The practice and study of civil resistance

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Abstract

This article provides an overview of the practice and study of civil resistance. First, historical roots of modern civil resistance are discussed, including the emergence in the 19th century of mass-based campaigns of non-cooperation to promote nationalist and labor interests, as well as the significance of Mohandas Gandhi and the widespread use of nonviolent resistance in the 20th century. Second, perspectives of scholars of social movements and revolution are compared with those of scholars who focus more specifically on nonviolent resistance. Despite studying much of the same phenomena, separate literatures have developed that are ripe for cross-fertilization and synthesis. In the third section, a literature review is organized around three key concepts for understanding civil resistance: mobilization, resilience, and leverage. Fourth, consequences of nonviolent resistance relative to violent resistance are discussed. Finally, areas for future research are identified.

The practice of civil resistance

Civil resistance, that is, the sustained use of methods of nonviolent action[1] by civilians engaged in asymmetric conflicts with opponents not averse to using violence to defend their interests, has occurred throughout history by groups resisting various forms of oppression and injustice. Its roots can be partially traced to diverse traditions and faiths that promoted nonviolence, including those of many indigenous cultures, and religions such as Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism (Arapura, 1997). Traditions in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity have also emphasized nonviolence (Solomonow, 1981; Paige, Satha-Anand & Gilliatt, 1993; Long, 2011). Christian peace churches such as the Brethren, Mennonites, and Quakers, for example, embrace pacifism and view violence as incompatible with their understanding of Christianity. Adherents may refuse to participate in war through conscientious objection or bear witness as an expression of resistance to violence and injustice.

Spiritual-based nonviolence outside of organized religion, such as Christian anarchism, also exists. A notable figure in this tradition is the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, who criticized organized religion as well as the state. In *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1984 [1894]) he promoted nonviolence and advocated passive non-resistance (i.e. non-cooperation with and non-participation in institutions based on violence) as an antidote to war and the hypocrisy of religious institutions (Christoyanno-poulos, 2010).

Civil resistance is also partially rooted in individual ethics and civic responsibility. The US writer and transcendental philosopher Henry David Thoreau exemplifies individual civil disobedience, that is, the open violation of unjust laws or policies in a nonviolent manner on the grounds of conscience. Thoreau refused to pay taxes that supported slavery and the US war against Mexico, which he viewed as unjust. In *Resistance to Civil Government* (1996 [1849]) he argued that when the government requires its citizens to participate in injustice, it

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[1] Nonviolent action refers to non-routine political acts that do not involve violence or the threat of violence.

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is the duty of conscientious citizens to refuse through civil disobedience.

With religious and individual nonviolence there is an implicit social causality that individual actions will promote a better society; if enough individuals adopt nonviolent beliefs and behaviors, then macro-social change will result. In the words of Thoreau, if enough individuals act as a 'counter-friction' then the 'machine' will be stopped. Nevertheless the primary motivation is individual morality or conscience, and social transformation is not typically prioritized. By contrast there is an explicit social causality in deliberate and organized collective campaigns of nonviolent resistance to promote social change (Vogele, 2010). Organizers and participants in these campaigns may or may not be motivated by spiritual or religious beliefs.

Campaigns of civil resistance have been practiced sporadically throughout history, at least as far back as 449 BCE when Roman plebs organized a general strike, abandoned the city, and set up camp until the political elite gave in to their demands for political rights. However only in the 19th century did campaigns of civil resistance emerge as a consistently consequential political force. Abolitionist and women's movements, for example, engaged in nonviolent action. Moreover, methods of nonviolent action were increasingly used as a means to struggle against injustice and oppression where in the past violent rebellion or war would have seemed the only appropriate or viable response. Civil resistance, to an extent, was increasingly used as a functional equivalent to violent resistance. Modern mass-based campaigns of civil resistance were cast in the crucible of nationalist and labor struggles (Carter, 2005; Randle, 1994; Sharp, 1973). Whereas the abolitionist and women's movements relied largely on protest and persuasion and attempted to convert their opponents, nationalist and labor struggles involved mass-based non-cooperation and nonviolent coercion. Nationalist struggles, such as Hungarian resistance to Austrian rule from 1849 to 1867, Finnish resistance to Russian rule from 1899 to 1906, and the Egyptian general strike against British occupation in 1919, were sustained efforts to promote political transformation through collective nonviolent resistance. In labor struggles, such as in Italy in 1904, Spain in 1919, and Britain in 1926, general strikes were a potent weapon of working class protest.

Mohandas Gandhi, undoubtedly the most significant modern figure in the development of nonviolent resistance, began his explorations of civil resistance after experiencing racial injustice in South Africa. His campaigns in South Africa against racial discrimination were followed by struggles for social and economic justice and independence after he returned home to India in 1915 until his assassination in 1948. From his experience organizing campaigns he developed an approach to conflict named *satyagraha*, which roughly means firmness relying on truth. Satyagraha practitioners improve their own life while struggling against social injustice through nonviolent action and building a better society through constructive programs.

In addition to his practical experience with campaigns, Gandhi drew from his knowledge of historical campaigns of collective defiance, religious thought, and literature on civil disobedience. He was knowledgeable about episodes of mass defiance, including peasant rebellions in India and the boycott campaign in Bengal against its partition by the British in 1905, as well as nationalist struggles outside India. He combined this knowledge with insights from Hinduism and especially with the concept of ahimsā (nonviolence), a central tenet of Jainism, and inspiration from his readings of Thoreau and Tolstoy, and applied them to political action.

