

1 Introduction

There are times and places about which nothing seems more significant than the sheer energy and violence that states direct against basic freedoms. The snippets of information that filter from these dictatorial seasons – tales of furtive hiding and tragic discovery: hard times and uneasy sleep – describe lives utterly structured by state repression. Authoritarians bent on taking power, consolidating their rule or seizing resources frequently silence opponents with bludgeons, bullets and shallow graves, and those who find themselves in the path of the state juggernaut probably have trouble even imagining protest or resistance without also calculating the severity or likelihood of state repression. Such considerations surely influence whether individuals take action or maintain a frustrated silence, and will over time broadly shape protest and resistance. They also influence what modes of democracy struggle will emerge or succeed in a given setting. Democracy movements arise against established patterns of contention: their timing, base, and outcome reflect state-movement interactions begun at the dictatorship's outset and reproduced (with adjustments) thereafter, in interactions between repression and contention. Institutions and repertoires of contention that survive, or are ignored by, state repression inform important aspects of anti-dictatorship movements, and influence the role that protest plays in transitions to democracy.

Analysts, however, have seldom attempted to understand *modes* of protest in authoritarian settings – or indeed elsewhere – via its relationship to *styles* of state repression. More often, we have been concerned with quantitative associations between the degree of repression and the extent of protest.¹ Such associations, however, may miss the strategic heart of political contention, in which authorities try to undermine or capture movement activists, discredit their lines of argument, interdict their connection to supporters, and eliminate opportunities for mobilization,

¹ Duff and McCamant 1976; Duvall and Shamir 1980; Rummel 1984; Opp 1989.

while movement leaders build on whatever opportunities they have, and endeavor to fit activity to specific sets of constraints. To grasp how authoritarian states influence protest requires distinctions *among* repressive strategies, and explanations of how these differences influence political contention.

But how should one distinguish among repressive regimes? How does one gauge authoritarian rule's influences on social protest and dissent? Quantitative answers imagine a more or less linear continuum from utter dictatorship to pure democracy, and locate repression at some point along this range. To fix a regime's character, one gathers information about its degree of openness or brutality. It makes sense, in this view, to ask whether Nigeria or Cambodia is more repressive, and to develop answers based on how often elections, political murders, or press closings take place. In this approach, one can define repression independently of its political consequences, and include physical violence, arrest, preventing assembly and expression, and perhaps even threats to do any of these things. For those compelled to live under a *specific* repressive regime, however, repression's *form* may be as important as its *extent*. A formally democratic state that periodically kills ethnic minorities profoundly affects members of that group. Authorities who tolerate student demonstrations but shoot up picket lines will encourage different contentious forms than those that allow labor a freer hand but clamp down on campus activism. Those who challenge authoritarians – particularly consolidating authoritarians – face off against active, calculating and often cruel adversaries. Citizens cannot plan a strike, a demonstration, a boycott or often even a poetry reading without concern for state reaction, and it makes sense that labor leaders, activists and poets will seek to anticipate, and somehow outflank, state repression.

Authorities facing actual or likely social challenge may attempt to prevent, interrupt or punish dissident expressions in acts we call repression. Following others, we define repression functionally, as coercive acts or threats that weaken resistance to authorities' will.² Defined in these terms, repression runs a broad gamut from physically harming members of society (i.e. summary execution and torture) to limiting activity (i.e. close surveillance, threats, warnings). Our definition regards repression contingently: we will see, for instance, that Indonesian officials often issued threats to dissidents that were expressed in terms of outward support or at least permission. On some universal scale of repression based on quanta of violence or overt menace, such supporting remarks

² Stohl and Lopez 1984: 7; Henderson 1991: 121.

would likely not qualify. Viewed in relation to the Indonesian historical context of punishment and threat, however, they certainly do.

This work explores how particular modes of state attack encourage specific patterns of political contention. Regime opponents anticipate state activity, search out its pattern, and in light of that pattern, calibrate movement practice to navigate between the innocuous and the suicidal. Some movements abandon activist forms crushed by surveillance and violence, others challenge prohibitions, or act evasively. Impending or recollected repression warns protesters away from some acts, and pushes them toward others, either because of the collective memory or more direct menace. Some dissidents are schooled by older comrades; others are haunted by their elimination. Apart from activists' explicit perceptions and intentions, moreover, state repression influences protest and resistance by changing movement organizations and oppositional cultures. Repressive patterns sometimes emerge with relative clarity, and I examine how and why this might be so. But even where state activity is more erratic, dissidents will have little choice but to forecast and adjust to state repression, because heedless mobilization carries such high costs in authoritarian settings.

I compare the Burmese, Indonesian and Philippine cases to illustrate the variety of repressive strategies available to states, and the connection between each strategy and modes of collective action and resistance. In defining the universe of cases in this way, I hope to persuade readers that repression does not operate in similar ways across settings, nor does it vary systematically between more and less democratic or developed settings. Careful comparison among these countries persuades me that case-specific interaction between authorities and challengers, identified most starkly by different patterns of political repression, initiate path-dependent sequences of contention. Naturally, contention in the cases will respond to some common triggers. Philippine, Indonesian and Burmese democracy movements, for instance, display some similar elements, which may help to explain the occurrence of anti-regime mobilization. A charismatic female leader led each, each unfolded during periods of acute economic crisis, and each opposed a regime under increasing international pressure. Still, important variations in the process and outcome of struggle in each case reflect deeper and historically established contentious patterns, patterns essential to understanding how economic or political crisis play out.

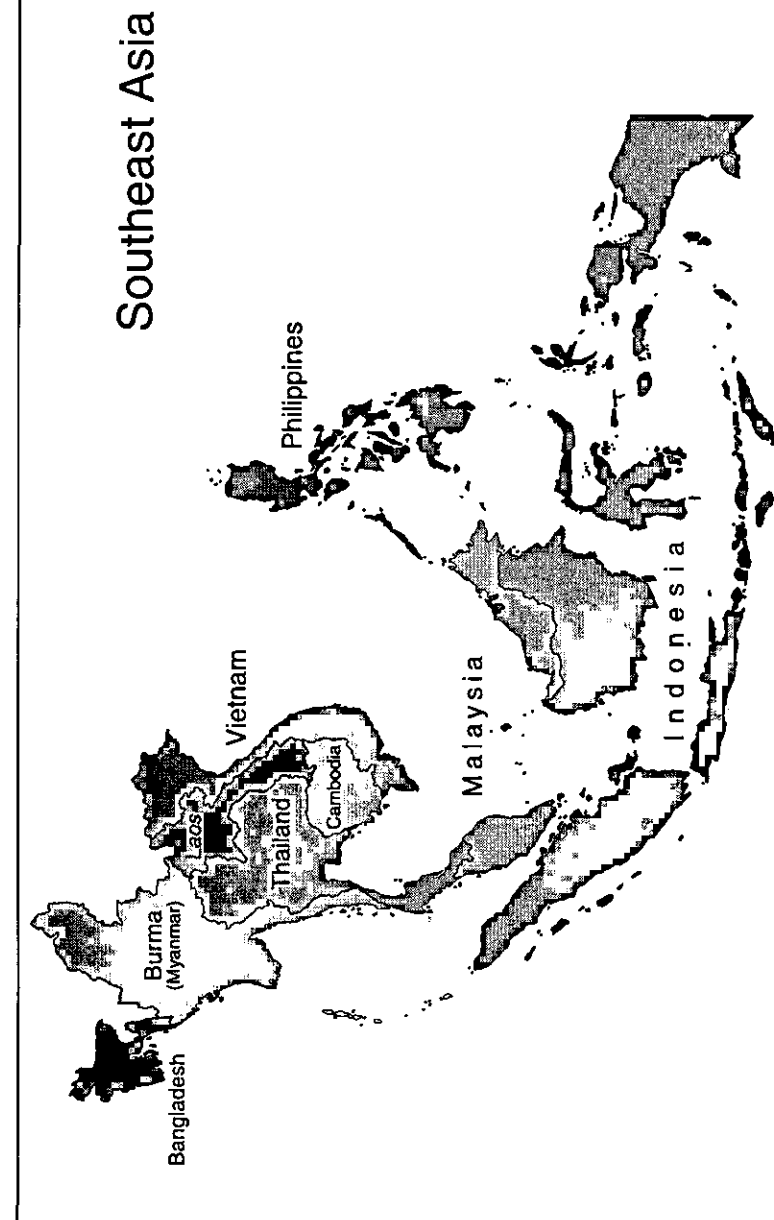
The accounts begin with the rise of men who would become their country's most important post-war dictators – Ne Win, Suharto and Ferdinand Marcos. Each developed initial strategies of attack to secure and consolidate power, and these strategies provided templates for later

state activity, although this activity also developed and evolved over time for each. Repression in the cases sorts into three simple models. Ne Win moved with swift and deadly violence against any open protest or dissent in lowland Burma, driving resistance underground or to the country's frontier-based insurgencies. Suharto murdered an astounding number of Indonesian communists in the PKI (*Partia Komunis Indonesia*, Indonesian Communist Party) then rooted out or constrained other opposition *organizations*, but less regularly had authorities attack demonstrations, particularly in urban, or central areas. Ferdinand Marcos's contradictory efforts to terrorize opponents and legitimize his regime required that he divide insurgents from moderate, less-organized and semi-legal activists. From these beginnings, regimes and movements tried to thwart one another by adjusting to new threats and opportunities, learning from mistakes, adapting to new conditions.

