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Mass Repression and Political Loyalty: A Dual Legacy of Stalin's Famine in Ukraine

with

Yuri Zhukov

The George Washington University

States use repression to instill political loyalty, but repression – and especially indiscriminate mass repression – can also cause grievances, making citizens more willing to oppose the regime. Given this duality, what is the net impact of mass repression on political loyalty? To address this question, we study the short- and long-term political impact of Stalin's famine in Soviet Ukraine in 1932-34 – one of deadliest cases of mass repression in human history. Using detailed data on local famine losses, instrumented by a composition of weather shocks, we find that the famine induced short- and long-term behavioral loyalty, but only in the historical periods when Moscow exercised unambiguous political authority and was able to retain the credible threat of violence. However, the famine had the opposite effect when the state's political authority was weak or absent: in those cases, it produced significantly greater short- and long-term opposition to political forces associated with its onset. This evidence suggests that mass repression can induce both compliance and opposition, depending on the state's capacity to renew violence.

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Suite 412, Fourth Floor

The Elliot School of International Affairs,

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Yuri Zhukov is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Michigan, and a Faculty Affiliate with the Center for Political Studies at the Institute for Social Research. His research examines the causes, dynamics and consequences of political violence. His publications have appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *Foreign Affairs*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Comparative Economics*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Journal of Politics*, *World Politics*, among other peer-reviewed and general-audience outlets.



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