Significantly, Gandhi moved beyond individual civil disobedience and realized that nonviolent resistance could be carried out in collective campaigns to confront societal injustices, from the local to the national level. He also introduced a much greater attention to strategy and tactics in campaigns of mass defiance (Sharp, 1973: 82). Moreover, Gandhi clearly moved beyond the pragmatic use of nonviolent resistance as practiced in nationalist and labor struggles, made a conscious association between mass political action and the ideal of nonviolence, and emphasized nonviolent discipline.

From the mid-20th century onward nonviolent resistance was implemented across the globe in diverse struggles.[2] Major episodes of civil resistance from the second half of the 20th century onward include the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr that challenged racial segregation and discrimination in the American South (1955–68); numerous protest movements in more developed countries in the late 1960s, such as the student and anti-Vietnam war movements in the USA and Australia, and the student and worker insurrection in France in 1968; and a wave of pro-democracy

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[2] For an excellent overview of the development of civil resistance over the course of the 20th century, see Ackerman & DuVall (2000). For a sharp set of case studies of civil resistance from Gandhi onward, see Roberts & Garton Ash (2009).

movements from the 1980s into the 21st century that challenged dozens of non-democratic regimes throughout the world. Nonviolent resistance contributed to notable regime transitions in the Philippines in 1986, Chile in 1988, Poland in 1989, South Africa in 1994, Serbia in 2000, and Tunisia and Egypt in 2011. Although some people in most of these movements were inspired by the example of Gandhi, adherence to Gandhian principles varied considerably.

Various issue-related social movements have been almost exclusively nonviolent. Women's movements have advocated nonviolent methods and social relations, adopting nonviolent action as both a tactical choice and a framing element, and cultivating a social critique of violence, from domestic violence to militarization and war (Costain, 2000). Women's movements have made significant contributions regarding creative methods, addressing the root causes of violence and developing nonviolent group processes (Vellacott, 2000: 135–137). Moreover, women's movements have been more concerned than most with how means prefigure ends. Historically, labor movements have depended on methods of non-cooperation, especially the strike, to force concessions from capitalists and the state. 'New social movements' that emerged in the West after World War II, such as the environmental and peace movements, have been almost exclusively nonviolent. In the global South many indigenous people's movements have been primarily nonviolent, and in recent years powerful land rights movements have adopted nonviolent resistance to prevent land dispossession and promote land reform (Schock, 2009).

Chenoweth & Stephan (2011) found that large-scale campaigns of civil resistance with maximalist political objectives occurred with greater frequency across the 20th century. Some factors that may have contributed to this include an increasing disparity in the means of violence between citizens and the state in most countries, cross-national diffusion of methods of nonviolent action, cross-national transfer of generic knowledge about nonviolent action, processes of learning, and an increasing recognition of the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance and the relationship between means and ends (Schock, 2005; Zunes & Kurtz, 1999).

The study of civil resistance

Gandhian nonviolent resistance has received considerable attention by scholars. Richard Gregg, an American, traveled to India to observe Gandhi's campaigns and subsequently wrote *The Power of Nonviolence* (1971 [1934]), which drew on psychological theory to interpret the dynamics of Gandhi's campaigns. To explain how nonviolent resistance can be effective against violent oppressors, Gregg developed the concept of 'moral jiujitsu' which states that activists committed to nonviolence have a moral advantage that throws the violent opponent off balance.

Krishnalal Shridharani, a Gandhian activist who participated in various campaigns including the famous Salt March in 1930, wrote *War Without Violence* (1939) based on his participation in campaigns organized by Gandhi. He described progressive stages that occur during a satyagraha campaign and offered a strategic framework for nonviolent struggle. The book would later be influential among Congress of Racial Equality activists struggling for racial equality in the American South. In *Conquest of Violence* (1958), Joan Bondurant presented a modified version of Shridharani's stages and analyzed the dynamics of nonviolent struggle in five Indian satyagraha campaigns.

In contrast to scholars who sought to understand the specific nature of Gandhian nonviolence, others identified a general class of non-routine political actions that did not involve violence or the threat of violence and investigated their dynamics in promoting political change while setting aside the question of moral beliefs or codes to which practitioners must adhere. The most significant figure in this regard is the US scholar Gene Sharp, who began publishing works on nonviolent resistance in the 1950s. His three volume *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (1973) provided a breakthrough in the social scientific analysis of nonviolent resistance. Paradoxically, depending on perspective, Sharp's approach may be considered to be narrower or broader than the Gandhian approach. Less holistic than Gandhians in his approach to social change, Sharp narrowed the focus to observable actions without consideration of motives or beliefs. However, by doing so Sharp may have expanded the circle of those interested in the practice and study of nonviolent resistance (Weber, 2003: 252).