Interactions between state repression and movement response (what I will refer to as patterns of political contention) establish broader themes in mobilization and demobilization by underwriting context-specific ideas about what constitutes a political opportunity, what movement goals will attract support, and what modes of struggle will likely prosper. Roughly similar events in different settings – elections, newly restrictive press laws, and economic downturns – produce radically different modes of political contention. Over time, a relational logic emerges in the state and social sides of political struggle that informs authorities' views about the difference between harmless and subversive mobilization, governs what challenges provoke state attacks, and structures consequent political contention. I work from these patterned relations toward a perspective on the confrontations between state and democracy movement that ended each dictator's reign.

Three state attacks and movement legacies

A dictatorship may impose itself on society most powerfully in grinding daily encounters between authority and subjects. Nevertheless, authorities often etch the lessons, threats and warnings fundamental to the regime in extraordinary moments of confrontation and repression. At such times, the state wades into society to emphasize or rewrite its rules, often via attacks that crush some opponents and eliminate some modes of activism. Across time and space, moreover, authorities often choose between clearly distinct patterns of repression. Human rights advocates and journalists may dwell on regime brutality as unreasoning and inhuman. Yet something *more* menacing than lapses in rationality or compassion probably guides many attacks: a cold logic and methodology geared



Map 1 Southeast Asia

to specific objectives that constitute clear political lessons and more veiled threats to generations of dissidents. State attacks leave legacies of fear and caution that realign authoritarian rule and social resistance for years. Consider, the rough outline of three political and military coups.

Just over three months after seizing power in March 1962, members of the Burmese military, or *Tatmadaw*, arrived at Rangoon University's campus to confront student protests. On that day, demonstrators stood near the university's student union-building, from where they denounced military rule and protested General Ne Win's coup. Several uncertain minutes after the soldiers surrounded the building, students shook off their initial apprehension, and some even shouted insults at the soldiers. A uniformed figure separated from the uniformed ranks, gave a signaling wave, and the troops opened fire. Many students were wounded, killed, or arrested, while others took shelter within the union building. Hours later, military personnel padlocked the building and dynamited it to the ground – killing a still undetermined number hiding within.³ According to many, the attack shocked Burmese observers, but so did the status of the target in their national pantheon. Burmese students in the anti-British nationalist movement had erected that student union, under British auspices, after pitched struggle. It figured centrally in the independence struggle, had sheltered students in the first nationalist organizations, had been a nationalist womb and shrine for over thirty years.⁴ The shootings and explosion constituted the opening moment in the new regime's campaign utterly to prevent protest in post-coup Burma; there could not have been a more pointed or dramatic place to deliver the opening salvo. In its aftermath, student activists one by one slipped into the countryside to join insurgent and underground forces. Between 1962 and 1988, fewer than six demonstrations, clustered in 1968 and around 1974 to 1975, disturbed the *urban* peace Ne Win built that day; all ended in bloodshed.⁵

A different sort of murder began in late October 1965 in Indonesia. There, ABRI (*Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia*, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia) set out to consolidate power after outmaneuvering an attempted coup, most likely planned by junior officers from Central Java. Seven of ABRI's most senior officers died in that coup,

³ Accounts on the exact character of the attack, and the body count, vary. Smith (1997) quotes *The Times* (July 9, 1962) that the death toll was in the thousands with students inside the union. Lintner (1994, 1990) quite definitively asserts that students were inside the building, while Silverstein and Wohl (1964) report fewer deaths, and an empty building.

⁴ Moscott 1974.

⁵ Lintner 1994.

and only General Suharto, then commanding the KOSTRAD (*Komando Cadangan Strategis Angkatan Darat*, or Army Strategic Reserve Command) seemed positioned to turn back the challenge. In this moment (or perhaps sometime earlier) Suharto glimpsed an opportunity to eliminate ABRI's arch-rival for national power, the PKI; under his leadership, the army stirred the flames of suspicion surrounding the PKI's role in the coup to full-throated outrage. By the end of October, soldiers led a campaign to murder and arrest Indonesian communists, for which they found willing allies in some rural, largely Islamic groups.⁶ Six months later, between 300,000 and 1,000,000 people were dead, mainly on Java, Bali and Sumatra.⁷ Soldiers carried out a great many of these killings, but also provided logistical and intelligence support, as well as ideological encouragement to civilian groups. It bears mention that the American CIA *also* contributed intelligence to the operation.⁸ When the killings stopped, no organized opposition to Suharto existed. Except for separatist movements in Aceh, Irian Jaya and East Timor, the New Order state virtually prevented organized opposition to its rule from that point forward.⁹

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, elected once by popular vote and once by massive fraud, decided in mid-1972 that he was through with constitutional restraints on his power, and declared martial law. To that point, his regime had already done much to concentrate traditionally decentralized power in the national executive. Under martial law, Marcos suspended civil institutions like the Supreme Court and Legislature, and thereafter ruled via unilateral presidential decree. In the days following the September 23 public declaration of martial law, moreover, he imprisoned his parliamentary rivals and a broad range of activists from campuses, labor unions and the recently organized Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP). Four months later, according to an Amnesty International report, some 30,000 people had been detained.¹⁰ For a time, under state pressure, the urban sites of protest – the Plaza Miranda, Mendiola Bridge, and the Liwasang Bonifacio – were becalmed. In the countryside, invigorated military pursuit dealt heavy setbacks to the armed CPP/NPA (New People's Army) insurgency.

⁶ Anderson and McVey 1971; Crouch 1978; Schulte-Nordholdt 1987.

⁷ Collin Cribb provides a sensitive account of the difficulties surrounding any effort definitively to count the number of people killed in the massacre. His survey of different efforts to arrive at a final tally includes more than twenty attempts, which range from low estimates of 150,000 killed to a high of 1,000,000, Cribb 1990: 12.

⁸ See Simmons 2000: 179–181; and Robinson 1984; Scott 1985.

⁹ Cribb 1990; Fein 1993; Robinson 1995.

¹⁰ Amnesty International 1977.

However, Marcos was more dependent on US support than either Ne Win or Suharto, and from the first he tried to legitimize martial law to placate American policymakers. This effort gave elite oppositionists, many of whom were soon released from jail, opportunities to position themselves against the regime. Meanwhile, Marcos's heavy-handed counterinsurgency in the countryside was undermined by the dictates of fighting the Muslim insurgency in the South, and by Marcos's greater attention to state building. Hence by 1975, both the urban protest movement and the organized rural insurgency had rebounded, and remained active (sometimes operating in tandem, often separately) through Marcos's remaining years as president.¹¹

How should one think comparatively about these cases? The social movements literature has often treated Third World cases mainly as contrasts to industrial society.¹² If we think along these lines, we may well consider it appropriate to describe the three as similar: generic Third World, authoritarian or even Southeast Asian examples of state crackdowns on social opposition. Each state attempted to expand and consolidate strong central power, and to that end threw off earlier post-colonial regimes. We might note authorities' apparently easy resort to violence, or recognize that in the Cold War's descending darkness, each attack (even in *socialist* Burma) hoisted the pennant of anti-communism, and used it for decades to justify some of the region's most horrific abuses.

Yet perhaps more interesting comparative gains await those willing to explore *differences* among Indonesia, Burma and the Philippines, and to consider broad possibilities for how states may respond to opposition. If we think about repression as strategic, we might ask where and how it occurs, and with what legacies. We would soon discover important diversity across the three cases, hints of larger comparative issues. The Burmese military killed students engaged in urban protest, and then devoted its greatest attention to eliminating any visible sign of dissent from their society. After the 1962 student-union massacre shocked Burmese society into silence, the government set to work eliminating protest from Burmese society, and particularly from the cities. Most activists evaded detection by taking great care and few risks. Some students withdrew into an underground existence, and in 1964 joined BCP (Burma Communist Party) cadres in their countryside bases. Authorities made little effort to stop the student exodus, and seemed content to police urban territory and quash the threat of new mass protest. The regime

¹¹ Wurfel 1988; Thompson 1995.

¹² Boudreau 1996; Ponna 1993.

was then also busy eliminating structures and institutions that supported student protest (at first), and broader dissent thereafter. Throughout, the shock of the campus murders underscored the deadly consequences of renewed protest or open dissent.

Indonesian state violence eliminated the PKI's entire organization – first killing many of its members and then driving others into hiding or silence. The slaughter reached the greatest heights in rural areas where the communist party had strong support from rural farmers – which hints at an important strategic decision. Forces working to seize and consolidate national power may first build countryside bases in preparation for larger and more central battles – a classic guerilla strategy. But why would a powerfully central institution like ABRI so strongly focus on provincial struggles, and not concentrate most on wresting control from civil authority in the cities (as the *Tatmadaw* had done in Burma)? Indeed, in the midst of the struggle between an increasingly weakened Sukarno and a rising Suharto, the General took an instructive gamble: he allowed and encouraged Indonesian students to protest against the president. Admittedly, these protests allied themselves with the military leadership. Yet mass demonstrations are risky and unpredictable affairs, less congenial tools than others a hierarchical military might take up.

