

Regimes and Repertoires

Hirsch-Hoefler, Sivan

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Hungary and Poland and another one for the Czech Republic. These could be viewed as two separate causal chains leading to the same outcome. 'Strategic social policies' are not necessary for preventing disruptive political protests, a point demonstrated by the Czech Republic, which followed a different method.

Given that there were many post-communist countries that exhibited this same outcome of political quiescence, based on the argument of the book, it is not clear what should be expected in post-communist countries that were not included in this analysis. By including more countries, more possible causal paths would most likely arise, which begs the question: what determines the causal path that a country ends up on? While Vanhuysse made convincing arguments for path dependence with the consistent outcome of relative political quiescence, there are very different medium- and long-term effects associated with each path (such as the high fiscal burden of paying for the abnormal pensioners). Therefore, not all paths are equal along other dimensions, and it is unclear if all possible paths would be open to all post-communist countries.

Another stated aim of the book was to explain the variation between post-communist countries. However, this variation was not clearly explained by the theory proposed. While the point was effectively made that overall political protest was significantly less in post-communist countries compared with other parts of the world, it was not clear that the variance between the post-communist countries was significant. Moreover, Vanhuysse's theory seems much more effective at explaining the overall low level of disruptive political protest based on 'strategic social policy' than it is at explaining why it was slightly higher in Poland than in Hungary.

Despite the challenges that are present when explaining outcomes that have complex causal paths, Vanhuysse made signifi-

cant contributions to literature and policymaking by demonstrating the diverse and significant political, economic, and social effects of a policy decision made in early transition. His argument demonstrates the far-reaching effects of a seemingly limited social policy. He developed the concept of 'abnormal' pensions and described its important effects in the past and future. This reveals new perspectives on how decision-making in social policy may have effects in all areas of life — political, economic, and social — and presents the importance of thorough planning when making social policy decisions, as it has the potential to determine much of a country's future trajectory.

Kristin Nickel

Central European University, Budapest¹

Notes

¹ Ideas developed in this review benefited greatly from active discussion of this text in Dorothee Bohle's 'Politics of Labor in Europe' course in the Political Science Department at the Central European University in Budapest.

References

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Charles Tilly: *Regimes and Repertoires*

Chicago 2006: The University of Chicago Press, 240 pp.

The means by which people make claims on their governments (i.e. their 'repertoires of contention') have long been an important tool for expressing the interests of a collectivity and advancing their claims. During the past several decades, there has been a rapid increase in the amount of scholarly research on repertoires of contention. Numerous works have been written on the

subject, and the term is now used in various theories and at all levels of analysis. However, upon observation it is evident that contentious repertoires vary dramatically from one type of regime to another (p. 210), and this raises the question of how regimes and repertoires of contention relate to each other. In *Regimes and Repertoires*, Charles Tilly masterfully takes up the challenge of examining this issue by carefully analysing the interplay between political regimes and contentious politics.

Regimes shape the timing of contentious repertoires and their character; for example, whether they will be moderate or violent, disruptive or non-disruptive, legal or illegal. Regimes not only influence the decision to become politically active but also determine the degree of political activism. The regime of a given society at a given time may be open to contentious repertoires or may be an obstacle to them, that is, hostile towards and discouraging of political participation. A regime may also limit an individual's ability to be active through conventional channels, thus making them choose a more radical or unconventional form of activity in order to achieve their goals.

Studies have typically focused on each aspect separately. Yet, as Tilly modestly notes, regimes and repertoires 'deserve' their own vehicle (p. vii). Accordingly, the central theme of this book is the interaction between regimes and repertoires. The book looks at three key questions: How do certain political regimes vary and change? How do the people living in various types of regimes make claims on each other and on their governments? What connections exist between regime change and the character of contentious politics? (p. 4)

In order to answer these questions, Tilly puts forth an interesting theoretical framework that offers a riveting review of different types of regimes and the various modes of repertoires which they encourage. According to Tilly, 'tracing caus-

al connections between regimes and repertoires requires a serious historical and comparative effort' (p. 59). He consequently presents the story of how changes in regimes interact with and relate to repertoires, drawing on examples from various areas around the world (for example, Peru, India, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Morocco, Jamaica, Angola, Chechnya, and Kosovo). The wide variety of interesting cases, examples, and diagrams helps the reader to understand the phenomenon under examination and its multifaceted nature by addressing it from an explicitly comparative perspective. More importantly, Tilly relates each of the historical events to the study of conceptual and theoretical issues. Tilly's talent for shifting between times and places makes this book coherent and readable. Moreover, the author invites the reader to be part of the journey, even though some cases took place many years ago or in remote places.

