CLASHES OF CONSCIENCE:
EXPLAINING COUNTERDEMONSTRATION AT PROTESTS*

Heidi Reynolds-Stenson and Jennifer Earl†

Whether in contemporary protests or in key movements in United States history, protesters must often contend with police and sometimes also with counterprotesters. Clashes with counter-protesters are often tense, ripe with the possibility of violence, and increase the chance of a police response. Although there is research on countermovements, there is little on counter-protesting. We conduct a systematic, cross-movement analysis to forward a strategic threat-based explanation of counterprotesting. We examine the frequency of counterdemonstration, the relative merits of threat versus weakness explanations of counterdemonstrator mobilization, and the relationship between counterdemonstrating and protest policing. We find that counter-protesting is relatively uncommon, is more common at conservative protests, and is explained by the threat posed by, and strength of, the initial movement. Furthermore, policing and counterdemonstrating appear positively and reciprocally related: we find that recent police repression increases counterdemonstration, and existing research shows that counter-demonstrators, in turn, increase police response.

When black and white Freedom Riders drove through the Deep South to challenge the segregated transit system, they were repeatedly attacked by angry mobs of white citizens; in one case their bus was burnt to the ground. Civil rights supporters also faced off against White Citizen's Councils and various versions of the Ku Klux Klan (Cunningham 2012). More re-cently, a Klan rally in Anaheim drew more counterdemonstrators than supporters and ended in the stabbing of three anti-KKK protesters and the arrest of thirteen people from both sides (Ellis and Hassan 2016), and the tragic events at the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia last summer reinforced the dangers that confrontations between opposing groups of demonstrators can hold (Hanna, Hartung, Sayers, and Almasy 2017). These examples should not imply that counterdemonstration is restricted to civil rights and to white supremacy events. For instance, prolife protesters also have a long history of demonstrating at prochoice marches and Planned Parenthood clinics, and pro-choice advocates have likewise counterdemonstrated at prolife protests. Indeed, counterdemonstrators have been part of some of the most iconic moments in movements' histories. Yet, social movement scholarship has little to say about when and why counterdemonstrators are likely to mobilize.

Of course, social movement scholarship has fruitfully examined movement-counter-movement dynamics more generally, with scholarship working to define counter-movements and to explore both their commonalities with (Andrews 2002; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996; van Deth 2012) and differences from (Koopmans 2004; Lo 1982) other social movements, the conditions facilitating countermovement emergence (Alimi and Hirsch-Hoefler 2012; Becker and Copeland 2016; Koopmans 2004; Meyer and Staggenborg 1996), the dynamics of elite support of countermovements (Austin 2012; Ferrer-Fons and Fraile 2014; Koopmans 2004; Meyer and Tarrow 1998), how opposing movements shape one another's frames (Earl, Copeland, and Bimber forthcoming; Esacove 2004; Keller 2012; Rohlinger 2002), and the outcomes opposing movements have for each other and for policy (Earl 2013; Fisher 2012;

Khalil 2012; Adams, Shriver, and Messer 2015). This work focuses on macrolevel phenomena, seeking to understand the emergence, life course, and interactions of countermovements. Theoretically, such questions are similar to the kinds of questions that macrolevel theories such as resource mobilization and political process are meant to address. We argue that existing scholarship on movement-countermovement relationships can inform, but not squarely address, the more microlevel question of when counterdemonstrators will oppose specific protest events.

This lacuna around counterdemonstrator presence is surprising not just because of the historical importance of counterdemonstrators and a growing literature on countermovements, but also because counterdemonstrator presence can affect other important social movement dynamics such as repression. Research has shown that counterdemonstrator presence increases the likelihood of police presence and action (Earl and Soule 2006), since it creates a high possibility of violence and special challenges for police. It is surprising, then, that scholars know little about when police are more likely to encounter counterdemonstrators and/or whether prior policing activity itself shapes the likelihood of future counterdemonstrations. In this article, we draw on research related to threat as a mobilizing force and research on protest policing to develop expectations about counterprotester presence. We test these hypotheses using the Dynamics of Collective Action dataset, which tracks protests from 1960 to 1995, finding that counterdemonstrators against right-wing events are more likely, counterdemonstrators are responsive to prior police action against the movements they oppose and that, like police and some protesters, counterdemonstrators are responsive to threats related to their opponent's strength.

RESEARCH ON COUNTERMOVEMENTS

Questions about countermovements more broadly are not new to social movement scholarship. Researchers have debated the extent to which countermovements constitute a distinct phenomenon. At first, this "reactive mobilization" (Koopmans 2004) was considered distinct from social movements, as they opposed social change rather than pushed for it. But as David Meyer and Suzanne Staggenborg (1996) argue, countermovements have more in common with initial social movements than we often assume: they make claims on the state, push for policies, and attempt to influence the mass media and public opinion.

Researchers also debated whether countermovements had distinct ideological orientations, sometimes conflating them with conservative movements and assuming them to always be reactionary (e.g., Lo 1982), or were better defined in terms of their temporality, arguing that what makes a movement a countermovement is that it emerges after an initial movement and makes claims contrary to that movement (Andrews 2002). Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) have argued against such a temporally based distinction, claiming that such a distinction loses meaning as the two movements interact with and react to each other over time. Michael Dorf and Sydney Tarrow (2014) complicate the issue of timing further by exploring the phenomenon of anticipatory countermobilization. In the case they studied, mobilization by conservatives to oppose an anticipated push for the legalization of gay marriage actually triggered a movement for gay marriage for which the political environment might otherwise not yet have been ripe.

Another major focus of this literature is the conditions that lead to the emergence of countermovements. Similar to the large body of work explaining movement emergence more generally, this work explores how political opportunities, available resources, and other factors explain when mobilization in opposition to a social movement is likely to form. Just as social movement scholars had pointed out that not all grievances give rise to social movements, scholars who focused on countermovements recognized that even though there is nearly always some segment of the population that disagrees with or stands to lose something as a result of any particular social movement, only some grievances inspire people to come together and form a movement to stop it. Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) were the first to seriously examine what gives rise to countermovements, arguing that the relationship between movement success and countermovement emergence is curvilinear; if movements do not experience much success, there may be no need for a countermovement, but when movements experience too much

success, there may be no hope for a countermovement. Thus, explaining the rise of counter-movements continues to be an important area of research (e.g., Alimi and Hirsch-Hoefler 2012; Andrews 2002; Hess and Brown 2016; Kongkirati 2006.

A related line of inquiry focuses on elite support for countermovements, pointing out that seemingly grassroots opposition to social movements is often backed, or even instigated, by elites threatened by the movements (Koopmans 2004). From the Associated Farmers of California (AF) that formed in the 1930s in response to agricultural labor organizing (Pichardo 1995), to elite support and think tank funding for the climate change countermovement (Brulle 2014; Jaques, Dunlap, and Freeman 2008) and the anti-environmental movement (Austin 2012), elite support is sometimes critical to the emergence of countermovements.

The countermovements literature also examines the dynamics through which opposing movements shape one another's general trajectories (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996), strategic choices (Andrews 2002), and framing efforts (Esacove 2004; McCright and Dunlap 2000, Rohlinger 2002). Across this work, scholars learn, for instance, how the pro-life or white power movements engage in framing contests or litigation, and thereby resist the efforts of an opposing movement while furthering their own.

