Diskussionsbeitrag

Anthony Ince

Entanglements of resistance and repression in the UK's 'far-right riots' of 2024

Verschränkungen von Widerstand und Repression während der ‚extrem rechten Riots' in Großbritannien 2024

This essay discusses the multiple dynamics of repression and its relationship with resistance in the UK's unrest in August 2024, which was principally led by far-right actors. The discussion identifies three mechanisms operating through these events: policing as repression of protesters; protest as repression of out-groups; and self-regulation as repression of in-groups. Events such as riots and disorder, I suggest, allow everyday repressive and resistant relations to become more clearly visible. In particular, it becomes apparent that repression can operate through multiple vectors simultaneously, both through vertical power relations and laterally among peers. Overall, repressive dynamics highlighted by spectacular actions such as riots are not ruptures from the everyday but amplifications of it, as part of a much larger arc of social action and political conflict. Resistance cannot be understood as the opposite of repression, especially in the context of far-right movements, for whom repressing the actions and capacities of marginalised groups and political opponents is central to their political programme; instead, resistance is entwined with and through repression both as discourse and practice. Understanding these entanglements could help scholars and activists to respond better to the complex realities of far-right social movements.

Keywords: far-right; repression; riots; United Kingdom.

In diesem Aufsatz werden die vielfältigen Dynamiken der Repression und ihre Beziehung zu Widerstand am Beispiel der Unruhen in Großbritannien im August 2024 erörtert. Die Riots wurden vor allem von rechtsextremen Akteuren angeführt. Es werden drei Mechanismen herausgearbeitet, die bei diesen Ereignissen zum Tragen kamen: polizeiliche Maßnahmen als Unterdrückung von Demonstrierenden, Protest als Unterdrückung von Out-Groups und Selbstregulierung von In-Groups. Insbesondere wird deutlich, dass Repression sowohl durch vertikale als auch horizontale Machtbeziehungen wirken kann. Insgesamt sind die repressiven Dynamiken, die durch spektakuläre Aktionen wie Krawalle hervorgehoben werden, keine Brüche mit dem Alltäglichen. Sie verstärken bestehende Segmente sozialer Aktionen und politischer Konflikte. Widerstand kann nicht als das Gegenteil von Repression verstanden werden, vor allem nicht im Kontext extrem rechter Bewegungen, für die die

Unterdrückung der Handlungen und Fähigkeiten von Randgruppen und politischen Gegner:innen ein zentraler Aspekt ihres politischen Programms ist. Stattdessen ist ihr Widerstand diskursiv und praktisch mit Repression eng verwoben. Ein Verständnis dieser Verflechtungen kann Wissenschaftler:innen und Aktivist:innen helfen, besser auf die komplexen Realitäten rechtsextremer und migrationsfeindlicher sozialer Bewegungen zu reagieren.

Schlüsselwörter: Extreme Rechte; Repression; Riots; United Kingdom.

2011 and 2024: history repeats itself?

> *"This is criminality, pure and simple."* – UK Prime Minister David Cameron on the 2011 riots, 9th August 2011.

> *"It's not protest. It's not legitimate. It's crime and violent disorder."* – UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer on the 2024 riots, 1st August 2024.

A primary function of the state is to maintain its monopoly of violence, fundamentally a practice of institutional self-preservation. Thirteen years apart, two British Prime Ministers alluded to this same principle amidst widespread disorder early in their respective governments. The contexts and triggers were very different, but the same repressive machinery was swiftly mobilised and punishments meted out to re-establish the state's order. In 2011, when multiple cities erupted in rioting after police shot and killed a young black man in London, Keir Starmer was Director of Public Prosecutions, responsible for implementing non-stop, 24-hour rolling courts that oversaw the processing and sentencing of over 3,000 arrestees, one of the largest mass legal processes in modern British history. In 2024, when the killing of three young children in Southport was followed by widespread anti-immigrant rioting, Starmer was the head of government.