Although inspired by Gandhi, Sharp infused the study of nonviolent resistance with a realist perspective tempered by historians of military strategy, such as Basil Liddell Hart (1967). In part one of *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Sharp presents a theory of power specifying that rulers depend upon the consent or acquiescence of the ruled. If people withdraw their consent or cooperation, then a regime's capacity to rule begins to lessen. A key insight is that violence is not required to topple powerful and repressive regimes. If a sufficient number of people refuse to obey or engage in actions that support the regime for a sufficient amount of time, then its power

Table I. Tendencies in social movement/revolution and civil resistance research.

	Social movement & revolution research	*Civil resistance research*
Audience	Academics	Academics, policymakers, practitioners
Theoretical roots	Structuralist	Gandhian, anarchist
Traditional substantive focus	Structural sources; social bases; mobilization; political context	Strategy; techniques of action; mechanisms of nonviolent change
Assumptions about political action	Falls along a continuum from conventional political action to nonviolent action to violent action	Nonviolent action represents a distinct break from violence and conventional politics
Assumptions about strategy	violent action and nonviolent action may be complementary	violent action and nonviolent action are almost always antithetical
Assumptions about context	in some contexts only violent resistance can be mobilized and effectual	where it is possible to mobilize effective violent resistance it is possible to mobilize effective nonviolent resistance
Assumptions about means and ends	recognition that ends may justify means	recognition that means may prefigure ends

The table represents ideal types of two general orientations. A specific study may not necessarily fall clearly into one category. Although the two research traditions have developed in parallel, increasingly there is cross-fertilization and synthesis.

may be undermined and perhaps eliminated. Although scholars have criticized its inattention to structural constraints of withdrawing consent, the theory of power is useful to activists who are typically aware, implicitly if not explicitly, of the constraints of the contexts in which they live (Martin, 1989).

In part two of *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Sharp identifies 198 methods of nonviolent action and classifies them into three main classes: protest and persuasion, non-cooperation, and intervention. Each method is illustrated with historical examples. A key insight is that throughout history a vast array of methods of nonviolent action have been implemented to promote social change, even though participants, historians, and social scientists may not have recognized them as a particular class of events.

In part three, Sharp presents a model of stages for a successful campaign of nonviolent resistance. The stages include laying the groundwork, challenge that leads to repression, maintaining solidarity and nonviolent discipline, political jiu-jitsu, mechanisms of change, and the redistribution of power. An idealized take on successful campaigns, it nevertheless identifies some of the key processes and dynamics that may occur during the course of nonviolent struggle.

Even though scholars of social movements and revolution study many of the same phenomena as scholars of nonviolent resistance, there has been a lack of engagement. As a result two research traditions developed in parallel that have tensions but are also in many ways complementary. Table I outlines some differences in general tendencies of the two approaches. The

differences are noted in the spirit of promoting constructive integration or synthesis of the two approaches rather than suggesting that one approach is superior to the other.

First, scholars of social movements and revolution[3] have generally been oriented toward academics, while scholars of civil resistance have often oriented their work towards a wider audience that may include practitioners and policymakers as well as academics.[4] Research on civil resistance for national defense, for example, has had a distinct policy orientation, and Sharp's research on nonviolent resistance has been useful to activists in the USA as well as activists in the People Power Movement in the Philippines (1986), the First Palestinian Intifada

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[3] There is significant variation across the social movement and revolution literature, of course, as the former has been most concerned with challenges in developed democracies and the latter with challenges in the developing world. Nevertheless, they have commonalities, especially when compared to the civil resistance literature. Major works on revolutions include Foran (2005), Goldstone (1991), Goodwin (2001), Parsa (2000), Skocpol (1979), and Wickham-Crowley (1992). Major works on social movements include Jasper (1997), Jenkins (1985), McAdam (1999), Piven & Cloward (1977), and Tilly (1978, 1995, 2006). See McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly (2001) for a heroic attempt to integrate the study of social movements, revolution, and much more under the domain of 'contentious politics' in which explanation occurs through the identification of recurring mechanisms and processes within causal chains.

[4] But see the important policy-relevant work of Goldstone et al. (2010) on political instability and state breakdown.

(1987–93), and pro-democracy movements in Serbia (2000), Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), and Egypt (2011). In fact, linking theory with practice has been encouraged in the civil resistance tradition (e.g. MacLeod, 2012; Martin, 2010). The same cannot be said for the social movement and revolution literature (but see Croteau, Hoynes & Ryan, 2005; Flacks, 2003; Maney et al., 2012; Valocchi, 2009), but this is largely due to different audiences for which the scholarship is intended. Perhaps research can provide useful insights to practitioners and policymakers as well as intellectually satisfying explanations to academics.

Theoretical roots and substantive foci of the research traditions have also diverged. Theories of revolution have traditionally been structural in perspective with an emphasis on how economic, political, and demographic change alters class relations and state structures to produce revolutions (e.g. Skocpol, 1979; Goldstone, 1991). More recent research on revolutions tends to be structurally oriented as well, but also takes into consideration the role of ideology and culture. For example, Parsa (2000) examines ideology as well as state structures, Goodwin (2001) considers popular culture and revolutionary agency in addition to state structures, and Foran (2005) emphasizes political cultures of opposition in addition to world-systemic factors.