Finally, scholars have shown that countermovements can also effectively suppress mobili-zation of the initial movement, as demonstrated by Benjamin Lind and Judith Stepan-Norris's study of the tenants' rights movement, and landlord mobilization formed to counter it. The efforts of countermovements and movements can also combine to shape policy outcomes, as in the case of the effect of labor movement and employer mobilization on right to work laws (Dixon 2008, 2010).

While this literature is clearly extensive and contributes greatly to our collective under-standing of how broader opposition to social movements emerges, organizes itself, operates, and, at times, succeeds, this work engages the growth of countermovements at the macro level, leaving questions about the specific protest events at which counterdemonstrators may appear unaddressed. This is a consequential oversight. Counterdemonstrations are an important part of a countermovement's arsenal. Researchers and police themselves have also acknowledged the difficulties that counterdemonstrators create for police, as noted in this 1968 article in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*:

> The main target of each group of demonstrators is the opposing group, but the police are in the middle and catch it from both sides. Like a lightning arrestor, they attract and ground the crack-ling energies from the militants, thus protecting the city and its people.

In other words, we argue that while existing literature has much to say about when counter-movements will be weaker or stronger, among other topics, it has little to say about when counterdemonstrations are likely to occur. In the following section, we develop theoretical expectations about what motivates counterdemonstrator presence at protest events.

EXPLAINING COUNTERDEMONSTRATION

While focused on the microlevel, explaining counterdemonstration is not simply a micro-mobilization question: that framing of the question would seek to explain who would become a counterdemonstrator, not at which events someone or some groups would choose to counterdemonstrate. Instead, to explain counterdemonstrations, we must first acknowledge that, as is true with any protest, there are costs to counterdemonstrating (e.g., time, energy, risk, etc.) and individuals and/or organizations cannot attend all protests with which they disagree. Counterdemonstrators must make choices about which events to prioritize. We argue that a theoretical approach to counterdemonstration should be able to identify the protest events that are most likely to be highly prioritized (and therefore more likely to be counterdemonstrated) and those that are too low of a priority to earn responses.

Threat

Although there are likely many factors that contribute to decisions about which events to counterdemonstrate (and we hope this article spurs further research on the topic, including by inspiring alternative explanations), we begin by adopting a strategic view. What events would strategic opponents prioritize? Our first major claim is that movement events that represent larger threats should be higher priorities for counterdemonstrators, which is consistent with arguments made by Meyer and Staggenborg (1996), who have argued that threats drive countermovement growth generally. In the larger social movements literature, there are two relevant lines of work describing threat—one that examines how protesters and movements may be motivated to act by threat, and one that examines how authorities (e.g., elites and police) evaluate and react to threat. We argue both are helpful in informing specific hypotheses about counterdemonstrations.

Where threat as a protest motivation is concerned, researchers have argued that the higher the perceived costs to inaction, the higher the "threat" motivation to protest (Almeida 2008; Einwohner and Maher 2011; Goldstone and Tilly 2001; Van Dyke and Soule 2002). This vision of threat focuses on a "push" motivation to protest (Einwohner and Maher 2011), instead of the "pull" motivation represented by political opportunities.

While we explore this more in developing specific hypotheses below, it is worth noting that scholars argue these costs to inaction must be perceived (McVeigh 2009), are dynamic over time (Maher 2010), and can occur in reaction to an opposing movement's success (McVeigh 2009; Wright 2007) or in reaction to exceptionally repressive authoritarian action (Almeida 2003, 2008; Einwohner 2003). Different dimensions of threat have been discussed, such as Rachel Einwohner and Thomas Maher (2011)'s discussion of threat severity, imminence, local applicability, inevitability (i.e., "unmalleable"), and credibility. Their arguments imply that the more severe a threat, the more immediate in a temporal sense the threat is, the more locally applicable instead of general the threat is, the less the threat can be avoided through alternative actions, and the more credible evidence supporting the threat is, the greater the overall evaluation of threat and the more likely action will be.

An alternative way of thinking about the matrix of characteristics that make events "threatening" draws on the literatures on state repression and protest policing (for reviews see Davenport 2007; Earl 2011). Here, scholars have considered what threatens elites as well as those charged with protest control (whether police or military), arguing that the more threatening a movement is to either kind of authority, the more severe the repressive reaction will be (Davenport 1995, 2000, 2007; McAdam 1982, 1983). Scholars in this area have conceptualized and measured threat in a variety of ways, including the use of confrontational tactics (e.g., Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; McAdam 1982, 1983) or violence (Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl and Soule 2006), the pursuit of revolutionary goals (Bromley and Shupe Jr. 1983, Earl, Soule and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006; McAdam 1982), having multiple goals (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006) or multiple targets (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003), or having a greater "scale of action" (Tilly 1978), sometimes measured in terms of the number of participants at an event (Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011, Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006). The evidence in favor of this overall threat claim is quite strong (e.g., Davenport 1995, 2007; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006).

While drawing on separate research traditions, we argue that both of these literatures highlight elements that many counterdemonstrators likely consider threatening to their interests, and therefore may increase the likelihood that they attend a protest. For instance, because counterdemonstration constitutes an effort to oppose a movement that is viewed as contrary to counterdemonstrators' interests or values, we expect that size, tactics, goals, and the targets of protests will all factor into counterdemonstrators' evaluations of threat.

In terms of size, both visions of threat suggest counterdemonstrators may be more likely at larger events. In a threat-as-mobilizer view, the costs to inaction rise if your opponent appears more powerful by mobilizing large numbers without contest. Or, in Einwohner and Maher (2011)'s terms, larger protests may increase the sense of threat severity and imminence. From

the repression literature, larger protest sizes are also threatening because they display greater support for change (Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006). Thus, we expect that larger protests will be perceived as threatening to private actors for the same reasons:

Hypothesis 1a: Larger protests will be more likely to be met by counterdemonstrator presence.

Hypothesis 1b: Protests by movements that have recently held larger protests will be more likely to be met by counterdemonstrator presence.

In other words, if all else is equal, we expect that counterdemonstrators will choose to act more when they believe their opponents are "gaining on them" by recently staging large events.

Second, this same line of argumentation suggests that movements that have been more active lately (by holding more protests, regardless of size) might be more threatening to those that oppose them. Thus, we expect:

Hypothesis 2: Protests by movements that have recently held a greater number of protests will be more likely to be met by counterdemonstrator presence.

Third, moderate tactics by protesters should be less threatening to opponents because they impose fewer immediate costs and are viewed as generally less disruptive; thus, they may provoke less counterdemonstration. By contrast, more radical tactics may impose greater costs and be more disruptive to their opponents, just as authorities oppose radical protest tactics more severely (Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006; McAdam 1982, 1983):

Hypothesis 3: Protests by movements that have recently held protests using radical tactics will be more likely to be met by counterdemonstrator presence.

Fourth, we argue that the radical nature of protester claims will also affect counter-demonstrations. Some have argued threat motivates conservative protest (McVeigh 2009; Wright 2007), which at first blush might imply that more progressive events should be more likely to have counterdemonstrators. However, we suspect that an alternative logic to left/right politics may matter, such that the more disruptive protester success would be to the status quo, the more threatening to potential counterdemonstrators. In this way, events making more radical claims should be the most threatening. Likewise, the repression literature also sees more radical or revolutionary claims as more threatening (Bromley and Shupe Jr. 1983; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006; McAdam 1982). More formally:

Hypothesis 4: Protests by movements that have recently held protests furthering radical claims will be more likely to be met by counterdemonstrator presence.