Here, then, we find two contrasts between the Indonesian and the Burmese assaults: first, and most clearly, while the *Tatmadaw* eliminated protest but allowed protesters to escape into the underground, ABRI killed members of the communist organization; but allowed protest to occur in the cities, even after those protests began to turn against his rule. Second, the Burmese fought the students in the cities to claim that strategic territory, but Suharto eliminated a rival organization – and devoted most attention to areas where the PKI was strongest – even if this meant taking the struggle to places like Bali and Northern Sumatra with comparatively less strategic value. Indeed, in Java's largest and most central cities, he allowed the largest and most organized protests.

In contrast, Marcos's martial law struck at both opposition organizations and protest, but with considerably less vigor or focus. Campaigns against insurgent organizations and more moderate protesters betrayed some equivocation on the new dictator's part. Under US pressure, and more a politician himself than either Suharto or Ne Win, Marcos was unable to keep most parliamentary opponents jailed for more than several months. Many had advance warning and slipped away to the United States or into the countryside before or during the clampdown. The military's efforts against the insurgency never achieved the energy or ruthlessness that Suharto mustered against the PKI, nor did Marcos have existing anti-communist antagonisms in his society such as those

that accelerated the Indonesian slaughter, for communism had shallow roots in Philippine experience. Marcos, in fact, devoted less of his initial attention to specific opponents than to reworking the Philippine state's legal and institutional foundations to expand his power. In contrast, Suharto wiped out the PKI before constructing the New Order's apparatus, and Burma waited twelve years for its socialist constitution.

What lessons do these comparisons yield? The scope of state violence differs sharply among the cases. The Indonesian massacre far outstrips anything in Burma or the Philippines, and Burma's crackdown was more violent than Philippine events. These differences do influence subsequent patterns of contention, particularly in Indonesia, where the specter of mass murder haunts all forms of dissent. But more than levels of violence, sharper and more significant differences in the *logics* of violence and repression distinguish the cases from one another. Burmese authorities drove all dissent far underground, where it was preserved but encapsulated in the form of armed insurgencies or secret cells. The Indonesian campaign against the PKI began a consistent state effort to draw an uncompromising line this side of organization: dissidents could protest, but protesters could not organize. Hence the Burmese and Indonesian state strategies exactly reversed one another. The Philippine effort fell somewhere in between, for Marcos was able neither decisively to eliminate the armed insurgent organization or its underground party, nor long silence less-organized, more moderate and open protest. After their authoritarian onsets, actors in each state developed new plans to defeat resistance and extend power, but generally built on and refreshed the politico-institutional legacies of the original attack.

Of these legacies, which are most important? I concentrate on three. The first is institutional and material. State repression killed, bruised, imprisoned and terrified citizens, but seldom indiscriminately. Most focused on specific targets, and so shaped the material and organizational resources that survived, promoting political forms that escaped the state's most direct proscription. Often, forms that authorities judge least threatening survived – as with student protests in 1970s Indonesia. Elsewhere, forms survived because authorities had neither the capacity nor will to defeat them – as with insurgencies in both the Philippines and Burma. Activist forms and organizations, however, do not exist independently of activists. Repression shapes the duration, direction and intensity of activist careers in ways that profoundly influence political contention. Where activist forms and organizations survive state attack, generations of experienced dissidents bring their accumulated wisdom and leadership to the struggle, and provide a thicker and more complex network of support for new protest. Elsewhere, authorities may eliminate entire

activist generations, and deprive new claim makers of experienced leaders. Activists in well-elaborated movement structures that include an insurgent army and overseas solidarity branches may sustain a lifetime of struggle. Where repression crushed supporting institutions, activist careers will be shorter, and either more precarious or less committed. Deprived of activist organizations, for example, Burmese and Indonesian dissidents could muster only short bursts of activity and ultimately had little choice, as individuals, but to join the authoritarian mainstream.

The second legacy is tactical and interpretive. Although state attacks target specific adversaries and challengers, they place entire societies on notice, establishing patterns and expectations against which dissidents assess any activity's probable consequences. Here one finds an important contrast with protest in industrial democracies. Activists under more moderate regimes can focus on concerns about recruitment, publicity and movement outcomes, for regime moderation narrows the general possibility of direct repression. The observation, of course, is empirical rather than categorical, and even liberal states sometimes attack demonstrations.¹³ In contrast, movements under authoritarian regimes must always anticipate state repression, and explicitly incorporate this anticipation into their plans. Movements that seriously challenge highly regarded state interests may find themselves facing tear gas, gunfire, arrest and summary execution. Some activists deliberately, or at least with resignation, draw fire from the state – as we will see, Burmese protests were cataclysmic and prone to violent escalation precisely because most participants reasonably expected devastating repression. Others plan to negotiate a line between utterly routine activity with little effect and acts that will surely provoke repression. Sufficiently strong movement capacities may allow activists to challenge state proscriptions, while weaker movements may comply with them. Activist plans reflect interpretations of past state responses to social challenges, and these interpretations help establish which events constitute mobilizing opportunities.

Third, historically patterned modes of contention create distinct movement cultures in each setting. Often, the culture represents little more than the combined effect of repression's institutional/material and tactical/political legacies. Yet operating within the constraints of these first two legacies, activists work out ways of thinking politically, engaging society and contesting authority. Even substantively moderate movements in the Philippines adopted revolutionary forms and expressions,

¹³ Davenport 1999.

while all Indonesian protest, including deeply repressed Marxist perspectives, relied on circumspect and intellectualized assertions of moral suasion. To describe such differences as inherently Filipino, Indonesian, or Javanese, I argue, is less compelling than demonstrating how political contention, and particularly the weight of state repression, worked to change and shape activist cultures. In making the case, I look particularly at how florid state violence at the dictator's rise upset established patterns and cultural expressions. Why do Filipino activists cherish ideological debate, while Burmese protesters follow the flow of mass sentiment? What accounts for the legalism of Indonesian movement discourse, or the exalted place that public intellectuals hold in Jakarta's reform movement? The reckless violence of Burmese students, the obliqueness of New Order intellectuals, the organization-minded radicalism of the Philippine left, all emerged from the historical interplay of states and societies.

These three legacies combine to produce different *patterns* of political contention, going forward, in the three countries. In Burma, protest was a relatively rare but cataclysmic phenomenon. Cycles of rising, increasingly organized protest occur at roughly decade-long intervals, triggered by massive economic dislocation, marked by increasing organization and coordination, and ending with escalating violence. Indonesian protest was on the whole less rare, less violent, and more localized than Burmese contention. Occasionally, protest produced massive rioting, and authorities who responded to dissent with deadly force. Typically, however, dissidents were tentative enough to avoid the starkest repression, and unorganized enough for contention to remain atomized and sporadic. Activist organizations dominated Philippine contention, sometimes steering activity into electoral campaigns, sometimes directing efforts toward the anti-state insurgency, but always in substantial control of when or where protest would rise. These longer-term patterns of political contention, moreover, shaped explosive democracy movements in each case, molding both patterns of struggle, likely patterns of defection from the regime, and movement outcomes. In each phase of the study, therefore, I am attempting to identify and explain not mere repertoires of contentious forms, but repertoires of contentious *interaction*.

The consequence of authoritarian regimes for political contention requires such careful and individualized attention for several reasons. First, they remain woefully understudied and under-theorized. It is difficult to begin making broad generalizations about authoritarian states and social movements without first attempting focused analysis with firm empirical foundations. My instinct in this endeavor brings me to carefully focused comparison among these cases. Second, the authoritarian state's range of options may in fact be broader than those available to democratic

states. The openness of democratic societies, the relative ease with which international media, organization and business penetrate liberal countries render them perhaps more similar and modular in their responses to social movements. Secrecy and autonomy, however, the very lifeblood of authoritarianism and cloistered states like those in Burma and Indonesia, allow the coercive apparatus more leeway in repressive forms, producing more varied patterns of contention. The expectation of variety encourages a more open-ended approach to efforts at developing new structural explanations for social protest under authoritarian rule. Where clear patterns emerge from the comparison among careful case studies, they may enable more certain and deft generalization. Finally, efforts to develop connections between established theory and new cases often encounter problems when analysts attempt a too literal transfer of indicators and variables from one setting to another. Rather than mechanical application, we need to reinterpret and sometimes translate theories for application in new settings, in ways that preserve the original spirit of the analysis.

On method and data

It does not take much field work in Burma, Indonesia or even the Philippines before one is almost tempted to give up on social science methodology. The problem is not simply that complete information on protest is seldom available. Data are unavailable in different degrees across cases, and similar collection methods seldom yield comparable information. Even during martial law, Philippine demonstrations were regularly recorded in national dailies, but the Burmese state entirely controls the media and substitutes European football news for any information about internal politics. Indonesian press restrictions wax and wane in response to state pressure, and the media is often *most* devoid of political stories when protest and strikes increase. Nor can one conduct fieldwork in the similar ways in these countries. By the 1990s, Filipino activists were quite willing to grant interviews with foreign researchers, but Burmese who consented to be interviewed hazarded arrest and prison terms. Most of the brave men and women I interviewed in Burma only consented to talk provided that I did not record our conversations, and even then risked so very much. (Yet many were also exceptionally eager to reflect on 1988. I had the good fortune to arrive at Burma at a time when movement participants were less interested in the polemics of the struggle than in attempting to understand it, and that orientation enabled me to have some remarkable conversations.) In Indonesia, I taped interviews with activists and used press archives, but it was often, for reasons that

directly bear on my argument, easier to find information on political *ideas* than on *events*. Not surprisingly, then, interviews are perhaps least necessary where they are most freely given. It is, of course, possible to get more comparable data from external and secondary sources. Beginning in 1984, for example, wire reports became available via electronic Nexus/Lexus services. For decades, the BBC and the US government's Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) have provided external data bases for comparing protest across countries. Yet such sources surely labor under the same constraints that hamper researchers, and so one again expects the most complete information about Philippine protest and the least complete and reliable on Burma.

