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Limiting Dissent: The Mechanisms of State Repression in the USA

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ABSTRACT *Despite longstanding traditions of tolerance, inclusion, and democracy in the USA, dissident citizens and social movements have experienced significant and sustained – although often subtle and difficult-to-observe – repression. Using mechanism-based social movement theory, I explore a range of twentieth-century episodes of contention, involving such groups as mid-century communists, the Black Panther Party, the American Indian Movement, and the modern-day Global Justice Movement. Cracking open the black box of state repression, I demonstrate how four interactive social mechanisms – Resource Depletion, Stigmatization, Divisive Disruption, and Intimidation – animate state repression. A fifth mechanism – Emulation – diffuses the effects of these four Mechanisms of Repression. First I delineate a typology of state actions that suppress dissent. Then I shift analytically from these ten actions to the Mechanisms of Repression, explaining how these mechanisms work. Drawing on scholarship from an array of fields, and pulling data from a variety of sources, I explain how the state has engaged in activity that – operating through social mechanisms – inhibits collective action, either through raising the costs or minimizing the benefits of mobilization.*

KEY WORDS: Social movements, repression, dissent, mechanisms

Introduction

On 24 May 1990, as Earth First! members Judi Bari and Daryl Cherney drove Bari's Subaru station wagon through downtown Oakland, a pipe bomb exploded beneath the driver's seat, injuring both environmental activists. Bari, who was driving, had her spine dislocated and her pelvis shattered, while Cherney, who was riding along in the front passenger seat, received lacerations on his face and injuries to his eye. As emergency paramedics and fire personnel worked to assist Bari and Cherney, members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) domestic terrorism squad swooped in and, in concert with the local police, took control of the investigation. As members of Earth First!, a radical environmental organization, Bari and Cherney were immediately treated with suspicion. The police quickly obtained a search warrant against the activists by asserting in an affidavit that they were 'members of a violent terrorist group involved in the manufacture and placing of explosive devices'. Upon being released from the hospital the day of the

bombing, Cherney was taken into custody and charged with possession and transportation of explosives. The next day Bari was arrested in her hospital bed where she lay flitting in and out of consciousness. The mass media picked up the story, transmitting the police's assertion that the bomb belonged to Bari and Cherney and that it detonated inadvertently (Bishop, 1990; Congbalay, 1990). Two months later, lacking any credible evidence, these charges were dropped. Years later, after a vertiginous whirl of civil litigation, Bari learned that before the bombing she and Cherney were being investigated by the FBI as suspected terrorists (Helvarg, 1994; Cole & Dempsey, 2002).

But the FBI's interest in Earth First! – and environmentalists more generally – did not begin with Judi Bari and Daryl Cherney. In 1970, the Bureau sent agents to surveil Earth Day rallies in more than forty cities. A decade later, in 1980, it opened a file on Earth First! soon after the group was established (Helvarg, 1994). In 1989, the FBI arrested Earth First! founder Dave Foreman as the culmination of a two-and-a-half-year investigation that cost more than $2 million and involved between fifty and a hundred Bureau agents (Foreman, 1991; Helvarg, 1994). The arrest was facilitated by extensive surveillance through wiretaps as well as the infiltration of an agent provocateur who was working for the FBI (Helvarg, 1994; Balser, 1997). By the early 1990s, considering his own safety, Foreman decided to cease engaging in environmental 'monkeywrenching' as a way of expressing his dissent (Foreman, 1991).[1] His demobilization deprived the environmental movement of one its most prominent, charismatic leaders.

How can one best make sense of this concerted effort of the US government to squelch the actions of a dissident group? Does the repression experienced by Earth First! resemble repression from other episodes of contention? If so, how? Is history too variegated and singular to try to pinpoint generalizable causality among episodes of contention? Or, alternatively, are there recurrent causal transactions that, in combination, reorient the relationship between dissident social movements, the state, the mass media, and the general public in systematic, identifiable ways?

This article first addresses these questions by creating a typology of repressive methods used in the USA to squelch the practice of dissent. This typology also elucidates how the state has interacted with the mass media to achieve repression. Building from these on-the-ground actions, I make an analytical shift to discuss the Mechanisms of Repression, explaining how these mechanisms play out in various contexts. I assert that four social mechanisms animate the dynamic process whereby individuals and groups decide to cease participating in social movements or opt to never join them in the first place. I also explain how the effects of these four interactive social mechanisms – Resource Depletion, Stigmatization, Divisive Disruption, and Intimidation – are diffused by a fifth transactional mechanism, Emulation.

Repression and Social Movements

According to Christian Davenport (2000, p. 1) the state's propensity to resort to repression when challenged by a domestic threat is one of the 'few relationships in the social sciences that [has] stood the test of time'. Davenport asserts that this finding 'has been supported with political-historical as well as statistical evidence concerning most countries in the world over varied time periods from the late eighteenth century to the present'. I define repression as a process whereby groups or individuals attempt to diminish dissident action,

collective organization, and the mobilization of dissenting opinion by inhibiting collective action through either raising the costs or minimizing the benefits of such action.

Over the past thirty years, a number of studies have traced the effect of repression on dissident activity in an effort 'to discover the "true" relationship between repression and dissent' (Lichbach, 1987, pp. 268–269). These studies range in topic from the conditions affecting the use of political repression (e.g. Bwy, 1968; Henderson, 1991) to the timing of repression (e.g. Rasler, 1996; Moore, 1998) to the scope and intensity of repression (e.g. Gurr, 1986; Khawaja, 1993) to the dynamic relationship between repression and dissent (e.g. McPhail & McCarthy, 2005; Carey, 2006). They range in geographical location, from Germany and Northern Ireland (Francisco, 1996) to Argentina (Kalmanowiecki, 2000) to Iran (Rasler, 1996) to Belarus (Titarenko *et al.*, 2001). Brockett (1995, p. 118) notes a well-known 'paradox that regime violence smothers popular mobilization under some circumstances, but at other times similar (or even greater) levels of violence will provoke mass collective action rather than pacify the target population'. In fact, the range of empirically supported relationships between repression and dissent is striking: there is little agreement. Some view the relationship as U-shaped (e.g. Gurr, 1970), others as an inverted U-shape (e.g. Muller, 1985), and yet others as S-shaped (e.g. Francisco, 1995). The present study, however, does not attempt to come to a universal, grand-theoretical conclusion about the relationship between repression and its effects on the practice of dissent that would apply to both democratic and authoritarian states. Rather, I adopt a middle-level, context-dependent theoretical approach that focuses on repression in a single country, the USA. While previous social movement scholars have provided an array of cogent, particularistic descriptions of how specific social movements were demobilized in specific historical moments, in this study I offer a parsimonious explanatory model – based on five social mechanisms – that elucidates the state's role in the repression of dissent in the USA throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Yet I do not claim to be cutting the Mechanisms of Repression from whole cloth. Numerous scholars before me have written about how repression can affect mobilization; however, this existing work – which spans across the disciplines of social movement studies, sociology, political science, geography, history, psychology, and legal studies – does not explicitly use the conceptual apparatus of social mechanisms. In this study I excavate the good work of my predecessors, systematize these 'data', and filter them through the lens of the social mechanism.

One branch of research on the repression–dissent interface views repression as an independent variable while another explores repression as a dependent variable. The former branch often examines how repression affects mobilization levels as well as subsequent social movement strategies and tactics (e.g. Opp & Roehl, 1990; Moore, 1998). The latter line of research shifts focus away from the effects of repression, instead considering forms of suppression and/or how states respond to dissent (e.g. Earl, 2003; Cunningham, 2004). While both areas of research deepen our knowledge and awareness of demobilization processes, the present study follows the latter tradition of research that examines repression as a dependent variable.

Straddling both branches of the 'repression–mobilization nexus', Charles Tilly (2005, pp. 224–225) offers four causal possibilities: '(1) repression decreases mobilization, (2) repression increases mobilization, (3) mobilization decreases repression, and (4) mobilization increases repression.' In this article I zero in on the first of these causal scenarios, delineating the social mechanisms that animate the relationship between

state repression and dissident citizenship on the dynamic, interactive road to social movement demobilization.

Another way of categorizing research on repression is that one strand of scholarship focuses predominantly on protest policing at the expense of other, less obvious forms of repression (e.g. della Porta & Reiter, 1998; Earl *et al.*, 2003). Research that only considers protest policing sacrifices breadth on the altar of depth, as it does not take into consideration either the wide range of alternative dissident practices or the variety of subtler ways the state attempts to exert social control. Another strand of repression-related research, which is less developed than the former strand, zeroes in on the quieter methods of repression rather than protest policing, since there are many more types of dissident activity than protests and demonstrations and there are many more forms of repression than suppressive policing (e.g. Cunningham, 2003, 2004; Earl, 2003, 2004). Again, while both strands of research have turned out valuable work for both scholars and activists, this study follows the latter path, highlighting the subtler ways in which dissent is suppressed.