Fifth, Einwohner and Maher (2011) noted that locally applicable threats are greater motivators for action. One translation of this to counterdemonstrators would draw on an analogy from protest policing: just as Jennifer Earl and Sarah Soule (2006) have argued that police react more strongly to what threatens them as police than to what threatens political elites, we argue that private actors should also be more concerned with movements that are pressuring private actors to make changes. While not local in a geographic sense, private targets are more applicable threats to counterdemonstrators (Einwohner and Maher 2011). That is, private actors should be more threatened by protesters who demand not only changes in the state, but changes in private institutions and relations as well:

Hypothesis 5: Protests by movements that have recently held protests targeting private actors will be more likely to be met by counterdemonstrator presence.

Weakness

Opportunism may be another motivator for counterdemonstrating. Mobilizing in response to favorable political opportunities, which is a major part of Meyer and Staggenborg's (1996) work on countermovements, represents a kind of movement opportunism. The repression literature provides another view of opportunism, but taken from the point of the view of the state instead of the movement. Some repression researchers argue that weakness, not threat, inspires repression because elites think they will be more likely to get away with, and be more successful in, their attempts to crush the movement (Gamson 1990 [1975]). Likewise, the authorities charged with actually engaging in repression (e.g., police) have a freer hand in repressing because there are fewer consequences to harming a weak group versus a strong one. Weakness has been operationalized in terms of subordinate group participants (racial and ethnic minorities, religious minorities, and the poor; Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011, Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006; Stockdill 1996; Wood 2007), college student participants (Earl and Soule 2006), lack of media coverage (which might offer some protection through publicity; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006; Wisler and Giugni 1999), and lack of social movement organization backing (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006).

While there is a great deal of empirical evidence showing that threat matters, support for weakness has been more mixed (Earl 2011), with Brett Stockdill (1996) and Lesley Wood (2007) finding support but Earl and Soule (2006) and Earl, Soule, and John McCarthy (2003) finding limited or no support, for example. Christian Davenport, Soule, and David Armstrong (2011) find time-specific support for weakness theories, finding that in the 1960s and 1970s (but not later), African American protests were more likely to draw police presence and provoke police action (arrest and violence) after controlling for measures of threat (although they do not conceptualize this effect as a weakness effect).

In terms of translating this research into expectations about counterdemonstration, we see little reason to believe that counterdemonstrators will be fueled by weakness, even if larger countermovements are influenced by political opportunities. Counterdemonstration opportunities are more abundant than the resources that it takes to engage in counterdemonstration, meaning that opportunity alone should not be able to explain which events are subjected to counterdemonstration. Moreover, political opportunities are unlikely to be so volatile that they can explain why one event versus another event is targeted for counterdemonstration in a similar time period. In terms of the repression-based weakness approach, since counterdemonstrators do not enjoy a supposed monopoly on force, they are not expected to be the only, or even the primary, source of discipline to uphold public order. Moreover, the failure of counter-demonstrators to successfully control or foil an opposing movement is not likely to be seen as a reflection of the weakness of private actors. Put differently, the mechanism by which weak-ness is believed to influence repression is a concern over the embarrassment of a failed attempt at repression, something that state actors are arguably much more concerned about than counterdemonstrators, as the stakes of legitimacy and consequences of perceived weakness are much greater for states.

However, to test relevant counterarguments to our central claims, we attempt to translate measures of weakness from work on state-based repression and/or opportunities to the context of opposing groups of protesters. One way of measuring weakness has been to focus on the monitoring that others engage in on protesters' behalf (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006; Wisler and Giugni 1999). This model of weakness animates the rallying cry, "The whole world is watching." The basic presumption is that the fewer people "watching," the weaker, and thus more vulnerable to repression, a movement is. We expect that since private protesters are motivated by threat, not weakness, outside monitoring of the movement will not influence the likelihood of counterdemonstrator presence:

> Hypothesis 6: Lack of prominent protests coverage will NOT increase the likelihood of sub-sequent counterdemonstrator presence.

Indeed, if anything, we might expect that greater coverage, or more prominent coverage, would be viewed as increasing evaluations of threat.

Likewise, weakness has also been measured by identifying subordinated groups, who are considered sociopolitically weaker, and assuming that those groups will be targeted (Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006). Since we do not expect that counterprotesters are responding to opportunities to repress, but rather to the pull to repress created by threat, we expect that minority participation in protest will not shape this phenomenon:

> Hypothesis 7: Protests by movements that have recently held protests instigated by subordinate groups will NOT be more likely to be met by counterdemonstrator presence.

Finally, lack of SMO backing has been used as an indicator of weakness in previous research on protest policing (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006). Scholars argue that SMOs provide some degree of protection against repression, as such formal organizations have more infrastructure and resources that can be drawn upon in publicizing or redressing repression-related grievances, compared with a collective of individuals with no such formal backing. However, because we argue that weakness does not drive counterprotesters' actions, we hypothesize:

> Hypothesis 8: Protests by movements with a greater proportion of recent protests lacking SMOs sponsorship will NOT be more likely to be met by counterdemonstrator presence.

Does State Repression Influence Counterdemonstration?

Meyer and Staggenborg (1996) argued that the state sets the parameters for movement-countermovement dynamics such that countermovements are unnecessary if the state is willing to suppress a movement. In this view, counterdemonstrators and the state have a common interest vis-a-vis a protest or movement — to quell the potential threat or disruption it poses — but can trade off in who performs the function. Following Meyer and Staggenborg, we argue that counterdemonstrators can be understood as stepping in to oppose protest and "take the law into their own hands" when they believe that the state is not doing enough to control protesters. This is also similar to an argument made by Earl (2004), but that work is based on a view of counterdemonstrations as a kind of private repression. Nonetheless, both lead to the same expectation:

> Hypothesis 9: Protests by movements more repressed by the state will be less likely to experience subsequent counterdemonstration.

However, it is important to acknowledge two alternatives that would change the direction of this relationship. First, if police are serving a peacekeeping function, effectively protecting the rights of demonstrators from being infringed upon by counterdemonstrators, then there should be a positive relationship between police presence and counterdemonstration. More generally, a positive relationship may result from the fact that the presence of opposing groups of protesters would likely make an event a higher priority for police to attend and monitor. To examine this would entail testing the relationship between counterdemonstrator presence and police presence at the same event. This has been included in previous studies and a positive relationship has been found (Earl and Soule 2006; Earl, Martin, McCarthy, and Soule 2004). In this paper, however, we focus on how recent movement histories, including histories of state repression, impact counterdemonstrator mobilization.[1]

Another way counterdemonstrator presence and state repression may be positively related to one another, which is more applicable to our study, is the possibility that counter-demonstrators may be emboldened by recent police action at protests organized by their opponents. For instance, just as white supremacists in the southern U.S. were emboldened by state action against civil rights, so too might counterdemonstrators be generally. If this were the

case, we would find evidence against hypothesis 9 and that points to a direct and positive relationship between state-based repression and counterdemonstrator presence.

DATA

To test these hypotheses, we use data from the *Dynamics of Collective Action* dataset (2009), which contains information on more than 20,000 protest events that received coverage in daily editions of the *New York Times* between 1960 and 1995. To be considered a protest event and included in the dataset, events must be collective (i.e., involve two or more people), public (i.e., not a private meeting), and involve extrainstitutional action. Various information about what occurred at the event, who was involved, who was targeted, and what claims were being furthered was quantitatively coded by a team of coders (Wang and Soule 2012).

