486 to 1502 in the Diocese of Soria and Burgo de Osma, which is located in north-central Spain. These reports were stored in the *Archivo General de Simancas* and were transcribed by Carlos Carrete Parrondo (1985). They include denunciations made during the Edict of Grace and the Edict of Faith; the outcomes of the investigations and trials are unknown (Edwards 1988). I translated these records from Early Modern Spanish and coded them according to variables described in the hypotheses.

Common to many historical records, these records are incomplete and lack several folios. However, the hypotheses are at the intra-denunciation level, meaning that relations within each denunciation text are being compared. As long as certain types of denunciations are not more likely to be missing, and there is no reason to believe they are, these results should not be biased.

Importantly, these data straddle the institutional change from the Edict of Grace to the Edict of Faith. Because of missing data for the middle years, the denunciations primarily come from the years 1492 and before (45 percent), and 1500 and after (54 percent). Only five denunciations are recorded for the years between 1493 and 1499. This is fortuitous for this analysis; as mentioned previously, *conversos* eventually realized that the Edict of Grace was a false promise. Most data from the Edict of Grace period come from the earliest years of the Inquisition, when the *conversos* had likely not yet realized the inquisitors' subterfuge.

Another important point must be made about these data. Although the Inquisition was strongly targeted against *conversos* during this time period, and the individuals denounced were almost invariably *conversos* (Antón 1984; Edwards 1988; Parrondo 1985), there is some uncertainty as to the social category of the denouncers. Three relevant groups lived in this region in the early years of the Inquisition: Jews, Old Christians, and *conversos*.¹³ The institutional change in 1500, however, affected only the *conversos*, as they were the ones who experienced coercion in the earlier time period. Therefore, to understand how incentives affect motivation, it is important to be relatively certain that it was *conversos* denouncing each other.

Fortunately, Jewish denouncers can be identified by their names. Parrondo (1985) catalogs every Jewish denouncer in the appendix to his book. I removed these denunciations, of which there are 86, from the data. Unfortunately, there is no direct way to know for certain whether the remaining denouncers were Old Christians or *conversos*. However, indirect evidence suggests it was *conversos* denouncing one another. Beinart (1981), who studied denunciations in the city of Ciudad Real during this time period, primarily finds *conversos* making the denunciations, as does Haliczzer (1990) for the tribunal of Valencia. Finally, if Old Christians were making the majority of the denunciations, there should be little difference in patterns of denunciations across the two time periods, as Old Christians did not experience coercive pressure in the earlier period. As we will see, that was not the case. It thus seems highly likely that these data represent denunciations made by *conversos* against *conversos*.

Patterns of Denunciation

Table 1 evaluates denunciations in the early period (1486 to 1499) and the later period (1500 to 1502), when *conversos* faced a coercive and a volunteer environment, respectively. By comparing patterns of denunciations across these two time periods, we can evaluate the hypotheses. Unless otherwise noted in the text, I use chi-square tests of independence for this analysis.¹⁴

<Table 1 about here>

The first hypothesis states that denouncers in the volunteer model should target geographically closer individuals than denouncers in the coercion model. In the Soria files, this is indeed the case. Of denouncers in the post-1500 period, 63 percent denounced

someone from the same village, compared to 48 percent of denouncers in the pre-1500 period ($\chi^2 = 9.40, p < .01$). This finding is further corroborated by looking at the mean and median distance between villages in cases where the denouncer did not accuse someone from the same village.¹⁵ The difference in the median distance is striking: in the pre-1500 time period, the median distance was 96 kilometers; in the post-1500 period, it was 30 kilometers.

The second hypothesis states that denouncers in the volunteer model should denounce closer relationships than denouncers in the coercion model. Relationship closeness can be inferred through a close reading of the context in which alleged crimes took place and the ways denouncers sometimes characterized their relationship with the person denounced. I define a close relationship as one in which the denouncer and denounced were in business together, were co-workers, had direct conversations with each other, were housemates, had been in one another's houses, had much contact, or were relatives.¹⁶ I define distant relationships as denouncers who were two degrees of separation from the person they denounced (e.g., a friend of a friend), who overheard or saw the crime but did not directly interact with the person denounced, who heard about the crime secondhand, or who denounced someone who is described as being temporarily in town. Using these categories, there is a clear difference between the early and later time periods. In the earlier period, almost twice as many denunciations were made against distant relationships as against close relationships, whereas in the later period this pattern is reversed.