Similarly, theories of social movements have traditionally been structural. North American scholars working within the political process approach have emphasized mobilizing structures and the political context in accounting for the mobilization and trajectories of social movements (e.g. McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996; Meyer, 2004), but the approach has also emphasized how collective action frames contribute to our understanding of agency, particularly the relationship between discursive practices and mobilization (e.g. Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Benford, 1988). Western European theories of social movements were also traditionally rooted in structuralist assumptions, namely Marxist, until the development of new social movement theory, which emphasizes the shift from industrial to post-industrial society contributing to a rise of social movements emphasizing identities and non-material values (e.g. Melucci, 1989; Touraine, 1981).

With regard to strategy, social movement scholarship is concerned with explaining how repertoires of contention – limited, familiar, historically created arrays of claim-making performances – are embedded in social and cultural structures and how variation occurs incrementally over historical time (Tilly, 2006). By contrast the civil resistance literature tends to focus on why a series of specific actions – methods of nonviolent action – may or may not be successful. The concern is with understanding the strategic logic of civil resistance (Schock, 2005; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011).

Furthermore, scholars of civil resistance have traditionally drawn from Gandhian and anarchist assumptions that prioritize the social roots of power rather than state structures and political institutions (Burrowes, 1996; Martin, 1993; Sharp, 1973). Strategy and agency have always been central to this approach (Ackerman & Kruegler, 1994; Bond, 1994; Burrowes, 1996; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Sharp, 1973, 2005; Stephan, 2009; Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008). The civil resistance tradition has also been narrower in substantive focus, emphasizing techniques of nonviolent action, strategic choice, and mechanisms through which nonviolent action produces social change. However, in recent years foci have expanded in both research traditions; for example, social movement scholars have prioritized outcomes (Amenta et al., 2010; Giugni, McAdam & Tilly, 1999) and the central role of strategy and strategic choice (Andrews, 2004; Ganz, 2009; Jasper, 2005; Maney et al., 2012; McCammon et al., 2008; Taylor & van Dyke, 2004),[5] and scholars from both approaches are increasingly concerned with the relationship between culture and agency (Chabot & Vinthagen, 2007; Jasper, 1997; Johnston & Klandermans, 1995; McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001; Reed & Foran, 2002).

Assumptions about political action, strategy, and context, and perspectives on the relationship between means and ends have tended to diverge across the two research approaches. Generally, scholars of social movements and revolution have assumed that political action falls along a continuum from conventional political action to nonviolent resistance to violent resistance. When goals cannot be attained through institutional channels, then challengers adopt nonviolent protest; if that is not effective, then violence is adopted.

Moreover, there is an assumption that violent and nonviolent resistance may be complementary. Although recognizing that radical flank effects[6] may be positive or

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[5] There are, of course, earlier works in the social movement tradition that emphasize strategy, such as Gamson (1990), McAdam (1983, 1999), and Piven & Cloward (1977).

[6] A positive radical flank effect occurs when the bargaining position of moderates is strengthened by the presence of more radical groups. A negative radical flank effect occurs when the activities of a radical group undermine the position of the moderates (Haines, 1984). 'Radicals' are typically conceptualized as those with more extreme demands than moderates or those who engage in violent action.

negative, the concept is almost always used to describe an alleged positive radical flank effect. Some, for example, have argued that the communist armed insurgency in the Philippines increased the leverage of the People Power movement and that the actions of the armed wing of the African National Congress increased the leverage of the urban-based campaigns of mass defiance of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. Nevertheless, the presence of a positive radical flank effect across a large number of cases has yet to be empirically identified.

Moreover, it is assumed – especially in the literature on revolution – that in some contexts violent resistance is the only strategy that can be mobilized or effectual. Finally, there is recognition that ends may justify means; that is, violence is considered to be rational and justified in repressive contexts if it is claimed that it will ultimately result in eliminating oppression or injustice.

In contrast, the civil resistance tradition rejects the assumption that there is a natural escalation from nonviolent to violent resistance or that nonviolent resistance is situated on an ordinal continuum between conventional politics and violence. As argued in this issue by Asal et al. (2013), political actions should be considered as nominal and discrete behavioral choices. If nonviolent resistance were a precursor to violent resistance, then we would expect to see similar causes and contexts of both types of resistance. However, violent campaigns seem to emerge in less constrained contexts and campaigns of nonviolent resistance tend to emerge in more constrained contexts, as argued in this issue by Chenoweth & Lewis (2013) and Cunningham (2013).

In the civil resistance literature it is assumed that violent and nonviolent resistance are almost always antithetical. Once challengers take up arms against the state then any restraints on state repression that may have existed are removed. Moreover, the degree of participation is likely to be lower, as barriers to participation are higher for armed resistance. In effect, it is assumed that in most contexts civilians have the comparative advantage with regard to nonviolent resistance, while the state's comparative advantage is with violence.

Moreover it is assumed that there are no special contexts where only violence can be mobilized and effective. If violent resistance can be mobilized and be effective, then nonviolent resistance can be mobilized and effective as well (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). In this issue, Kaplan (2013) finds that even in the midst of civil war, unarmed civilians – typically assumed to be powerless in relation to armed actors – are able to organize creative nonviolent interventions that defuse violence and the threat of violence against members of the community.

Finally, in the civil resistance tradition there is recognition that means prefigure ends. Both Gandhi and King maintained that the means had to reflect the goals being sought (Gandhi, 1993; King, 1961; see also Huxley, 1941), and Arendt (1969) argued that since the end result in human conflict is unpredictable, the method used to attain political goals might be more important than the ends themselves.