Relying on newspapers for data on protest events, while common in research on social movements, comes with its limitations (Earl et al. 2004). Problems come in two primary forms: description bias and selection bias. Description bias occurs when newspaper accounts differ from events on the ground. Fortunately, DOCA only records "hard news items" about the event (i.e., the who, what, when, where, and why of the event), and these hard news items have been shown to be relatively free from description bias (Earl et al. 2004). Second, newspaper data may be affected by selection bias. Newspapers, even those with national and international coverage like the *New York Times*, may focus more on events closer to home, and events that are larger, more dramatic, or more disruptive. Therefore, the protest events reported in a given newspaper, or even in many different newspapers, may not be representative of protest events in general. By limiting our analysis to protest events in New York State, we reduce selection bias based on geographical location of the newspaper (Earl et al. 2004), the single biggest documented source of selection bias.

We also exclude from our analyses all protest events in which the only tactic was a lawsuit, as these events are unlikely to be at risk of having counterdemonstrators present. Likewise, we exclude protest events instigated by institutionalized persons, such as prison strikes and riots, for the same reason. Even after taking into account these exclusions and the geographic restriction, we were left with 3,792 protest events for analysis.

Using these data, we create and test several measures of the threat and weakness posed by a protest event based on recent protests within the same movement[2] and on characteristics of the protest event in question. We had to adjust the construction of our independent variables to accommodate the different ways counterdemonstrators might find out about events and decide to protest against them. Drawing an analogy to models of police presence, which also involve choices about whether to attend specific events, it is common to use the current event's characteristics to model the likelihood of police presence for two reasons: (1) for a preplanned event, it is assumed that police are aware of its likely characteristics (e.g., cause, likely tactics, SMO sponsors, etc.) and use that information to decide whether to attend the event in advance; or (2) if an event was unknown to the police, or the police had initially decided not to attend, emergency calls and/or information from regular patrol officers about current event characteristics might lead the police to show up at the event.

Counterdemonstrators would not have access to the same amount of pre-event information (since they are not involved in permit reviews, as police are), nor would they have the same real-time ability to respond to emergent protests (as police do through calls for service), so we must consider how counterdemonstrators find out about potential and actual events and decide when to attend. We expect that counterdemonstrators decide what events to attend based on two different types of information: (1) "tells" about upcoming events that would be reasonably observable to nonorganizers; and (2) recent protest histories of a movement. In the first instance, there are a limited number of factors that might affect the likelihood that potential counterdemonstrators would hear about an event beforehand and decide to mobilize in advance. For instance, massive protests or protests with large numbers of SMOs are likely to be more widely publicized as they are planned, increasing the odds of drawing counterdemonstrator attention. For these kinds of tells, we can use the event's characteristics as a predictor.

However, recent histories of protest movements are also likely to create a sense among potential counterdemonstrators of the threat posed by a movement, as well as a sense of its weakness or the degree to which it has come under repression from the government. To measure these longer-range trajectories, we ignore the current event's characteristics and instead examine the characteristics of events during specific time windows (e.g., a year, six months, one month) preceding that protest. Because the extant literature provided no guidance as to what might constitute "recent" protests (i.e., how far into the past potential counter-demonstrators consider when developing a sense of the threat or weakness posed by a movement they oppose), we tested multiple time frames for each key measure and included in the final model those which had the greatest predictive capacity over our dependent variable, counterdemonstrator presence (See table 1 for the exact time frames used for each measure; models used to make these determinations are available upon request. Time frames tried included the past year, past six months, past three months, past month, past three weeks, past two weeks, and past week.). Given this general measurement strategy, we now describe our specific measures.

Threat

As discussed, previous literature has found threat, operationalized in various ways, to be a reliable predictor of observable, coercive repression by state actors. We take cues from this literature and develop five different measures of the threat posed by a protest event, and test whether these explain when counterdemonstrators mobilize.

First, we measure the total count of recent protests that were part of the same social movement as the event in question.[3] For example, for a women's rights march, we would calculate the number of other women's rights protests that had occurred within the previous six months (as well as other time frames, as discussed). We expect that movements with greater levels of recent activity and momentum will be perceived as more threatening to groups and individuals opposed to the movement. A recent wave of women's rights protests, for example, is likely to make opponents of this movement worried, perhaps enough to inspire them to action.

Second, we create a measure for the total number of recent movement protest participants (Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006).[4] Using the same example of the women's rights march, we count the number of people who participated at women's rights protests within a given time period, giving us the total number of recent movement participants for that event. We also tried using the mean and median number of participants at recent movement protests, but the total was shown to be the best measure (models used to determine this are available upon request). The total number of participants is logged to adjust for heteroscedasticity.

Third, we measure the percentage of recent movement protests using radical tactics (Ring-Ramirez, Reynolds-Stenson, and Earl 2014),[5] hypothesizing that movements that have recently employed radical tactics are perceived as more threatening (see Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006; McAdam 1982, 1983). We also tried using the total number of recent movement protests using radical tactics, but the percentage was shown to be the best measure (models used to determine this are available upon request). We expect that pursuing radical claims will similarly be more threatening and therefore included a measure for the total number of recent movement protests furthering radical claims (as done in Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006).[6]

Fourth, we expect that private actors will feel more threatened by movements that explicitly target private actors (such as businesses) instead of the government, and therefore create a measure for the total number of recent movement protests with a private target. The percentage of recent movement protests targeting private actors was also tried but the total was shown to be the best measure (models used to determine this are available upon request). Using the target variables, events are coded as having private targets if they targeted businesses, educational institutions, medical organizations, or racial/ethnic groups. They are coded as having state targets if they targeted the U.S. government or foreign governments.

Fifth, we expect that particularly large events will be more likely to be on potential counterdemonstrators' radar and more likely to be seen as threatening. Thus, in addition to the measures of movement threat based on recent events, we also include a measure of threat posed by the event in question, a dummy variable for whether or not the event had more than 10,000 participants.[7] We reason that such massive events require a degree of publicity and organizational infrastructure that make it much more likely that those opposing the protests' aims will be aware of it beforehand and will feel threatened by such a large potential gathering. Whereas smaller events may still be notable gatherings, the scale of organizing such events is not likely to require the same broad push to publicize, and thus not likely to serve as such a big tell to potential counterdemonstrators.

Weakness

Although some scholars argue that weaker movements, lacking in political power and recourse, are more vulnerable to experiencing state repression, we expect these factors to be less predictive of counterdemonstration. To test this, we include four measures of movement weakness.

First, as already discussed, movements without the protection afforded by prominent media coverage may be perceived as weaker (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006; Wisler and Giugni 1999). Therefore, we measure the percentage of movement protests receiving front-page coverage in the *New York Times* leading up to the protest in question.[8]

Second, we use a measure for the number of recent movement protests with at least one social movement organization (SMO) present,[9] taking lack of recent SMO backing as an indication of weakness. This directly mirrors extant research on protest policing (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006).

Third, as others have done (Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003; Earl and Soule 2006), we include a measure for the percentage of recent movement protests instigated by members of subordinate groups. Fourth, we include a measure of the number of SMOs sponsoring the event in question. SMO presence has been used as an indicator of strength in prior research (Earl, Soule, and McCarthy 2003, Earl and Soule 2006), such that proponents of a weakness account expect an inverse relationship between SMO presence and state repression.