At the work's heart, perhaps unavoidably, lie differences in the empirical foundations for each case: I hope to make amends for that inconsistency with my comparative strategy, looking to uncover big patterns and trends, rather than minute details of struggle in each setting. Even where it may be impossible to reconstruct all details of any one struggle (or counterproductive to recount only one case in detail) the broad comparisons among them help to build an argument about how analysts might approach the study of protest in similar settings. In this objective, I am encouraged by personal experience: in a decade's study of Philippine protest, I never understood how the armed and rural insurrection influenced urban, legal and organizationally independent protest movements fully until I examined first the Indonesian and then the Burmese cases, both devoid of such interaction. Because the comparative objectives are so central to this project, I make liberal use of secondary sources, and often use my own fieldwork more to answer questions suggested by comparisons among secondary accounts. Such narratives establish the backdrop for my interview and archival research, and allow me to focus on moments of new or heightened activity or state repression – asking why things may have changed when and how they did – or why they did not. It is in the comparative evaluations of answers to such questions that I hope to make my biggest contribution.

Chapter outline

After this introduction, chapter 2 develops this work's theoretical perspective, particularly how institutional/material, tactical/political, and cultural legacies of authoritarian state repression shape protest. In that chapter I distinguish my framework from the structural approaches developed in relation to advanced industrial societies on which I still deeply depend, and consider how analysis of post-colonial states requires adjustments in these approaches. The chapter concludes with a discussion

of social movements theory and democratic transitions, arguing that democracy protest represents a particular kind of collective contention.

Chapter 3 sets forth, and attempts to explain the differences in state repression at each dictator's rise. The discussion traces social and political legacies of colonialism and decolonialization to patterns of contestation, threat and fear between rising dictators and other social forces. Discussion then moves to the political and authoritarian norms manifest in the state attack consolidated in the new authoritarian regime. The chapter ends by considering the three cases comparatively.

The rest of the book is organized as two distinct clusters of chapters, each beginning with three case-study chapters that consider Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines in turn, followed by a comparative chapter that reviews themes from the case studies, and develops comparisons between them. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 each describe protest and contention under one of the three dictatorships, beginning with sporadic and cataclysmic Burmese protest, the more constant but scattered, localized and circumspect Indonesian protest, and the Philippine model of steadily accumulating and increasingly mainstream revolutionary, and revolution-*esque* opposition. Each discusses modes of state repression and social resistance, noting the ways in which interactions between the two change over time. Chapter 7 compares and integrates the cases. The final four chapters examine the democracy movements in each case. Working chronologically, chapter 8 discusses Philippine democracy protests, chapter 9 concentrates on the Burmese uprising of 1988, and chapter 10 details the movement against Suharto in 1998. Chapter 11 compares the three democracy movements, and also serves as a general conclusion and summary.

This mode of presenting the material hopefully emphasizes my two central objectives. First I wish to make broad argument about contentious politics in these settings. The repressive activities of an active authoritarian state represent important and indispensable aspects of the movement's political context and broadly shape political contention. A larger point looms beyond this argument: in the contentious and often violent struggles between Southern states and societies, the terms of interaction between state and society often come down to more particular fights. Figuring out how movements work demands sensitivity to context and history. Of necessity, the work I present stays fairly close to the interesting ground of political contention in Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines. But I also hope to demonstrate how one must approach these questions in places like those I study.

Second, regarding Southeast Asia, I hope in each case, and among the comparative set, more accurately to indicate the elements of the state-society

struggle that have influenced protest and resistance. By stepping back somewhat from the details of any individual history and contrasting events across settings, I try to single out the influences that shaped protest, and describe more general patterns of state attack and movement response. I think that this context-specific and comparative interpretation of contention provides a useful antidote to generic interpretations of democratization that pay little heed to individual country histories, and concentrate instead on external pressures and inducements. State repression, social resistance and democracy struggle are intimately associated with, and indebted to, contentious patterns worked out between dictators and their oppositions over the years.

2 Protest, repression and transition in Southeast Asia

Ideas about social conflict underwent a curious change over the twentieth century's last decades. At the height of the Cold War, contentious domestic politics seemed always pregnant with broader conflagration. People on both sides of the ideological fence associated social unrest with worldwide subversion (or proletarian victory), falling dominoes (or a triumphant line of march), and the descent into anarchy (or world historical progress). Middle-class American college students in the 1960s joined "the revolution" while US intelligence officers viewed peasants scrambling to subsist as communist operatives. Many then had difficulty recognizing that social movements often pursued limited objectives from autonomous positions rather than as parts of a larger revolutionary process. Decades after Saigon's "fall," however, we face an almost complete reversal: as theories about social movements gain credibility and explanatory power, the fears and hopes about revolutionary challenges to state power have quietly yielded to broader assumptions that struggle seeks more modulated influence and access *within* prevailing systems.¹ Increasingly, analysts examine movement radicalization and violence as signs that participants have become frustrated or disappointed in originally more civil programs of struggle, rather than as inherent aspects of the struggle itself.² Of course, attachments to either revolutionary or social movement images have important empirical foundations: for decades world communist organizations *did* often support revolutions, even where these revolutions remained grounded in local conditions, and the Soviet Union's dissolution, combined with a spate of apparent transitions to democracy, encourage more reform-oriented, less revolutionary protest.³

Something important fell into the space between these two approaches, however. For decades, movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America

¹ Van Aelst and Walgrave 2000.

² Tarrow 1998; White 1989; Zimmermann 1998.

³ Hipscher 1998; Lee 1998; Giugni, McAdam, and Tilly 1998; Garreton and Antonio 1996.

struggled against dictatorships. In the interval, we could look on these contests with a sort of analytical patience, for each at least held the potential for eventual state crisis and social polarization to render them intelligible as preludes to a revolutionary climax. Yet as revolutionary explosions failed to occur and scholarship moved from the anticipation of revolution toward a social movement perspective,⁴ analysts also imported assumptions and expectations culled from Northern protest, including domesticating perspectives about the extent of movement demands (they are limited), the methodology of change (movements seek influence *within* existing arrangements), or the likely influence of state repression (repression demobilizes protest).⁵ In Ne Win's Burma, Suharto's Indonesia, Marcos's Philippines and many other places, these assumptions impair analysis. Regimes in each country resort to repressive strategies far outside any reasonable civil parameter, and repression's extent and nature greatly shape other aspects of political contention. Movement objectives in each case depend on wider and more variable patterns of state and social power: state repression shaped institutional and political options available to movements, and so some activists operated primarily through armed and underground struggle, others through civil associations, still others via unpredictable waves of popular unrest. Indonesian activists prevented from building large opposition organizations often demonstrated to influence or support particular state actors judged sympathetic to their demands. Filipino activist organizations could draw on both civil and insurgent formations, and pursued objectives ranging from acquiring patronage resources, through promoting reform to pursuing a state-replacing revolutionary program. Burmese dissidents could only frame demands (when they could) in state-replacing terms. These differences, I argue, reflect the distinct influences of violent and repressive regimes working according to particular strategies to control their societies.

The political process model, with its careful attention to the conditions that trigger and shape mobilization provides important signposts for our analysis, but we must still rethink how this processes unfolds in the different contexts of the global South. In many cases, we would be particularly misled by assumptions and indicators designed to account for civil demonstrations in prosperous liberal societies. In what follows, I retheorize elements of the political process model for application to the Southeast Asian context, both to further my own thinking about these

⁴ Smith and Haas 1997; Opp 1989; Kitschelt 1986; Kriesi *et al.* 1992; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998.

⁵ Boudreau 1996.

three cases, and as a model for those who wish to undertake similar efforts in relation to other areas of the world. Scholars of state repression in post-Soviet successor states will naturally need to figure out unique puzzles in that area of the world, as would any comparativist or area specialist. While state activity depends on context-specific contests for power, I hope to demonstrate that basic elements of political contention in many places plausibly emerge from the interaction of repression and resistance.⁶ The usefulness of these Southeast Asian cases is not, therefore, in their utter uniqueness, but rather that state repression and social resistance in Southeast Asia interacted to produce particularly salient patterns that may have broader theory building and comparative utility.