The book begins with an excellent description and classification approach to the terms 'regime' (Chapter 1), 'how regimes work' (Chapter 2), and 'repertoires of contention' (Chapter 3). In this first stage, Tilly's approach is relatively static, creating 'two rough conceptual maps – one of regimes, the other of contentious politics' (p. 16). Only after Tilly has mapped each component in this two-sided equation separately does he proceed to combine both aspects (Chapter 4 – 'repertoires, meet regimes'). Tilly searches for the causes that connect regimes and repertoires – 'ways that regimes shape repertoires, ways that repertoires shape regimes' (p. 16). It is important to note, however, that the book puts greater emphasis on how change and variation in regimes shape contentious politics than vice versa.

Tilly's analytical tool for examining the connection between these two aspects (i.e. regimes and contentious politics) appears in the form of a two-dimensional space: 'government capacity', the

extent to which governmental agents control resources, activities, and people within government jurisdiction; and 'democracy', the extent to which individuals have equal rights and protection from arbitrary governmental action (p. 21). The horizontal dimension of this matrix represents democracy or non-democracy, while the vertical dimension represents governmental capacity (either high or low). Tilly's basic and very simple argument is that the location of a regime within the capacity-democracy space strongly affects its government's approach to contentious politics (p. 211). In other words, change and variation in governmental capacity or in democracy cause change and variation in the character of contentious repertoires.

The next chapter moves on to examine 'trajectories of change' (Chapter 5), explaining how changes in regimes interact with changes in the forms of contentious politics and, more importantly, what explains these changes. Interestingly, in this chapter Tilly discusses the apartheid regime in South Africa and illustrates how different actors make claims on each other and on their governments, and how they try to force change. This case study dramatically brings to light the influence of previously existing political institutions on the forms and outcomes of contention (p. 110).

The book then examines the model's implications for three contentious processes: 'collective violence' (Chapter 6), 'revolutions' (Chapter 7), and 'social movements' (Chapter 8). Tilly unsurprisingly reveals that 'the public politics of high-capacity, democratic regimes brings together widespread collective claim-making.....and impressively restrained domestic use of the governments enormous coercive power... Less democratic and lower-capacity regimes experience more authoritarian and/or more violent forms of contentious politics' (p. 150). Yet, violent repertoires differ sharply not only from one type of regime to another (i.e. democracy versus non-

democracy), but rather between high-capacity and low-capacity non-democratic governments. For instance, while civil wars concentrate in low-capacity, non-democratic regimes, successful revolutions concentrate in (relatively) high-capacity, non-democratic regimes (p. 210). The 'concluding chapter' (Chapter 9) is organised in a manner that allows the author to clarify all the theoretical issues raised throughout the book.

The strength of the book lies in the simple and yet very effective theoretical framework it applies to the questions of regimes and repertoires. Tilly has once again proven to be an author of impressive skill, using a theoretical framework and various historical cases to stimulate every reader to think and comprehend beyond a factual level. Although part of this book is an adaptation of materials from Tilly's previous works, the texts have been significantly updated.

In our complex world, regimes and repertoires interact. Readers who wish to learn about the trajectories and characteristics of this interconnected process will find this book highly useful. This is undoubtedly an important, well-written book, rich in detail, which raises an important theoretical and practical issue. Its readability makes it useful for both undergraduate and graduate students. It is an essential addition to the private libraries of scholars interested in contentious politics (and collective action). Nevertheless, those who are taking their first steps into this field of interest and wish to broaden their knowledge will miss the in-depth character and intricacies of a focused one-dimensional analysis. Anyone interested in understanding contentious politics can therefore use this wide-ranging work together with a deeper, more penetrating analysis in order to obtain a complete picture of this issue.

*Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler
University of Antwerp, Belgium*