State Repression

We create several measures of recent state repression. First, we measure the percentage of recent movement protests where police were present. Second, we measure the total number of recent movement protests where police made arrests (but did not use force/violence) and the total number of recent movement protests where police used force/violence (but did not make arrests). Third, we measure the total number of recent movement protests where police both used force/violence and made arrests.[10] By including multiple measures of state repression, we can distinguish if different forms, or degrees, of state repression might have different relationships with subsequent counterdemonstration.

Controls

Because many of the variables, such as the number of recent movement protests, are likely to fluctuate with the rising and falling of protest levels generally (in other words, with the protest cycle), we include controls for the overall number of recent protests.[11] We also control for the political leaning of the protest (See table A1 in appendix for coding of political leaning of movements). The social movement literature typically conceives of countermovements as conservative movements working to preserve the status quo, suggesting that leftist protests are more likely to have counterdemonstrators present. We also include fixed effects for time by including yearly dummy variables. To ensure that our choice of reference year was not creating an artifact, we test multiple reference years, and across these tests three years—1965, 1991, and

1992—consistently seemed to have more counterdemonstrations than other years, and so these effects are retained in models below.

Finally, because 82% of events in the DOCA dataset that occurred in New York State occurred in New York City (i.e., in any of the five boroughs or their neighborhoods),[12] it is also important to determine whether counterdemonstrating occurring inside versus outside of New York City worked similarly. We tested for such an effect in two ways. First, we included an additive effect for NYC, but this dummy variable was not significant and its inclusion did not alter any significant effects in important ways (i.e., no significant effects went from being significant without the NYC dummy to nonsignificant or vice versa, changed direction, or changed dramatically in terms of magnitude).[13] Nonetheless, we have left the control for NYC location in the final model out of caution.

Second, in unreported model tests, we also forced an implicit model-wide set of inter-actions instead of an additive location effect; we accomplish this by splitting the sample and remodeling using only cases inside NYC and then only cases outside NYC. Effects were substantially similar. In the NYC-only models, a few coefficients became less significant (e.g., went from .01 to .05 in significance), three variables went from being significant or marginally significant in the entire sample to only marginally significant or nonsignificant in the NYC sample (percentage of movement events with SMO presence in past two weeks, the percentage of movement events with front page coverage in past two weeks, and right wing protest), and the percentage of movement events with police force/violence only in past week became significant. However, no variables—including those with altered significance—changed direction of the relationship. Since variables in the non-NYC models also did not change direction, even if their significance is altered (which probably resulted from a substantial loss of power by dramatically reducing the *n* for the analysis), we concluded that the process was not substantially different inside and outside of NYC and therefore present only full sample models below.

METHODS

To test our hypotheses about the predictors of counterdemonstration and its relationship with state repression, we perform logistic regressions to model the log likelihood of counter-demonstrator presence at each event. We also compute the same models using a Firth correction because counterdemonstrator presence is rare enough (257 of the 3,792 observations) to potentially bias estimates without such a correction (Allison 2012; King and Zeng 2001). However, differences between the uncorrected standard logistic regression models and the Firth-corrected models were negligible, suggesting that the original models were likely robust to low positive-event counts as a source of bias. Therefore, to ease presentation, we only present the uncorrected models.

FINDINGS

Our analyses reveal that counterdemonstrator presence is relatively rare, with counter-demonstrators appearing at only about seven percent of protests (n = 257) in our final dataset. However, when counterprotesting does occur, it seems to be provoked by threat. Results in table 1, which appears on the next page, show that just as threat has proven to be an extremely strong predictor of police presence and action, some elements of threat also predict counterdemonstrator presence. In terms of threat "tells" in advance of events, our analysis shows that events with at least 10,000 participants are much more likely to draw counter-demonstrator action, as indicated by the significant positive coefficient and supporting hypothesis 1A.

Table 1. Logistic Regression on Counterdemonstrator Presence

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Threat (at event)			
At Least 10,000 Participants	1.259***	1.464***	1.362***
	(0.288)	(0.283)	(0.292)
Threat (prior events)			
Total Movement Protests in Past Year	0.021***		0.018**
	(0.006)		(0.006)
Logged Total Participants at Movement Protests in Past Year	0.023 (0.042)		0.019 (0.043)
Percentage of Movement Protests Using Radical Tactics in Six Months	-0.540+ (0.302)		-1.152*** (0.341)
Total Movement Protests Furthering Radical Claims in Past Two Weeks	0.014 (0.044)		-0.037 (0.050)
Total Movement Protests with Private Target in Past Year	-0.010 (0.014)		-0.008 (0.015)
Weakness (at event)			
Number SMOs Involved	0.176***	0.191***	0.186***
	(0.048)	(0.046)	(0.049)
Weakness (prior events)			
Movement Protests with SMO Presence in Past Two Weeks	0.577** (0.204)		0.578** (0.210)
Percentage of Movement Protests with Front Page Coverage in Past Two Weeks	0.589* (0.243)		0.491*** (0.250)
Percentage of Movement Protests with Sub-ordinate Group Instigators in Past Year	-0.033** (0.010)		-0.031** (0.010)
State Repression			
Percentage of Movement Protests with Police Presence in Past Year		0.724+ (0.404)	1.095* (0.430)
Movement Protests with Arrests only in Past Month		0.206** (0.059)	0.295*** (0.068)
Movement Protests with Police Force/Violence only in Past Week		1.007 (0.643)	1.002 (0.654)
Movement Protests with Arrests and Police Violence in Past Year		-0.173 (0.845)	0.419 (0.828)
Controls			
Overall Protest Level in Past Month	-0.013 (0.010)	-0.026** (0.010)	-0.028** (0.010)
Overall Protest Level in Past Week	0.066** (0.022)	0.067** (0.021)	0.066** (0.021)
Right-Wing Protest	0.703** (0.218)	0.198 (0.196)	0.554* (0.229)
New York City	0.272 (0.208)	0.292 (0.202)	0.306 (0.212)
1965	0.732 (0.529)	1.599** (0.502)	1.148* (0.540)
1991	1.125* (0.555)	1.176* (0.555)	1.108* (0.564)
1992	1.252* (0.501)	1.465** (0.495)	1.297* (0.505)
Constant	-3.807*** (0.582)	-3.888*** (0.508)	-4.073*** (0.597)
N	3,454	3,454	3,454

Standard errors in parentheses; *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, + < 0.1

To allow this effect to be more substantively interpretable, we also calculate predicted probabilities for significant variables, as shown in table 2 on the next page. The first row of table 2 shows the predicted probability of counterdemonstrator presence if all dummy variables are off and all continuous variables are at their mean. Subsequent rows show the effect of changing only one variable while leaving other variables off (for dummies) or at the mean (for continuous variables). In terms of large protest events, the results suggest that moving from being a protest event with an average size to a much larger event where 10,000 participants or more are present moves the probability of counterdemonstrator presence from three percent to ten percent, more than a threefold increase in probability. However, the size of recent movement protest does not seem to matter, leading us to reject hypothesis 1B.