The post-colonial state and social challenges

Processes of state and social formation in Africa and Southeast Asia were in significant ways unique.⁷ In many post-colonial countries, including at least two under consideration here, successor states at independence were barely distinct from other groups striving to control government. Decolonization often so drained state resources that apparent national leaders and challengers stood on relatively equal footing.⁸ Southeast Asian independence struggles and World War Two mobilized social demand and reduced central state capacities. In Indonesia, this process created myriad local and autonomous militia; in Burma, it produced a single but ideologically diverse national leadership, and sharpened ethnic antagonisms. In the Philippines (where, among these three cases, the most unified and institutionally coherent apparatus existed) it still produced leftist challenges and fiscal crisis. Over time, from the jumble of mobilized nationalist movements, post-colonial authorities consolidated power. It is tempting to read history backward, as if one band of robbers or heroes had from the outset been destined to rule. In truth, however, the outcome of these power struggles was seldom evident beforehand, and early post-colonial politics were often more contests among rival social networks than between states and societies.

The prior emergence, under colonial auspices, of social networks capable of mounting advanced forms of national or proto-national struggles posed particular problems for post-colonial states, problems absent from the global North. Consider the more familiar sequence of European state

⁶ This interactive approach picks up principles laid out in McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001 (see especially pp. 44–63).

⁷ Young 1994.

⁸ Randall 1998; Alatas 1997; Migdal 1988.

and social emergence. Much of the literature argues that styles of protest and collective tactics (commonly, the *collective repertoire*) develop in relation to opportunities and ideas enabled or endorsed by emerging state institutions and expanding social networks. Under such influences, people invent new forms of collective activity, which are then reproduced and diffused. Charles Tilly describes how Britain's evolving national parliament encouraged citizens to demonstrate in the national capital rather than make local and unilateral attacks on tax collectors, landlords and the like.⁹ Emerging national institutions both opened new venues for political contention, and more obviously linked grievances to national policy. Broader social connections allowed populations to synchronize claims and form common cause, thereby encouraging national social movements.¹⁰ Still, the new state institutions pre-dated, and could settle in before these modes of challenge gathered steam – and so authorities could develop a politics of scale while society remained localized and fragmented.¹¹

Consider a contrasting post-colonial experience, where the imperial state's centralized institutions and processes provided a prominent target for national protest rather early in the game. Indigenous elite networks germinated within the colonial regime, seeded by contacts in schools, the local bureaucracy, and (sometimes) representative assemblies. Colonial institutions, although nationalist targets, also helped colonial elites and other members of local society develop the ideas, power and networks to challenge foreign rule.¹² The subsequent collapse of colonial regimes, and the labored attempts of local successors to resuscitate its remnants on indigenous foundations (with vastly diminished resources) rendered post-colonial states far more vulnerable to, and less distinct from, other social contenders.¹³ Each of the three new states we are concerned with, moreover, gained independence after profoundly damaging World War Two fighting – both under the initial Japanese occupation and at the allies' return. In some cases, the damage mainly crippled the infrastructure and economy, as in the Philippines. In Burma, the fighting also shattered the last possibility of coherent and civil relations among different ethnic groups. War-ravaged and cut off from metropolitan resources, astride perhaps precociously mobilized societies, and attempting to

⁹ Tilly 1995.

¹⁰ Tarrow 1998.

¹¹ Badie and Birnbaum 1983.

¹² Anderson 1983a; Lockman 1988.

¹³ Migdal 1988.

measure up to colonial standards for administrative scope, each needed to reconsolidate central state power.

The project often faced threats absent from Europe centuries earlier, for the anti-colonial struggle had politicized social networks within which post-war Southeast Asian leaders jostled one another for power – and the post-colonial state's initial social base reflects that struggle's character and extent. The prolonged, mobilizing Indonesian revolution produced an energetic and diverse social base, while the managed transition to independence in the Philippines allowed a narrow colonial elite to maintain power.¹⁴ In Burma, when the nationalist struggle moved to the final, more negotiated settlement phase, nationalist elites narrowed their social base, and important divisions among leaders emerged more clearly. Weakened or divided independence coalitions proved volatile. In case after case, some coalition faction seized the upper hand and drove erstwhile comrades to insurgent and revolutionary challenges. The relatively equal capacities of new states and non-state challengers produced more balanced, and so particularly dangerous struggles among them. For all these reasons, the new Burmese, Indonesian and Philippine states first spread their independent wings during perilous seasons. Confronting comparatively daunting social challengers, authorities never developed the prior political hegemony in advance of social mobilization that allowed European states to face national social movements from a position of comparative strength, because the *colonial* state (rather than conditions at independence) had already called forth and shaped these social challenges.

The juxtaposition of embryonic states and mobilized social networks produced peculiar contentious dynamics. Institutionally weak and resource poor, post-colonial states had comparatively little prestige or authority with which to meet opponents. The institutions of emergent rule may have looked amateurish and flimsy;¹⁵ the state's ideological ramparts may still have been under construction and easily breached. New political personages could seem under-whelming and unsettled, particularly in relation to nationalism's sweeping promises.¹⁶ Authorities facing social challenges found themselves hard pressed and beleaguered, and often fell back on sheer fire power.¹⁷ In this inhospitable

¹⁴ Anderson 1988.

¹⁵ Tarling 1998.

¹⁶ This also reflects modes of transition. Anderson calls attention to contrasts between the opulence of Philippine assembly members and the simplicity of Indonesian nationalists. Anderson 1998: 279.

¹⁷ Dinnen 1999; Linz and Chahabi 1998.

climate, post-colonial state leaders probably did not think about protest and resistance as votes won or lost, as friction dragging on a favored policy, or even as redistributive threats to property. Rather, they had reason to fear the loss of power, the anger of adversaries, death and retribution. This fear motivated a more strategic way of engaging political protest and social movements. In the comparatively high-stakes struggle for national power, state actors laid plans to disperse their most formidable opponents.¹⁸ Officials, moreover, probably did not equally fear all opponents. Some dissidents exercised restraint, had limited resources, or resources that did not threaten the regime's particular purchase on power. Other challengers, however, may have wielded sufficient power, in precisely the most dangerous currency, to upset officials. Perhaps they possessed a strong organization, key links to international backers, or a powerful popular base. Depending on the foundations of state power – which naturally vary from case to case – one or another such opposition movement may loom particularly large and inspire special modes of repression. Authorities needed to decide whom to fear, to what extent, and with what consequences.

The active state and social movements theory

Structural models of political contention concentrate on how both stable and volatile environmental conditions influence social mobilization.¹⁹ Some analysts examine how the institutional legacies of long-term processes like state building influence collective repertoires;²⁰ others note how volatile structural changes increase or decrease political opportunities for mobilization.²¹ Discussions on either side of this divide, however, depict the state as oddly passive and dominated by institutional features, rather than by strategy.²² Centralized states funnel protest in national directions as a deep ravine forces water into narrow cascades, and decentralized states encourage local and diffused expressions of claim making, the way a delta dissipates a slow river. Even more dynamic state programs and interests emerge in the language of architecture and geography: a president's sympathy may open new doors for a movement; a woman's promotion to the justice department may improve the terrain for women's struggles. Under some conditions, of course, this image may

¹⁸ Brown 1996.

¹⁹ Gamson and Meyer 1996; Tilly 1995.

²⁰ Eisinger 1973; Tilly 1978; Kitschelt 1986; Tilly 1986; Tilly 1995.

²¹ McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1998; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001.

²² Hoover and Kowalewski 1991: 151.

make sense: where officials are relatively secure, they may meet claim making with lethargy and organizational routines, and not fret over their hold on power. Even so, research on state repression in advanced industrial democracies is replete with examples of exceptionally active states taking explicit aim at dissidents.²³

But even if descriptions of state lethargy appropriately capture institutionalized and secure states' responses to protest, they fail in connection to more besieged Southeast Asian state actors in the immediate post-colonial period. The Burmese and Indonesian states were particularly fluid, composed of politicians, soldiers, revolutionaries and clerks all trying to grasp the new roles into which they had been thrust. Especially in the decades following independence, Southeast Asian states were every bit as much in motion as their societies. How should we adjust our analytic approach to explain how calculating authorities operating in fluid state organizations respond to pressure from powerful social forces? First, we anticipate that state survival, rather than mere police practice, biases or cultures, drives repression. In strategic interplays between authorities and dissidents (involving state leaders' ideas about their vulnerability and peril relative to social challengers) security force orientations (or the state's degree of centralization, strength or openness) will not explain patterns of repression.²⁴ Those in power will probably think about dissidents as people or organizations with track records for reliability, treachery, power or weakness, and calculate repression accordingly. Hence, analysts might profitably analyze repression as a response to specific social challenges to specific authorities.²⁵

Second, modes of repression and social resistance will perhaps be more important than mere levels of either – a point not entirely embraced by the literature to date. Some of the most established debates about repression and social movements concern themselves entirely with relations between *levels* of repression and *levels* of mobilization,²⁶ or between levels of state and social violence.²⁷ But quantitative measures of state violence, democracy, or strength sometimes describe incomplete pictures, for a generally violent state may use force selectively, and a democratic regime may still discriminate against certain social forces.²⁸ We need, instead, a more strategic reading of violence, democracy and strength cognizant of larger

²³ Davenport 1999; della Porta and Reiter 1998; Koopmans 1997; Davenport 1996; Davenport 1995; Francisco 1996.

²⁴ Escobar 1993.

²⁵ Jacobs 1979; Gartner and Regan 1996.

²⁶ Mason and Krane 1989; Khawaja 1993.

²⁷ White 1989; Lichbach 1987.