The third hypothesis regards the relative status of the denouncer and the person denounced. Status is somewhat difficult to determine in these data, and I examine it in two

ways. First, I look at the occupations of the individuals involved in denunciations. Unfortunately, the provision of occupations is sporadic, and few denunciations include the occupation of both the denouncer and the person denounced: only 37 in the early time period and 28 in the later period. This means any results are tentative, especially because the reason for occupation not being systematically recorded is unknown. I divide occupations into three types: low-status industry jobs, which include occupations such as shoemaker, carpenter, and weaver; high-status professional jobs, which include physicians, lawyers, and priests; and traders, who would have fallen in the middle of the status hierarchy (Blockmans and Janse 1999; Crawford 2014; O'Day 2000). Using this categorization, 46 percent of denouncers in the earlier period denounced someone of similar status, whereas 55 percent did so in the later time period. Although this difference is not statistically significant, it is in the expected direction.

A second measure of status is gender. Women had lower status than men during this time period; this is evident in the denunciations themselves, as many women are identified by their relation to their husband. Gender is consistently identified in the data, and the hypothesis predicts more within-gender denunciations in the later time period. This is indeed the case, with 68 percent of denunciations being within gender in the early time period and 80 percent of denunciations being within gender starting in 1500 ($\chi^2 = 8.01, p < .01$).¹⁷

The fourth hypothesis relates to the number of people denounced by each denouncer. In the period before 1500, 23 percent of individuals denounced more than one person. In the period after 1500, 13 percent of denouncers denounced more than one person ($\chi^2 = 4.93,$

$p < .05$). Again, this is consistent with the hypothesis that individuals are more likely to denounce more than one person in the coercion model.

The fifth hypothesis regards the prototypicality of those denounced. The Inquisition was primarily interested in *conversos* who were secretly practicing Jewish traditions, so denouncing for such crimes would have been the most prototypical denunciation and the most likely to appease the authorities. Consistent with the hypothesis, 46 percent of denunciations in the early period were for Jewish practices, compared to 27 percent in the later period ($\chi^2=15.13, p < .001$). Furthermore, denouncers occasionally indicated if the person they were denouncing was widely known as a bad Christian. This occurred in 9 percent of all denunciations before 1500, but only 1 percent after 1500 ($\chi^2=18.09, p < .001$). Again, this is consistent with earlier denouncers trying to reinforce their helpfulness to the authorities; this was a rhetorical device added to otherwise specific denunciations.

The sixth hypothesis—that many denunciations in both periods should be false—cannot be evaluated, as the Soria files include only the initial denunciations made to inquisitors. However, the records do contain several clues as to how people felt about the Inquisition, along with their thoughts about the truthfulness of the denunciations. Alvaro de Prado, for instance, claimed that “in Castile more than fifteen hundred people have been burned by false witnesses.” Diego, also of Aranda, elaborated on a similar statement by declaring that “there were another hundred that would say it.” A different Diego was so incensed that he asserted, “I swear to God or to the Corpus Christi, which I worship, that of those they burned at Aranda, none of them was a heretic.”

These complaints about false denunciations correspond with the opinions of several historians that such behavior was indeed prevalent (Netanyahu 2001; Roth 2002). Roth (2002:215) prints a report by the contemporary Fernando de Pulgar: “There were in this city some poor and vile Jewish men who because of enmity or malice gave false testimony against one of the *conversos*, saying that he had seen him Judaizing.”¹⁸

One additional result is worth mentioning. Although it does not quite fit within any of the six hypotheses, it is consistent with the overall theory. Many people in the Soria files denounced someone who was already deceased, and this was much more common in the early period. Of denunciations before 1500, 25 percent were against dead people, compared to 5 percent in the later period ($\chi^2 = 38.72, p < .001$). This accords well with the theoretical models; in the volunteer model, denunciations should be made against living individuals, as denouncing the dead does not cause direct harm nor does it provide relative advantage.¹⁹ However, denouncing deceased individuals under the coercion model allowed villagers to demonstrate their eagerness to provide information. Indeed, authorities were interested in information about the deceased; such individuals were posthumously put on trial.

Together, the denunciations from the Spanish Inquisition provide support for the hypotheses and show a marked contrast in patterns of denunciations between the early and late periods. The coercion model and the volunteer model reliably predict denouncer behavior, lending support for their validity as descriptors of denouncer motivation.

ROMANOV RUSSIA

Russia was a place of extreme turmoil at the turn of the seventeenth century.²⁰ The years from 1598 to 1613 are known as the “Time of Troubles” and consisted of political, social, and economic upheaval. Politically, the ruling elite began to collapse in 1601, and four different rulers briefly gained power. Compounding these political problems, there was a devastating famine from 1601 to 1603. Together, this resulted in a massive dislocation of the population and widespread destruction of entire villages.