Marwan Khawaja (1993, pp. 50–51) has noted that among studies on repression, 'few provide clear criteria for conceptually distinguishing among the many manifested forms of repression.' Yet, some studies that examine state repression have constructed typologies in order to clarify the range of methods at the state's disposal. However, these typologies have significant limitations. In one of the first efforts to systematize repression, Gary Marx (1979) addresses a propensity to focus on factors internal to social movement organizations rather than external factors such as the role of the state and the mass media.[2] He categorizes forms of repression according to their intended purpose, lumping them together as 'strategies and tactics intended to facilitate or damage social movements' (1979, p. 95).[3] Thus, Marx conflates actions and intentions (or what Cunningham, 2004, p. 236, differentiates as 'form' and 'function'). While Marx views mobilization and demobilization as mirror processes, I assert in this study that, in fact, these processes are not mere mirrors of each other, but rather that they are distinguishable processes animated by different social mechanisms.

Michael Carley (1997) similarly delineates various forms of repression that the state used during its 'successful state repression' of the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the 1970s. Yet his study focuses on a single movement during a short time period. His typology features three overpacked categories: 'direct assault', internal infiltration', and 'opinion control' (1997, pp. 165–170). Earl (2003, p. 46) aptly critiques the typological work of both Marx (1979) and Carley (1997) as 'catalogs of repressive tactics only loosely organized by salient, theoretically driven nomenclatures'.

Donatella della Porta (1996, p. 66) offers another attempt to typologize repression based on five dimensions: (1) 'repressive' versus 'tolerant', based on 'the range of prohibited behavior'; (2) 'selective' versus 'diffuse', assessed by the array of repressed groups; (3) 'preventive' versus 'reactive', based on the timing of police repression; (4) 'hard' versus 'soft', as judged by 'the degree of force involved'; and (5) 'dirty' versus 'lawful', based on 'the degree to which respect for legal and democratic procedures is emphasized'. As such, della Porta's typology pays more heed to the harshness or acuteness of repression than the various forms in which repression arrives. Also, della Porta focuses narrowly on the police at the expense of other repressive forces.

Cunningham (2003, 2004) also offers a typology of repression, which is unique in that, as mentioned above, it differentiates between the forms and functions of particular state actions. His typology of the FBI's Counter Intelligence Programs (COINTELPRO) actions

against the New Left includes fourteen forms and eight functions while his typology of COINTELPRO actions against the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) suggests nineteen forms and nine functions (Cunningham, 2004, pp. 236, 243). His typologies have notable limitations. For instance, his abundant list of forms could be streamlined,[4] and his 'form' and 'function' dichotomy could be less static. Additionally, like Carley (1997), Cunningham explores an abbreviated time period (1961 through 1971) and specific groups (the New Left and the KKK), whereas the typology I elucidate below systematizes a wider array of dissident movements operating in a wider range of times and places. Furthermore, while both Carley and Cunningham focus on the role that the FBI played in the repression, I look at how additional agents – such as police forces and the National Guard – played into social movement repression. Finally, Cunningham (2003, p. 46) looks at how the FBI increased the *costs* of social movement participation, whereas I also consider how the state *minimizes the benefits* of mobilization.

A final example of a typology of repression comes from Jennifer Earl (2003, 2004). Earl (2003, pp. 48, 49) develops a multi-dimensional typology that, first of all, distinguishes between 'coercion' and 'channeling', with the latter defined as 'more indirect repression, which is meant to affect the forms of protest available, the timing of protests, and/or flows of resources to movements'. She also categorizes the repressors into three groups: (1) state agents with tight ties to national elites; (2) state agents with loose ties to national elites; and (3) non-state agents. While both Earl and I develop typologies in order to facilitate theory building, my typology is more focused on repression whereas some of the 'unobserved' forms of 'channeling' she discusses – such as US tax laws that provide tax relief for non-profit organizations – swerve away from disruptive state repression and toward facilitative legal structures, or 'channeling'. Therefore, the typology I offer below is both more focused and more parsimonious. Additionally, I fully investigate the role of the mass media, whereas Earl sidesteps the repressive role this crucial institution sometimes plays.

In this final regard, Earl is not alone. Previous social movement research has neither theorized the important role that the mass media play in the repression of dissent, nor explored in detailed descriptive terms the repressive role the mass media sometimes performs.[5] Extant research tends to focus solely on the role of the state, without considering how the state sometimes works through the mass media to suppress dissent. By transmitting the state's unfavorable portrayals of dissidents, the mass media sometimes depict social movements in deprecatory ways, and this has important effects not only on social movement participants and their adversaries but also on potential recruits and supporters (Boykoff, 2006).

In sum, studies that move beyond protest policing and that attempt to typologize the repression of dissent are valuable, but have notable limitations. The present study aims to build from these previous efforts in order to systematize repression into 'a theoretically driven typology of repression' (Earl, 2003, p. 45) that forges ligature-like links to social mechanisms. These Mechanisms of Repression, which function as my engines of explanation, reorient the organizing premises of these ongoing transactions, shifting the parameters within which actors maneuver. As a result of these mechanisms, a social process that sustains dissident action – mobilization – makes way for a different social process that debilitates dissidence – demobilization. This brings us to the question: what exactly is a social mechanism?

Social Mechanisms

McAdam *et al.* (2001, p. 24) define a social mechanism as 'a delimited class of events that alter relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations'. Social mechanisms allow for explanation, though not for prediction. Mechanisms are able to achieve a level of generality, and although they may have limited applicability in that they cannot be applied across the board to all situations, mechanisms improve the suppleness of a theory (Stinchcombe, 1991). 'By concentrating on mechanisms', writes Elster (1989, p. 7), 'one captures the dynamic aspect of scientific explanation: the urge to produce explanations of ever finer grain.'

As typically unobserved analytical constructs that help us identify causal patterns that are detectable across a variety of historical situations, mechanisms inhabit the intermediate space between laws and descriptions, between grand theory and historiography. A middle-level, mechanism-based approach to the study of politics is markedly different from the dominant strains of research being carried out in the social sciences today. Abbott (2001, p. 183) characterizes the prevailing approach in the following way:

> Our normal methods parse social reality into fixed entities with variable qualities. They attribute causality to the variables – hypostatized social characteristics – rather than to agents; variables do things, not social actors. Stories disappear. The only narratives present in such methods are just-so stories justifying this or that relation between the variables. Contingent narrative is impossible.

Concomitantly, with these normal methods, 'action and contingency disappear into the magician's hat of variable-based causality' (Abbott, 2001, p. 98).

Social mechanisms move beyond covariation to identify the 'nuts and bolts, cogs and wheels' that bring about and animate social relationships (Elster, 1989, p. 3). While much social science research recognizes – visually, through the use of an arrow – that there is a relationship between two variables (A → B), mechanisms provide plausible explanations of how A and B are related to one another. In other words, the black box – which is tantamount to the arrow – is pried open and its contents are made transparent (Elster, 1998; Schelling, 1998). Social mechanisms intercede between input and outcome, forging the link between explanans and explanandum, which makes more finely textured explanation possible.

Yet, when working with mechanisms, one is not necessarily in search of a one-to-one, mechanism-to-outcome causal relationship (Bhaskar, 1978). Mechanisms are dependently connected: they intersect with, play off of, and in some cases amplify each other in interlocking configurations, or 'concatenations of mechanisms' (Gambetta, 1998). Such concatenations constitute the 'workhorses of explanation' that McAdam *et al.* (2001, p. 30) identify as the key to carrying out meso-level social science research that is interested in causation. With mechanisms as a middle-range centerpiece, this study taps into a rich theoretical tradition (e.g. Merton, 1968 [1957]; Tilly, 2001).

The Mechanisms of Repression

McAdam *et al.* (2001, p. 34) consider repression to be a single mechanism that leads to the process of demobilization, while, in a later work, Tilly (2005, p. 225) identifies two

mechanisms that account for dissident demobilization.[6] Both studies define demobilization as a process whereby people stop making contentious claims and cease engaging in contentious politics. While I agree with their widely accepted definition of demobilization, I assert that, in fact, repression consists of a grouping of mechanisms that causes demobilization. Therefore, I break down repression into four dynamic mechanisms – (1) Resource Depletion, (2) Stigmatization, (3) Divisive Disruption, and (4) Intimidation – in order to better understand the lineaments of repression and how, more specifically, repression causes the process of social movement demobilization. Depending on the socio-political and cultural context, these mechanisms reverberate and interact, reinforcing each other on the road to demobilization.

While these mechanisms do not concatenate in the same way in every context, and therefore do not afford us a one-size-fits-all level of generality, they consistently operate at both the individual and group level. These four mechanisms coexist and overlap as they alter the organizing premises of the transactions between social movements, the state, the mass media, and the general public. Forming constellations, the mechanisms change social relations in similar ways through a wide range of contentious episodes.