²⁸ For an especially nuanced typology of different modes of repression, see Earl 2003.

state-society relationships: if the state is violent, in relation to what challenges is it particularly so? If the state is undemocratic, to what sort of voices is it most determinedly deaf? If the state is strong or weak, in relation to which social forces is this strength or weakness most manifest? Authorities' ability to shut off some modes of dissent or favor others – or a movement's ability to ignore or maneuver around such proscriptions – may set the political table for years to come.

Even work that accounts for repressive modalities often seeks to explain when and why different repressive modes produce variable levels of protest. Both Francisco's predator-prey model (which argues that authorities and movements adapt to one another) and Loveman's fine work on strategies of repression and embedded social networks ultimately explain potentials for sustained collective action.²⁹ The strategic logic so important to each argument, however, suggests that interactions between state and society loom largest when fundamental issues of power (on both sides of the contest) hang in the balance, and mobilization levels may only partially help us understand these issues. Questions about how state and movement interactions shape modes of contention and contestant power should be more central to the analysis. Such a relational logic more closely informs DeNardo's work, which recognizes that state and social strategies evolve in light of perceived advantage and vulnerabilities during struggle.³⁰ Similarly, Beissinger's analysis of the Soviet Union's collapse describes both how state repression shaped and marginalized nationalism in long "quiet" phases, and how "noisy," active nationalist mobilization transformed collective identities and strategies – and ultimately the state. If the distinction between quiet and noisy politics is still described in partly quantitative terms, Beissinger understands that "[M]uch of what occurs in the 'quiet' phases of nationalism conditions what takes place within the 'noisy' stages."³¹ The reverse, of course, is also true, particularly when regimes begin with periods of noisy repression: patterns of repression and resistance *both* provide an essential context for interpreting what political contention, ultimately, will mean.

I begin my analysis with three critical moments of state attack on their societies. Such attacks suggest whom authorities feared, and on which flank they felt most vulnerable. Each attack helped a rising dictator hurdle barriers to power erected by social and political rivals, but also indicated which of these rivals seemed most dangerous to the new regimes, none of which indiscriminately attacked its society. I regard these attacks as

²⁹ Francisco 1996; Loveman 1998.

³⁰ DeNardo 1985.

³¹ Beissinger 2002: 26.

chilling applications of a calculus gauged to reinforce and extend emerging state power, and explain them by examining the balance of forces and histories of animosity transmitted from the colonial period through independence. These attacks wiped some historical slates clean, but also left new marks: a record of state actors' anxiety, inscribed in a fresh reordering of social and political relations.

Strategic interactions and four principles of analysis

The logic of conquest frequently sprouts into a logic of rule. Repressive programs, enacted by authorities facing regime-endangering threats or nurturing regime-building plans reveal ambitions and fears, and also provide a foundation for new political arrangements. Subsequent policy both institutionally reproduces and adapts initial repressive programs, suggesting how and against whom authorities will use force and violence.³² As we will see, adaptation is not always perfect, and differences between what a situation demands and what officials are accustomed to do often opens opportunities for anti-regime mobilization. State attacks also reshape social forces. Some do not survive authoritarian murders, arrests, or intimidation campaigns. Repression may eliminate the media, close university campuses and even constrain informal gatherings that support or encourage movements. Political activists and dissidents develop strategies based on how they understand repressive frameworks and use surviving institutions; analysts should pay heed as well, and attempt to discern the strategic dimension in early regime attacks, and recognize both modification in that strategy that respond to unfolding political events, and institutional mechanisms that extend established modes of repression.³³ These considerations prompt me to suggest a four-fold adjustment in how we investigate state repression and its influence over social movements.

Principle 1: Authorities uncertain of their grasp on power will more likely engage social movements strategically, to identify and neutralize their most dangerous opponents. Analysis should search out this pattern. It remains important to tally people imprisoned, killed or tortured, and many have undertaken the task of examining what general conditions likely encourage such violence.³⁴ Still, this accounting cannot substitute for efforts to understand repression in terms of the targets and tactics that authorities most insistently proscribe. Movement efforts to mobilize populations

³² Worby 1998; Hoover and Kowalewsky 1991: 152; Jenkins 1985.

³³ Fatton 1991; Coronil and Skurski 1991; White 1989.

³⁴ See, for example, Mitchell and McCormick 1988; Poe and Tate 1994.

likely respond to these patterns of repression, and by understanding authorities' orientation toward collective action, we can begin to figure out the latitude available for different contentious forms. Claim makers likely plan or adopt activity in the light of expected state responses. Under auspicious material or political conditions, they may risk expressly prohibited and repeatedly repressed forms of struggle. Burmese activists, for instance, sometimes undertook such risks when widespread economic crisis had already mobilized broad social discontent. Short of these rare frontal assaults, claim makers may seek to avoid state repression by adjusting their strategies, reorganizing their formations, or seeking shelter and support from civic institutions or powerful allies.³⁵ Movement leaders, activists and cadres not only anticipate how a state might respond to one mode of collective action or another (the attribution of threats and opportunities)³⁶ they also gauge the level of popular support that any campaign or mode of struggle will attract.

To date, social movements' literatures have tended toward two important explanations of movement strategy: new contentious repertoires often emerge in relationship to long-term shifts in social and state structures, and subsequently diffuse across populations and time.³⁷ The concept of the repertoire and its evolution, however, says more about possible tactics at any moment than about those actually selected by a given movement. *Within* protest cycles, scholars have linked changes in collective tactics to the different stages in the struggle: activists may use more mass mobilizing and moderate tactics during contention's ascending curve, and radicalize or institutionalize as protest peaks and then declines.³⁸ McCammon has argued that defeats are particularly important in motivating movements to change tactics, while others link tactical change to efforts to sustain their political initiative or retain their mass base.³⁹ Some examine how different levels of repression influence collective forms.⁴⁰ Important clues to movement strategy, however, may be connected to how movement participants respond to the forms of state repression they encounter or expect. States that squeeze off particularly threatening modes of resistance frequently leave room for other

³⁵ McAdam (1983) speaks of similar tactical innovations in the US black insurgency, as civil rights activists adjusted to segregationist opponents' moves to undercut them. I am here more interested in a state-movement nexus, mainly because of the overwhelmingly statist character of the movements I examine.

³⁶ McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001: 46-47.

³⁷ Tilly 1995.

³⁸ Tarrow 1998.

³⁹ McCammon 2003; Gibson 1989.

⁴⁰ White 1989.

expressions – and this opens a new range of questions. How do patterns of repression influence the resources and plans available to activists and claim-makers? What imprints do different repressive forms leave on social movements? Given actual and expected patterns of state repression, can we begin to develop more nuanced concepts of political opportunity that is contingent on repression-shaped notions of possible movement strategy? Even in the less strategic or purposive realm of movement culture and activist orientation, we can ask about the legacy of state repression.⁴¹

Such questions divide into three categories that together constitute the remaining three principles of analysis. *Principle 2: The range of legal and illegal organizations that survive repression shapes the modes of struggle within range of claim makers under authoritarian rule.* Are legal urban organizations destroyed? Are underground organizations eliminated? How do surviving organizations shape modes of struggle? An array of armed insurgent organizations may accumulate capacities to displace a state, but few faculties for urban-based reform campaigns. Prohibitions on movement organization may only allow claim makers to mobilize limited and immediately affected constituencies. Where both underground insurgent organizations and legal protest organizations exist, a kind of cooperation may evolve between the two, wherein combat victories force regime concessions that encourage protest, and legal struggles secretly recruit for the armed movement.

Principle 3: Movement participants' selection of contentious forms occur against larger issues of power, informed by risk hierarchies associated with different modes of repression. Activists and claim makers, no less than authorities, assess threats and opportunities.⁴² State acts that imprison, kill or intimidate social challengers, also serve warning to future activists. Authorities that routinely fire on urban demonstrations will likely do so in the future; a military that hunted one party to extinction will not likely tolerate a similar group's emergence. A student march in one setting may risk little; in another, it may risk all. Past contention provides a context that defines which forms of struggle are routine and which more directly challenge authorities. Because idiosyncratic and context-specific hierarchies of risk exist among contentious forms, structural changes acquire significance as political opportunities by changing a regime's ability to proscribe modes of collective action or claim makers' willingness to defy those proscriptions.⁴³ Hence it may be more interesting to ask under what

⁴¹ See Tilly 1999.

⁴² Fatton 1991; White 1989; McAdam 1983.

⁴³ Lichbach 1995; Moodie 2003.

conditions people mobilize in *particularly subversive ways* than merely to ask why they mobilize.