Only in 1612 did some modicum of stability return to the region. It was in this year that native Muscovites recaptured Moscow, which had been taken in an invasion by Polish forces. With Muscovy unified, an assembly was called to appoint a new tsar. In 1613, delegates from the various towns gathered, and on February 7, 1613, the Assembly of the Land of Moscow chose a 16-year-old, Mikhail Fedorovich Romanov, to rule Muscovy.

Mikhail was clearly a compromise choice. He was young, sickly, and had “limited gifts” (Crummey 1987:231). He was also not an obvious choice in terms of lineage. Yet Mikhail was the only person the various social classes could agree on, and his perceived insignificance and weakness likely contributed to him being chosen.

Nevertheless, Mikhail set about the task of reinstating the rule of law, rebuilding the army, and fighting off pretenders to the throne. Surprisingly, he was able to consolidate power and start what became the 304-year Romanov Dynasty. One of the tools he used to accomplish these goals and restore governance was an institution known as the Sovereign’s Word and Deed.

The Sovereign's Word and Deed

Under the Sovereign's Word and Deed, individuals were obligated to report any act or expression of treason against the tsar. The policy had existed previous to Mikhail's reign, but it had applied only to the noble class. Mikhail expanded it to include all social classes. If someone was heard plotting against the tsar or saying something negative about him, this was known as a "Sovereign's Word." If a treasonous act was witnessed, this was a "Sovereign's Deed." After declaring knowledge of a Sovereign's Word or Deed to a local official, that official was required to open up an inquiry into the case. Examples of denunciations include individuals comparing themselves to the tsar, verbally insulting the tsar, or charges of corruption. The Sovereign's Word and Deed was embedded in the inviolability of the Tsar's honor (Rustemeyer 2006).

The scope of crimes was broad and what constituted a crime was never explicitly stated. Instructions were not codified until the early 1700s, and these instructions still permitted remarkable room for interpretation. Although the authorities were purportedly looking for treason that had the potential to directly harm the tsar, the cases they zealously investigated included drunken statements made about the tsar and economic or administrative crimes.

The Sovereign's Word and Deed was technically an obligation to denounce, but local residents did not perceive it this way. As Lapman (1981:202) notes, individuals who knew of crimes but did not denounce "showed no fear . . . of being accused of disloyalty themselves." This system thus fits well with the volunteer model. Individuals could freely

denounce if they so desired, but there was no punishment for not denouncing and no reward for providing information.

Once a crime was reported, denouncers and the people they denounced were interrogated, occasionally together. Both denouncers and those denounced could be incarcerated or put under guard during an investigation. A denounced individual could stay in jail up to a month, which was the general duration of a trial. Jails tended to be unhealthy, and prisoners sometimes died from hunger and “bad air” (Kollmann 2012).

Denouncers and those they denounced could also be tortured or threatened with torture if the official believed that either person was not revealing everything they knew. When denouncers freely answered all of the official’s questions, they were rarely tortured. For those denounced, being stoic in the face of torture was an important defense against accusations of wrongdoing. However, torture or the threat of torture against those denounced occurred in only a minority of investigations.

After the basic facts of a case had been gathered to the best of the local administrator’s abilities, he would send a report to Moscow and await further instructions. If a guilty verdict was returned, local officials usually meted out the punishment in front of the entire town’s population. Punishments ranged from simple reprimands to imprisonment to beatings to death, although the majority of cases resulted in a brief imprisonment or a beating.

Note the different attitude toward denunciations by the Russian authorities compared to the Spanish inquisitors. In Russia, the authorities imposed potentially burdensome costs on individuals who came forward to provide information. Nevertheless, people denounced.

If the hypotheses are borne out in the data, this suggests the individual benefits of denouncing were considerable. As Levesque (1800:100) put it over a century later, “The most respectable citizen could be arrested on the accusation of the lowliest pauper. A severe punishment awaited the calumniator, but if he was vigorous and a little sensible, he was sure to bring his enemy to loss.”

This voluntary system persisted throughout the entire period of investigation, with no temporal variation in the institutional structure. Within this environment, however, a particular group of individuals *did* experience an incentive to cooperate with the authorities and denounce others: prisoners. Prisoners believed that if they provided information to the authorities or managed to assist an official higher up than the local constable, they could get out of jail. This belief was widespread (Lapman 1981). Furthermore, another, smaller group of individuals experienced similar incentives to denounce: people in the process of being arrested or beaten by the authorities. If such an individual called out knowledge of a Sovereign’s Word or Deed, the beating or arrest would come to a halt and an investigation would ensue. This provided a brief respite, at the very least.