One of the more diffuse indicators of threat—the total number of movement protests in the last year—was influential in increasing the probability of counterdemonstration, confirming hypothesis 2. A one standard deviation change doubles the probability of counterdemonstrator presence to 6%, while a two standard deviation raises the probability to 12%. This suggests that movement with greater momentum, as gauged by the level of recent mobilization, may be seen by those opposing the movement as more threatening, therefore provoking efforts to stop the movement.

Contrary to hypothesis 3, we also see that the percentage of movement protests using radical tactics in the last six months decreases the odds of counterdemonstrator presence at a protest, although examining the predicted probabilities suggests this effect is relatively small. Even if every movement protest employed radical tactics in the last six months, the probability of counterdemonstration only decreases from three percent to two percent. Other diffuse indicators of threat were not significant (see table 1).

Our findings on weakness suggest that counterdemonstrators do not seem to be reacting to signals of weakness, at least not in the way theory would predict. In terms of event-specific "tells" to counterdemonstrators, the number of SMOs present was positively related to counterdemonstrator presence (see table 1). Weakness scholarship would expect that low levels of SMO-sponsorship would indicate weakness and increase the likelihood of counter-demonstration, producing a negative relationship between the number of SMOs present at an event and the likelihood of counterdemonstrator presence. However, the opposite was true: the more SMOs participating in an event, the more likely counterdemonstrators were to attend. This suggests two different dynamics might be at work: (1) counterdemonstrators might be more likely to hear about, and therefore be able to organize and mobilize for, events with more SMOs because those SMOs do a better job at advertising their event; and/or (2) counterdemonstrators feel a greater need to appear at events that seem stronger due to the presence of multiple supporting SMOs or greater levels of recent SMO-sponsorship.

However, the substantive impact of increasing the number of SMOs was relatively small (see table 2). In terms of probabilities, raising the number of SMOs present by one standard deviation from the mean only increases the probability of counterdemonstrator presence by 1 point, and increasing the number of SMOs present by two standard deviations only increases the probability by two points to seven percent. Thus, substantively it appears that event-specific threat measures are far more decisive in driving counterdemonstrator presence.

Recent protest histories that feature SMOs also increase the odds of counterdemonstrator presence, net of the number of SMOs at the current event (see table 1). The substantive effect on the predicted probability of counterdemonstrator presence is identical to that for the number of SMOs present at the current event. A one-standard-deviation increase from the mean in the number of SMOs at protests in the last week raises the probability of counterdemonstrator presence to four percent, and a two standard deviation increase raises it to five percent (just as with a one standard deviation increase in the number of SMOs at the event). Together, these findings lend credence to the idea that counterdemonstrators see SMOs as undergirding movements, thereby making them more threatening, and thus more in need of opposition.

Table 2. Predicted Probability of Counterdemonstrations by Protest Characteristics

Protest Characteristic	Probability of Counterdemonstration
Base Probability	3%
Threat (at event)	
More than 10,000 participants	10%
Threat (prior events)	
Movement protests in past year is 1 standard deviation above the mean (~71 protests)	6%
Movement protests in past year is 2 standard deviations above the mean (~110 protests)	12%
0% of movement protests in past 6 months employed radical tactics	4%
50% of movement protests in past 6 months employed radical tactics	3%
100% of movement protests in past 6 months employed radical tactics	2%
Weakness (at event)	
Number of SMOs involved is 1 standard deviation above the mean (~2 SMOs)	4%
Number of SMOs involved is 2 standard deviations above the mean (~3 SMOs)	4%
Weakness (prior events)	
Movement protests in past two weeks with SMOs is 1 standard deviation above mean (~4 protests)	4%
Movement protests in past two weeks with SMOs is 1 standard deviation above mean (~6 protests)	5%
0% of movement protests in past 2 weeks received front page coverage	3%
50% of movement protests in past 2 weeks received front page coverage	4%
100% of movement protests in past 2 weeks received front page coverage	6%
0% of movement protests in past year instigated by subordinate groups	3%
50% of movement protests in past year instigated by subordinate groups	3%
100% of movement protests in past year instigated by subordinate groups	3%
State Repression (prior events)	
0% of movement protests in past year had police presence	2%
50% of movement protests in past year had police presence	4%
100% of movement protests in past year had police presence	7%
0% of movement protests in past year resulted in arrest	3%
50% of movement protests in past year resulted in arrest	3%
100% of movement protests in past year resulted in arrest	3%
Controls	
Right-Wing Protest	5%
Overall protest level in past week 1 standard deviation above mean (~9 protests)	4%
Overall protest level in past week 2 standard deviations above mean (~13 protests)	4%
Event was in 1965	10%
Event was in 1991	9%
Event was in 1992	10%

Greater front-page coverage of movement protests in the last two weeks also increases the likelihood of counterdemonstrator presence, contrary to weakness theories. This finding lends greater credence to the idea that counterdemonstrators may be more likely to mobilize against movements that are seen as gaining momentum and publicity or may simply be more likely to be aware of well-publicized movements. If all movement protests in the past two weeks received front-page coverage, the probability of counterdemonstrator presence doubles from three percent to six percent.

The unexpected negative relationship between minority presence and counterdemonstrator presence is also contrary to weakness expectations. As table 1 shows, higher levels of minority participation actually suppress the likelihood of counterdemonstrators. Substantively, however, this suppression effect is negligible (table 2). One reading of this finding suggests that events with subordinate groups are seen as so unthreatening that they do not merit counterdemonstrator attention. If this were true, this finding says more about threat than it does about weakness.

Another interpretation comes from coupling this finding with a finding discussed below on the greater likelihood of counterdemonstrators at conservative events: perhaps minority protest participation is capturing some aspect of left-leaning or progressive protest. Future research will be needed to further understand the mechanism behind this effect given these competing alternatives.

Directly contrary to hypothesis 9, we find evidence for a positive relationship between recent state repression and counterdemonstration. This relationship is strongest when we examine recent police presence. If police were present at all movement protests in the last year, the probability of counterdemonstrator attendance jumps from five percent to twelve percent. This positive relationship between recent police presence and counterdemonstrator presence should, however, be interpreted with caution. Prior research has demonstrated that police are more likely to attend protests when counterdemonstrators are present (Davenport, Soule, and Armstrong 2011; Earl and Soule 2006), so it is possible that recent police presence is also capturing a greater level of recent counterdemonstrator presence at those movements' protests. Therefore, if counterdemonstrators are more likely to protest movements that others have recently counterdemonstrated, this could contribute to a positive statistical correlation between recent police presence and counterdemonstration at the event in question.

However, there is also evidence that recent arrests at movement protests or, more specifically, at movement protests in the past year, increase the chance of counterdemonstration, but the predicted probabilities suggest the substantive impact is quite small. Arrests with physical force or violence at recent movement protests also may increase counterdemonstration at a protest, but the effect is only marginally significant. Taken together, we can conclude that there is support for a positive relationship between recent state repression and subsequent counterdemonstration. Potential counterdemonstrators may be emboldened by the recent state repression of a movement, or they may feel like police will be more likely to tolerate their efforts to counter the movement. It is also possible that police serve a peacekeeping function, protecting the rights of both demonstrators and counterdemonstrators. However, since this is a lagged effect—prior state repression begets subsequent counterdemonstration—we regard the former interpretation of this effect as more likely.