Principle 4: Opposition cultures are at least partial consequences of interaction between authorities and society, and may serve to reproduce authoritarian proscriptions even as state power weakens. Whether movements "typically" burn down police stations, give democracy speeches or recruit urban workers to the armed struggle largely depend, I have so far argued, on state activity, its legacies, and movement responses. Over time, these possibilities become encoded into larger ideas about what is politically possible, how one must live under a particular regime, and what kinds of acts might change things. Tactical considerations may move from the realm of explicit calculation to pre-strategic ideas about what one might or should do. In the Philippines, many people of all classes came to believe that the dictatorship would fall when organized and revolutionary forces grew sufficiently strong, and ideas about coordinated opposition struggle lurked behind most anti-regime efforts; in Burma, some regime critics paid as much attention to auspicious cosmic alignments as to insurgent plans, and even underground activists seldom imagined that they could "make" the anti-Ne Win revolution. In defining large sweeps of opposition imagination, cultural patterns go beyond mere accumulations of institutional possibilities and cautionary tales learned, and instead influence how citizens think about politics and their roles in it. Repression often sharply rewrites some of these patterns, and subsequent opposition cultures may prolong and reproduce repression's influence.⁴⁴

These principles suggest a strategy for contextualizing broadly useful structural arguments. I have argued elsewhere that political opportunity is contingent on movement demands and forms of struggle.⁴⁵ Collective action modes have particular political logics: some aim at a broader voice within the state, some aim to amass power to displace the state, and some combine the two. Since all structural shifts do not encourage all contentious forms, we cannot define opportunity independent of a movement's tactics or objectives;⁴⁶ a state land-reform campaign may encourage demonstrations but undercut a revolution's ties to its mass base. Movements angling for international support against an abusive regime may only respond to opportunities that promise a significant foreign audience. Efforts to identify opportunity structures *outside* places where reform-oriented movements typically seek broader voice in liberal

⁴⁴ See the essays collected in Meyer, Whittier and Robnet 2002.

⁴⁵ Boudreau 1996.

⁴⁶ See Moodie 2002: 49–51.

regimes require that we rethink the relationship between structural change, established patterns of state activity, and movement objectives.

Moreover, opportunity is not merely contingent on the form of collective struggle, but also on the political meaning of specific collective acts in the power balance between an authoritarian state and its society. For long stretches, politics in Burma, Indonesia and the Philippines operated under conditions that differ from those in the global North, and political opportunities in each reflect assumptions about what contention might achieve under those specific conditions. Different forms of state repression *also* promote case-specific logics of opportunity. Modes of repression menace some expressions and accommodate others; authorities stake their reputations in some realms, but not elsewhere. Real political opportunities undercut the state's dominant strategy of control and intimidation: to identify such opportunities, one must figure out repression's over-arching logic and also distinguish routine from subversive collective acts. Authorities may allow, encourage, or even compel some collective tactics, channeling them in directions that neither threaten authorities nor especially jeopardize participants – but in what ways should we consider exogenous triggers for anemic activism true "opportunities?"⁴⁷ Other conditions, other triggers, may encourage claim makers to mount forbidden modes of activity in the very teeth of state repression. Identifying the especially important opportunities that encourage such acts, and the circumstances under which these opportunities can occur, requires careful attention to context, and a willingness to bring interpretive skills to the effort.

This work follows the prescriptions of this perspective. Proceeding via comparisons among the case narratives, I first attempt to discern and describe patterns of state repression, and the contentious politics to which they give rise. Working with what organizations and allies they can, burdened by the shadow of state repression, movements were not merely encouraged or inhibited by repression: they were sculpted by it. Activists in each setting, moreover, needed to decide whether to work within state prohibitions or to challenge them – each needed to decide how unfolding conditions might alter the political balance sheet inscribed since the dictator's rise. Most approached these problems with some understanding of how the state dealt with activists in the past; virtually all worked from within oppositional cultures greatly changed by dictatorship. Together, interpretations of how repression, surviving institutions, activist

⁴⁷ Earl 2003. Earl relies on Oberschall's (1973) concept of "channeling" in her exposition.

calculation, and oppositional cultures interact help explain patterns of protest and resistance in these three Southeast Asian dictatorships.

Democracy struggle and social movements theory

This work culminates by comparing democracy movements in the three cases from a social movements' perspective: a logical theoretical pairing which nevertheless remains in its infancy. By far, most scholars who are interested in transitions to democracy have focused on long-term developments in the class and social structure,⁴⁸ short-term realignments in the authoritarian regime's coalition,⁴⁹ or international pressures, demonstration effects and diffusion.⁵⁰ Few investigators focus on the collective struggle itself, save descriptively, and this struggle may be an essential influence on the decisions so central to many explanations of regime transition.⁵¹ Admittedly, democracy movements rarely *themselves* bring down governments, and we should be wary of claims that equate democratization with strong pro-democratic mobilization.⁵² More commonly, pro-democracy activists influence regime transitions by paralleling or accelerating initiatives originating within the regime, or by sparking defections from the regime by acts of protest and dissent. Still, where protest movements are most involved in the process, as in the Philippines, we should perhaps ask why this is so.⁵³ In what remains of this chapter, I will clarify my understanding of the democracy movements' particularity *qua* movement by situating them in established contentious patterns.

In what follows, I argue that protest and struggle exercise an independent influence on regime transitions. Established patterns of contention help us anticipate when, how and with what consequences regimes are likely to break down and change. In some ways, the effort runs parallel to recent arguments about the political and economic basis for regime transition. In a telling critique of the choice-based literature of regime realignment, Haggard and Kaufman strive to explain actor preferences, rather than taking them as exogenous, as others commonly do.⁵⁴ Their corrective concentrates on political economic conditions, arguing in part

⁴⁸ Lipset, Seong and Torres 1993.

⁴⁹ O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Snyder 1992; Przeworski 1991; Karl 1990.

⁵⁰ Huntington 1991; Pye 1990; Hill and Rothchild 1986; Haggard and Kaufman 1997; Pion-Berlin 1997; Lee 2001; Becky 2001.

⁵¹ For exceptions, see Collier and Mahoney 1997; Borneo 1997; and Adler and Webster 1995.

⁵² Glenn 1999.

⁵³ Geddes 1999.

⁵⁴ Haggard and Kaufman 1997.

that economic performance and need shape political opportunities and structure actor preferences. Elizabeth Wood's explication of an insurgent path to democracy argues that the escalating costs of protracted insurgent struggle in El Salvador and South Africa divide the regime's political and economic elite from its security forces, making the former interested in negotiated settlements even though the latter prefer to continue to fight. Wood places contention at the center of her explanation by demonstrating that patterns of insurgency encouraged the regime crisis and divisions (which others have analyzed in isolation from social challenges).⁵⁵ Bratton and van de Walle examine regime leaders' decisions to reform in light of the breadth, power and viability of opposition coalitions that emerge in struggle.⁵⁶ Histories of struggle also influence other aspects of the transition process, shaping the possibility of alliances between former regime members and activists, the possibility of defections from the regime, and the politics of the transition itself.

To understand how repression may shape transitions to democracy, we must first ask how contemporary democracy movements have often worked. An important clue lies in their rather peculiar combination of goals and tactics. For much of this century, rather clear associations existed between a movement's goals and its level of violence. Movements with broader, state-replacing objectives more regularly adopted armed struggle, while reform-oriented movements sought non-routine but generally less violent tactics. Mao famously wrote that political power came from the barrel of a gun; the Russian anarchist Kropotkin and the Algerian revolutionary Fanon both associated direct challenges to the state with violence.⁵⁷ In contrast, movements that have sought to instigate some change *within* a political arrangement or regime have adopted peaceful, and sometimes explicitly non-violent modes of activity.⁵⁸ Less commonly, essentially unarmed protests adopted regime-displacing goals, as did the Indian struggle for independence, but until recently, these were atypical events that required special understanding.⁵⁹ Moreover, Gandhi's non-violent methods have most widely been adopted by more programmatically limited movements, such as the

⁵⁵ Wood 2000.

⁵⁶ Bratton and van de Walle 1992: 436–438.

⁵⁷ Kropotkin 1995; Fanon 1963.

⁵⁸ Pollatta (2002) eloquently demonstrates the connection between movement objectives and modes of activity.

⁵⁹ Barrington Moore, for instance, explains the Indian movement's non-violence in terms of legacies left by British commercial practices, which destroyed an indigenous stratum of entrepreneurs and drove them into the anti-colonial movement that reflected their bourgeois orientations. Moore 1966.

moderate wing of the American civil-rights movement; self-styled revolutionaries in that same movement gravitated toward more violent modes of struggle.⁶⁰ Since the middle 1980s, however, several democracy movements have used primarily *non-violent tactics* like massed demonstrations, boycotts and hunger strikes to support *state-replacing objectives*, and this is puzzling.

In examining the question of how transitions to democracy work, several analysts direct our attention toward the defection of officials from the authoritarian regime to the opposition camp, for emergent alliance between regime defectors and a democracy movement may shake a dictatorship to its very foundations.⁶¹ Some analysts have proceeded as if inherent political affinities between reformers inside the regime and without underpin defections and alliances.⁶² Others reject such an essentialist reading of things, and adopt a more contingent approach, asking how interactions between regime officials and democracy advocates may dissolve old coalitions and produce newer, more democratic arrangements.⁶³ Accordingly, new political coalitions emerge on a rather short time horizon, in response to eroding state positions or particularly compelling protest.⁶⁴ I am interested here in uncovering the deeper roots of defection and pro-democracy alliance, which I suspect lie buried in established patterns of regime repression and social response. Accepting the importance of contingent influences on emerging alliances during democracy movements, can we still theorize conditions that make regime defectors and dissidents more or less available to one another? I think that we can, on both ideological and existential levels.