The effects of these four mechanisms are diffused to other social settings through a fifth mechanism: Emulation. This mechanism proliferates the influence of the four Mechanisms of Repression, transferring altered social relations to other spaces of dissent. As such, the Mechanisms of Repression form a consistent two-step pattern. In step one, the four mechanisms of repression operate: Resource Depletion, Stigmatization, Divisive Disruption, and Intimidation. These four mechanisms form a constellation called Isolating Mechanisms. These Isolating Mechanisms may function in concert, but, whether operating individually or combinatorially, on the individual or on the group, they serve to isolate social movement groups as well as the individuals who comprise them. Step two involves the transmission of the combined effects of the four Mechanisms of Repression through Emulation, a Decisional Mechanism that plumbs the cognitive processes of dissident citizens, explaining why they opt to cease engaging in contentious politics. This Decisional Mechanism brings the effects of the Isolating Mechanisms to demobilizational fruition as it shifts levels of analysis down to the decision-making realm of the individual dissident. Figure 1 depicts this two-step process visually.

The Action Modes of State Repression

At the core of the explanatory model sit five social mechanisms – Resource Depletion, Stigmatization, Divisive Disruption, Intimidation, and Emulation – which will be elucidated below. But first it is crucial to explore what it is that the state actually does: the actions the state takes in order to suppress dissent. In other words, what are the Action

Isolating Mechanisms	Decisional Mechanism	Process
Resource Depletion →		
Stigmatization →		
	Emulation →	Demobilization
Divisive Disruption →		
Intimidation →		
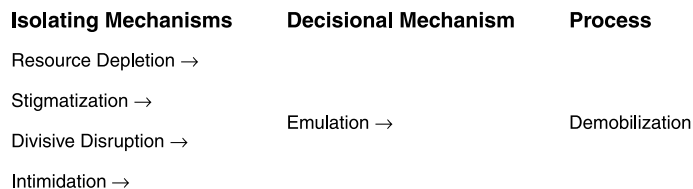
Figure 1. The two-step process of demobilization

Modes of state repression? A thorough combing of dissident history in the USA led to the creation of a typology of the ten actions – or Action Modes – that the state engages in to suppress dissent. These Action Modes, which are presented in Table 1, flow into the four Mechanisms of Repression that animate the process of social movement demobilization. While the Action Modes describe what the state does to inhibit dissent, the Mechanisms of Repression explain how and why these state actions have their effect.

The first eight Action Modes highlight the role of the state, while the remaining two zero in on how the state makes use of the structures, norms, values, and practices of the modern mass-media system. Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986, p. 72) assert: 'Regardless of one's conceptual or theoretical approach to the study of social movements … a complete explanation requires attention to the organizational constraints and occupational norms of the news media.' Koopmans (2005, p. 159) seconds this assessment, arguing that 'the mass media play a crucial role' at the repression–dissent interface since 'repression and dissent have increasingly become acts on a public stage, and third parties who watch, comment on, and intervene in the play are crucial to understanding the sequence of events'. Accordingly, for a full explanation of how the state engages in repression, one must consider the ways in which the state sometimes works directly with friendly sources in the media and occasionally works indirectly with the media – through the norms and values that structure newsmaking – in order to inhibit dissent. Journalists do not necessarily set out to hinder dissent in conscientious collusion with the state. Rather, there are norms and values – such as heavy reliance on 'official' government-connected sources (Kielbowicz & Scherer, 1986, p. 77) and indexing the range of political perspectives according to the array of views found in the corridors of government (Bennett, 2002) – that structure the state–media interface in ways that benefit the state and hamper dissent (Boykoff, 2006). Therefore, I include these media-related Action Modes in a study focused on state repression due to the direct and indirect links that the state has in these Action Modes. I do this so we can more fully understand how the state influences 'the abstract space of a mediated public sphere' in the context of dissident citizenship (D'Arcus, 2006, p. 7).

The ten Action Modes in this study are not part of a hierarchy of repression. The modes may coexist, overlap, and reinforce each other. They almost always work in various combinations and sequences; only rarely does a single mode operate unconnected from others. As Charles Ragin (1987, p. 27) writes, 'social causation is often both multiple and conjunctural, involving different combinations of social conditions.' These Action Modes combine and reverberate as they feed into specific causal mechanisms that favor demobilization. As we will see, the repressive actions are aimed at both social movement

Table 1. The ten Action Modes of state repression

1. Direct violence
2. Public prosecutions and hearings
3. Employment deprivation
4. Surveillance and break-ins (including 'black bag jobs')
5. Infiltration, 'badjacketing', and the use of agent provocateurs
6. 'Black propaganda'
7. Harassment and harassment arrests
8. Extraordinary rules and laws
9. Mass media manipulation
10. Mass media deprecation

leaders, as well as rank-and-file social movement adherents, and the prioritized target depends on the context of contention.

Action Mode No. 1: Direct Violence

Historically, dissent has often been crushed with direct violence – or repression – in the USA. From attacks on early-twentieth-century anarchists and members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) to the fatal National Guard attack at Kent State University to police violence directed at protesters of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle in 1999, dissident citizens in the USA have experienced repression in the form of beatings, bombings, shootings, and other forms of violence. Often this violence is carried out directly by the state via the military, police, FBI, or National Guard (Churchill & Vander Wall, 2002 [1988]). An illuminating case that highlights the mode of direct violence and demonstrates how this Action Mode intersects with other state Modes of Action is the murder of Black Panther Party (BPP) leader Fred Hampton and BPP member Mark Clark, which occurred on 4 December 1969 (US District Court, Northern District of Illinois, 1970).

Action Mode No. 2: Public Prosecutions and Hearings

Public prosecutions of and hearings on dissidents – especially events that are mass-media publicized – suppress dissent on two levels: (1) dissidents are often put in jail or so traumatized as to drop their dissident stances or temporarily put them on hold, and (2) current supporters and potential supporters in bystander publics are discouraged from putting forth dissident views. When dissidents are publicly questioned – and sometimes castigated – by the state, dissident reputations can be tarnished or destroyed in the public arena, thereby lessening the inclination to join these individuals' groups, to support these groups, or even to make an effort to determine exactly what these groups are saying (Barkan, 1985, pp. 3–4). Public trials also lead to large legal fees, lost wages, and other pecuniary losses (Barkan, 1984, 1985; Earl, 2005). Many dissident citizens have found themselves testifying at hostile hearings and defending themselves in court, including Angela Davis, Geronimo Pratt, Russell Means, the Chicago Eight, Thomas McGrath and numerous protesters in the Civil Rights and Vietnam anti-war movements (Barkan, 1985). The Hollywood Ten, who appeared in front of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC), and who went on trial in 1949, are a quintessential example of this Action Mode (Goodman, 1968; Ceplair & Englund, 1980).

Action Mode No. 3: Employment Deprivation

Another Action Mode involves the deliberate threat of being deprived of one's job and/or the actual loss of employment because of one's political beliefs. While the dissident citizen's political views and principles constitute the central reason for dismissal, this motive often remains concealed, while other excuses are conjured to fit the public need for a rationale. For individual dissident citizens, employment deprivation has both immediate and long-term impacts, especially if a blacklist is disseminated to other prospective employers. Many dissidents have lost their jobs – or were never hired in the first place – because of their political beliefs. For example, Frank and Jean Wilkinson were fired from

their jobs after refusing to submit to California's version of HUAC (Caute, 1978; Fariello, 1995). The blacklisted members of the Hollywood Ten are another example of this Action Mode. A number of academics have also experienced this form of repression, including, recently, Sami Al-Arian at the University of South Florida (Mintz, 2003).

Action Mode No. 4: Surveillance and Break-ins

Anthony Giddens (1985, p. 15) has distinguished two types of surveillance: (1) direct routes like spying and monitoring, and (2) indirect routes such as the accumulation and storage of 'coded information' about individuals. The surveillance of dissident citizens is often carried out by the domestic political surveillance apparatus, which in the USA has historically consisted of three interrelated networks: local police, the FBI, and military intelligence. This Action Mode of state repression can take the form of electronic surveillance, wiretapping, mail opening, file storage, and 'black bag jobs'.[7] Surveillance of dissident citizens is one of the state's most common Action Modes, in part because it can generate such intense, reverberative effects at a relatively small cost. Many dissident citizens and groups have been surveilled through time, including anarchists of the 1910s and 1920s, participants in the New Left of the 1960s, and people involved in the Global Justice Movement today. Martin Luther King Jr was under FBI surveillance from 1957 until his assassination in 1968. According to the Church Committee's Final Report (US Congress, 1976, p. 81), King 'was the target of an intensive campaign by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to "neutralize" him as an effective civil rights leader', and surveillance was an integral facet of this neutralization effort. The combination of high technological innovations and recent legislation like the USA PATRIOT Act is likely to extend surveillance as a staple Action Mode for years to come (US Congress, 2001).

