

Political Repression – October 2022

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Month/Year	October 2022
Key term	“Political repression” and political repression
Database	Google Scholar
Link to database	https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17p2fFHcyHQ0-hhlzNb2ZV-nzAUPxBPYs1fXsVC1IRY/edit?usp=sharing

There were 95 articles published under the keyword political repression and “political repression” in October 2022 that include theoretical and empirical papers, and case studies. The topic of political repressions is often discussed specifically in the context of particular states or countries (e.g., Abou El Zalaf, 2022; Arias & Duica-Amaya, 2022; Bazoobandi, 2022). Case study is the most frequent approach applied to study political repression in the October 2022 papers, which allows scholars to intensively consider different political structures and political issues. Therefore, the approach helps to deepen the understanding of the political stands of targeted authoritarian governments and to move forward the evidence-based understanding of the determinants of political repression, as well as the factors that motivate people to fight against them (Blaive, 2022; Buyantueva, 2022; Dal & Nisbet, 2022). Of the qualitative papers, in-depth interviews are the most common data collection strategy, where the findings were interpreted through the relevant theories (Lutscher & Ketchley, 2022; Thompson & Cheng, 2022). In this sense, the findings are difficult to be generalised since the data considered are deliberately restricted by geographical boundaries.

Selected themes

Of the many issues covered in the papers published for this topic, digital repression is a focus receiving high attention from scholars (Lutscher & Ketchley, 2022; Michaelsen & Thumfart, 2022; Ng, 2022; Suhr-Sytsma, 2022). Following activists' digital resistance, authoritarian governments have sought to limit activists' activities on social media, as well as to increase surveillance and cyber-attack against pro-democracy activists (e.g., Siregar et al., 2022). In addition to studying repression in social media, scholars have studied authorities' soft control of journalism (e.g., Isaac et al., 2022): the attempt to induce journalists to self-censor by ambiguous and threatening legislation or coercive practices.

A second major theme of scholars' research, after studying authoritarian tactics to control the internet, is studying the coping mechanisms that activists use in dealing with repressive media controls, and how they adjust to the restrictions (Ng, 2022). Many resistance groups have transformed into "invisible" or small-scale movements, and coordinated their resistance from other countries (O'Brien, 2014; O'Brien, 2022). This situation brings scholars of political repression to consider the role of trans-national cooperation, both for the authoritarian governments and for the resistance groups.

Much of the October 2022 political repression research focuses on recent situations, but a third line of research that is also evident uses historical analyses to connect the past and the present. Historical studies were used to map the wars amongst countries to understand the recent socio-political sentiments (Gewirtz, 2022), and to understand the common strategies applied by authoritarian regimes (e.g., mobilizing fear). In addition, another theme of empirical analyses of political repression considers the recent COVID-19 pandemic situation, especially how the pandemic is used by governments to increase their control over the people.

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