On 29th July 2024, in the town of Southport, a lone attacker undertook a mass stabbing at a children's dance event, in which three young girls died. Amidst public grief and shock, rumours circulated online about the identity of the attacker, falsely claiming that they were a Muslim asylum seeker. This misinformation was distributed across social media, with global far-right and 'manosphere' influencers such as Tommy Robinson (real name: Stephen Yaxley-Lennon), Andrew Tate, and Elon Musk amplifying the message to their followers (Pearson 2024). In the days that followed, after violent clashes at a demonstration in Southport on 30th July, at least 40 separate demonstrations took place across the UK. Many of these demonstrations turned violent. Far-right activists travelled long distances to organise the demonstrations, but most arrestees were local to the areas where rioting occurred (Duncan et al., 2024)[1]. Thus, I use the term 'riots' loosely in this text, since most of the

---

1 Arrest records do not necessarily constitute a representative sample of overall participants. However, in instances when large numbers of participants are arrested, data such as age and home address can help scholars to get an imperfect sense of who was involved in

largest demonstrations led to large-scale violent disorder, but multiple forms of action took place – including peaceful demonstrations, riots, and pogroms.

While some arrests and legal proceedings are still ongoing at the time of writing, police reported that by 30th August, a total of 1,280 arrests and 796 charges had been made (Downs 2024). By 7th August, demonstrations had faded due to a range of factors, including major anti-fascist counter-mobilisations, public and media criticism of the violence, and the weight of the criminal justice system bearing down on participants. The conclusion to these riots appeared to demonstrate the repressive apparatus of the state against resistive subjects, and in some regards it was. Equally, this is only one way in which we can use these riots to think about repression and resistance. In this essay I will discuss three distinct but intersecting forms of repression to understand these riots in particular, and far-right movements more generally: resistance as a repressive act, repression by the state, and repression of the self and peers. These themes do not constitute a model or typology – for example, it could not be applied neatly to their anti-fascist opponents – but they are key dynamics of how repression and resistance manifest within the far right.

Political repression is the use of violent or restrictive means to "reduce or eliminate a threat" to a political order (Franklin 2020: 98), and this is precisely what the British state undertook following the riots in both 2011 and 2024. Equally, studying the 2024 riots shows that repression also operates across multiple vectors, including laterally among different segments of the citizenry, especially in far-right mobilisations. The *'event'* of riots provides an entry point into these wider social processes, because although they are often seen as an extraordinary outburst they are in fact a "magnification of the ordinary" (Till 2013: 71). The experience of "being surprised" (Cloke et al. 2017: 70) by unexpected events like riots has the potential to reshape and disrupt political landscapes, but they are also underpinned by longer-term processes and structurally embedded relations of power (Ince et al. 2023).

Resistance as repression

The riots of 2024 followed years of stigmatisation of migrants, led by hardline right-wing activists and politicians. Most notoriously, the construction of a 'hostile environment' by the Conservative government was a policy decision to reduce so-called pull factors for (non-elite) migrants considering the UK as a destination, deliberately creating an atmosphere of obstruction and denigration toward migrants, groups labelled as ethnic minorities, and non-citizens. Moreover, anti-immigrant sentiments that dominated the Brexit referendum and subsequent withdrawal of the UK from the European Union were still very present at the time of the riots, and their effects on political discourse in the UK have been profound. In particular, the crossings of un-

the most serious actions.

documented migrants in small boats from France has embodied this political moment, cementing a siege mentality among the political right and large fractions of the centre. In 2023 there had already been unrest in several towns and cities concerning the government's use of hotels and decommissioned military barracks as temporary housing for asylum seekers (Santamarina and Ince forthcoming). These solidified and strengthened far-right networks, and increased their reach.

With this backdrop of longstanding and growing demonisation of migrants, increasingly confrontational street actions were, perhaps, inevitable. The 2024 rioters deployed various practices that materialised a racialised distinction between 'us' and 'them'. Significantly, in several cities, protesters targeted infrastructures of immigration and asylum (White 2024). For example, in Rotherham and Tamworth, in what can arguably be called pogroms, hotels repurposed as asylum seeker residences were attacked while residents were inside. In both cases, attempts were made to set fire to the buildings. In Bristol, an attempted attack on another hotel was repelled by anti-fascists in the absence of police intervention. Buildings and events related to Muslim communities were also targeted, such as several mosques. Some rioters also attacked and abused individuals who fit the racialised profile of the 'enemy' (White 2024): in Hull and Middlesborough, for example, cars were stopped and South Asian drivers attacked. In Birmingham and Bristol, demonstrators attacked lone black men, and in Sunderland Filipino nurses were pelted with stones.