These groups represent a category of individuals who experienced the Sovereign’s Word and Deed as a system with authority-based incentives. They believed that if they assisted the authorities, the negative situations they were in would improve.²¹ By comparing their patterns of denunciations to free individuals, I can again evaluate the hypotheses.

The Muscovy Files

The denunciations from Muscovy come from the archives of the Service Chancellery of Moscow, which was the section of government most involved in cases of the Sovereign's Word and Deed. These records were collected by Lapman (1981) and consist of 453 denunciations spanning the period 1600 to 1649. They include summary reports sent to Moscow, testimony transcripts, directives from Moscow, and the final decisions made by Muscovite officials. Not all the cases include each of these elements, but each element occurs in at least several hundred cases. There does not appear to be any systematic reason why cases are missing particular components (Lapman 1981).

Similar to the Soria files, these are not the complete records for this time period. A massive fire occurred in Moscow in 1626 and destroyed almost all records of the Sovereign's Word and Deed. This explains the dearth of denunciations during the first years of the period of analysis. Otherwise, it is reasonable to assume that losses were random (Lapman 1981). Considering there were no major institutional differences between the early and later periods, there is little reason to think that these missing records somehow bias the results. Again, the use of within-denunciation analysis obviates the need for the complete universe of denunciations during a given time period, as long as certain types of records are not systematically missing.

To prepare the data for analysis, I removed 39 denunciations made by nobles. Nobles made denunciations in their role as administrators, not as independent individuals, and they tended to report uprisings. I also removed three denunciations made before Mikhail Romanov came to power in 1613. The fact that these denunciations were made before the

scope of the Sovereign's Word and Deed was expanded makes them difficult to interpret, especially considering they were not made by nobles.

Next, I divided the denunciations into free individuals and prisoners. Among the denunciations, 234 fall in the former category and 177 are in the latter.²² The ensuing analysis compares denunciations by free individuals against denunciations by prisoners across the six hypotheses.

Importantly, this comparison requires that the two populations comprise similar individuals and that the only variation is the existence of the perceived incentive. If imprisoned individuals are of a different "type" than non-prisoners, then that variation could be the cause of any differences in patterns of denunciations between the two groups. It is difficult to know to what extent criminals and non-criminals differed, and it is not unreasonable to expect differences between the two populations. Prisoners, being more willing to commit crimes, might have been more likely than non-criminals to fabricate denunciations. Criminals may also have been more self-interested and less swayed by the prevailing norms and morals of society.²³ Even if this were true, though, there is no clear reason to expect such characteristics to systematically affect how criminals behaved in accordance with five of the six hypotheses.²⁴ Therefore, differing patterns of denunciations along these dimensions likely reflect the differential presence of incentives rather than group differences.

Patterns of Denunciations

Table 2 displays results of the analysis comparing prisoners to non-prisoners during the first several decades of the Romanov Dynasty. Due to differences in the data source and

context compared to the Spanish Inquisition, some of the hypotheses are operationalized in different ways. However, they test the same fundamental concepts.

<Table 2 about here>

In the Muscovy files, the specific villages where the denouncers and the people denounced live is unavailable. However, the region is recorded.²⁵ Considering that region covers a wide territory, it comes as little surprise that most denunciations by both prisoners and free individuals were within the same region, and the result is only marginally significant ($\chi^2 = 3.53, p < .10$). However, the difference is in the expected direction: prisoners denounced someone from the same region 81 percent of the time, and non-prisoners denounced someone from the same region 88 percent of the time.

The second hypothesis—regarding relationship closeness—is difficult to evaluate in the Muscovy files. The data provide little in the way of clues about the relationship between denouncers and the people they denounced. Therefore, this hypothesis cannot be properly evaluated. The findings about geographic proximity are relevant, however, as individuals spatially closer likely had stronger relationships. Moreover, six cases were between family members, and in accordance with this hypothesis, all but one were made by free individuals.

The third hypothesis states that the volunteer model should result in more denunciations between people of similar status. Relevant social categories in this setting include provincial hereditary servitors, Cossacks, peasants, bondsmen, musketeers, churchpeople, and townsmen; each category represents a different social status, and these social categories were very salient during this time period. Social status was usually

specified in legal and private documents, and it formed the “unquestioned cornerstone of the political order” (Kivelson 1988:8). In the denunciation data, however, the social group of both the denouncer and the person denounced is indicated in only 164 records (40 percent). Consistent with the hypothesis, prisoners denounced someone of the same status 35 percent of the time, whereas non-prisoners denounced someone of the same status 45 percent of the time, although this difference is not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.12, p > .05$).