Despite different research traditions and assumptions – and some tensions between them – the literatures on social movements and revolution and the civil resistance literature are ripe for cross-fertilization and synthesis (Chabot & Vinthagen, 2007; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Nepstad, 2011; Schock, 2005; Sommer, 2000). The following section examines important dynamics of civil resistance drawing from the social movement and revolution literature as well as the civil resistance literature.

Mobilization, resilience, and leverage

Three concepts central to understanding dynamics of civil resistance are mobilization, resilience, and leverage. *Mobilization* refers to the process of acquiring resources, people, and support for a campaign. Some theories of revolution have emphasized the intensification of grievances or relative deprivation as a cause of mobilization (Gurr, 1970); however, social movement theory assumes that grievances and deprivation are always widespread, therefore the focus is on resource mobilization, framing, mobilizing structures, and political opportunities and threats (McAdam, 1999; McAdam, McCarthy & Zald, 1996; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Meyer, 2004; Snow et al., 1986). Theories of revolution emphasize class conflict and state structures, yet also recognize mass mobilization as a necessary, but not sufficient, cause of revolutionary situations. Goldstone (2001) identifies traditional, informal, and elite-directed forms of mass mobilization. Traditional mobilization occurs through communal organizations through which individuals have formal ties and high levels of commitment, such as in peasant villages or urban workers' guilds. However, there is a tendency for traditional mobilization to be defensive rather than change-oriented. Informal mobilization occurs through loosely connected networks based on friendship, workplace, or neighborhood ties. Such mobilization occurred in the Iranian Revolution in 1979 as well as the political revolutions in the Philippines in 1986 and East Germany in 1989. A third type identified

by Goldstone is elite-directed mobilization, whereby elites harness popular discontent by creating and directing organizations through which mobilization occurs. Examples include Communist party mobilization in rural China in the 1940s and the establishment of Christian base communities by progressive Catholic priests in Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s.

Scholars of civil resistance have focused on the *extent of mobilization*, since widespread participation increases the likelihood of success of campaigns of nonviolent resistance (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). Threshold and cascade models are pertinent as they address why movements may grow large. Granovetter's (1978) model, for example, explains how increasing numbers of individuals who join a movement reduce participation thresholds of additional participants. Kuran (1989) argues that the cost of collective action decreases when the size of a protest movement increases, and when political opposition to a regime reaches a critical level, regime change is likely. Taking into consideration the strategic interaction between challengers and the regime, DeNardo (1985) argues that individuals choose to participate in an anti-regime challenge if the difference between the movement's demands and the policies of the regime exceed individual specific criteria.

A strategic advantage of civil resistance campaigns relative to violent campaigns is the lower barriers to participation that may contribute to higher levels of mobilization. Chenoweth & Stephan (2011) argue that physical, informational, commitment, and moral barriers to participation tend to be lower for civil resistance campaigns, giving them an advantage in mobilization potential.

Widespread mobilization is necessary for successful challenges, but it is not sufficient for their success. Mobilized campaigns must remain resilient in the face of repression and gain leverage over their adversary to attain their goals. *Resilience* refers to the ability of a challenge to withstand and recover from repression; that is, to sustain a campaign despite the actions of opponents aimed at constraining or inhibiting their activities (Schock, 2005). Social psychological factors may contribute to the resilience of a campaign and some have emphasized stubbornness, relentless persistence, steadfast perseverance (*sumud*), and fearlessness. Gandhi emphasized firmness relying on truth. Although these traits are important, ultimately the resilience of a campaign depends on tactical interactions between challengers and opponents.

In his analysis of the trajectory of the US Civil Rights movement, McAdam emphasizes tactical interaction. He maintains that expanding political opportunities and mobilizing structures influence movement mobilization,

but the skill of activists in devising effective protest tactics and the opponent's ability to counter those tactics determine whether mobilization is sustained. When authorities counter the tactical innovations of challengers with tactical adaptation, then challengers must continue to adapt to remain resilient (McAdam, 1983). Similarly, when challengers implement diverse methods of nonviolent action and are able to counter regime repression of methods of concentration, such as demonstrations, with methods of dispersion, such as boycotts, then resilience is more likely (Schock, 2005).

Resilient campaigns are more likely to produce political change when the opponent's dependence relations are leveraged. *Leverage* refers to the capacity of a challenge to sever the opponent from the sources of power upon which it depends, either directly or through allies or third parties (Schock, 2005). Leverage is a potential that may be realized when challengers are sufficiently organized to threaten or actually withdraw support from the opponent or when their actions contribute to the threatened or initiated withdrawal of third-party support upon which the opponent depends. The power of civil resistance comes not from hammering away at an opponent through direct armed assaults or asymmetric wars of attrition; rather, it inheres in its ability to undermine the power of the opponent through collective actions that directly drain power and legitimacy of the opponent or catalyze the withdrawal of support from key actors upon with the opponent depends. Violence works like a hammer, while nonviolence works more like a lever. Through leverage, oppressed and marginalized actors are able to defeat repressive and ostensibly more powerful opponents. In fact, the crucial variable in determining the outcome of nonviolent struggle is not repression, as is commonly assumed, but rather dependence relations that can be leveraged by challengers to undermine the opponent's power (Summy, 1994). There are various dimensions of dependence relations, including political, economic, and moral.

