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**NAVAL  
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**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**MAXIMALIST MOVES: AN ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT  
AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT TACTICS**

by

Reuben O. Morris

December 2023

Thesis Advisor:  
Second Reader:

Timothy C. Warren  
Michael W. Jones

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**MAXIMALIST MOVES: AN ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT  
AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT TACTICS**

Reuben O. Morris  
Major, United States Army  
BS, Texas A&M University, College Station, 2011

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS  
(IRREGULAR WARFARE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the tactics of resistance employed by social movements seeking regime change, territorial separation, or foreign expulsion. It draws upon existing research and datasets to explore the effectiveness of both violent and nonviolent strategies, the impact of movement size, the role of leadership decapitation and terrorism, and the importance of third-party support. The research findings highlight several key factors that influence movement success. Population size, regime type, and GDP per capita appear to be significant variables. Movements within anocracies, characterized by a mix of democratic and autocratic elements, showed a higher likelihood of movement success compared to stable democracies and autocracies. Contrary to some claims, the study reveals that a mixed strategy combining violence and nonviolence has a positive effect on movement success. Violent elements within a movement can be complemented by moderate groups, enhancing the movement's overall effectiveness. Additionally, the findings affirm the importance of movement size, with larger movements demonstrating increased success, and the backfire effect of government violence. These findings advocate for SOF to seek to align operational objectives with social movements, favor support to mixed-methods movements, and incorporate all elements of special operations for success.



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>RESEARCH QUESTION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>KEY CONCEPTS .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Government Strategies and the Blowback Effect .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Violence and Terrorism.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Nonviolent Resistance.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Mixed Methods and a Radical Flank Effect.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Political Leadership .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Third-Party Support.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>HYPOTHESES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>DATA DESCRIPTION .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>THE NETWORK.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Network Topography.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Network Centrality Measures.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Summary and Implications .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>REGRESSION MODELS .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>RESULTS .....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>A.</b>	<b>IMPLICATIONS FOR SOF .....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>B.</b>	<b>TRAINING, DOCTRINE, AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>C.</b>	<b>SUGGESTED FUTURE RESEARCH .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>D.</b>	<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>52</b>
	<b>LIST OF REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>55</b>
	<b>INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....</b>	<b>63</b>

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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Variables Included in Modeling.....	25
Figure 2.	Locations of Maximalist Movements in 89 Countries in the Data .....	28
Figure 3.	Overall Movement Network Analysis Diagram .....	30
Figure 4.	Overall Strategy Selection .....	31
Figure 5.	Giant Component of the Movement Network .....	32
Figure 6.	Nonviolent Movement Network Analysis .....	34
Figure 7.	Mixed Method Movements Network.....	35
Figure 8.	Substantive Effects Comparison Plot.....	41
Figure 9.	Predicted Effects of Variables on the Probability of Movement Success .....	42
Figure 10.	States with Largest Number of Government Violence Incidents, 1995–2014.....	51

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## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Movement Topographical Measures.....	36
Table 2.	Regression Results .....	39

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CAM	Arauco Malleco Coordinating Group
CAMEO	Conflict and Mediation Event Observation
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CPN-M	Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists
C-VEO	Counter Violent Extremist Organization
FeI	Fedayeen of Islam
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HJI	Harakat-ul Jihad al-Islami
ICEWS	Integrated Crisis Early Warning System
IO	Information Operations
LeJ	Lakshar-e Jhangyi
LeT	Lashkar-e Toiba
MISO	Military Intelligence Support Operations
NAVCO	Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes
PKK	Kurdistan Workers Party
REVMOD	Revolutionary and Militant Organization Dataset
RFE	Radical Flank Effect
ROC	Resistance Operating Concept
SOF	Special Operations Forces
STR	Support to Resistance



ULFA                      United Liberation Front of Assam  
V-DEM                     Varieties of Democracy

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis analyzes which resistance tactics are most successful in achieving desired outcomes for social movements under varied regimes and conditions. The research analyzes campaigns in which the movement seeks to overthrow their government, break away from their government, or expel a foreign government from their country.