I can also take a closer look within certain statuses at the rank of individuals involved in denunciations. For churchpeople, musketeers, and Cossacks, rank mattered and is sometimes indicated in the case files. Within those three social groups, the rank of both parties is known in 34 cases. Within this subset, 56 percent of prisoners accused someone of the same rank, and 74 percent of non-prisoners did so. Again, these results are in the expected direction.

The fourth hypothesis states that the coercion model should lead to more denouncers accusing multiple individuals in an attempt to appease the authorities. Indeed, this was the case in the Muscovy files, with 18 percent of prisoners denouncing more than one person, and 3 percent of non-prisoners denouncing more than one person ($\chi^2 = 23.63, p < .001$).

The fifth hypothesis, that denouncers in the coercion model should denounce prototypically, is difficult to evaluate. The authorities were not targeting specific types of individuals with the Sovereign’s Word and Deed, and they seemed equally eager to investigate all types of denunciations (Lapman 1981). It is unclear what a prototypical deviant would look like, and thus this hypothesis is not particularly relevant in this context.

Finally, the Muscovy files provide information about whether denunciations were deemed to be true or false after being investigated. Of course, this should not be construed as an exact accounting of how often such denunciations occurred, as it is unlikely that investigations were able to perfectly uncover falsehoods. Regardless, the authorities concluded that 74 percent of denunciations by prisoners and 28 percent of denunciations by non-prisoners were fabricated. Recall that Hypothesis 6 does not specify whether the coercion model or the volunteer model should have more false denunciations, just that they should be present in both. And as mentioned earlier, prisoners might constitute a “type” of person who is fundamentally predisposed to make false denunciations. Even focusing on non-prisoners, though, this means that more than one out of every four denunciations was found to be false.²⁶ This is consistent with the writings of Olearius (1967:135), who documented his travel through Muscovy in the seventeenth century: “False witness and deception are so prevalent among them that they threaten not only strangers and neighbors but also brothers and spouses. . . . Cases of this sort among the Russians are countless.” In fact, false denunciations were viewed as such a problem that three of the 22 articles in the Law Code of 1649 detailed punishments for false denouncers.

Looking more closely at the specifics of falsehood is particularly enlightening. In some cases, a denouncer never named the person being accused. This happened in 32 percent of all denunciations made by prisoners and 7 percent of denunciations made by non-prisoners ($\chi^2 = 20.35, p < .001$). This disparity is revealing, as declaring knowledge of a Sovereign’s Word or Deed without providing the perpetrator’s name makes little sense for non-prisoners if they were indeed motivated by local animosities. Prisoners, on the

other hand, used unspecified denunciations strategically in an attempt to gain access to officials higher up in the hierarchy. Prisoners thought they could persuade officials to free them from incarceration through the provision of valuable information.

It is possible to gain additional insight into denouncers' motivations directly from their own demands and explanations. For example, 46 percent of imprisoned denouncers demanded to provide their evidence directly to the tsar. This was another attempt to gain access higher in the hierarchy in the hopes of escaping prison and gaining personal benefits. In contrast, only 6 percent of non-imprisoned denouncers made this demand; as they were primarily seeking to harm other local actors, it did not matter who investigated the case ($\chi^2 = 87.51, p < .001$).

In cases where denouncers ultimately admitted to falsely denouncing, they sometimes provided reasons for this behavior. The reliability of these reasons is questionable, but differences between the two populations are nevertheless revealing. Although many denouncers pled insanity or drunkenness, 2 percent of prisoners admitted to denouncing out of spite, and nine times as many (18 percent) non-prisoners admitted that spite was a motivation ($\chi^2 = 5.56, p < .05$). Furthermore, 65 percent of imprisoned denouncers admitted they were trying to gain benefits from the authorities, such as relief from a beating or release from jail. Conversely, only 18 percent of non-prisoners admitted they were seeking similar benefits ($\chi^2 = 7.14, p < .01$). These results are indicative of the differing orientations of denouncers in a coercive versus a volunteer environment; in the former, denouncers hope to gain something from the authorities, whereas in the latter they want to harm

members of their community. Across all testable hypotheses, the results are consistent with the two models.