In theory, rulers are politically dependent upon the ruled (de La Boétie, 1997; Sharp, 1973). Political dependence concerns acceptance by the citizenry of a government's authority and claim to legitimacy. A government's ability to command obedience is reduced if it is widely perceived as acting in an unjust, ineffective, corrupt, or unconstitutional manner. Although repression may command obedience over the short term, it is likely to alienate an ever-expanding circle of people over the long term (Machiavelli, 1950). State power will be severely undermined if any essential group of administrators, police,

military, or workers in key sectors such as energy or transportation refuse or threaten to refuse to carry out their duties and competent replacements are not readily available (Summy, 1994). The defection or neutrality of state security forces is especially important in the case of nonviolent struggle (Binnendijk, 2009; Binnendijk & Marovic, 2006; Nepstad, 2011, 2013).

Economic dependence exists since the resources of a state must be constantly replenished. If workers withdraw their labor, citizens refuse to pay taxes, or third parties, such as allies or important international trading partners, withdraw support, end relations, or impose economic sanctions, then state power may be undermined. Thus, governments depend on the cooperation of their own citizens, but also on other states and, increasingly, non-state transnational entities.

Moral dependence is related to the social distance between oppressors and oppressed. The shorter the social distance, the more likely that nonviolent action will succeed; the greater the social distance, the less likely is success (Galtung, 1989). Social distance may increase or decrease through processes of de-humanization and re-humanization. If social distance between oppressor and oppressed is large, then intermediary parties that connect antagonists must intervene in the conflict for nonviolent resistance to succeed. The oppressor and oppressed may be concatenated through third parties by the 'great chain of nonviolence' (Galtung, 1989). In the case of Indian independence, for example, liberal and socialist Britons and higher caste Indians bridged the social distance between British imperialists and Indian workers and peasants. This intercession provided leverage to the struggle for national liberation.

Some of the more onerous struggles involve oppressed peoples whose opponents are not directly dependent upon them, such as in Western Sahara, Palestine, Tibet, and West Papua. In these cases, third parties that concatenate the oppressors with the oppressed are crucial (MacLeod, 2012; Stephan & Mundy, 2006).

A dynamic related to mobilization, resilience, and leverage is *backfire*, that is, the reduction of the power and legitimacy of an authority that uses violent repression against civilians engaged in nonviolent protest. Backfire is crucial to many struggles waged through nonviolent action. For a repressive event to generate backfire, information about the event needs to be communicated to receptive audiences, receptive audiences must perceive the event to be unjust and they must be outraged by it, and authorities must take their outrage into consideration. For example, the outrage generated by the violent repression of civil rights activists in the American South,

which contributed to the intervention of federal forces, was critical to the success of the civil rights movement (McAdam, 1999). The backfire dynamic may win over neutral or uninvolved third parties that serve to concatenate the oppressors with the oppressed (Hess & Martin, 2006; Martin, 2007).

Martin (2007) identifies tactics used by authorities to minimize outrage as well as tactics implemented by challengers to counter the actions of authorities and to promote backfire. Just as with sustained mobilization, the tactical interaction between challengers and oppressors is crucial in determining whether or not backfire occurs. When it occurs, the repressive event that was intended to inhibit the movement is overcome, mobilization broadens, and if there is enough public outrage, then the power of the opponent is undermined.

Another important factor that increases the likelihood of backfire is *nonviolent discipline*; that is, the strict adherence to nonviolent methods of action regardless of the actions of opponents. Scholars of social movements have long recognized that protests often turn violent when met by repression. Yet the question of why violent responses to repression may or may not occur has not been adequately addressed. Factors that account for nonviolent discipline, or the lack thereof, need to be identified.

Another important dynamic of resistance is *strategy shift*, that is, the shift in the predominant strategies through which struggles are waged. Although there is extensive research on the shift from unarmed to armed methods of resistance, as well as the shift from armed methods to negotiation, demobilization, and conventional politics (sometimes referred to as 'conflict resolution'), we lack studies examining the shift from violent to nonviolent resistance. Significantly, perhaps in recognition of the potential power of nonviolent resistance, this type of strategy shift has occurred in a number of places, including Western Sahara, Palestine, Nepal, East Timor, and West Papua. In this issue, Dudouet (2013) suggests that the shift from armed to unarmed resistance is a function of internal factors, such as strategic re-evaluation, support base demand for new strategies, and attempts to expand the support base; and external factors, such as political opportunities, a critical assessment of persisting power asymmetries, and the influence of external patrons.

Finally, civil resistance campaigns with leaders and participants who recognize and understand the role of strategic choice are more likely to succeed. *Strategic consciousness* refers to practitioners'

> awareness of the conflict and what it is about, their sense of the adversary and its likely response, their orientation

toward third parties, possible openings for the employment of nonviolent means, selection and employment of particular methods, and the sense (if there is one) of the process by which their own use of nonviolent action may bring about some or all of their objectives. (McCarthy & Kruegler, 1993: 26)

In his analysis of the California Farm Workers' Movement, Ganz (2009) develops the concept of *strategic capacity*, which emerges from an interactive process of experimentation, learning, and adapting. When sufficiently developed, strategic capacity enables a movement to capitalize on opportunities by turning the resources they have into the power they need to attain their objectives. Strategic capacity is created by the skillful assembly of a leadership team and the careful structuring of interactions among its members, constituents, and environment. If the leadership team is deeply motivated, has access to salient information, and is open to learning, then effective strategy is more likely to develop over the long run.