Action Mode No. 5: Infiltration, 'Badjacketing', and the Use of Agent Provocateurs

Another of the state's Action Modes involves the infiltration of informants who engage in intelligence gathering, create internal dissension, and/or incite illegal activities. Informants have been used to hamper the political activities of a variety of social movements, from William O'Neal's infiltration of the BPP to James Harrison's informant work within the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), from Mary Jo Cook's infiltration of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) to John G. Arellano's infiltration of AIM (US Congress, 1976; Churchill & Vander Wall, 2002 [1988]). Sometimes infiltrators engage in 'badjacketing' or 'snitchjacketing': intentionally generating suspicion that legitimate, committed members – often leaders – are actually FBI or police informants. In a spurious turn of reverse psychology, infiltrators paint legitimate group members as corrupt, deceitful, and untrustworthy, when, in fact, the opposite is the case. Badjacketing was a common and explicit 'neutralization' technique under COINTELPRO (US Congress, 1976, p. 46). Examples of snitchjacketing include the badjacketing of thirty-year veteran and top leader of the Communist Party William Albertson, a committed communist who was kicked out of the party in 1964 after being falsely fingered as an informant (Donner, 1980, p. 192). A final dimension to this Action Mode is the work of agent provocateurs: infiltrators who move beyond the information-gathering function and deliberately provoke violent activity, sometimes even offering training and supplies. For example, Horace Packer infiltrated Students for a Democratic

Society (SDS) and the Weathermen at the University of Washington where he furnished New Left dissidents with weaponry, drugs, and the requisite supplies for concocting Molotov cocktails ('F.B.I. Agent Tells of S.D.S. Activity', 1970).

Action Mode No. 6: 'Black Propaganda'

'Black propaganda' involves the use of fabricated documents assiduously designed to forge schisms or to prevent solidarity between social movement organizations (Churchill & Vander Wall, 2002 [1988], p. 42). These false documents purportedly originate with one organization – the target of state repression – and are sent to other organizations that are extant or potential allies. By design, these controversial, offensive, and sometimes vicious documents are meant to foment dissension between the groups. So, while infiltration, 'badjacketing', and agent provocateurs often lead to dissension and violence among group members, 'black propaganda' provokes conflict between dissident social movement organizations. For example, the FBI tried to foment dissension between SDS and the BPP through false, anonymous letters (US Congress, 1976).

Action Mode No. 7: Harassment and Harassment Arrests

Another Action Mode that feeds into the process of demobilization is the state's execution of harassment and harassment arrests. Dissidents are arrested for minor charges that are often false, and that are sometimes based on obscure statutes that have remained on the books, buried and dormant but nevertheless vessels for legal compulsion. Harassment arrests compose part of what Isaac Balbus (1973, p. 13) has called 'legal repression', which he describes as the crushing of dissent by the 'formal rationality' of a legal apparatus that 'tends to depoliticize the consciousness of the participants, delegitimate their claims and grievances, and militate against alliances between participants and other nonelites or elite moderates'. Under this Action Mode, dissidents are selectively arrested for minor crimes that, when committed by the general population, go unpunished. Also, dissidents are often given inflated bails to post, and, if convicted, exorbitant jail sentences. Harassment arrests can have a pre-emptive dimension to them, as their aim is to prevent future political dissidence. Many of the core features of harassment arrests occur in concert (Barkan, 1984). An example of this is the arrest of John Sellers, Director of the Ruckus Society, during protests of the Republican Party's national convention in Philadelphia in 2000. Sellers was arrested as he walked down the street chatting on his cell phone after a small, peaceful protest. Although he was only charged with misdemeanors, his bail was initially set at $1 million, much more than most bails for felony charges (Redden, 2001). Another example comes from the Southern Civil Rights movement, where in Albany, Georgia, 'Most of the more than 1,200 arrests that took place through the summer of 1962 were without legal merit' (Barkan, 1984, p. 558). In regards to harassment arrests, Earl (2005, pp. 106, 109) makes two important observations: (1) despite being considered relatively 'softer' than direct violence, harassment arrests can be painful, physically challenging experiences, and (2) 'the costs imposed on defendants through their sheer entanglement with the criminal justice system are imposed on the innocent and guilty alike'.

State harassment need not result in arrest to be an effective Action Mode. For example, Craig Rosebraugh, the spokesperson for the radical environmental group called the Earth

Liberation Front (ELF), was not actually arrested, but repeatedly harassed by federal agents and brought in front of a grand jury on a number of occasions. Such harassment, along with other factors, ultimately compelled Rosebraugh to quit his position as ELF spokesperson (Long, 2000; Rosebraugh, 2004).

Action Mode No. 8: Extraordinary Rules and Laws

This Action Mode – extraordinary rules and laws – is also related to Balbus's (1973) concept of 'legal repression'. During exceptional moments when the state is seriously challenged by dissident groups or individuals, the state may respond by promulgating and exercising extraordinary laws and rules that are then used to suppress the challenge and to stifle dissent. James L. Gibson (1988, p. 513, emphasis in original) designates this type of repression as 'repressive public policy'. By this he means 'a statutory restriction on *oppositionalist political activity*' that affects 'some, but not all, competitors for political power'. The Espionage and Sedition Acts of 1917 and 1918 are examples of such extraordinary laws. Later, on the heels of Truman's institutionalization of his loyalty program, Congress passed a slew of explicitly anti-communist laws. Oberschall (1978) and D'Arcus (2006) explain how the Federal Anti-riot Act of 1968 was used as a repressive legal instrument. More recently, the USA PATRIOT Act – and especially Section 802 of the Act, which defines a new federal crime, 'domestic terrorism' – is an example of an extraordinary law that has the potential to affect the practice of dissent (US Congress, 2001, Sec. 802). States and localities also pass extraordinary laws and rules designed to squelch dissent. For example, in 1951, Texas passed the Communist Control Act, which required communists who were visiting the state for more than five days to register themselves with the Department of Public Safety. Registration included fingerprinting and the answering of any questions the Department of Public Safety viewed as relevant. Violation of the law was a felony with a ten-year maximum prison sentence and a $10,000 maximum fine (Gibson, 1990, p. 518).[8] Also, the courts have often granted injunctions to prevent marches, rallies, and other forms of dissent (Barkan, 1985, pp. 33–34).

Action Mode No. 9: Mass Media Manipulation

Sometimes state actions are mediated through press, radio, and television outlets. One such Action Mode is mass media manipulation, of which there are two major types: (1) story implantation, and (2) journalist strongarming (in order to prevent the publishing of unwanted information). Press censorship – including coerced self-censorship – is an important dimension of the latter form. With story implantation, the state makes use of friendly press contacts who publish government-generated articles verbatim, or with minor adjustments. Mass media manipulation was an explicit part of the FBI's COINTELPRO operations whereby the Bureau used friendly media contacts to besmirch the names of individual dissidents as well as to throw into question the character of dissident groups (US Congress, 1976). For example, BPP supporter Jean Seberg, an actress living in Paris, was the victim of Bureau-induced rumors about her having an affair with a member of the BPP. The resultant stress led to Seberg's miscarriage and her eventual suicide (Richards, 1981). The strongarming of journalists is another form this Action Mode takes. Lyndon Johnson, for example, would call newscasters – like CBS's

Dan Rather – in the middle of a newscast to refute, correct, or applaud information that was being presented (Small, 1988).

Action Mode No. 10: Mass Media Deprecation

The media are not neutral arbiters of reality. When covering social movements, the mass media often engage in description bias by relying on state agents as sources and transmitting their deprecatory claims about dissident citizens and groups at face value (Smith *et al.*, 2001). Media scholars (e.g. Bennett, 1990) have demonstrated that, on a range of issues, the media tend to 'index' sources and viewpoints according to the range of opinions and perspectives among key government decision makers, and that this practice is frequently to the detriment of dissident citizens. Mass media deprecation can be broken down into two types: (1) bi-level demonization, and (2) negative framing. Bi-level demonization entails linking dissidents to a demonized group or individual from the international arena. This external foe is depicted as deserving of punishment, and the linking of domestic dissidents to the external demon – either rightly or wrongly, based on ideology, ethnicity, race, or other categories – therefore makes the domestic dissident more vulnerable to state repression. In other words, the demonological logic proceeds simultaneously on two levels. In the late 1940s and running through the end of the Cold War, to be associated with communism was to make oneself vulnerable to bi-level demonization. In fact, bi-level demonization was the ideological foundation upon which McCarthyism was built.

A second type of mass media deprecation is negative framing. A frame is 'an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the "world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment' (Snow & Benford, 1992, p. 137). Thus, interactions are converted into events, and events are converted into news stories. Mass-media accounts of social movement activity frequently follow the lead of the state, which not only fails to focus on the issues and ideas of social movement participants but also frames matters in ways that actually deprecate the participants as ridiculous, bizarre, dangerous, or otherwise out of step with the general public, thereby undermining social movement efforts. Real-world examples of mass media deprecation via negative framing include coverage of Vietnam War protesters (Gitlin, 1980) and the anti-corporate Global Justice Movement (Boykoff, 2006).