DISCUSSION

The preceding analysis demonstrates that a key difference in institutions of social control can lead to different outcomes in patterns of denunciations. Environments with authority-based incentives to denounce lead to denunciations that attempt to placate or appease those authorities; voluntary environments result in denunciations that tap into negative networks and reflect the striving to harm others and gain relative to them. In both cases, the predominant motivation is self-interest.

Nevertheless, both models serve to enhance social control and consolidate power in repressive regimes. Although either may result in a preponderance of false denunciations, the authorities still benefit in important ways. Some of the information acquired is truthful, which allows the authorities to punish deviance. More importantly, however, the authorities' responsiveness and denouncers' unpredictability deters others from showing anything but allegiance to the authorities for fear of being denounced. Even though such behavior will not necessarily protect someone from false denunciations, it may reduce the likelihood of being denounced and may lessen any hardship experienced as a result of an investigation.

Widespread denouncing also benefits the authorities in other important ways. Cooperation, even if for personal reasons, is a tacit acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the authorities to investigate and adjudicate a complaint. Importantly, this legitimization

can occur regardless of whether or not citizens privately oppose the regime; it is public opinion, not private opinion, that undergirds political power (Kuran 1997). Widespread denouncing may give a false impression of popular support for the authorities and their agenda, which can lead to the diffusion of regime-supporting norms (Centola, Willer, and Macy 2005).

Furthermore, because actors know that any person can denounce them at any time, their social associations likely become constrained. Caution prevents individuals from giving others an excuse to denounce them. Yet although horizontal bonds are ruptured, hierarchical bonds are strengthened through the collaboration of ordinary citizens with social control agents. Ultimately, this can lead to a reorientation of society away from cooperation and trust, and toward hierarchy and obedience.

The authorities can also do much to channel denunciations toward harming particular groups, even if they cannot command the ideological support of the populace. The case of the Spanish Inquisition demonstrated how *conversos* were controlled, even though most denunciations were intragroup, not intergroup. This was effective in both the coercion model in the early years and the volunteer model thereafter.

The Two Models Compared

Both the coercion model and the volunteer model can lead to increased social control, but there are important differences in the macro implications of each. Despite both models potentially leading to widespread denunciations, social control should be imposed more efficiently in the volunteer model than in the coercion model.²⁷ In other words, it requires more resources for a state to employ an active police force that maintains and

enforces incentives than to employ a more passive and sparser police force that waits for denunciations to be reported by relying on internal local dynamics. This is particularly evident in the contrast between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Nazi Germany maintained an estimated one Gestapo officer for every 10,000 residents (Ayçoberry 2000; Johnson 1997). The Soviet Union, which implemented a coercive system, had one secret police officer for every 500 residents during the same time period (Gellately 1997).²⁸ Yet both systems are commonly thought to have been effective.

Furthermore, the differing orientations of potential denouncers have important implications. In the coercion model, the incentive structure is likely widely known. This means individuals will tend to attribute much of citizen participation to state incentives, and will therefore direct at least some of their anger about the resultant denunciations toward the authorities. Denouncers themselves may also resent the authorities for particularly coercive tactics. In the volunteer model, the lack of authority-based incentives suggests that individuals will attribute widespread denouncing to personal choice. They may view denouncing as an attempt to harm others or they may perceive it as an indication of popular support for the regime. Denouncers themselves may be grateful to the authorities for assisting in the resolution of private disputes. In the volunteer model, any blame or dissatisfaction with the generalized system of social control may be deflected away from the authorities and toward the local community.

A similar dynamic should exist among people who consider denouncing but do not go through with it. In a coercive environment, individuals who resist pressure to denounce are in implicit conflict with the authorities; they are choosing to defy the authorities' incentives

and suffer the consequences. In the volunteer model, however, people who do not denounce are not in conflict with anyone. Their orientation was never toward the authorities, so not denouncing should have little impact on their perception of that relationship.

Together, these differences suggest that authorities may be less at risk for collective action against the regime in the volunteer model than in the coercion model. The volunteer model may therefore lead to a more stable repression. Ultimately, social control is most effective when authorities provide individuals maximum freedom to direct its coercive power.²⁹

This indicates that resisting repression in the volunteer model may be especially challenging, as authority structures become entangled with community dynamics. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that solidarity may lead to a kind of immunity. As Kamen (1999:178) reports, “In many Christian communities throughout Spain where internal discord was low and public solidarity high, fear of the Inquisition was virtually absent.”³⁰

Denunciation without Repression

These findings have potential implications beyond the scope of repressive regimes, as the coercion and volunteer models both exist outside of repressive contexts. For example, plea bargains in which defendants agree to provide evidence against others in return for reduced sentences are a clear incarnation of the coercion model. For the coercion model, the structure of government should be largely irrelevant; what matters is the nature

and force of the incentives, not whether they occur in a totalitarian state or a liberal democracy.