Consequences of civil resistance

The social movement literature has traditionally focused on limited or reformist challenges in liberal democracies; therefore, success has typically been conceptualized in terms of official recognition, policy change, or changes in norms, attitudes or behaviors (Amenta et al., 2010; Gamson, 1990; Giugni, McAdam & Tilly, 1999; Wapner, 1996). By contrast, civil resistance research, like research on revolutions, is often concerned with the outcomes of campaigns with maximalist goals such as regime change, ending foreign occupation, or secession. Chenoweth & Stephan (2011), for example, compared the effectiveness of hundreds of major campaigns with maximalist objectives that occurred from 1900 to 2006. Controlling for a number of structural factors, they found that nonviolent resistance movements were more likely to succeed than violent resistance movements, concluding that strategy has an impact on likelihood of success.[7]

Scholars of civil resistance, as discussed above, are also concerned with how means may prefigure ends. That is, nonviolent resistance can lay the groundwork for a more cooperative post-conflict society, in terms of behavior and attitudes as well as in terms of political structure, since nonviolent resistance is a self-limiting form of struggle, inhibiting violent extremism and unbridled

conflict escalation (Dudouet, 2008: 18–20; Wehr, 1979: 55). Compared with violent resistance, nonviolent resistance may also reduce feelings of humiliation, hatred, and desire for revenge, which are often the seeds of future conflict (Randle, 1994: 113). Tending to be more open and participatory than secretive and hierarchical, nonviolent resistance is conducive to the diffusion of power and democratic relations (Bond, 1994; Randle, 1994: 9).

Recent research addresses the negative social and political consequences of violent conflict (Collier, Hoeffler & Söderbom, 2008; Elbawadi, Hegre & Milante, 2008) as well as the positive social and political consequences of nonviolent resistance. For example, Karatnycky & Ackerman (2005) examine 67 democratic transitions from the 1970s through the 1990s, finding that the occurrence of mass-based nonviolent resistance was a significant factor in most democratic transitions, and countries with strong and cohesive nonviolent civic coalitions were more likely to be more democratic in the post-transition era. Thus, beyond the strategic effectiveness in promoting regime change, the nature of the resistance may shape the post-transition regime and society. By contrast, violent social movements, when successful, tend to result in the centralization of power, which in turn promotes power differentials between ruling and subordinate groups.

Similarly, Chenoweth & Stephan (2011) found that in countries that experienced successful nonviolent resistance campaigns, there was a relatively higher level of democracy and lower level of the recurrence of violent civil conflict in the years following the struggle compared with the conditions in countries that experienced successful violent struggles. In this issue, Gleditsch & Celistino (2013) find that regime change brought about by violent protest is more likely to result in a new autocracy, while regime change resulting from nonviolent protest is more likely to lead to democracy.

In a broad comparison of various strategies for promoting social change, Martin (2009) argues that nonviolent resistance is more successful than conventional politics or violent resistance in terms of historical track record, degree of popular participation, compatibility of means and ends, and lower levels of suffering. Social scientists as well as practitioners are increasingly recognizing not only the power of campaigns of nonviolent resistance to transform acute conflicts, but also the relationship between means and ends.

The consequences for individuals of participation in collective action may be another significant outcome. Gandhian nonviolence, for example, involves the spiritual development of individuals who participate in

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[7] The authors defined 'success' as the complete attainment of the stated goals of the movement.

satyagrahas. Social movement scholarship has identified positive benefits of participation in collective action, such as increased feelings of empowerment and political efficacy. In this issue Davenport & Trivedi (2013) find that among Dalits in India, those who participate in nonviolent resistance have increased cognitive activation towards oppression in comparison to those who engage in either conventional politics or armed resistance; that is, the number of discriminatory events subsequently identified by activists is higher for those who participate in nonviolent resistance compared with other forms of political action.

Frontiers of civil resistance research

A few issues for future research mentioned above include strategy shift from violent to nonviolent resistance, the interrelation of violent and nonviolent resistance and its consequence for movement outcomes, and factors that contribute to nonviolent discipline. In the following sections, three areas that are pushing the boundaries of civil resistance research are briefly discussed: the study of struggles against structural violence, an examination of the role of culture, and comparative and quantitative analysis.