The Four Mechanisms of Repression

This typology of ten Action Modes of state repression emerged inductively from exploration of the stories and narratives of specific social movements and dissident citizens working in particular historical moments. But in order to understand how these state actions take effect and lead to demobilization one must return to social mechanisms, since the ten Action Modes actually do their demobilizing work through four interactive mechanisms: Resource Depletion, Stigmatization, Divisive Disruption, and Intimidation. In the following sections I explain how each of the four Mechanisms of Repression alters relations among the state, social movements, the mass media, and the general public in similar ways across a variety of episodes of contention.

Resource Depletion

With the mechanism of Resource Depletion, the state erodes the capacity of social movements, thereby diminishing the ability to engage in contentious politics. While previously social movements were able to use their resources for mobilization, with Resource Depletion relations are reoriented toward a different process: demobilization. In this study I adopt a wide definition of 'resource' so as to include both human and non-human resources. In their resource-centered 'Civic Voluntarism Model' of political activity, Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady (1995, p. 271) identify three types of resources: money, time, and civic skills. In addition to these important resources, I add other material resources (e.g. books, office supplies, meeting spaces) and I highlight the resource of leadership (which they subsume under 'civic skills'), since the creation, nurturing, and support of leaders is crucial for collective action (Aminzade *et al.*, 2001).

Resource mobilization theory – one of the major strains of social movement research – informs this mechanism. At its core, this approach regards the key issue for social movements as the ability to mobilize resources, since given access to resources movements will be born and grow, but absent resources they will not. John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (1987, p. 16, emphasis added), two major proponents of resource mobilization theory, assert that this approach

> emphasizes both societal support and constraint of social movement phenomena. It examines the variety of resources that must be mobilized, the linkages of social movements to other groups, the dependence of movements upon external support for success, *and the tactics used by authorities to control or incorporate movements.*

Resource mobilization scholars focus on the idea that deprivation, injustice, and grievance do not necessarily convert into social movement activity. Rather, they view the mobilization of stable resource flows and the organizational structures of activity as crucial to the ability of social movements to become and remain competitive in the public sphere. Indeed, without the requisite resources it is difficult to meet mobilization goals like solidarity maintenance, effective recruitment, leader cultivation, generation of media coverage, garnering of support from bystander publics, and the tactical freedom to pursue social change goals (Barkan, 1985; McAdam, 1996).

The resource mobilization approach stresses process and operates at the meso-level, focusing on the groups, associations, organizations, and less formal networks that make up the foundation of social movements. This includes 'the range of everyday life micromobilizational structural social locations' such as 'family units; friendship networks, voluntary associations, work units and elements of the state structure itself' (McCarthy, 1996, p. 141). In other words, this approach zeros in on social movement 'mobilizing structures', which are the 'collective vehicles, informal as well as formal, through which people mobilize and engage in collective action' (McAdam *et al.*, 1996, p. 3).

A number of the Action Modes feed directly into the mechanism of Resource Depletion. Clearly, direct violence depletes the human resources of social movements. Sometimes the state explicitly targets social movement leaders for direct violence, as was the case with the killing of the young BPP leader Fred Hampton. Global Justice Movement protesters experienced direct violence in Seattle in 1999, as well as more recently in Miami at protests

against a proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) (Blumner, 2003). Public prosecutions and hearings also deplete precious resources that could otherwise be used to further social movement goals. Harassment arrests and the extraordinary rules and laws these arrests are often based upon can combine to nudge dissidents into resource-draining, legal labyrinths. Barkan (1984, pp. 555, 558) details how Southern local police forced local and national Civil Rights groups 'to spend large sums of money on bail bonds before trial, appeal bonds after conviction, fines, and costs of legal defense' thereby saddling the movement with 'serious legal problems' that were financially burdensome. As noted previously, members of AIM and the BPP – as well as these movements' supporters – were also forced to expend significant resources to defend themselves in court after experiencing harassment arrests and being brought into the orbit of extraordinary rules and laws. More specifically, this complex dynamic was in effect with the cases of AIM leader Russell Means, BPP organizer Geronimo Pratt, and the Hollywood Ten. Earl (2005, p. 118) points out that not only does the arrest of dissidents take protesters off the streets while they are jailed, but many protesters are forced to vow, as part of their plea bargains, not to publicly dissent once released from jail. Others deem it too risky to participate with charges still pending against them.

There is an internal–external dimension of the Resource Depletion mechanism. Internally, social movements suffer diminished resources as they are used up for trials and meeting bail. This cuts into recruiting efforts. Also, the resource of group morale is seriously challenged. Simultaneously, outside sources of funding and support are more likely to dry up as extra-movement supporters – or 'reference elites' as Mayer Zald (1992, p. 333) calls an important slice of them – consider whether or not to lend their support to the social movement cause. All this makes social movement organizations less likely to use resources to bolster networks that connect potential participants to mobilizing structures.

The mechanism of Resource Depletion has both short-term and long-term aspects in relation to human resources. In the short term, dissidents who receive exorbitant bails may spend time in jail while protests they helped to organize transpire, as was the case with protesters at the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia in 2000. Clearly, long jail sentences also take a substantial toll, especially when they are handed out to movement leaders. For example, Geronimo Pratt spent twenty-seven years in jail, which deprived the BPP of one of its most promising organizers and social movement entrepreneurs, someone with the ability to broker crucial linkages with other social movements groups (Olsen, 2000). After analyzing a range of social movement organizations from the 1960s, including the BPP, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, SDS, the Weathermen, and anti-Vietnam War groups, Oberschall (1978, pp. 277–278) concluded that the Justice Department's prosecution of movement leaders was part of a strategy designed 'to tie down leaders in costly and time consuming legal battles which would impede their activities and put a tremendous drain on financial resources regardless of whether the government would be successful in court'.

Stigmatization

In order to fully understand the process of demobilization, one must move beyond the depletion of material and human resources. The discursive basis of power differences and exclusionary practices must also be identified, examined, and translated into the language

of mechanisms. Stigmatization is an ever-present discursive battle rooted in the process of social construction: the boundary lines between the stigmatized and the mainstream shift and blur as these lines adapt to social circumstance (Stangor & Crandall, 2000).

A stigma is something that detracts from the character, nature, or reputation of an individual or a group. Stigmatization, therefore, is a relational mechanism whereby discrediting attributes are attached to the character, nature, or reputation of an individual or group based on perceptions of that individual or group. Stigmatization leads to 'an impaired collective identity, where connection with the group is a source of discredit and devaluation because that is how the group as a whole is viewed' (Ferree, 2005, p. 144). This mechanism is therefore an important cog in the process of social control whereby individual and group behavior and/or attitudes are manipulated in order to bring them into conformity with the behavioral or attitudinal expectations of others. With Stigmatization, social transactions proceed differently than within 'normal' social relations, and this has significant implications for dissidents. Stigmatization is important on both the level of the group and the level of the individual; it is not simply socially isolating, but it also affects the decisions of individual dissidents.

Stigmatization is a social relationship, since, as Goffman (1963, p. 3) notes, 'an attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as a thing in itself'. Therefore, stigmatization constitutes a special bond between a negative attribute and a social stereotype. This contemptuous concoction promotes a bifurcated worldview that divides 'outsiders' from 'insiders', or, in the case of social movements, deviant social movement participants from those who engage in contained contention or those who refrain entirely from contentious claims-making. In the field of psychology, Elias and Scotson (1994, p. xvi) dub this an 'established-outsider figuration'. With their 'figurational approach' to understanding stigmatization, they explore how group relations lead to stigmatization, and how these patterns are rooted in power differentials.

In a study on the subtle ways in which gender-based movements are repressed, Ferree (2005, p. 145) asserts that stigma is 'a cultural strategy to prevent collective action by actively discouraging identification with a group that could make claims against an institution', which, she is careful to note, need not be the state. 'Negative stereotypes of groups that are socially subordinate', she continues, 'are the classic means by which civil society represses the formation of a positive collective identity'. Ferree views stigmatization as an important meso-level form of repression, sandwiched between micro-level, interpersonal ridicule and macro-level silencing that is 'embedded in the ordinary institutional practices of a social system' (Ferree, 2005, p. 147).[9]

The meso-level mechanism of Stigmatization affects the capacity of social movements to promote social change primarily through the mass-media-related Action Modes. Episodes of contention often result in negative press coverage, especially in the case of bi-level demonization, as with prestige-press coverage of communists and socialists in the 1940s and 1950s. Barkan (1984, p. 555, emphasis added) isolates the effects of stigmatization when he notes: 'most Southern attorneys were not willing to defend civil rights activists. Those that did represent such clients faced threats of contempt and disbarment in court, and possibilities of physical attack, loss of business, *and social ostracism outside the court*.' Contemporarily, mass-media deprecation, through negative framing, affects the ability of the Global Justice Movement to meet its goals and to gain additional adherents and supporters. Recurrent frames such as the 'violence frame',

'ignorance frame', and 'amalgam of grievances frame' have served to deprecate the movement as well as the individuals who comprise it (Boykoff, 2006). Stigmatization has the overall effect of putting social movements on the defensive, on the ever-unfolding path of self-explanation, justificatory back-tracking, and damage control.