The volunteer model also exists outside of repressive regimes. Programs like the “See Something, Say Something” campaign run by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security are generally voluntary. Although some programs, like Crimestoppers, offer monetary rewards, contributors often describe the reward as not being particularly important (Pfuhl 1992). The key to understanding such systems outside of repressive regimes is to consider the likely damage a denunciation stemming from a negative tie could create, and the primacy authorities give to accurately identifying malfeasance versus enacting social control. For example, democracies tend to treat denunciations with more skepticism than do repressive regimes. Due process rights are supported and individuals are innocent until proven guilty. Therefore, the likelihood that a denounced individual suffers is diminished, which hampers a denouncer’s ability to cause harm and likely reduces the volume of denunciations reported to the authorities.

This comes with a caveat, however; to the extent that being investigated is costly, denouncers can still cause harm even if their target is eventually found to be innocent.³¹ Even in a fair criminal justice system, innocent individuals may suffer reputational damage or have to expend resources on their own defense, which provides an opportunity for self-interested denouncers.

In certain cases, non-repressive authorities may be open to self-serving denunciations if it means they acquire additional information, even if that information is of dubious quality. This tends to occur when the cost of sifting through such claims is perceived to be

less than the cost of failing to discover something vital. For example, consider tip hotlines in the United States that gather information about terrorism. Although Hewitt (2010:136) describes the frequency of false leads that are “provided by informers seeking asylum or other favors from the government or simply looking for revenge against a foe,” these hotlines are considered beneficial if they marginally decrease the likelihood of a future attack. Where the volunteer model succeeds at social control, it has key limitations when used to accurately identify malfeasance.

Although the coercion model and the volunteer model appear applicable to a variety of settings, the distinction between the two is based on a single institutional difference. A comparison of a greater variety of institutional features and denunciation outcomes—both within repressive regimes and without—would help further elucidate the mechanisms and motivations by which individuals participate in social control.

Notes

1. Formal social control is sometimes referred to as governmental social control.
2. Note that social control is distinct from social order. Widespread denunciations may increase social control at the expense of social order. More likely, widespread denunciations erode trust and damage social relationships, replacing community-based forms of order with order built on hierarchy and domination.
3. Although the citizenry may be providing information about deviant behavior, it is important to keep in mind that authorities' primary objective is social control. As will become clear, even when the reliability of this information is questionable, widespread denunciations can still facilitate control of the populace.
4. Another means of cooperation is *informing*, in which particular individuals are recruited and meet regularly with the authorities to provide intelligence. This behavior is largely consistent with the coercion model, which will be described shortly. Crime reporting by victims is another type of cooperation, but it is the reporting of victimless crimes that tends to be especially numerous in repressive regimes.
5. This literature takes a broader perspective than social control, with people often cooperating with authorities in order to organize economic activity or establish local government.
6. Despite the occasional use of positive incentives, I call this model the coercion model to highlight the role of the authorities. Both positive and negative incentives similarly reflect authorities' attempts to directly influence behavior.
7. This is not to say that people cannot denounce their negative ties in environments where authority-based incentives are present, but that strong incentives likely dominate the decision of when and whom to denounce. In other words, survival or protection become more important than harming particular others.
8. Note that neither model posits that *all* denunciations are made for one particular reason. Various idiosyncratic reasons likely lead to some proportion of denunciations. The argument, rather, is about the primary motivation that leads to widespread participation.
9. This last hypothesis emphasizes that formal social control is overlapping, but not coterminous, with the accurate identification of malfeasance. Social control can occur even when the information provided by denunciations constitutes a noisy signal of the actual incidence of deviant behavior, as I will explain in the Discussion section. As a pure means of gathering accurate information, however, both models have their limitations.
10. After 1530, the Inquisition's mandate expanded to include all Christians.

11. Inquisitorial procedure is best known for those who were taken to trial. However, not everyone denounced was brought to trial, and it remains uncertain why certain individuals were prosecuted but not others. Inquisitors sometimes punished small offenses on the spot, usually with a fine. However, it is unclear if these quick processes applied only to people confessing or to people denounced, as well. These lacunae prevent a complete understanding of the range of consequences for individuals who found themselves under the scrutiny of the Inquisition, but in general, such attention was likely to be unpleasant.

12. Being arrested and jailed did not preclude individuals from denouncing others. Denunciations made from prison received the same consideration as other denunciations.