Direct and structural violence

The civil resistance literature has traditionally focused on conflicts involving overt authoritarianism and direct violence where political democracy is the goal of the challengers. In these conflicts, such as national liberation from foreign occupation, toppling authoritarian regimes, thwarting coups d'état, and ending overt legal discrimination, there is a sharp dichotomy between oppressor and oppressed and the actors and objects of violence are readily identifiable. The focus is somewhat paradoxical given Gandhi's emphasis on social and economic justice in addition to legal discrimination and national liberation. Gandhi maintained that civil resistance may also be used to combat structural violence; that is, diffuse or systemic injustices and inequalities imbedded in institutions or social relations that prevent people from meeting basic human needs (Burrowes, 1996; Galtung, 1969, 1990). Struggles by indigenous peoples and small farmers to prevent land dispossession and struggles by the landless to promote a more equitable distribution of land, for example, prioritize social and economic rights. The transformation sought goes beyond Western liberal democratic structures to challenge unregulated market relations and accumulation through dispossession and promote a more equitable distribution and sustainable use of resources. Increasingly these struggles are being prosecuted through methods of nonviolent action

(Schock, 2009). The extent to which theories and concepts pertaining to struggles to topple dictators apply to struggles against economic inequalities and exploitive economic relations – such as anti-austerity campaigns, the Occupy Wall Street movement, land reform movements, and challenges to privatization – remains to be seen. Future research on struggles against structural violence will lead to important insights on dynamics of civil resistance.

Culture and civil resistance

Typically, scholars of civil resistance outside of the Gandhian tradition have focused on the dynamics and consequences of implementing methods of nonviolent action regardless of the motivation for their use or the beliefs or cultures of activists. This approach is assumed to be the most useful in uncovering the distinctive nature of nonviolent resistance (Sharp, 1973, 2005; Bond, 1994). An alternative way to proceed is to examine nonviolence as an ideology or to examine how cultural elements, such as beliefs, attitudes, goals, values, and lifestyles, inform the selection and implementation of strategy and tactics. Chabot & Vinthagen (2007), building on Reed & Foran (2002) for example, develop the concept of political cultures of nonviolent opposition in order to understand the importance of emotions, morality, and ideology in campaigns of civil resistance. Moreover, Norman (2010) shows the importance of cultural understandings of 'nonviolence'. In the case of Palestinian resistance, for example, she found that support for nonviolent resistance is much higher when nonviolence is framed as a strategy rather than as just a moral preference. Scholars of civil resistance will continue to benefit from and contribute to the cultural and emotional turns in the study of social movements and revolution.

Data and methods

The predominant research method used in the study of civil resistance has been the case study of movements, campaigns, or streams of contention. Case studies, of course, are invaluable and may provide deep insight. Nevertheless, the field is characterized by selection bias in the sense that most studies have focused on single successful cases. We lack comparative studies that focus on multiple cases and compare and contrast successful and unsuccessful campaigns of civil resistance (but see Ackerman & Kruegler, 1994; Nepstad, 2011; Schock, 2005).

Also needed are quantitative studies that examine a large number of campaigns or events. Event data, of course, exist for armed resistance, such as the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (Gleditsch et al., 2002) and for mobilization and protest in democracies (Andrews &

Biggs, 2006). Large-N event data are also commonly used in quantitative studies examining the relationship between state repression and collective action (Lichbach, 1987). However, until recently we have lacked large-N data on nonviolent resistance campaigns with maximalist goals such as regime change or political secession (but see Beissinger, 2002). Also useful is the use of automated natural language processing techniques to generate disaggregate data on challenger and regime actions. In this issue, Shellman, Levey & Young (2013) incorporate this method to generate data that predict the shift to violence by the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka.

The work of Erica Chenoweth and collaborators has been pioneering with regard to the study of civil resistance. Using the campaign as the unit of analysis, NAVCO 1.0 contains data on 323 primarily violent or nonviolent campaigns with maximalist goals occurring from 1900 to 2006 (Chenoweth, 2008). NAVCO 2.0, introduced in this issue by Chenoweth & Lewis (2013), contains annual data on 250 nonviolent and violent campaigns with maximalist objectives from 1945 to 2006. Although scholars of armed conflict and social movements have often used event data as the unit of analysis, campaigns may be a more appropriate unit of analysis since they allow us to consider the broad spectrum of actions as a whole and permit us to better operationalize strategy.

Conclusion

The most violent century of political conflict in human history, the 20th century, was also the century in which nonviolent resistance was transformed from a relatively unorganized, spontaneous, and non-strategic phenomenon to an organized, collective, and strategic method of struggle. By the 21st century, nonviolent resistance has become recognized as a powerful method of struggle that can be dismissed as naive by only those with a fetish for violence and military power.

Decades ago Gene Sharp wrote,

> until very recently no overall conceptual system existed to reveal relationships between diverse and apparently dissimilar historical events which are now grouped as cases of nonviolent action . . . . For the many forms of military struggle an overall conceptual tool has long existed, and this itself may have contributed to the detailed attention which wars have received. Attention to war has included historical and strategic studies which could help future wars. But until very recently, nonviolent action has had no comparable self-conscious tradition. Such a tradition would probably have brought attention to many of these neglected

struggles and might well have provided knowledge to be used in new cases of nonviolent action. (1973: 73)

A self-conscious tradition in the analysis of nonviolent resistance has emerged and is making headway. Scholarly analysis of nonviolent struggle is producing consequential social scientific knowledge as well as knowledge that may be useful to activists. Government policymakers might even learn that 'promoting democracy' or 'defending freedom' does not require the actual or threatened use of military violence. A careful evaluation of assumptions about violence and nonviolence, the interrelation of violent and nonviolent action, strategic choice, and power from various perspectives and the comparative and large-N empirical study of campaigns of nonviolent struggle will not only deepen our understanding of civil resistance, but may transform peace studies, security studies, and the study of social movements and revolution as well.

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