Other Action Modes flow into Stigmatization indirectly. For example, harassment arrests and extraordinary rules and laws often result in the jailing of dissidents, which commonly tarnishes their reputation in the public eye. Public prosecutions and hearings perform a similar function, especially when they are reported by the mass media, which play a central role with this Isolating Mechanism. Earl (2005, p. 118) makes the connection between harassment arrests and stigmatization when she notes that such arrests

> can serve as a powerful symbol in media coverage of protests. Arrests paint protesters as violent and lawless even while creating an image of police action that is justified and measured … Guilt pleas further substantiate negative portrayals of arrested [activists] and [their] supporters because guilty pleas are accepted by the public as admissions of guilt

even though this may not be the case. Convictions may lead to social shunning and/or job loss (Opp & Roehl, 1990, pp. 523, 524). In another example, the BPP's radical rhetoric, extensive trail of arrests, and highly publicized public trials led to the mass media portraying it as 'wrongheaded, antisocial, and a national threat' (Rhodes, 1999, p. 113). A wide range of dissident social movements have similarly been pulled into the vortex of the Stigmatization mechanism, and have therefore been isolated from others who are depicted as respectable citizens who engage in contained politics largely through institutionalized political channels.

Since, according to Edwin Schur (1983, p. 39), systematic stigmatization leads to 'a strong likelihood of impaired self-esteem', it challenges social movements' solidarity maintenance efforts, complicates recruitment, and makes the mobilization of support from bystander publics much more difficult. Relatedly, Allport (1958, Ch. 9) lists and examines a whole set of 'traits due to victimization' that arise from the social mechanism of Stigmatization, including 'denial of membership', 'withdrawal and passivity', and 'identification with the dominant group: self-hate'. In general, the mass-media-related Action Modes make social movements appear less respectable and less viable, and therefore less worthy of support. Once tethered to an external demon or portrayed as violent or ignorant, social movements have more difficulty maintaining solidarity, scoring new recruits, and mobilizing support from bystander publics and state elites. Also, with this mechanism, tactical freedom is constrained; by placing dissidents under a spotlight of negativity, this Isolating Mechanism puts the pursuit of social change goals in jeopardy, since social movement adherents must attempt to simultaneously overcome the stigma relation whereby they are seen as irrelevant outsiders as they attempt to make social change. In other words, Stigmatization leads to a re-tooling, re-asserting, and/or re-enforcement of the 'discursive opportunity structure', as stigmatizing language establishes categories that delineate who is legitimate and reasonable, and therefore worthy of serious consideration and/or support (Koopmans & Statham, 1999, p. 228).[10] This not only emerges from the cultural constraints that hamper dissident efforts by creating 'boundaries of the legitimate cultural repertoire' (Williams & Kubal, 1999, p. 226)

but also from the aforementioned journalistic norms and values that combine to the benefit of the state and the detriment of dissent.

Divisive Disruption

Securing the exclusion of social movements and the people who comprise them has many dimensions, two of which are the narrowing of dissident possibilities and the management of public impressions. Resource Depletion speaks more to the former dimension while Stigmatization speaks to the latter. The next Isolating Mechanism – Divisive Disruption – interacts with both dimensions at the same time.

Dissensus over goals is a common aspect of social movement activity, but this mechanism moves beyond such quotidian and anticipatable (if heated and even ferocious) disagreements, and considers the deliberate fracturing of movements, including fracturing that emerges from outside sources. Divisive Disruption is dynamic conflict that emerges within or between social movement groups that formerly shared (or potentially share) common beliefs, interests, tactics, and/or goals, but who, after the state's relevant Action Modes take effect, experience an increasing divergence in shared purpose and/or camaraderie. Sometimes this divergence occurs because of a shift in these beliefs, interests, tactics, and goals, and this shift may be a direct result of the tampering of external agents. This leads to schism: when ties – either formal or informal – are snapped. Sometimes this process is abetted by inter- and intra-group violence.

Deborah Balser (1997, p. 211) observes that many studies in the social movement literature explain schisms by emphasizing the internal structure of organizations – she calls this 'a closed-system perspective'. She suggests that the role of the external environment also deserves careful consideration when one is trying to understand factionalism. This is warranted since external intervention by the state has also contributed in significant ways to foster inter- and intra-group strife and strain. More specifically, many of the state's Action Modes – from surveillance to 'black propaganda' to infiltration, 'badjacketing', and the use of agent provocateurs – emerge from the external environment before burrowing inward and transmogrifying into the internal-organization factors that animate the mechanism Divisive Disruption. This relational mechanism applies to both internal social movement schisms as well as ruptures between groups, although the specific ways in which schisms occur vary from situation to situation, with a different concoction of internal and external factors characterizing each detrimental fragmentation of social movement activity.

Divisive Disruption, as a mechanism, changes the nature of previous or potential transactions between disparate social movement organizations as well as between social movement organizations and the state. This change in the nature of the transaction also filters down to the individual level. While before the state kicks Divisive Disruption into motion dissident groups may have worked together to further shared goals, after Divisive Disruption has affected relations the elements of this social process are reoriented and suspicion and division, rather than camaraderie and unity, become the order of the day. In some ways, Divisive Disruption is the opposite of 'frame bridging' (McAdam, 2003). Put differently, Divisive Disruption burns frame bridges.

Examples of Divisive Disruption include episodes from the COINTELPRO era, when the FBI used a variety of techniques to disrupt and divide active social movements and networks, such as the sending of both signed and anonymous bogus letters, the forging

of cartoons, the planting of evidence, and by placing fake telephone calls (e.g. US Congress, 1976; Cunningham, 2004). Also, the surveillance of Martin Luther King Jr and the SCLC allowed the FBI to identify potential pressure points within the Civil Rights movement (US Congress, 1976; Garrow, 1981). Infiltrators like William O'Neal and Douglass Durham were state agents who ingratiated themselves with social movement leadership before fomenting social atomization within their respective groups, the BPP and AIM. Both deliberately created or deepened a violent atmosphere that made their groups less palatable – indeed alarming – to much of the general public in the USA. Along the way, these infiltrators, badjacketers, and agent provocateurs shattered trust both within and between groups, thereby causing internal splintering and dissension between groups. In the case of the BPP and the United Slaves Organization in Los Angeles, the FBI circulated 'black propaganda' to engender inter-group rifts (Churchill & Vander Wall, 2002 [1988]). In a discussion of the BPP, Oberschall (1978, p. 261) points to the interrelation between Divisive Disruption and Resource Depletion: 'In late 1968, the Panthers closed several chapters and purged about half of their membership. Internal tension was high because Panther leadership defense absorbed most of their funds leaving no bail and defense money for the rank and file.'

Movement solidarity was a casualty of such disruptive discord, and in the cases of the BPP and AIM this fractured sense of solidarity was a crucial step on the path of social movement demobilization. Transactions based on solidarity and cooperation were therefore reoriented toward transactions based on suspicion and mistrust. As a result, potentially sympathetic groups were put off – and sometimes even attacked – rather than embraced as potential allies. All this tension serves to distract social movements from pursuing their goals while instead they are forced to address intra- and inter-group schisms. When such schisms turn violent – or even when they do not – negative mass-media coverage often results, as agents of the state publicly condemn these groups for their transgressive tactics. As Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986, p. 87) note, 'Newsmaking dynamics tend to exacerbate divisions in movements. Since conflict among different factions is usually more visible (and more savory as news) than the underlying issues that unify movements, the media accentuate the disagreements.'

Intimidation

Intimidation is a complementary mechanism that harmonizes with Resource Depletion, Stigmatization, and Divisive Disruption. Like other Mechanisms of Repression, Intimidation operates at both the individual and collective level. In the mobilizational milieu prior to the nascence of this mechanism, social movement organizations – and the individuals who comprise them – are largely concerned with the *external* goals and aspects of their dissident activity. Groups attempt to pursue social-change goals, gain recruits, generate positive media coverage, and secure support from key social groups. The mechanism of Intimidation imposes a new logic on social movement activity, forcing participants to seriously consider the *internal* consequences of their activities. Individuals must ask themselves: what could happen to me if I opt to dissent? What could happen to the future of my social movement organization?

In this study, the mechanism of Intimidation takes on the colloquial meaning of the term: discouraging or inhibiting action through explicit or tacit threat. The concept of deterrence is intricately related to this mechanism. Donna Bahry and Brian Silver (1987, p. 1067)

dissect the concept, dividing it out into 'individual deterrence' and 'general deterrence'. With 'individual deterrence' the state retaliates against 'nonconformists' so as to make them pause in the future before continuing the undesired behavior, whereas with 'general deterrence' people are discouraged from undertaking 'undesirable activities'. General deterrence, they argue, 'depends on shaping peoples' perceptions of what could happen to them if they were to overstep the boundaries of acceptable behavior'. In other words, actors are encouraged to take their attention away from external goals and instead look internally and consider what state actions their political beliefs might instigate. Koopmans (2005, p. 161) zeroes in on the deterrent dimension of the Intimidation mechanism and how it sprays outward to the general public when he writes: 'repression always has important deterrence and socialization components that aim not at the repressed subject, but at the wider public, to deter those who might consider committing a similar offense, or to symbolically reward and satisfy those citizens who refrain from breaking the rule'.

Many of the ten Action Modes flow directly into the mechanism of Intimidation. For example, direct violence has a deterrent dimension. When potential dissidents see protesters getting gunned down, as with Kent State University, or doused with tear gas, as with Global Justice Movement protesters in Seattle, they are likely to think twice before attending a protest event. For example, Roseann Canfora, who was actively involved with SDS, opted to leave the street heat of Kent State after living through the National Guard's rifle attack that left four students dead. 'I . . . moved to Boston, because I wanted to forget politics for a while', she said later in an interview as she thinly veiled the effect of Intimidation (Schultz & Schultz, 2001, p. 366). The Intimidation mechanism is no mere relic of the 1960s and 1970s, however. As Peter Kraska and Victor Kappeler (1997, p. 12) point out, recent trends in the USA show

> a sharp rise in the number of police paramilitary units [PPUs], a rapid expansion in their activities, the normalization of paramilitary units into mainstream police work, and a close ideological and material connection between PPUs and the U.S. armed forces. These findings provide compelling evidence of a national trend toward the militarization of U.S. civilian police forces and, in turn, the militarization of corresponding social problems handled by the police.

Such militarism gives protesters – and potential protesters – pause. Fernandez (2005, p. 129) calls this 'the chilling effect', by which he means the technology-drenched, baton-and-mask intensity designed to intimidate both dissidents and the general public. This fear-inducing 'technology of control' deters local activists from taking to the streets and sends the message to the general public that protesters necessitate strong policing.

Public prosecutions and hearings, employment deprivation, and harassment and harassment arrestments, which sometimes result from extraordinary rules and laws, have a similar effect. As Carey McWilliams (1950, pp. 71–72) notes in regards to the Hollywood Ten:

> It can be a short step from 'informing' the public to intimidating the public. And this, in effect, is precisely what happened to the Hollywood Ten. The House Committee on Un-American Activities, in the guise of 'informing' the public and Congress on Communistic infiltration in the motion picture industry, proceeded to interdict a vast range of social, economic, and political ideas and to proscribe those identified, in any

> manner, with any of these ideas. The action had a clear tendency to dissuade other people from listening to an exposition of these ideas or from reading about them or from being associated with those interested in them.

Police who are quick to the cuffs can trigger the Intimidation mechanism. Barkan (1984, p. 555) explains how this worked in the South with the Civil Rights movement: 'Southern police made arrests in virtually any kind of sit-in, march, or demonstration, and also arrested known activists in the absence of actual protest activity. Most of these arrests were for actions that would have been legal outside the South.' Once arrested, dissidents were forced to endure brutal jail conditions and hostile, racism-addled prison guards. 'Southern jails', Barkan (1984, p. 555) concludes, 'sapped the strength out of the movement'.

Viewing or hearing about the acts of repression against dissidents is crucial, since according to Bahry and Silver (1987, p. 1068): 'For general deterrence to work, the agencies of coercion must appear to be effective and the punishment meted out must be visible, publicized. Or the memory of past activities of the agencies must be strong. A perception that some activity might be risky is only a deterrent if reprisal is very likely.' They also assert that certainty and severity of punishment must be strong in order to undermine collective activity, though certainty may be more important in terms of intimidation (Bahry & Silver, 1987, pp. 1068–1069). Thus, the effectiveness of the Intimidation mechanism affects subsequent Action Modes that are adopted by the state. For example, if intimidation is effective, then direct violence is less necessary as an Action Mode in the future repertoire of repression.

This brings us to the special relationship between state surveillance and the mechanism of Intimidation. In a sense, surveillance – and especially ostentatious surveillance – compresses space, both physical space and tactical space, which makes people feel less able to act freely. Ostentatious surveillance may lead to demobilization without the allocation of punishment via the other Action Modes. As Zald (1978, p. 91) points out, 'Surveillance can also be thought of as a form of sanction. At least, target element awareness of surveillance is likely to lead to a perception that the probability of sanctions is increased. Thus, periodic surveillance can be seen as a control device even without the imposition of fines or allocations of subsidies.' With the not-so-distant prospect of direct violence, harassment, harassment arrests, and surveillance looming in the air, Intimidation imposes new organizing premises on actors, leading to altered strategies and tactics. By forcing actors to consider the internal consequences of their actions, Intimidation leads to amplified paranoia as well as increased secrecy in group relations. Harry Wachtel, one of Martin Luther King Jr's advisors, described how this works, as he explained how surveillance affected people working with the SCLC: 'When you live in a fishbowl, you act like you're in a fishbowl, whether you do it consciously or unconsciously … I can't put specifics before you except to say that it beggars the imagination not to believe that the SCLC, Dr. King, and all its leaders were not chilled or inhibited from all kinds of activities, political and even social' (US Congress, 1976, p. 184). Secrecy often breeds a significant decrease in internal democracy in decision-making processes. It also complicates intra- and inter-group brokerage and alliance building.

Circulating the Effects of the Mechanisms of Repression: Emulation

The sometimes fierce, sometimes subtle whirl and swirl of repression in particular historical moments involving specific social movements and dissident citizens can be

explained through four social mechanisms: Resource Depletion, Stigmatization, Divisive Disruption, and Intimidation. These four mechanisms, working in concert, isolate dissidents from each other and from the general public. An additional social mechanism – Emulation – circulates the effects of the Mechanisms of Repression, transferring altered social relations from one locale to another and from one individual or group to another. The Mechanisms of Repression, whether acting individually or in concert, activate step two of the demobilization process, the spread of repression's effects, which primarily occurs through the Decisional Mechanism, Emulation. By Emulation I mean a social relation whereby a group or individual models itself or oneself after the behavior or actions of another group or individual. Also, I agree with Charles Tilly (1998, p. 10) who defines the Emulation Mechanism as 'the transplanting of existing social relations from one setting to another'.[11] Such transference of social relations can be triggered by both individual decisions to defect as well as group decisions to demobilize.

Since political dissidence is concealable – and therefore publicly avertable – individual defection affords dissident citizens an escape hatch, a way of reorganizing the premises of social transactions. Outward political expression of beliefs can be sacrificed on the altar of social acceptance. The cognitive mechanism of Emulation cuts in two, not mutually exclusive ways: (1) demobilizing dissidents imitate previous dissidents who have opted to cease making contentious claims, or (2) dissidents model themselves after mainstream people – 'normals' as Goffman (1963, p. 5) calls them – acting in mainstream ways with more socially accepted political beliefs. Emulation does not necessarily have to occur at the conscious level; therefore it includes individuals who carefully weigh out their situations and decide to no longer participate in social movement activity and those who do not undergo such conscious calculation.

Recent research in social psychology indicates that with social isolation and exclusion – which the Mechanisms of Repression often trigger – non-conscious behavioral mimicry is a common response. Lakin and Chartrand (2005, p. 283) note that an array of studies 'clearly demonstrate that we mimic the behaviors of those we care about (or with whom there is an ongoing relationship) and those we might want to like us'. Other psychological research has found that the mere threat of social exclusion can cause people to modify behavior and cooperate with the dominant groups in society (Ouwerkerk *et al.*, 2005).[12]

Emulation has much in common with what is known as the 'demonstration effect'. However, the term 'demonstration effect' is used almost exclusively in regards to the diffusion of protest, the inter-movement spread of activism or repertoires (e.g. Minkoff, 1997), or the widened proliferation of other social phenomena such as revolution or nationalization (e.g. Kobrin, 1985). According to Stephen Kobrin (1985, p. 8) the 'demonstration effect implies that the information provided by an event within the system reduces uncertainty in a way that increases the probability of action or inaction'. In social movement studies, the 'demonstration effect' has been used to explain movement emergence and development, but not demobilization. Debra Minkoff (1997, p. 779), for example, explores how the 'demonstration effect', or the idea that 'successful protests incite other constituencies to activism', applies to the women's movement, even as she grafts on her alternative model of organizational behavior and dynamics.

Highlighting the role of social interaction, Passy (2003, p. 23) notes in regards to the decision to join social movements:

> One of the multiple functions of networks intervenes at the end of the participation process, when individuals define their preferences as to whether they will join collective action or otherwise. Individual decisions are shaped, at least in part, by interactions with other actors. Individuals incorporate and make sense of their multiple social interactions, which influence the definition of individual preferences.

When Passy mentions 'the end of the participation process' she is, in many ways, referring to the beginning, or to the decision to participate in collective action rather than its inverse, demobilization. According to the mechanism of Emulation, if social movement participants see their comrades withdrawing from participation, or they are feeling social isolation and the pressure to conform, they may opt to cease making contentious claims.[13] Therefore, Emulation is a mechanism of diffusion that circulates state repression through and between groups, carrying the collective, reverberative effects of the other four Mechanisms of Repression.

Kim and Bearman (1997, p. 72) assert that interpersonal interaction is 'the furnace of collective action in which ordinary men and women become activists'. Accordingly, such human interaction – and more specifically in this case, Emulation – is the metaphorical cold shower that affects why people decide *not* to become activists or that influences them to cease their social activism.

Once Emulation – step two of the demobilization process – is set in motion, solidarity nosedives while recruitment slumps and alliance building wanes. As a result, positive media coverage shrinks. Hedstrom (1998, p. 324) sums up how this cognitive mechanism works in the real world:

> Through their actions, actors give off signals to other actors, and other actors pay attention to these signals because they provide information about the likely payoffs of different action alternatives. By relying upon [Emulation] and following the lead of others, actors arrive at better decisions than they otherwise would have, and, in addition, they reduce whatever cognitive dissonance might be stemming from adopting an unconventional minority position.

Accordingly, the mechanism of Emulation leads to social movement disintegration, the decline of dissent.

Conclusion

In a democratic society, where open coercion cannot be used too often without losing legitimacy, the state must come up with subtler ways to maintain social control. Therefore, liberal-democratic regimes, such as the one that exists in the USA, tend to rely more on the quieter forms of repression than on overt, direct violence to maintain social control. By social control, I agree with Mayer Zald (1978, p. 83) who defines it as 'the process by which individuals, groups, and organizations attempt to make performance, the behavior and operations of other groups, organizations, and individuals, conform to standards of behavior or normative preferences'. This is a negotiated, transactional process and not a wholly imposed one. Because these subtler Action Modes are more difficult to observe, and therefore data are more difficult to access, many social movement researchers have

sidestepped the issue. In this study, however, the subtle, difficult-to-detect Action Modes are central.

Using social mechanisms to crack open the black box of state repression in the USA is important on the empirical, theoretical, and normative levels. Being able to sift through the wide range of contentious political activity that appears at the empirical surface and to distill the swirl of state, mass media, and dissident interaction into analytical categories, allows us to better understand the oft-unexplored interstices of US history where repression regularly resides. Theoretically, a middle-level approach that specifies and systemizes the four social mechanisms that cause social movement decline affords political scientists a concrete way to bridge the structuralist, culturalist, and rationalist positions on collective action and to forge causal explanations that can skate across space and time, making sense of the dynamic interactions that occur in various episodes of contention across the USA and throughout US history. Normatively, dissident citizenship – replete with creativity, consciousness, and courage – is a crucial cog in the complex machine of democracy. As a force that challenges privilege and repudiates the thinning of political discourse, dissidents serve the important democratic function of seeking out forms of authority and domination, and questioning their legitimacy. Therefore, understanding the role of the dissident citizen is critical to understanding democracy as it is practiced in the USA.

In *Dynamics of Contention*, McAdam *et al.* (2001, p. 32) offer a radical critique of the field of social movements. Instead of the classic social movement agenda's focus on a 'checklist of variables – opportunity, threat, mobilizing structures, repertoires, framing', they suggest replacing these variables with recurrent causal mechanisms that explain social processes. This study takes their critique seriously, as it explores the real-world structures of interaction internal to the state's repression of political dissent. To do so, it digs beneath the empirical surface in order to identify and understand the underlying interrelations and organizing premises that inform this social process. In the end, I offer a model, depicted visually in Figure 2, that not only strives to explain repression in twentieth- and twenty-first-century USA but also endeavors to offer a parsimonious analytical framework that makes future inquiry more tractable.

While the mechanisms exhibit tendencies to affect or negate key aspects of collective action, a parsimonious and singular mechanism-to-outcome relationship does not exist. As the historical data above show, individual mechanisms impinge on many movement-building and maintenance activities simultaneously. This is the multi-faceted causal power of the mechanism: its ability to stultify collective action in many ways at once. This does

Action Modes	Mechanisms of Repression	Diffusion	Process
Direct violence			
Public prosecutions and hearings	Resource Depletion→		
Employment deprivation			
Surveillance and break-ins	Stigmatization→		
Infiltration, 'badjacketing', and the use of agent provocateurs		Emulation→	Demobilization
'Black propaganda'			
Harassment arrests	Divisive Disruption→		
Extraordinary rules and laws			
Mass media manipulation	Intimidation→		
Mass media deprecation			

Figure 2. A mechanism-based model for understanding demobilization

not mean we are unable to observe clear causal pathways to demobilization in specific episodes of contention. Rather, it means that since we are examining complex circuits of social interaction, the Mechanisms of Repression interrelate and reverberate in intricate, complicated ways that do not pattern out in a universally generalizable way. Grand theory and universalisms aside, one can still operate at the theoretical middle level and elucidate the Mechanisms of Repression that cause social movement demobilization, namely Resource Depletion, Stigmatization, Divisive Disruption, Intimidation, and Emulation. Rigorous case studies of particular social movements operating in specific historical moments can illuminate these complex circuits of interaction and uncover the precise concatenations of mechanisms that are causing demobilization in particular instances.

The repression of dissent is usually couched in the syntax of exceptionality and carried out on the terrain of crisis. Dissent is often framed by the state and mass media in terms of negation, criticism, and objection, which downplays, if not elides, its regenerative aspects rooted in creativity, conscientiousness, and courage. Dissenting citizens not only speak to perceived dangers and problems in society but they also speak to the opportunities and possibilities of vigorous political life. Dissidents challenge the axiomatic, taken-for-granted 'realities' of prevailing societal discourse(s) as they question the silences, omissions, and limitations of these dominant constructions. In historical hindsight, dissident citizens are often held up as national heroes, from Sam Adams and his revolutionary comrades to Frederick Douglass and the slavery abolitionists, from Susan B. Anthony to Martin Luther King Jr. It is difficult to deny the importance of these dissidents in US history; they are held up as model Americans precisely because their dissident philosophies strongly challenged the prevailing worldviews of the time. Understanding the Mechanisms of Repression brings us closer to comprehending how political freedom has been threatened across time and place, and therefore, perhaps, drives us toward a time when political dissent is not seen as a sign of societal peril but rather as the mark of a healthy society.

Notes

1. 'Monkeywrenching' is a term that encompasses a wide range of activities, from the removal of surveyor stakes from logging roads to the destruction of logging and mining equipment to the insertion of spikes into soon-to-be-logged trees in order to destroy the sawblade (also known as tree spiking). The essential idea is to deliberately place a wrench in the plans of developers, loggers, miners, and others intent on laying claim to the environment.
2. Almost two decades later, Deborah Balser (1997) voiced the same critique.
3. Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall (2002 [1988]) also offer an early and important categorization of repression, but they do this somewhat informally, and the mass media play only a minor role.
4. For example, Cunningham (2004, p. 236) could combine three forms – 'send anonymous letter', 'send fake (signed) letter', and 'send ridiculing information' – into a single category, 'black propaganda', which I discuss below.
5. Notable exceptions include Gitlin (1980), Hallin (1986), and Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986).
6. Tilly's (2005, p. 225) two mechanisms are 'dissident fragmentation' and 'dissident defection'.
7. The Church Committee – a Senate Select Committee established in January 1975 to investigate intelligence community malfeasance – defined 'black bag jobs' as 'warrantless surreptitious entries for purposes other than microphone installation, e.g., physical search and photographing or seizing documents' (US Congress, 1976, p. 355).
8. For social movement organizations that opt to go the non-profit, 501(c)(3) tax-exempt-status route, various state tax rules and laws can also serve to suppress dissent, as can selective enforcement of the federal tax code and Internal Revenue Service rules (McCarthy *et al.*, 1991).

9. Ferree (2005) is more focused on how stigmatization burrows culturally into and is constituted through civil society, rather than how it can emerge via relations between the state and mass media, which is the focus of this paper (although she does discuss the crucial role that media play in the stigmatization process). She also zeroes in on movements that are not targeting the state, but rather are trying to shift socio-cultural values.

10. In fact, Koopmans (2005, p. 160) asserts in a study on dissent in Germany that 'protests that are widely condemned in the public sphere as illegitimate are more likely to be repressed than protests that receive broad public support'.

11. Emulation is one of Tilly's (1998) four social mechanisms to explain the process of durable inequality (the other mechanisms are Exploitation, Opportunity Hoarding, and Adaptation). He uses Emulation as a group-level mechanism that helps explain how modes of inequality spread to other sites.

12. Other researchers (Pinel & Swann, 2000, p. 144) have found that activists are inclined to leave movements that are unable to provide them with 'self-verification', or self-confirming support for who they are. With resources quickly depleting, a movement's group image being questioned or besmirched in the public sphere, fractious inter- and intra-group relations abound, and an intimidating, muscular state always near, one's 'self-verification' may well be under assault.

13. Opp and Roehl (1990, p. 527) find that the level of investment in the movement or cause relates to the effect of negative sanctions that may emerge via the Mechanisms of Repression. Protesters who are 'integrated' into 'protest-encouraging' networks will not receive the same negative sanctions from outside the group as those who are less integrated into movement structures.

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