Unlike revolutionary movements that thrive on regime weakness and pose comprehensive alternatives to ruling arrangements, democracy movements often do not juxtapose new ideas about governance with those state actors *espouse* – a word I use in a strictly limited way. Often, authoritarian regimes advocate democratic principles but fail to act democratically: some present authoritarian rule as merely transitional, while others redefine democracy as (*faux*) consensus, (enforced) social harmony, or (alleged) equity while retaining authoritarian practices. Attempts to package non-democratic programs as democracy suggest that contemporary regimes are less able *explicitly* to invoke authoritarian

⁶⁰ Zald 1988. Hipscher (1996) tells this story in reverse in her account of how the increasingly moderate goals of Chilean social movements after 1990 led to increasingly moderate tactics.

⁶¹ Beissinger 2002; Przeworski 1986: 56.

⁶² O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986.

⁶³ Karl 1990; Tilly 2000.

⁶⁴ Glenn 1999; Younes 2000: 122.

principles than was previously the case. Deeply enmeshed in international organization and business networks, governments must at least pay lip service to increasingly universal principles of political democracy and economic liberalism – even when they do so with reservations or violate these principles in practice.⁶⁵ The similarity between what democracy movements *demand* and what established regimes *profess* suggests that democracy movements may differ from other state-replacing movements in their ability to use the dictatorship's public ideological foundations as political resources, particularly to build bridges to regime members and to indoctrinated populations.⁶⁶ That alliances can exist between activists outside the regime and disaffected regime sectors based on *shared* ideas marks these movements as significantly different from other regime-displacing contention. Even divided authoritarian states may close ranks in the presence of a strong communist challenge, and a socialist revolutionary force will have trouble recruiting even unhappy members of a state built on capitalist foundations. But when an authoritarian regime acknowledges principles of democratic participation and economic liberalism – as even repressive states in the increasingly globalized world have – weakening central authority may embolden disaffected regime actors to take reforming action, and even to justify defection as defending regime principles against leaders who have slipped the rails.⁶⁷

The point may grow clearer if we consider a comparison between Eastern European socialist states and at least some fascist regimes. Avineri argues that socialism's ideological framework shapes anti-regime movements. State socialism has difficulty justifying itself without reference to citizens' social and economic circumstances, and this inadvertently provides resources for people mistreated or disappointed by the socialist apparatus, and helps economic dissatisfaction accelerate into demands for regime replacement.⁶⁸ In comparison, classical fascism offered virtually no promise of citizen prosperity or social equity, and depended on conquest and racialist strivings for ideological legitimacy.⁶⁹ Having pledged so little, however, the fascist regime provides a correspondingly slim internal framework for anti-regime mobilization. Contemporary and internationally nested authoritarian regimes, in contrast, participate in a global capitalist system where admittedly minimal

⁶⁵ Diamond 1999: 58.

⁶⁶ Noonan offers an interesting parallel in her discussion of the relationship between Pinochet's ideological appropriation of women's issues and the anti-regime women's movement (1995: 98).

⁶⁷ Abrahamsen 1997: 147–151.

⁶⁸ Avineri 1991.

⁶⁹ Moore 1966.

promises of procedural justice still provide resources against corrupt, brutal or patrimonial regimes.⁷⁰ Regimes that guarantee equal protection before the law and denounce corruption, but still plunder their own societies, violate narrow principles of capitalist justice. Those that stage elections to legitimize their rule, but prevent free participation in those elections, violate narrow principles of procedural democracy. Either way, the regime provides normative resources to anti-regime movements.

But why have reforming or dissident members of authoritarian states frequently allied with or encouraged democracy movements over the last several decades? In part, the answer can be found in the democratization literature itself, which expects diversifying states with increased international linkages to be more open to democratizing impulses.⁷¹ Another part of the answer rests in a historically particular conjunction of factors: over the last century's first half, as modern bureaucracies and armies emerged outside Europe, dissidents inside these institutions seldom had strong mass societies to support reforming positions, and often acted through internal coups, or not at all. During the Cold War, ideas about mass susceptibility to communist subversion made alliances between social dissidents and state reformers unattractive to officials who were not themselves leftist – unless they could rely on non- or anti-communist constituencies (as Suharto would in 1965 to 1966). Only in the late 1980s was mass society both available and judged free enough of communist subversion for non-revolutionary reformers inside the state to consider working in tandem with popular coalitions demanding democratic reform, “at the very moment when (for the movement) notions of alternative societies have vanished.”⁷² Needless to say, the post-1989 climate also made capitalist governments freer in supporting these alliances.⁷³

In combination, these factors help contemporary democratization movements imagine that a successful campaign to replace the regime can consist largely in moderate protest, rather than in armed revolution or insurrection – and explain how in some situations that campaign succeeds. It also indicates the direction of a possible synthesis between different theoretical approaches to democracy protests. Transitions do not occur merely from realignments in the political coalition that supported authoritarian rule. Political mobilization can constitute a central factor in forcing that realignment into areas the old order can no longer

⁷⁰ Meyer 2000, Abrahamsen 1997.

⁷¹ Franck 1992: 59.

⁷² Adler and Webster 1995: 86.

⁷³ Bratton and van de Walle 1992: 435; Chipman 1982.

contain,⁷⁴ and can provide opportunities for one faction of the state against competitors.⁷⁵ Cracks in the authoritarian armor also provide political opportunities to counter-hegemonic movements, precisely as political process models in the social movements' literature predict. Still, this presentation of how democracy movements *may* work says little about *when* they will most likely occur, and with what outcomes. To make these more precise judgments, we revisit considerations of established, patterned relations between authoritarian states and their societies.

Historical (as well as proximate) conditions (particularly, I hope to demonstrate, long histories of repression) influence the extent to which state and movement reformers will be politically and existentially available to one another.⁷⁶ Do prominent dissident movements exist to receive and protect defectors from the state, or have these been wiped out or driven underground by state violence? Will alliances between erstwhile regime members and activists require improbable political adjustments (to, for instance, armed struggle) or has dissent evolved to within range of regime members' imaginations? By shaping the contours of political dissent, I argue, repression also influences the nature of alliances that are possible or likely between opposition movements and potential defectors from the regime (and so the timing and character of pro-democracy mobilization).

Conditions most likely to produce successfully democratizing protest often permit some connection between isolated, disgruntled, or concerned members of the ruling coalition and social reformers and activists. Patterns of state repression affect the potential for, and terms of, these alliances. By shaping the institutions, practices and culture of the political opposition, repression helps determine whether the disenchanted or disgruntled regime official, in turning away from the state, finds plausible allies in society. Repression also influences whether movement activists, in grappling with the possibilities of regime change, view officials as unambiguous enemies, or as at least potential confederates. As we will see, Burmese state repression utterly marginalized social reformers, who readily mobilized mass society, but could build no bridge to state actors. Indonesian state attacks on activist organization *divided* social reformers from mass society: constrained from building dissident organizations, pro-democracy actors instead solicited support from elements of the state – even if this meant foregoing the initiative in the realm of mass politics. Bourgeois reformers in the Philippines built and controlled larger

⁷⁴ Collier and Mahoney 1997; Adler and Webster 1995; Stepan 2001: 123–125.

⁷⁵ Amenta and Zylan 1995.

⁷⁶ Younes 2000.

and more institutionalized movement organizations, and used those resources to position themselves as senior partners in the transition. Different patterns of regime repression shape social institutions and political practice in ways that both enable or forestall cooperation between society and reforming state actors, and also dictate the relative balance between state and society in the transition.

In this treatment, the social movements' and democratic transitions' literatures become indispensable to one another. Those seeking to explain and predict when and how disenchanted members of the regime's ruling coalition finally move against the state must interpret established patterns of political contention and relationships between dissidents and authorities. Students of social movements may only be able to understand how the process of anti-regime mobilization influence a democratic transition by examining how the activity of divided regimes helps accelerate a period of protest into a full-fledged democratic attack on state power; social movements scholars may also need to examine this shift in uncus-tomary ways: i.e., not merely as mobilization opportunities, but as a central element of the attack on the authoritarian citadel.

3 Authoritarian attack and dictatorial rise

The first puzzles en route to understanding how state repression influenced contention concern each dictatorship's inaugural violence. I hope to demonstrate that these attacks were strategic (not merely passionate) responses to social opposition. Each undercut the most formidable or apparent challenge to the new regime and established rules that played to each dictator's advantage. Authorities who faced specific, powerful adversaries set out decisively to defeat that force – leading, for instance, Suharto's murderous anti-PKI campaign. Authorities with preferential access to particular resources attacked those with access to different resources – as when the Burmese military (*Tatmadaw*) eliminated public politics. In either case, we understand the dictator's attack within the geography of power in the post-colonial regime. The discussion that follows traces the social foundations of colonial rule and nationalism in each case, asks how different transitions to independence influenced those social forces, and then examines the engines of upward political mobility in the post-colonial period. These three lines of inquiry bring the terrain of contestation surrounding each dictator's rise into sharper focus. We begin with brief narrative descriptions of each case, and then move to a comparative discussion.

Burma

In several ways, the Burmese *Tatmadaw*'s attack against student protesters on July 7, 1962 is puzzling. Only months before, Ne Win's new military regime had used comparative restraint against initial, scattered protests (in Mandalay, demonstrators blocked university entrances; in Rangoon, they rallied at the Student Union building): soldiers arrested activists, closed campuses for three months, and in several places fired teargas at