Social movements are especially pertinent to those in the special operations community, which focuses on supporting resistance movements in unconventional warfare or in foreign internal defense and counterinsurgency. Understanding the probability of movement success based upon regime type, socio-economic factors, government interventions, and resistance techniques is essential to aligning appropriate ends, ways, and means in operations.

**Research Design:** The analysis is grounded in three large-scale quantitative datasets, (known as ICEWS, REVMOD, and V-DEM) encompassing 267 movements from 1995 to 2014. These datasets include crucial variables like movement strategy, outcomes, regime type, population size, GDP per capita, movement size, and government strategy. Network analysis and logistic regression were applied to the data in order to assess the impacts of different variables.

### Findings:

- The combination of nonviolent and violent techniques provides the greatest probability of success. Regression analysis showed that the selection of a mixed violence strategy and strong political leadership of the movement had a substantial positive impact on movement success. Furthermore, the evidence shows that the selection of a violence-only strategy appears to reduce movement success.

- Increased movement size directly contributes to movement success. While movement numbers do not guarantee success, the evidence shows that they significantly contribute to the movement's durability and leverage. In conjunction with a mixed-methods strategy, this lends credence to the assertion that the greatest diversity of participants and tactics is key to success against an adapting and innovative government opponent.
- Government strategies relying on violence are more likely to backfire and lead to greater movement success. As government violence increased, so did the odds of movement success. This implies that when facing off against its own population, the traditional strengths of the state turned into weaknesses, shifting domestic and international support to their domestic opponents.
- Social movements receiving third-party support are more likely to successfully overcome the asymmetric material advantages of governments. Violent and mixed-methods movements are most likely to create supporting relationships with other movements. Nonviolent movements do not generally share these same relationships and operate independently of other movements.

### **Implications for Special Operations Forces (SOF):**

- The success of a social movement in this study was determined by comparing its stated maximalist goals with the movement's outcomes, but U.S. objectives frequently fall short of regime-change. U.S. objectives may be achieved far sooner than the movement's, necessitating a decision to continue support or cut ties.
- As opposed to diaspora populations in permissive areas, supporting resistance amongst populations in denied territory can benefit from the blowback effect. Intentionally inducing security forces to violently overreact, even before external supporters are prepared to cross the threshold of violence, can be useful.

- When examining which types of movements are best suited to receive SOF support, the findings presented here favor a mixed-methods movement. This aspect lends credence to the employment of Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations forces in various support to resistance scenarios.
- Creating political command within the movement can benefit from a whole-of-government approach. While SOF is uniquely skilled within the Department of Defense to enhance and support foreign partners, they should be used in conjunction with other levers of government and the private sector to maximize their impact.

### **Training and Doctrine Recommendations:**

- Rename ATP 3-18.1 (Special Forces Unconventional Warfare) to ATP 3-18.1 (Special Operations Unconventional Warfare) to reflect the necessity of all special operation elements in support to resistance and unconventional warfare.
- Update ATP 3-05.1 (Unconventional Warfare at the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force [JSOTF] Level) to reflect the need of the JSOTF to advocate for movements' political leadership to exert supremacy over the resistance organization.
- Adjust Robin Sage, Sluss Tiller, and Black Knight culminating exercise scenarios to incorporate political leadership and provide necessary role-players. Encourage use of mixed-methods movements and cross-functional integration in these scenarios.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

- Provide additional security force assistance and ethics training in India, Iraq, Sri Lanka and the Philippines to reduce unnecessary government violence and enhance future counterinsurgency outcomes.

- Conduct training on governance and nonviolent resistance to democratic forces in Myanmar, Syria, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan to increase local legitimacy and outcomes.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

When Russia escalated its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, most analysis focused on the maneuver of conventional forces with minor attention given to the thousands of Russians rallying to stop the invasion.<sup>1</sup> However, these anti-war protests significantly affected Russian strategy as Putin returned much of his premier pacification force, the *Rosgvardiya*, or Russian National Guard, to Russian territory to stop dissent.<sup>2</sup> With a fearful reputation for crushing internal opposition, Putin had previously deployed these units into the occupied areas of Ukraine to keep the local populations from disrupting his conquest.<sup>3</sup> Half a year later, these domestic Russian nonviolent movements had largely been silenced by a repressive regime with the full levers of government power. While unable to achieve their political objectives, these protestors have created a specter of widespread resistance that continues to delay Putin's use of full military conscription, despite the desperate need for additional Russian soldiers in the war.

With the suppression of peaceful assembly and protest, a wave of arson attacks hit Russian government offices and recruiting stations, while anti-Putin militants seized portions of the Belgorod region from their central government.<sup>4</sup> Calling for the overthrow of Russian President Putin and the freedom of the eastern provinces, these

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Coalson, "Russia's Anti-War Movement After Six Months: What Happened To 'The Most Important People On The Planet?'," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 12:53:39Z, sec. Russia, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-lackluster-antiwar-movement-ukraine-invasion/32000288.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Xander Landen, "Russia Arrests over 4,000 for Anti-War Protest, Most since Ukraine War Began," *Newsweek*, March 6, 2022, <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-arrests-over-4000-anti-war-protest-most-since-ukraine-war-began-1685300>.

<sup>3</sup> "Rosgvardiya: Hurling Towards Confrontation?," accessed September 5, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/blogs/post-soviet-post/rosgvardiya-hurling-towards-confrontation>.

<sup>4</sup> Reuters, "Who Are the Freedom of Russia Legion and Russian Volunteer Corps?," *Reuters*, June 5, 2023, sec. Europe, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/who-are-armed-fighters-russias-belgorod-region-2023-06-05/>.



militants stand in stark contrast to their nonviolent predecessors.<sup>5</sup> These movements have forced President Putin to divert military resources, grapple with the limitations of a ‘Special Military Operation’ and seek to overcome threats to his regime’s stability and longevity. These movements, largely operating under the banner of the Freedom of Russia Legion, also constrain Putin’s range of options in Ukraine, perhaps even inadvertently preventing escalation. Regardless of whether Putin ultimately chooses to accommodate or repress domestic dissent, the diversion of resources and attention leaves his regime weakened both at home and abroad.<sup>6</sup>

Nonviolent opposition movements have similarly taken root in Belarus and show the potential to hinder basing and support of Russian military forces in that country. Recent Chatham House polling showed that 42% of Belarussians oppose stationing Russian forces in their nation and 39% want them immediately withdrawn.<sup>7</sup> Scholarly literature on Anti-Basing that focused on those opposing U.S. bases highlights protestors’ ability to hinder military operations even when they fail in the primary objective of removing these bases.<sup>8</sup> One such scholar, Amy Holmes, describes six means of successful obstruction including disrupting access, preventing expansion, forcing temporary shutdowns, and creating supply shortages.<sup>9</sup> While the specific impacts of Belarussian efforts to expel these foreign soldiers will be unknown for quite some time, they have not gone unnoticed. These challenges to Russian operations are also enhanced

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<sup>5</sup> *Bashkir fighters of Rota Bashkort in the UAF appeal* (Unknown, 2023), [https://www.reddit.com/r/UkraineWarVideoReport/comments/1443cu8/the\\_ethnic\\_bashkir\\_fighters\\_of\\_rota\\_bashkort\\_in/#;MicrowaveBurns](https://www.reddit.com/r/UkraineWarVideoReport/comments/1443cu8/the_ethnic_bashkir_fighters_of_rota_bashkort_in/#;MicrowaveBurns), “Ilya Ponomarev, Leader of the Political Wing of the Freedom of Russia Legion, on LBC: ‘At the End of the Day, This War Can End Only in Moscow, When Putin’s Regime Is Replaced, and Obviously It Would Not Be Done by Ukrainians or NATO Forces, It Will Be Done by Russians. It’s Our Job.’” Reddit Post, *R/UkraineWarVideoReport*, May 22, 2023, [www.reddit.com/r/UkraineWarVideoReport/comments/13ozn0g/ilya\\_ponomarev\\_leader\\_of\\_the\\_political\\_wing\\_of/](https://www.reddit.com/r/UkraineWarVideoReport/comments/13ozn0g/ilya_ponomarev_leader_of_the_political_wing_of/).

<sup>6</sup> *Anti-Putin Militia Diverts Russian Troops Away from Ukraine* | Colonel Brendan Kearney, 2023, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qui-iVeyBa4>.

<sup>7</sup> Ryhor Astapenia, “Belarusian’s Views on Russia’s War on Ukraine,” Public Opinion Poll Results, What Belarusians Think (Center for New Ideas, April 8, 2022), <https://belaruspolls.org/volny-oprosov>.

<sup>8</sup> David Vine, “No Bases? Assessing the Impact of Social Movements Challenging U.S. Foreign Military Bases,” *Current Anthropology* 60, no. S19 (February 2, 2019): S158–72, <https://doi.org/10.1086/701042>.

<sup>9</sup> Amy Austin Holmes, *Social Unrest and American Military Bases in Turkey and Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2014).

by the more violent and widespread destruction of Belarussian railways which continue to complicate the logistical efforts of Russian forces since the start of the war.<sup>10</sup>

Nonviolent movements are also occurring in the authoritarian regimes of China and Iran, but to little effect. In China, anti-COVID protestors called for their president, Xi Jinping, to step down in the first significant challenge to control of the country.<sup>11</sup> Iran was shaken by over six months of protests following the police killing of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini while in custody.<sup>12</sup> While initially peaceful, government crackdowns resulted in the rise of violent methods amongst protestors who began throwing rocks and attacking government officials and their supporters.<sup>13</sup> These mixed methods, defined as the employment of both violent and nonviolent tactics, have caused increasing disruption in Iran. Whether Russian violence, Chinese non-violence, or Iran's mixed approach will best achieve their objectives is worthy of investigation.

This thesis seeks to address the question of which tactics of resistance are most successful in achieving desired outcomes for social movements under varied regimes and conditions. The research analyzes maximalist campaigns, defined in the social sciences as those in which the movement seeks to overthrow their government, breakaway from their government, or expel a foreign government from their country. While this research has roots within international relations, social movement theory, and contentious politics, it is especially pertinent to those in the special operations community, which focuses on supporting resistance movements in unconventional warfare or defeating these movements through foreign internal defense and counterinsurgency. As such, special

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<sup>10</sup> Liz Sly, "The Belarussian Railway Workers Who Helped Thwart Russia's Attack on Kyiv," *Washington Post*, April 24, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/23/ukraine-belarus-railway-saboteurs-russia/>.

<sup>11</sup> "Are China's Lockdown Protests the Beginning of the End for Xi Jinping?," *POLITICO* (blog), November 29, 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/are-chinas-lockdown-protests-the-beginning-of-the-end-for-xi-jinping/>.

<sup>12</sup> Peter Kenyon, "Iranians Are Still Protesting 6 Months after the Death of 22-Year-Old Mahsa Amini," *NPR*, April 3, 2023, sec. Middle East, <https://www.npr.org/2023/04/03/1167683220/iranians-are-still-protesting-6-months-after-the-death-of-22-year-old-mahsa-amin>.

<sup>13</sup> Dana Sammy, "Anti-Government Demonstrations in Iran: A Long-Term Challenge for the Islamic Republic," *ACLEDDATA* (blog), April 12, 2023, <https://acleddata.com/2023/04/12/anti-government-demonstrations-in-iran-a-long-term-challenge-for-the-islamic-republic/>.

operations forces (SOF) needs to understand the conditions that result in a movement's success or failure.<sup>14</sup>

## A. RESEARCH QUESTION

U.S. Army doctrine in the *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare* manual, ATP 3-18.1, guides SOF, the “resistance profession,” on the tactics to support or defeat resistance movements.<sup>15</sup> In denied territory, unconventional warfare seeks to grow these movements to disrupt, coerce, or enable regime change. In friendly or neutral countries, SOF seeks to suppress hostile movements using Foreign Internal Defense (FID) or Counterinsurgency (COIN). This dichotomous relationship with resistance movements requires both a detailed understanding of how they come to exist, grow, achieve their ends, or are thwarted. Military doctrine seeks to answer these questions from a practitioner's perspective and thus must be buttressed by research identifies the most relevant factors in both movement success and failure.

Many scholars, activists, and researchers have sought to identify the conditions under which “weak” actors defeat their “stronger” adversaries. When viewed through an unconventional warfare or resistance lens, these authors highlight the advantages of employing indirect and opposing strategies, as noted in Arreguin-Toft's seminal work *How the Weak Win Wars*.<sup>16</sup> When these roles are reversed, however, these same insights apply to those adversaries who seek to overcome a conventional defense in an opposing country. Rather than directly targeting the strength of a well prepared and determined military, they take the indirect approach of targeting a vulnerable population. It is thus important to understand these movements and their tactics in terms of both offense and defense.

A social movement with maximalist objectives shares many similarities with a nation waging a war of unlimited military objectives. A maximalist movement seeks to

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<sup>14</sup> “ATP 3-18.1 Special Forces Unconventional Warfare” (Headquarters, Department of the Army, March 21, 2019), [https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB\\_ID=1006688](https://armypubs.army.mil/ProductMaps/PubForm/Details.aspx?PUB_ID=1006688).

<sup>15</sup> “ATP 3-18.1 Special Forces Unconventional Warfare.”

<sup>16</sup> Ivan Arreguin-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict,” *International Security* 26, no. 1 (2001): 93–128, <https://doi.org/10.1162/016228801753212868>.

overthrow its government, separate from them, or expel a foreign power.<sup>17</sup> The term draws its origins from the early days of the Russian Revolution of 1917, where it was used to differentiate the revolutionary Bolsheviks, who sought to overthrow and replace the Tzar, from their more reform-minded counterparts.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, nations seeking to overthrow an enemy government are said to be waging an unlimited war or having unlimited political objectives.<sup>19</sup> This term draws its origins from Sir Julian Corbett, celebrated naval historian, who, building upon the work of Prussian General Carl von Clausewitz, coined this distinction between unlimited and limited wars just prior to the Russian Revolution.<sup>20</sup>

Just as governments engaged in unlimited wars will seek to define the strategies they employ in achieving victory, maximalist campaigns can broadly be categorized by their use of either a violent, nonviolent or mixed methods approach to resistance. Many resistance movements will inherently prefer one of these options based upon their unique cultural sensitivities, the circumstances leading to the resistance, and the resources available to them. SOF professionals have been raised in the shadow of Mao's revolutionary warfare, advocating for a mix of mobile and guerrilla warfare, but current research asks if Mao's advocacy of violence produces the best outcomes compared to the alternatives.<sup>21</sup> Erica Chenoweth suggests that nonviolent resistance in broader maximalist campaigns can have higher probabilities of success and achieve longer-term stability because they lower the logistical and moral barrier to entry, increasing

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<sup>17</sup> Erica Chenoweth and Orion A Lewis, "Unpacking Nonviolent Campaigns: Introducing the NAVCO 2.0 Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (2013): 415–23.

<sup>18</sup> "J. C. Mariategui (1924): History of the World Crisis – Lecture 5," accessed August 27, 2023, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/mariategui/works/1924-hwc/hwc05.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> "What's in a Name II: 'Total War' and Other Terms That Mean Nothing," *Military Strategy Magazine*, accessed August 27, 2023, <https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/article/whats-in-a-name-ii-total-war-and-other-terms-that-mean-nothing/>.

<sup>20</sup> "The Project Gutenberg eBook of Some Principles of Maritime Strategy, by Julian Stafford Corbett," accessed August 27, 2023, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15076/15076-h/15076-h.htm>; "What's in a Name II."

<sup>21</sup> Zedong Mao, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, Books That Matter (Praeger, 1961).

movement size, and enabling a more diverse and durable movement.<sup>22</sup> This, however, is actively debated, as new research examines how a mixed-methods approach may increase government repression, though its effect on success outcomes is less clear.<sup>23</sup>

Many scholars have also attempted to document the range of strategies at a government's disposal for dealing with oppositional social movements. Governments generally seek to demobilize their opponents through violence and intimidation, control of information, imprisonment or judicial action, and political division. In his 1987 book, *The State as Terrorist: The Policy of State Political Violence*, George A. Lopez asserts that violence is frequently the most overt form of repression.<sup>24</sup> Governments use police brutality, political killings, disappearances, and torture are used to intimidate and silence opposition groups. Governments also shape the information space to change the public's perceptions of both dissidents and the government to increase support for these repressive measures.<sup>25</sup> Governments weaponize their judicial arm to reinforce the state's legitimacy in relation to their rivals and to ritualize the punishment of dissidents and maintain loyalty.<sup>26</sup> To further spoil a social movement's cohesion, governments also attempt to co-opt through concessions or by allowing participation in the political process. However, these strategies can backfire and lead to increased support for the movement, as well as international attention and condemnation.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Erica Chenoweth, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Columbia Studies in Terrorism and Irregular Warfare (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Tompkins, "A Quantitative Reevaluation of Radical Flank Effects within Nonviolent Campaigns," in *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, vol. 38, Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change (Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2015), 103–35, <https://doi.org/10.1108/S0163-786X20150000038004>.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Stohl and George A. Lopez, *The State as Terrorist: The Dynamics of Governmental Violence and Repression*, Contributions in Political Science, No. 103 (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1984).

<sup>25</sup> Pearce Edwards and Daniel Arnon, "Violence on Many Sides: Framing Effects on Protest and Support for Repression," *British Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 2 (2021): 488–506, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123419000413>.

<sup>26</sup> Edwards and Arnon.

<sup>27</sup> Michael L. Gross, "Backfire: The Dark Side of Nonviolent Resistance," *Ethics & International Affairs* 32, no. 3 (ed 2018): 317–28, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679418000412>.

The research question that guides this thesis is: Which tactics of resistance are most successful in achieving their desired outcomes for social movements engaged in maximalist campaigns? Key to this research is the examination of four hypotheses that arose from the contentions of academics in studying resistance. First, the combination of nonviolent and violent techniques provides the greatest probability of success. Second, increased movement size directly contributes to movement success. Third, government strategies relying on violence are more likely to backfire and lead to greater movement success. Finally, social movements receiving third-party support will be more likely to successfully overcome the asymmetric material advantages of governments. This thesis tests those hypotheses using statistical methods, combined with global data on movement tactics and outcomes, to assess the underlying forces driving the success and failure of maximalist movements.

## **B. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The results drawn from these statistical models indicate that several factors are significantly associated with movement success, including population size, regime type, and wealth. Contrary to previous academic assertions, the models reveal that having a political component in control of the movement is not the sole determinant of success. While political leadership was significant, when controlling for all other variables, the selection of a mixed violence strategy had a substantial positive impact on movement success. Furthermore, the evidence shows that the selection of a violence-only strategy appears to reduce movement success, aligning with Chenoweth's arguments. These findings highlight a positive radical flank effect, where states offer rewards to moderate competitor groups to isolate or thwart violent elements in the movement.

Two additional assertions from Chenoweth and Stephan find support within the models examined here: movement size and the backfire effect. While movement numbers do not guarantee success, the evidence shows that they significantly contribute to the durability and leverage of the movement. In conjunction with a mixed-methods strategy, this lends credence to the assertion that the greatest diversity of participants and tactics is key to success against an adapting and innovative government opponent. Equally, as

government violence increased, so did the odds of movement success. This implies that when facing off against its own population, the traditional strengths of the state turned into weaknesses, shifting domestic and international support to their domestic opponents.

This research holds significant implications for SOF in their dual role of assisting or suppressing resistance movements. One key takeaway is the necessity for clear strategic goals when determining whether to support a resistance movement. Aligning diverging interests between SOF and their supported movement is crucial, especially when the most common U.S. objective is disruption of an opponent for coercive purposes. The decision to support movements within the targeted country's domestic population, often in denied or semi-denied territory, where government violence is likely, can potentially benefit from the blowback effect. Intentionally causing security forces to violently overreact, even before the movement is prepared to engage in violence, can be a useful tool to grow the resistance movement. When examining which types of movements are best suited to receive SOF support, the findings favor a mixed methods movement which underscores the importance of employing Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations forces in various support to resistance (STR) scenarios. While creating a capable guerrilla force is important, these findings argue that it should be a small component of a mixed strategy, overseen by strong political leadership within the movement.

The research also reinforces the ongoing relevance of counter-terror, counterinsurgency, and Security Force Assistance programs. The findings presented here also imply that a disciplined and capable government force may be able to effectively avoid the blowback effect that spreads the flames of resistance. This further implies a key role for Special Forces in executing train, advise, and assist missions to increase partner capacity and reduce the freedom of maneuver for violent actors, while also pointing to the critical need for Civil Affairs in building government and institutional capacity, and contributing to national protections.



## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many readers will be familiar with the realist approach to international affairs which draws its roots from Thucydides and can be best summarized by his famous quote “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”<sup>28</sup> Following this school of thought, resistance and revolution have historically been couched within the realm of violence. Even the seminal text, *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, frames the topic in the “Revolutionary War” chapter as essentially an armed struggle for control of the state.<sup>29</sup> More recent authors have even argued that violent revolution is on the upswing and more successful than ever.<sup>30</sup> Buried within each of these claims is the foundational assumption that violence is necessary for change. However, these arguments seem ill-equipped to account for the growing success of nonviolent movements, especially when those movements face violent government opposition.

A more unorthodox school of thought argues for the use of nonviolent tactics as a more successful and stable means for movement strategy. Authors such as Sharp, Zunes, and Ackerman and Duvall have all argued that nonviolent resistance is in fact superior due to its ability to mobilize larger swathes of the population and turn the state’s monopoly of violence against it.<sup>31</sup> Far from being purely a moral choice, nonviolence was the logical approach for those seeking to overcome their government opposition.

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<sup>28</sup> Notre Dame International Security Center, “An Introduction to Realism in International Relations,” ND International Security Center, July 21, 2022, <https://ndisc.nd.edu/news-media/news/an-introduction-to-realism-in-international-relations/>; “Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War, Book 5, Chapter 89,” accessed June 12, 2023, <https://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:abo:tlg,0003,001:5:89>.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Paret, Gordon Alexander Craig, and Felix Gilbert, *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, Princeton Paperbacks (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986).

<sup>30</sup> “Rage Against the Machines: Explaining Outcomes in Counterinsurgency Wars | International Organization | Cambridge Core,” accessed June 9, 2023, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/abs/rage-against-the-machines-explaining-outcomes-in-counterinsurgency-wars/7D087F93A59E7D15931576039C0641BF>.

<sup>31</sup> Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation*, 3rd U.S. ed (East Boston, MA: Albert Einstein Institution, 2008); Stephen Zunes, “Unarmed Insurrections against Authoritarian Governments in the Third World: A New Kind of Revolution,” *Third World Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (1994): 403–26; Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, “Nonviolent Power in the Twentieth Century,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33, no. 2 (2000): 147–48, <https://doi.org/10.2307/420882>.



Increased government investments in counterinsurgency, the estrangement of the general population by violence, the greater participatory potential of nonviolence and the creation of more effective institutions through nonviolence argue in favor of this approach.<sup>32</sup> However, these arguments relied on their qualitative examination of a smaller pool of cases and lacked the systematic comparison of outcomes frequently seen in the revolutionary war camp.

More recently, Chenoweth and Stephan received significant acclaim in 2011 with their work “Why Civil Resistance Works” by arguing for nonviolent campaigns through the creation of the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) dataset.<sup>33</sup> This was one of the first datasets to comprehensively compare the ability of both violent and nonviolent movements to achieve maximalist ends and examined a large sample of 312 movements from 1900 through 2006. Their findings revealed that nonviolent campaigns have been twice as effective in achieving full or partial success compared to violent counterparts. They attributed this disparity to higher population participation rates enabling a greater variety of tactics, expanding costs on their government, and shifting the loyalties of their opponent’s previous supporters. An important limitation of their method, however, was that all analyzed campaigns were coded as either “violent” or “nonviolent,” despite many campaigns utilizing a mixed approach. Chenoweth and Stephan acknowledged that it is common for both armed and unarmed elements of a movement to operate simultaneously, but their dichotomous categorization obscures these complexities.

Building upon Chenoweth’s work, Benjamin Acosta created the Revolutionary and Militant Organization dataset (REVMOD) to address these shortcomings.<sup>34</sup> REVMOD categorized movements as either violent, nonviolent, or mixed, and added a range of additional variables such as leadership decapitation, graded success, use of terrorism, and third-party support. While ambitious, Acosta focused much of his effort on

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<sup>32</sup> Zunes, “Unarmed Insurrections against Authoritarian Governments in the Third World.”

<sup>33</sup> Chenoweth, *Why Civil Resistance Works*.

<sup>34</sup> Benjamin Acosta, “Reconceptualizing Resistance Organizations and Outcomes: Introducing the Revolutionary and Militant Organizations Dataset (REVMOD),” *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 5 (2019): 724–34.

confirming the importance of an organization's political command in achieving successful outcomes. He argues that this sole factor is more substantial than the selection of a strategy of violence or nonviolence and argues that nonviolent organizations that succeed do so "despite their nonviolence- not because of it."<sup>35</sup> However, Acosta's models did not control for variables that have a near academic consensus on their impact toward movement success (population and GDP per capita) and did not consider lagged variables to account for autocorrelation, or other commonly cited characteristics of movements such as third party support, use of terrorism, or even the type of government response. More research is therefore needed to examine the conflicting claims from this literature.

Most explanations for movement success and failure generally fall within three theoretical perspectives: cultural framing, resource mobilization, and political opportunity.<sup>36</sup> Cultural framing theories assess the beliefs and meanings that enable a social movement to inspire, legitimize, and mobilize their campaigns. Resource mobilization theory, conversely, evaluates the material, human, organizational, cultural, and moral resources that are necessary for a movement to succeed. Finally, political opportunity theories pinpoint the variable opportunities that institutional structures, political systems, and individual actors afford these challengers.<sup>37</sup> While each of these theories provide great insight into how and when movements succeed, this paper draws primarily from the resource mobilization and political opportunity realms when constructing its approach as they provide useful frameworks for understanding how social movements mobilize their resources and exploit the opportunities in their environment to achieve their goals.

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<sup>35</sup> Acosta, 731.

<sup>36</sup> *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, 1st ed. (John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119168577>.

<sup>37</sup> Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 21.

## A. KEY CONCEPTS

### 1. Government Strategies and the Blowback Effect

Blowback is the effect that turns a government's repression against itself, causing the population to shift their support in favor of protestors, terrorists, and resistance fighters. Many military readers will have encountered this effect when studying the *Accidental Guerrilla*, written by retired LTC David Kilcullen.<sup>38</sup> