

**Christian Davenport, Hank Johnston, and Carol Mueller, editors.
Repression and Mobilization.**

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Thirty years of examining the often stormy relationship between dissidents and authorities has generated many questions and few answers. We do know, for instance, that when faced with an increase in challenger mobilization, authorities consistently resort to ever greater repressive means. When faced with increased repression, however, challengers react in a great variety of ways: some flee, others dig in and fight harder, and still others alternate between fleeing and fighting. In his introduction to this book Christian Davenport points out that what we know about the relationship between repression and mobilization is useful only to a point. Much of what counts as repression focuses on a narrowly defined set of activities. Further, existing empirical results need to be replicated. Finally, while the use of newspaper based data is increasing in popularity so too are the questions surrounding this type of data. Frustration with what we now know about repression and mobilization brought 30 political scientists and sociologists together at the University of Maryland in the summer of 2001. The result is the 21st volume of the University of Minnesota Press' Social Movements, Protest and Contention series. This particular volume is an innovative combination of subtly nuanced theoretical insights backed by solid empirical case studies.

Four sections serve to organize the chapters that make up the book. Part I is meant as a general summary of what we already know about the dynamics of repression and mobilization. On first reading, McPhail and McCarthy's chapter does strike the reader as a somewhat tedious itemization of the various elements of public protest and state policing. When viewed within the context of the book as a whole however, it stands out as an excellent overview of the present understanding researchers have about the policing-protest dynamic. Three points need highlighting here. First, McPhail and McCarthy demonstrate that despite media impressions, violence at protests is still the exception rather than the rule. Second, they show that the degree of repression varies with the experience police agents have with protest activities. Finally, they encourage researchers to look to the interaction between protesters and police rather than focusing only on one side of the equation. Vince Boudreau's analysis of the conditions shaping state repression takes seriously this challenge. Using Indonesia, Burma and the Philippines as illustrative examples, Boudreau shows that variations in state repression are conditioned by challenger power. In other words, the breadth and depth of protesters' influence on the larger society has much to do with the kind response they will receive from the state. Finally, Ronald Francisco's analysis of the "dictator's dilemma" — the fact that dictators usually respond to protest with harsh repression but that this strategy eventually undermines them — uncovers the logic of state repression and protester backlash. He tries to understand massacres and the backlash that results from both the dictators and protesters perspective.

Part II contains three chapters that look into previously unexplored areas of research into repression. They also address Davenport's critique of the narrowness of what is defined as repression and mobilization. Hank Johnston and Myra Marx Ferree's chapters do this best. Ferree reacts to state-centred approaches, arguing that in democratic states social movement action is largely decentralized and focused on cultural change. Rather than "hard repression" (state-led physical violence) many

groups experience “soft repression” defined as the use of ridicule, stigma and silencing to limit or exclude certain types of identity. Johnston’s chapter reinforces Ferree’s analysis with his discussion of “oppositional speech acts”. Using examples from former Soviet republics as well as Francoist Spain, Johnston maintains that choral societies, literary groups, even soccer matches, opened up free spaces for dissidents to challenge a repressive political system. Graffiti, the secret placement of flowers and flags, and over-taking a public event, all of which appear as either spontaneous public actions or the isolated activity of a single person, are usually well planned coordinated symbolic forms of protest. Finally Zwerman and Steinhoff combine their knowledge of the New Left in the US and Japan to show the parallel shifts found in both countries toward the increasing use of violence during the late 1960s. Their point is that those who were politicized at the height of state repression later come to use violent means. The unintended consequence is that in both the US and Japan these individuals continued to fight back, through the courts, by going underground or moving into exile. This activity lasted well into the 1990s.

Methodological issues preoccupy the two chapters in Part III. Ruud Koopmans’ chapter makes a strong and persuasive point: The relationship between dissent and repression is not a direct one; rather, it is mediated by the mass media. Using data on extreme right groups in Germany during the 1990s Koopmans tests three hypotheses around the decision of authorities to use repressive means. He shows that regardless of the actual level of right extremist group violence, the German authorities were more likely to use repression when public discussion around these groups’ actions was negative. Koopmans develops the idea of “discursive opportunities” to highlight the point that the mass media is not merely a reflection of protest violence but acts to shape and condition its use. Patrick Ball also tells a methodological cautionary tale. He compares several sources of data on political violence in Guatemala. His point is that relying solely on newspaper reports for counts of massacres and political murders does not capture the whole picture. He suggests supplementing newspaper sources with human rights organizations field and interview reports in order to correct some of the biases in mass media reporting.

Finally Part IV is intended to look to the future. The point of departure is Charles Tilly’s discussion of the Dynamics of Contention program outlined by Tilly, Doug McAdam and Sidney Tarrow in 2001. Central to that program is the idea that rather than search for large-scale law-like generalizations about what causes, in this instance, repression and mobilization, we should examine the mechanisms and combination of mechanisms that lead to certain types of protest event or episode. Mark Lichyach then discusses this new program and challenges the usefulness of mechanisms. This final section of the book is a lively and spirited challenge of a new program of study in contentious politics. However to my mind such a discussion seems out of place in a section about the future direction of studies on repression and mobilization. Why not instead expand on what Davenport calls “the Maryland model” outlined in the Introduction? This model is based on the political opportunities, framing and mobilizing structures program and Davenport makes excellent use of it to analyze the September 11th attacks on the US and their aftermath.

Yet this is a minor quibble about an otherwise excellent book. What is most rewarding about the analyses here is how they force us to look again at the absolute intricate complexity of repression and mobilization. Its value lies in its ability to open research questions that usually focused on traditional state authorities, physical violence and dissidents to include other previously ignored forms of repression and resistance. This is an exciting prospect.

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