While some violence was seemingly random, especially opportunist looting of shops, the targeting of specific buildings and individuals reflected what Gardenier (2022) calls "far-right vigilantism". Following the stabbing in Southport, what appeared to some onlookers as a failure of the state to protect white children, combined with misinformation about the identity of the attacker being allegedly a Muslim asylum seeker, meant that participants took the repressive function of state power into their own hands to create an atmosphere of fear and passivity among Muslim, non-white, and migrant groups. This self-appointed policing of public space is part of a longstanding tradition of far-right and fascist activism (e.g. Atkinson 1998).

What to protesters and some sections of the public was resistance to the status quo found its expression through vigilante repression, undertaken by certain groups of citizens on groups deemed 'other' or 'alien'. In part, then, the riots became an effort to put them 'in their place': quiet, submissive, and at the lowest possible rank in the social order. Nonetheless, although leading far-right individuals and groups called for protests, and later justified their violence, they did not (explicitly) demand or orchestrate vigilante attacks and pogroms. This was therefore not a state-like organised strategy of repression, but an often-impulsive assemblage of individual and collective actions – some planned, some undertaken in the moment – that included strongly repressive intentions and effects, and that revelled in their temporary control of public space.

State repression

Over the last 25 years, legislation around so-called 'anti-social behaviour' has become a mainstay of UK policing and policy. Successive governments of different political persuasions have attempted to control and sanitise public spaces, with the effect of criminalising young people, the working class, and minorities, by selectively regulating and enforcing 'appropriate' behaviours (Brown 2020). This racial and class profiling has stigmatised working-class communities of all backgrounds. Pejorative terms such as 'chav' and 'thug' have been deployed extensively by political and media elites to vilify and subdue the voices of working-class white populations in particular (Tyler 2008), while extended police powers to 'stop and search' individuals without evidence has disproportionately affected Black and Asian youth (CRED 2021). One effect of this has been to justify the persistence of "places that don't matter" (Rodriguez-Pose 2020) and the culpability of their residents for society's ills (Le Grand 2015). Another effect has been to racialise the working class as a specifically *white* underclass; an excess and unredeemable population supposedly tainted by the vices of 'black culture' (Tyler 2008; Mondon/Winter, 2019).

Fifteen years of severe fiscal austerity has disproportionately affected low-income groups, generating an atmosphere of scarcity and competition for dwindling resources. This competitiveness has increasingly been articulated as one between British citizens and migrants, allowing successive governments to 'divide and rule' according to markers of difference, especially ethnicity, citizenship status, and cultural differences (Winter 2024). Nominally linked to fiscal austerity, but rarely achieving noticeable savings, nativist policies since at least 2010 have deliberately fuelled popular discontent about the 'burden' of immigration on UK taxpayers (e.g. Shahvisi 2019; Crowley 2020). One community development worker in a working-class area of Bristol indicated that for at least some rioters "I don't think it's immigration itself, it's the conditions we're living under. They're looking for someone to blame" for the material decline and cultural stigma they have experienced (author's interview 2024).[2] Indeed, the age profile of arrestees indicates that many were teenagers or young adults – often called austerity's 'lost generation' – when austerity began (Duncan et al. 2024). These riots can therefore partly be understood as an expression of powerlessness against economic, legal, and cultural structures of repression placed upon working-class people (of all backgrounds).

Policing and public order laws have also created significant structural barriers to resistive political expression. Increasingly stringent legislation limiting freedom of expression in 2022 and 2023 was originally designed to counter-

---

2 This quote is taken from fieldwork funded by British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship MFSS24\240117, during which this essay was written.

act environmental and anti-racist demonstrations but created powerful tools for repression of protest in general. For example, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act (2002) allowed police greater powers to restrict the size, nature, and route of protests, and significantly loosened the definition of "disruption" to allow governments to unilaterally reinterpret the law as they see fit (Liberty n.d.). Following the riots, the government also promised further restrictions on what constitutes legitimate protest (Brock et al. 2024). Alongside established state surveillance methods, the policing response to the riots used private sources, such as CCTV-enabled doorbells and social media, to identify suspects (Tapper/Das 2024), representing a growing privatisation of security infrastructure.

