

**Lichbach, Mark Irving. The Rebel's Dilemma. Ann Arbor, MI:
University of Michigan Press, 1995.**

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Lichbach, Mark Irving. *The Rebel's Dilemma*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

This normative theoretical analysis explores the interactions between government and dissidents individual citizens or groups. In the Preface Mark Lichbach maps out the book and provides humorous, yet pragmatic suggestions for how to read this volume of material (344 pages not including notes). He realizes the limits of human endurance in reading such a long theoretical study. Therefore, his suggestions are tailored to the ambitious and serious scholar, as well as to the student who wants the bottom line.

The outline and structure of the book are straightforward. It is designed and organized to be "user friendly." The book has four parts. They are a Preface, Part One with an Introduction and chapters 1-2; Part Two Solutions with chapters 3-6; Part Three Themes, chapters 7-8; and Part Four - Appraisal, chapters 9-11. The reader can skim through the main arguments at the beginning and summary of each chapter. A dedicated reader can select different subsections of each chapter. A more determined reader should read it all.

In the Preface the author introduces three dilemmas: Hobbes' Dilemma, the Prisoner's Dilemma, and the Rebel's Dilemma. He outlines Hobbes' Dilemma, posing the basic question: What holds society together? He provides a concise summary of social and political theorists from Machiavelli to Parsons. (pp. x-xi) Lichbach's next step is to redefine Hobbes' Dilemma as a problem between an individual's goal quest for power and gain versus Public Goods (PG) and altruism. By identifying the linkages between these two, Lichbach begins to explore the Rebel's Dilemma. And, he asks the question: How does social change occur? The dilemma is, "If dissidents are unable to band together and press the state for a redress of grievances, social order results. If, however, dissidents can overcome the Rebel's dilemma and mobilize as a collectivity, social disorder ensues." (p. xii) Hence, he proposes the exploration of the Collective Action (CA) program that is the heart of this study.

The first two chapters are extremely important and set the agenda for the rest of the book. The readers who are pressed for time, should read the Preface, Chapters 1, 2 and 10. Chapter 1 leads the reader through the maze of writings, and clarifies the dilemma before dissidents individual vs. collective. This is an excellent review of the literature on rebellion, protest, and dissent. Therefore, Lichbach raises fundamental questions that others did not address. The main question at this stage is: How individual deprivation transforms into collective action of dissidents? Obviously, the transformation is not automatic, and has to gain momentum. Thus, to have group action becomes an issue for each individual. Do individuals engage in rational decision making, i.e., calculating the costs and benefits for joining or not joining the dissident group? From a rational choice point of view the answer is clear do not join a dissident group. Yet, people do. Why?

In Part Two Solutions (chapters 3-6), the author explores four different broad concepts as explanations to the Rebel's Dilemma and causes for CA. The solutions are: Market, Community, Contract, and Hierarchy. Market solutions seek to explain processes that

lead rebels to the voluntary provision of PG. Community solutions examine how common belief systems transform into collective dissent. Contractual solutions study the way in which mutual agreements produce CA. Hierarchical solutions explore how hierarchies structure CA. In these respective chapters Lichbach introduces a list of variables and their links to the causes of CA.

In Part Three Themes (chapters 7-8), he explores the origins and outcome of various solutions to the CA problem. Thus, chapter 7 concentrates on politics as a struggle between the state and the dissident group. Chapter 8 studies the outcomes of various solutions to the CA problem.

Part Four Appraisal (chapters 9-11), is a broad assessment of the CA theory. Here, Lichbach goes beyond the problems and solutions. In chapter 9 he explores the limitations of the CA theory. While recognizing the contribution of CA theory to conflict studies, he also acknowledges the limitations to understand all possibilities involved in CA. Among these shortcomings he identifies the difficulty, for example, of explaining the impact and correlation to government response. (p. 322) In this chapter he appraises the Rebel's Dilemma vis-à-vis the various solutions. Thus, he recognizes that he does not have all the answers to all the questions and puzzles. In chapter 10 the author recaptures the arguments and discussion of the whole book. Finally, he assesses the CA theory and how it fares with all other approaches that explain dissent. In chapter 11 Lichbach proposes additional exploration and possible expansion of CA theory. He suggests two strategies (i.e., psychological studies), and macro structures (sociological research) in order to further the research of the CA dissent.

From the start Lichbach launches an ambitious analytical task. He attempts to map out a comprehensive approach to understanding dissent. In due process he reviews large bodies of literature. Among these writings are: Conflict Studies, Economic Explanations, and Psychological exploration of the interwoven relations. The author succeeds in this thorough, and complex research to establish and apply an interesting framework of analysis. Lichbach slowly builds up his CA theory by systematically incorporating many variables. Thus, the Rebel's Dilemma becomes more complicated, which requires further exploration of the myriad linkages among the actors. He then generates numerous propositions that are useful in addressing alternative relations. The web of variables includes causes, rational choices and decision-making, cooperation among the actors and explanations that drive them. The CA approach bridges the gaps among other studies.

This is a well researched, and very well-documented book. The theoretical discussion is a significant contribution to the Conflict Studies research body, and to group dynamics. By employing the CA theory the author presents various propositions that provide the basis for meaningful examination regarding further research. However, such future research should be empirical in nature based on quantitative data. The material presented in this study provides theoretical underpinnings for future case studies.

The author acknowledges that collective dissent is unpredictable. He says that CA ". . . cannot be used to forecast protest and rebellion." Obviously, this issue has been haunting

researchers for the longest time. For example, at what point in time do rebels shift from frustration and dissent/protest, and mobilize toward violent action? Why can't we predict this shift in the rebels' tactic? The biggest breakthrough of this study would have been to answer this question. Then, it would have leaped from the theoretical analysis to the pragmatic world. Such a contribution would have enriched human knowledge, but more important it possibly would have saved many lives.

The author takes the first inquisitive exploration of the actions of the Rebel. Thus, it becomes a one phase game. But is it possible that the game is multi-phased? What are the dynamics of this game? How do changes in the authorities' responses generate modification among the dissident groups? How does escalation of regime's response provoke a reaction from the rebel group? Can we measure the levels of escalation/de-escalation, intensification and relaxation of the interaction between the rebels and the target authorities? Since there are so many variables, can we explore all of them in a dynamic environment action /reaction over time? If we do, can we predict the breaking point in the rebel's reaction? To accomplish such a task, wouldn't we have to resort to a quantitative analysis?

Ultimately, the study proves that everything is interwoven and related to many other variables. Therefore, the major shortcoming of this study, as I see it, is the lack of operationalizing the variables. But, maybe the author's intent was to limit himself to a theoretical discussion.

The reader faculty member, graduate student, researcher and others will benefit from this comprehensive book. It captures the rich body of writings on conflict studies and helps us rethink the fundamental questions, possible answers, and sets the stage for further research. Therefore, I highly recommend this book.

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