and early 2000s, it was easier for nonprofits to adopt such technology without outside support and the Circuit Riders simply became obsolete. As these two examples illustrate, one might conceivably construct a narrative of the same events based solely on market and institutional forces. McInerney’s interpretation would have been even more convincing had he elaborated on why values, and more specifically the clash between competing values, are essential to the process and why such an alternate, valueless, narrative is incorrect.

Overall, From Social Movement to Moral Market is a richly descriptive and engaging account of the Circuit Riders movement and the development of a new market for nonprofit technology assistance during the late 20th and early 21st century. Empirically and theoretically, McInerney contributes to the economic sociology literature on market embeddedness and the morality of markets. This work is likely to be of broad appeal to scholars interested in social movements, hybrid organizations, market embeddedness, and institutional entrepreneurship. Additionally, organizational ethnographers of all stripes are likely to be interested in McInerney’s extensive fieldwork as well as his analytical focus on micro- and mesolevel behaviors and constructs.


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In How Social Movements Die, Christian Davenport takes on an important but relatively understudied question: What factors lead social movement organizations (SMOs) to demobilize? He argues that we know little about the broader set of forces that might lead to demobilization as most work on demobilization focuses exclusively on the effects of repression. Although he does attend to repression in detail, Davenport develops a more comprehensive approach across the first three chapters, casting demobilization as the result of internal pressures, external pressures (including, but not limited to, repression), and the interaction of the two. The rest of the book is spent assiduously examining the life course of the Republic of New Africa (RNA) using detailed data drawn from an archive assembled by the author’s Radical Information Project.

Before going further, it is important to step back and consider the dimensions of the question that Davenport takes on. His question is not the standard organizational ecology question of when SMOs die (the RNA technically still exists) but rather a broader question about when an SMO becomes a shadow of itself, having shed members and substantially reduced its activity level (which may or may not involve its official end). More technically, Davenport identifies demobilization through four shifts: (1) a significant
change in the organization as an institution (this is closest to an organizational ecologist’s organizational death); (2) significant losses in membership; (3) substantial diminishment of activities; and/or (4) critical shifts in goals, ideology, and so on. For instance, by the time Davenport sees the RNA demobilizing, it has split into competing factions, lost most of its members and divided those that remained across different camps, virtually stopped all activity, and, depending on the camp, substantially revised its goals and vision.

In chapter 1, Davenport breaks down pressures toward demobilization, beginning with a handful of internal pressures. Some of these pressures work by starving an SMO of personnel, such as when SMOs struggle to recruit new members (“membership loss”) or lose existing members owing to burnout or a flagging commitment to the SMO. Other processes fracture a group, such as factionalization and polarization. Alternatively, an SMO can be too rigid, failing to adapt to changing circumstances.

Davenport identifies three external demobilization pressures. First, “resource deprivation” occurs when an SMO struggles to fund itself and its efforts, which turned out to be a significant and ongoing pressure on the RNA. “Problem depletion” can occur for several reasons, including the development of more moderate organizations or alternative solutions that provide potentially satisficing options, or a declining evaluation of the importance of the problem more generally. Finally, state repression can lead to demobilization, although Davenport argues that SMOs can do two things to blunt its impact: SMOs must help participants anticipate and prepare for repression (a process he calls “reappraisal”), and SMOs must build and maintain trust with members. When SMOs fail to prepare members for repression, either because the state uses more force than expected (a tactic he calls “overwhelming”) or uses different types of repression than expected (a tactic he calls “outwitting”), trust declines and the SMO becomes more likely to demobilize. Distrust may also result from other factors such as covert repression or from pressures independent of repression, such as an SMO’s inability to make progress on lofty goals.

Chapter 2 focuses on the ways in which these internal and external pressures may interact, arguing that they may feed on one another. For instance, resource depletion (an external pressure) coupled with burnout and loss of organizational commitment (two internal pressures) led a large number of RNA members to leave the organization over time. Likewise, unexpected levels and types of repression made it difficult for the RNA to maintain trust, especially when trust was already compromised from having overextended goals that the SMO could not meet.

Chapter 3 introduces the reader to the context in which the RNA emerged, and chapter 4 reviews the exquisitely detailed data Davenport uses to examine the RNA, including local, state, and federal police materials (e.g., surveillance reports, arrest reports, legal documents), internal RNA documents (e.g., meeting minutes, timelines of activities), externally facing literature on the RNA (e.g., leaflets), and media reports. The data he assembled
are truly breathtaking, but, he argues, absolutely necessary for tracking all four elements of demobilization and their varied causes.

The rest of the book is a painstakingly detailed accounting of five moments in the RNA’s lifecourse in which different pressures are working toward demobilization. Beginning with the founding of the organization, Davenport lays bare several Achilles heels present from the RNA’s inception. He then chronicles its shift in focus and activity toward mobilization in Brooklyn, which featured a significant number of internal pressures toward demobilization. His third period focuses on the effect of a confrontation with police and subsequent arrests and the interaction of this repression with other internal and external pressures toward demobilization. The fourth period focuses on subsequent factionalization in the RNA, and the last period traces out the impacts of a police raid on the RNA in Mississippi. The overwhelming view across these five periods is that internal and external pressures, and their interaction, were critical to demobilization.

There is a great deal to admire about this book—from its astonishingly rich data and thorough analysis to its clear theorizing about an important and nettlesome issue in the study of repression (What are the consequences of repression?) to its call for research on demobilization. At some moments, though, one does feel that there is existing work that Davenport could better leverage to advance his cause even further (e.g., drawing more heavily on the limited but growing body of work on participant disengagement). But this nagging feeling does little to diminish the overall contributions of the book, which are significant. Certainly, for scholars interested in the impacts of repression, this is a must read.


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Whereas the economic importance of culture enjoys considerable attention in the urban literature, the “cultural turn” is emerging in urban political studies in an uneven fashion. *Can Tocqueville Karaoke? Global Contrast of Citizen Participation, the Arts and Development* is a welcome contribution, providing a series of comparisons of citizens’ democratic participation associated with the arts and cultural activities in North and South America, Europe, and Asia. The book, in three sections, includes studies carried out over the years by local teams in different cities of the world. It combines qualitative and quantitative sources and methods with detailed tables, graphs, and maps.

The volume addresses civic participation and its impact on trust and legitimacy, providing nuances to debates on what role culture plays in politics.