Amidst this tightening of repressive apparatus, a key far-right discourse during and following the riots concerned "two-tier policing", alleging that police treatment of right-wing activists – and white people generally – was more severe than for left-wing and non-white groups. This resonated with broader right-wing criticisms of state institutions for complying with so-called 'woke' agendas related to gender, racial, and other equalities (Brown 2024). Senior police quickly sought to emphasise their neutrality; however, data indicate that there is indeed inequality in policing practice, but this disproportionately affects non-white populations (CRED 2021) and left-wing and environmental groups (Brock et al. 2024). Nonetheless, right-wing claims of two-tier policing formed a bridge to wider emotional resonances on the far-right that position them as victims. By positioning Europeans, whites, and especially men, as victims of egalitarian agendas within the nation and invasive others from outside it – processes that remove them from their position at the apex of social hierarchies – the far-right offers them agency, self-esteem, a route to national and personal rebirth (e.g. Marcks/Pawelz 2022). Discourses of two-tier policing reinforce this victimhood, vigilantism offers hope for overcoming it.

Self-regulation as repression

Repression is not only the exertion of force to limit the agency of external others but also can act on one's own, or in-group, behaviour. Much like the wider far-right, the 2024 riots were overwhelmingly male: early evidence indicated that 92.5 % of people arrested were men (Duncan et al. 2024). Although this figure is similar to the politically very different riots of 2011 (Lewis et al. 2012), scholars emphasise the significance placed upon distinct, binary gender roles in far-right political imaginaries (e.g. Miller-Idriss and Pilkington 2019). During and following the 2024 riots, online far-right and manosphere influencers reminded participants of what masculinity 'ought to be', demanding that participants develop the physical and mental readiness for escalation of violence in future. For example, Tommy Robinson stated that this required a "dedicated, fit, healthy, ready, British resistance" (Pearson

2024). Moreover, the unusually large numbers of middle-aged men arrested (Duncan et al. 2024) indicates that although social media influencers such as Andrew Tate speak powerfully to younger men's insecurities, older men also have distinct grievances that are not adequately being addressed in media, policy, or social life (Wilford 2024).

Within this multi-generational, hypermasculine convergence, many of the protests had football hooligan involvement. Many had previously networked nationally through the English Defence League (EDL) (2009-c. 2015) and/ or the Football Lads Alliance (2017-2019) – both of which presented themselves as 'anti-extremist' but were largely led and populated by the far-right, especially the EDL. These networks re-activated to mobilise significant numbers in 2024. Football offers men an important space to form community and express emotions without challenging heteronormative masculinities; this habitus can manifest in a way that aligns with far-right narratives of masculinity as physical, competitive, virile, and associated with territorial control of public (or quasi-public) spaces such as stadia, pubs, streets – and ultimately nations.

Thus, far-right masculinities not only seek to repress women's activities, bodies, and lifestyles, but also men's. The homosocial tendency of the rioters to act in ways that are both externally and internally directed (Pearson 2024) indicates how outward expressions of resistance can fold inward to repress behaviours that do not conform with normative standards. Regulating in-group behaviours is not exclusive to the far-right, but its gendered dimension is especially significant for them because men's physical and mental discipline has always been ideologically foundational to the fascist political tradition (e.g. Bellassai 2005). Redeeming a 'fallen' Western masculinity through the strict formation and regulation of a warrior self has been a mainstay of far-right politics, and vigilante action to reassert white male dominance of traditionally white male spaces is central to expressing this idealised masculinity.

Conclusions: looking up, but punching down

Using the UK's 2024 riots to interrogate repression and resistance highlights significant dynamics that are easily overlooked when considering the far right. Long-term vilification of working-class populations, disinvestment in communities and public services, and the racialisation of the white working class, served to repress the autonomous agency of communities through stigma, criminalisation, securitisation of public space, and increasingly draconian policing powers. Simultaneously, and partly in response to this state repression, the emergent far-right over this period has pursued street activism and policy agendas, nominally under the monicker of resistance to the liberal state, with the intention of repressing 'others' to maintain strict social hierarchies. This vigilantism is underpinned and embedded intergenerationally by

self-repression of in-group masculinities that are perceived as under threat from the liberal order. Events such as riots capture these multiple threads by exposing everyday dynamics and relations that are not normally easy to see.

Scholars and activists should be aware that, for many participants in the riots and their wider social circles, state repression is real and their efforts to resist it are genuine, even if those efforts are severely misplaced and further attack already marginalised groups. Anti-fascists experience much the same – arguably more – repression from the state, but this repression usually comes about due to resisting the far-right in ways that often circumvent or challenge state authority. Strengthening the state's repressive powers fails to address underlying structural inequities, can drive potential recruits towards the far right, and end up being used on the targets of far-right attention (e.g. migrants, anti-fascists). Conversely, an important step towards undermining the far right's appeal is understanding how they use narratives of resistance to uphold and deepen inequalities and repressive conditions, and when, where, and how these sentiments resonate with wider audiences. The 2024 riots do not provide definitive answers, but they offer an entry point for further investigation.

Bibliography

Atkinson, David (1998): Totalitarianism and the Street in Fascist Rome, in: Fyfe, N.R. (ed.): Images of the Street: Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space, Abingdon, 13-30.

Bellassai, Sandro (2005): The masculine mystique: Antimodernism and Virility in Fascist Italy, in: Journal of Modern Italian Studies 10(3), 314-335.

Brock, Andrea/Huff, Amber/Huff, Patrick (2024): Why We Don't Need More Policing – Even after the Riots, in: The Conversation, https://theconversation.com/why-we-dont-need-more-policing-even-after-the-riots-236710 [Accessed 4 December 2024].

Brown, Faye (2024): UK Riots: What Does 'Two-tier' Policing Mean – and Does it Exist?, in: Sky News. 6 August, https://news.sky.com/story/uk-riots-what-does-two-tier-policing-mean-and-does-it-exist-13191977 [Accessed 22 November 2024].

Brown, Kevin (2020): The Banishment of the Poor from Public Space: Promoting and Contesting Neo-liberalisation at the Municipal Level, in: Social and Legal Studies 29(4), 574-595.

Cloke, Paul/Dickinson, Simon/Tupper, Sarah (2017): The Christchurch Earthquakes 2010, 2011: Geographies of an Event, in: New Zealand Geographer 73(2), 69-80.

Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021): Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities: The Report, London.

Crowley, Ned (2020): Austerity and Ethno-nationalism: The Politics of Scarcity in Right-wing Populism, in: Ron, Amit/Nadesan, Majia (eds.): Mapping Populism: Approaches and Methods, London, 134-145.

Duncan, Pamela/Aguilar García, Carmen/Goodier, Michael/Lee, Olivia/Clark, Alex (2024): Local. Left Behind: Prey to Populist Politics? What the Data Tells us about the 2024 UK Rioters, in: The Guardian. 25 September, https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/sep/25/local-left-behind-prey-to-populist-politics-data-2024-uk-rioters [Accessed 27 September 2024].

Downs, William (2024): Policing Response to the 2024 Summer Riots, London.

Ince, Anthony/Borén, Thomas/Lindell, Ilda (2023): After Riots: Toward a Research Agenda on the Long-term Effects of Urban Unrest, in: Journal of Urban Research 45(1), 84-101.

Lewis, Paul/Newburn, Tim/Taylor, Matthew/Mcgillivray, Catriona, et al. (2012): Reading the Riots: Investigating England's Summer of Disorder, London.

Liberty (n.d.): How Does the New Policing Act Affect my Protest Rights?, https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/advice_information/pcsc-policing-act-protest-rights/[Accessed 6 January 2025].

Marcks, Holger/Pawelz, Janina (2022): From Myths of Victimhood to Fantasies of Violence: How Far-right Narratives of Imperilment Work, in: Terrorism and Political Violence 34(7), 1415-1432.

Miller-Idriss, Cynthia/Pilkington, Hilary (eds.) (2019): Gender and the Radical and Extreme Right: Mechanisms of Transmission and the Role of Educational Interventions, London.

Mondon, Aurelien/Winter, Aaron (2019): Whiteness, Populism and the Racialisation of the Working Class in the United Kingdom and United States, in: Identities 26(5), 510-528.

Pearson, Elizabeth (2024): The Hypermasculine Far Right: How White Nationalists Tell Themselves They Are 'Protecting' Women and Children when They Riot, in: The Conversation, https://theconversation.com/the-hypermasculine-far-right-how-white-nationalists-tell-themselves-they-are-protecting-women-and-children-when-they-riot-236250 [Accessed 10 December 2024].

Rodriguez-Pose, Andrés (2020): The Rise of Populism and the Revenge of the Places that Don't Matter, in: LSE Public Policy Review 1(1), 1-9.

Santamarina, Ana/Ince, Anthony (forthcoming): Urban Neighbourhoods and Far-right Spatial Strategies: Displacement, Infrastructure, and Civic Life, in: Dialogues in Urban Research.

Shahvisi, Arianne (2019): Austerity or Xenophobia? The Causes and Costs of the 'Hostile Environment' in the NHS', in: Health Care Analysis 27, 202-219.

Tapper, James/Das, Shanti (2024): Video Doorbells, CCTV, Facial Recognition: How the Police Tracked UK Rioters, in: The Guardian. 10 August, https://www.theguardian.com/politics/article/2024/aug/10/video-doorbells-cctv-facial-recognition-even-masked-rioters-could-end-up-in-court [Accessed 6 December 2024].

Till, Jeremy (2013): The Broken Middle: The Space of the London Riots, in: Cities 34(1), 71-74.

Tyler, Imogen (2008): '"CHAV MUM CHAV SCUM": Class Disgust in Contemporary Britain', in: Feminist Media Studies 8(1), 17-34.

White, Nadine (2024): Street Beatings, Stabbing and Mosques under Siege: The Horrifying Racist Attacks Carried out by Far-right Mobs, in: The Independent. 5 August, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/riots-uk-muslim-asians-rotherham-manvers-hotel-b2591159.html [Accessed 5 December 2024]

Wilford, Sarah Helen (2024): Middle-aged Radicalisation: Why Are so many of Britain's Rioters in their 40s and 50s?, in: The Conversation, https://theconversation.com/middle-aged-radicalisation-why-are-so-many-of-britains-rioters-in-their-40s-and-50s-236263 [Accessed 7 December 2024].

Winter, Aaron (2024): Riots, Racism and the Left', in: Jewish Socialist 80, https://www.jewishsocialist.org.uk/features/item/riots-racism-and-the-left [Accessed 28 November 2024].

Anthony Ince, School of Geography and Planning, Cardiff University, Glamorgan Building, Edward VII Avenue, Cardiff, UK, CF10 3WA. E-Mail: incea@cardiff.ac.uk

Philipp Knopp, Simon Teune, Roman Thurn & Lena Harms (unter Mitarbeit von Jan Spatzl)

Policing der Klimabewegung

Methodische Potenziale der Protestereignisanalyse zur Untersuchung von ‚Repression'

Policing the climate movement. Potentials of protest event analyses for research on 'repression'

Die Forschung zu sozialen Bewegungen widmet sich seit einiger Zeit verstärkt dem dynamischen Verhältnis von Protest und Polizei. Dabei versucht sie einerseits übergreifende Muster des Protest Policing herauszuarbeiten. Andererseits wurden detailreiche Studien zu einzelnen Großereignissen durchgeführt. Hinzu kommen zeitdiagnostische Arbeiten, die ihren Fokus auf globale Wandlungsprozesse legen. Die Untersuchung von Veränderungen im Zeitverlauf bringt aber methodische Herausforderungen mit sich, wenn Globalhypothesen auf der Grundlage belastbarer Daten geprüft werden sollen. Dieser Werkstattbericht diskutiert am Beispiel eines aktuellen Forschungsprojekts zu den Handlungsräumen der deutschen Klimabewegung, inwiefern die quantitative Inhaltsanalyse von Medienberichten als methodische Option in Frage kommt, um das Verhältnis von Protest und Polizei über längere Zeiträume hinweg zu untersuchen. In der Studie wird auf das erprobte Verfahren der Protestereignisanalyse zurückgegriffen und diese für das Themenfeld Sicherheit, Kriminalisierung und Repression adaptiert. Der Beitrag diskutiert Herausforderungen bei der Analyse von Polizeihandeln wie die Phänomendefinition, die Medienselektivität und die Interpretativität der Datenanalyse.

Schlüsselwörter: Klimabewegung; Protest Policing; Protestereignisanalyse; Quantitative Inhaltsanalyse; Medien

For some time now, research into social movements has increasingly focused on the dynamic relationship between protest and the police. On the one hand, it attempts to identify overarching patterns of protest policing. On the other hand, detailed studies have been carried out on major events. In addition to this, there are also time-diagnostic studies that focus on global processes of change. However, the investigation of changes over time poses methodological challenges if global hypotheses are to be tested on the basis of reliable data. This article uses the example of a current research project on the spaces of action of the German climate movement to discuss the extent to which quantitative content analysis of media reports can be used as a methodological option to investigate the relationship between protest and police over longer periods of time. The study draws on the tried-and-tested method of protest event analysis and adapts it to the topic of security, criminalization and repression. The article discusses challenges in the analysis of policing such as the definition of phenomena and media selectivity in data interpretation.

Keywords: climate movement; protest policing; protest event analysis; quantitative content analysis; media