Of the control variables, the most notable effect involves rightwing events. It appears that, contrary to the image of counterdemonstrators as conservative opponents to leftist movements common in the literature on movements and countermovements (e.g., Andrews 2002; Esacove 2004; McCright and Dunlap 2000), counterdemonstrators are much more likely to be leftist protesters opposing rightwing demonstrations. The size of the effect is also surprising: rightwing protests have almost doubled the probability of counterdemonstrator presence, with five percent counterdemonstration probability. This suggests that counterdemonstrators opposed almost one in ten rightwing protests but only about one in twenty leftwing protests. This finding demonstrates the value of a crossmovement, rather than movement-specific, analysis of counterdemonstrator mobilization. While case studies of specific movement-countermovement pairs have painted a picture of countermovements as generally conservative, our analyses suggest that once other factors that may provoke counterdemonstration are controlled for, it is more often leftists who mobilize to oppose conservative social movements' efforts. We also can see that the increase in the probability of counterdemonstration in 1965, 1991, and 1992 are all quite dramatic (all at least three times the base probability). It may be that during these years there were particularly active pairs of opposing movements—perhaps civil rights activists and segregationists in 1965, and pro-choice and pro-life protesters in the early 1990s—that drove these effects. Future research should explore these years in greater depth.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Although much is known about what drives state actors to repress demonstrators, only a few studies have tried to understand when private actors will attempt to oppose or thwart protesters and larger social movements by counterdemonstrating at their events. Given the likelihood that

clashes between opposing demonstrators lead to violence and police response, we argue that this research gap is even more important. In this article, we examined key questions about counterprotest: (1) how common is counterdemonstrating?; (2) can threat and/or weakness of events and opponents explain counterdemonstrator presence?; and (3) what is the relationship between police presence and action and counterdemonstrator presence? In addressing these questions, we drew on research about countermovements more broadly, translating this work into expectations about which events might be counterdemonstrated. We also drew on work about threat as a mobilizing factor and threat as a motivator for state repression.

We used the *Dynamics of Collective Action* dataset, which includes data on protest events reported on in the *New York Times* from 1960-1995, to address these questions and to test nine hypotheses. We show at a descriptive level that counterdemonstrator presence is relatively rare. Our logistic regressions show that counterdemonstrators, just like police, tend to respond strongly to cues of threat. As Davenport (2007) has argued, threat is the single most robust predictor of state-based repression, and our findings extend the importance of threat to counter-demonstrating.

More specifically, we found that size was very important for explaining counter-demonstrator presence: counterdemonstrators are far more likely to attend massive events than other events. We argue this is because counterdemonstrators are likely to be aware of those events in advance, and thus have the ability to plan and organize themselves; furthermore, these events are seen as most threatening, and therefore in most need of opposition. Relating this finding to work on police presence at events, large events are more likely to draw counter-demonstrators than are smaller events, just as they are more likely to draw police. This extends not just to threatening characteristics of the event itself, such as its size, but also the recent track record of the movement of which the specific event is a part. For example, protests by movements that have held a greater number of protests in the past year are also much more likely to be counterdemonstrated against. While many of the more diffuse indicators of the threat posed by a movement (such as making radical claims or using violence) had no effect on counterdemonstrators, the two threat variables that did have an effect—protest event size and the number of recent movement protests—are likely seen by counterdemonstrators as good proximate indicators of the mobilization strength of their opponents. Previous research has found that police respond to different types of threat (specifically, situational threats such as protester violence or confrontational tactics) whereas elites may respond to others (such as political threats posed by espousing radical goals or targeting the state, see Earl and Soule 2006). Bearing this in mind, it makes sense that counterdemonstrators may, like these other actors, be most responsive to specific indicators of momentum and strength as indicators of threat, and less responsive to more diffuse indicators that threaten elite interests more generally (e.g., making radical claims). Future research should examine whether recent changes in the threat posed by a protest, for example changes in the tactics, targets, or goals of a movement, or changes in the frequency or size of their protests, may even better predict counter-demonstrator mobilization than the recent level of these threats alone.

Research on the role of weakness in explaining police presence and action has been mixed at best, and the literature on movement-countermovement interactions does not entertain the possibility that weakness spurs countermobilization. Our results show conclusively that weak-ness does not positively predict counterdemonstration. Instead, we think many of these weak-ness indicators may be better thought of in the reverse—as indicators of strength—from the perspective of potential counterdemonstrators. When viewed in this light, findings are more consistent with expectations of threat explanations. For example, counterdemonstrators are more likely to show up to protests with SMO-sponsorship, and to protests by movements with recent SMO-sponsored protests. In both cases, this runs counter to expectations that would be drawn from weakness theories of repression—that a lack of SMO sponsorship would signal that a movement or protest event is easier to defeat and would therefore increase attempts to repress it (or in our case, attempts to counter it with protest). Another way to view this finding is that SMO-sponsored protests suggest mobilization strength and potential, leading counter-demonstrators to be more likely to mobilize when they perceive that the movement they oppose is gaining ground and momentum. Likewise, protests by movements that have received more

front-page coverage recently are more likely to provoke counterdemonstration. This could be easily viewed as a measure of an opponent's strength and momentum since more media coverage of a movement may amplify its message. Thus, instead of findings that suggest opportunism, we found that when groups appeared strong (e.g., by receiving more media coverage), counterprotest became more likely. We also found that minority protester presence substantially suppressed the odds of counterdemonstrator presence, contrary to weakness, casting further doubt on the applicability of weakness-based accounts.

In sum, we find that counterdemonstration is driven by parallel, if not identical, forces that guide policing and other forms of state repression of protests. While the type and specific cues of threat to which they are most responsive may differ, the underlying concept holds true that more threatening movements are more likely to provoke efforts by others to stop it, whether those actors are state or private actors. This lends greater credence to the argument made by some that repression of movements is not the exclusive domain of the state, but rather that repression comes in many forms and is perpetrated by various actors opposing a movement, including private actors (Earl 2003. 2004; Adams, Schriver, and Messer 2015). According to this framework, counterprotest is considered one form of private repression (Earl 2003, 2004).

Critics of this view may argue that counterdemonstrations are simply offering alternative views, not attempting to silence their opponents. However, alternative perspectives could be offered by holding simultaneous events elsewhere. The choice to engage in counterdemonstration against an opposing movement is, instead, a strategic attempt to publicly oppose and even potentially intimidate or harass opposing movement actors through interacting with their opponents.

This strategic approach becomes clear when we examine the *New York Times* articles in the DOCA data that describe counterprotester-protester dynamics. For example, a 1964 article describes a seven-night-long picket organized by the Congress for Racial Equality (CORE) outside of a real estate office that was discriminating against African Americans. Each night, hundreds of white counterdemonstrators showed up too, heckling the CORE protesters and throwing rocks at them. Years later, in 1990, a pro-life rally in Manhattan was completely drowned out and unable to continue after a larger group of pro-choice counterdemonstrators arrived, outshouting the original rally and leading to a clash in which protesters on both sides ripped signs out of each other's hands and verbally challenged one another. In these cases, and many others that we found in the DOCA data, counterdemonstrators are not simply voicing their own take on an issue, they are increasing the costs of protest, which some have considered the defining characteristic of repression (Tilly 1978).

Of course, not all counterdemonstrations are this confrontational or aim to suppress the original demonstration. However, their presence may still be intimidating to protesters. A crowd of white antagonists at a civil rights demonstration would certainly change the dynamics and the risks to the demonstrators, regardless of whether the counterdemonstrators used overt force or not. Indeed, where state repression is concerned, police presence is considered to be repressive in that it implies the possibility of force (and arrest). Of course, we recognize that counterdemonstrators do not enjoy the same monopoly of legitimate violence that the state does. Still, examples like those above abound, both in our data and in the contemporary news. Taken together with our findings that counterdemonstration is driven by the same factors as state repression, this suggests that we should widen our understanding of repression to take into account the ways that private actors, through counterdemonstration and other means, also raise the costs of protest in hopes of silencing or curtailing opponents.

Put differently, we argue that counterdemonstration can be understood as a form of private repression, analogous but not identical to state repression, since it both attempts to raise the costs of protests (which is at the core of the definition of repression) and is explained by the same primary factor—threat—used to explain a wide variety of state repression. If our interpretation is borne out by further research on counterdemonstrator goals, tactics, and decision making, this is an important advance in understanding counterdemonstrating for two reasons. First, it potentially identifies an important kind of private repression. Earl (2004) distinguishes between forms of private repression perpetuated by a variety of entities—not just businesses, but also countermovements, formal SMOs, and vigilante groups. Placing counterdemonstration

within that repertoire suggests it deserves study even though the vast majority of research on repression still focuses on overt state repression, overlooking the potential importance of private repression.

If we begin to think of counterdemonstration as a form of private repression, our findings can also be read as contributing to another important question originally suggested by Earl (2003): what is the relationship between different types of repression? We uncovered a positive, significant relationship between police and counterdemonstrator action, showing that counter-demonstrators are more likely to demonstrate against movements that have recently experienced greater police presence at their protests and against those that have recently held protests that resulted in arrests of demonstrators. When read through the lens of work on private and public repression, this finding provides some preliminary evidence that state repression may encourage subsequent private repression (i.e., a positive relationship between state and private repression). We encourage further work on these topics, as well as further research trying to understand the relationship between larger infrastructures for opposition represented by counter-movements and both counterdemonstrator presence and state-based repression.

In closing, we argue that while the growing literature on countermovements has greatly expanded our understanding of movement dynamics, it has largely focused on the overall emergence and trajectory of larger countermovements, without considering what factors may influence which specific events counterprotesters will attend. By combining research on threat from the mobilization literature and the repression literature, we validate the relevance of threat to counterprotesting, and show that while state weakness models may see the state as an opportunist, it would be more appropriate to focus on strength and threat when studying counterprotesters. That said, the strength and similarity of threat findings, and the relationship between counterprotesting and policing of movements suggests that counterprotesting may be understood as a mode of private repression, and in doing so, may help scholars to understand how different forms of repression work to reinforce (or undermine) one another. We hope that future research considers additional predictors of counterprotests, incorporates not just strategic but also cultural or other factors that may influence counterprotests at events, and further examines the relationship between counterprotest and the policing of protest.

APPENDIX

Table A1. Movements by Political Leaning for Control Variable Construction

Left	Right
Anti-Nuclear	Pro-Nuclear
Pro-Immigration	Anti-Immigration
Global Social Justice	Pro-globalization
Feminist	Anti-Feminist
Peace	Pro-War
Pro-International Human Rights	Anti-International Human Rights
Green/Environmental	Anti-Green/Environmental
Pro-Drugs	Anti-Drugs
Civil Liberties	Anti-Civil Liberties
Criminal Justice Reform	Anti-Crime
African American Civil Rights	Anti-African American Civil Rights
LGBTQ Rights	Anti-LGBTQ Rights
Native American Civil Rights	Anti-Native American Civil Rights
Latino Civil Rights	Anti-Latino Civil Rights
Disability Rights	Anti-Disability Rights
Other Civil Rights	Anti-Other CR
Pro-Choice	Pro-Life
Anti-White Supremacy	White Supremacy
Animal Rights	Anti-Animal Rights
Senior Rights	Anti-Senior Rights

NOTES

[1] Future research could also examine whether recent counterdemonstrator mobilization against a movement makes that movement more likely to come under state repression at subsequent protests, but that is beyond of the scope of this paper, which is focused strictly on explaining counterdemonstrator mobilization.

[2] This required aggregating protest claims into 40 distinct movements (see table A1 in the appendix). In most cases, these movements aligned with DOCA's "General Claims Codes" but were separated to take valence into account. However, the 1300 General Claim Code (Social) required categorization into other movements or the creation of new movement codes. Also, all 1800 series codes (Mexican-American Civil Rights) were combined with the 2000 series codes (Pan-Latino Civil Rights) to create one movement, Latino Civil Rights. Full coding of movements is available upon request.

[3] For this and other measures of recent movement activity and outcomes, we combined scores in cases where more than one movement was involved in a protest. For example, a protest furthering both feminist and peace claims would be assigned the sum of recent feminist protests and recent peace protests for the recent movement protests variable.

[4] For some protest events, this required imputing the exact number of participants using a categorical variable for the estimated number of participants (PARTICES) in cases when the exact number (PARTICEX) was not reported. The imputed value is equal to the mean number of participants reported for all protests falling into that category of the categorical variable, PARTICES.

[5] We recode the data using the original overly-general protest "form" and the overly-specific protest "act" variables to produce a more meaningful midlevel variable, resulting in nineteen different tactics. These tactics were then classified as radical or nonradical according to their disruptiveness. Tactics coded as radical are: civil disobedience, attacks, riots, strikes, conflicts, and meeting disruption.

[6] Claims coded as radical are: pro-affirmative action for women and minorities, pro-Equal Rights Amendment, pro-zero population growth, pro-legalization of illegal substances, pro-Black Pride, pro-same sex marriage, anti-political underrepresentation of gays and lesbians and racial minorities, pro-bilingual education, pro-compensation for WWII Internment of Japanese Americans, pro-Puerto Rican Nationalism, and pro-racial hate/white supremacy. The percentage of recent movement protests furthering a radical claim was also tried.

[7] We used 10,000 as a cut off because these events represented a size that would be hard to achieve without extensive organizing and publicity. Although relatively rare, as the events represent the top three percent of events in terms of size, they mark cases where "tells" to potential counterdemonstrators would be obvious. Inspection of the distribution of this variable shows no natural breaks below 10,000, making any choice a theoretically-driven choice.

[8] For this measure, we created a dummy for whether the story for an event appeared on the first page (every event is coded for the page it appeared on). The percentage of recent movement events with this dummy turned on is then used to gauge the perceived media protection afforded to the event in question.

[9] We also tried the total number of recent movement protests with SMO backing, but the percentage was the best measure (models used to determine this are available upon request). To calculate the percentage of recent movement events with SMO backing, we used the dummy variable for whether or not an SMO was named in the article about the protest.

[10] Just as with the measures already discussed, whether the percentage or total was used was determined by the results of preliminary models are available upon request.

[11] Measures of the recent protest level used were those with the time frames corresponding to the independent variable included in the model and which were shown to be significant in earlier modeling.

[12] Although the DOCA data does not include a coding for NYC or non-NYC event, we use the four variables containing city information to look for city, borough, and NYC neighborhood names. Of events that occurred in NY State, only 42 cases could not be conclusively categorized as inside or outside of NYC based on the coding of the city variable in the DOCA. For these 42 cases, we concluded that these should be assumed to have occurred in NYC because they were listed by the NYT as having occurred in "New York," and we know from other NYT articles that this was used to refer to New York City. We also tried dropping these 42 cases and assuming that all occurred outside of NYC, which had small, but not critical effects, on some results.

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