13. Recall that the Jews were expelled in 1492.

14. Due to the small cell counts for several comparisons in the tables, I verify those results using Fisher's exact test (not shown).

15. Distance is measured as the crow flies.

16. This last category—relatives—is rare; it occurred in only nine cases.

17. The proportion of denunciations within each gender combination is as follows: 65 percent of denunciations were between males, 11 percent of denunciations were between females, 10 percent of denunciations consisted of males denouncing females, and 14 percent of denunciations involved females denouncing males.

18. Six people admitted to "past enmity" with the individual they denounced; all six denounced in the period after 1500.

19. Furthermore, animosity by the living toward the dead should fade with time, as negative ties tend to decay without regular interaction.

20. Russia was also known as Muscovy during this time period.

21. This was, in fact, somewhat of a false perception. Many prisoners demanded to speak directly to the tsar, assuming this would allow them to reach someone higher up in the hierarchy and help rectify their imprisonment. These requests were generally ignored, although there were exceptions (Lapman 1981).

22. The 177 include 48 denunciations made by individuals being arrested or beaten by the authorities.

23. On the other hand, there may be no differences between the two populations. There may be systemic reasons why particular individuals ended up imprisoned that are only

loosely related to their propensity to commit crimes. However, it is still important to consider the ways imprisoned individuals may be different and the impact this might have on the results.

24. The sixth being the prevalence of false denunciations, as just described.

25. Muscovy is divided into seven regions: the Belgorod Frontier, West Moscow, the West region, the South Central region, the Riazan region, East Moscow, and the Northeast region (Lapman 1981).

26. Rustemeyer (2006) argues that denouncing arose out of loyalty and ideology, due to citizens' acceptance of the sacredness of the tsar's honor. The prevalence of false denunciations, however, contradicts this.

27. This is in no way meant to endorse repression, but simply to understand how it functions. Understanding these dynamics may help reveal forms of resistance that would be most effective in a given institutional environment.

28. There are surely additional reasons why the Soviet Union maintained a larger per capita police force than the Nazis. However, to the extent that both are considered to have been effective at maintaining social control, this is a suggestive comparison.

29. This system has some similarity to the Catholic Church's regulation of European royalty's marriages and divorces (Ermakoff 1997). The Church imposed normative demands on what constituted a legitimate marriage, and their success hinged on aristocrats' acceptance of this system because it provided an avenue for strategic gain vis-à-vis other aristocrats. Similar to repression under the volunteer model, the ultimate consequence of individual strategic action was to increase institutional legitimacy and impose new behavioral constraints.

30. Negative ties, however, are more prevalent in settings where networks are denser (Burt 2005), which may be highly correlated with solidarity. Further research is needed to determine what types of community dynamics are best able to resist the volunteer model.

31. An extreme example of this is *swatting*, where an individual tries to harm another by falsely reporting a horrific crime in progress so that a SWAT team is sent to that person's home. Although the truth is usually quickly discovered, the psychological cost to victims of having their house broken into by armed police is likely substantial.

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Tables

	Pre-1500 (Coercion model)	Post-1500 (Volunteer Model)	χ^2
Geographic Proximity			
Same Village	48%	63%	9.40**
Mean Distance Between Villages ¹	108km	73km	9.32***
Relationship Closeness			
Close Relationship	27%	51%	24.55***
Distant Relationship	56%	29%	33.50***
Status Homophily			
Same Occupational Status	46%	55%	0.01
Same Gender	68%	80%	8.01**
Number Denounced			
Multiple People	23%	13%	4.93*
Prototypicality			
Jewish Practices	46%	27%	15.13***
Bad Reputation	9%	1%	18.09***
N	171	297	

⁺ p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

Table 1. Coercive Versus Voluntary Denunciations in the Soria Files, 1486-1502

¹ The last column displays the result of a t-test, as distance is a continuous variable.

	Prisoners (Coercion model)	Non-Prisoners (Volunteer Model)	χ^2
Geographic Proximity			
Same Region	81%	88%	3.53 ⁺
Status Homophily			
Same Status	35%	45%	1.12
Same Rank	56%	74%	0.34
Number Denounced			
Multiple People	18%	3%	23.63***
Falsity			
Denounced Falsely	74%	28%	39.82***
No Name	32%	7%	20.35***
Motivation			
Speak to Tsar	46%	6%	87.51***
Spite	2%	18%	5.56*
Benefits from Authorities	65%	18%	7.14**
N	177	234	

⁺ p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; p < .001

Table 2. Coercive Versus Voluntary Denunciations in Muscovy, 1613-1649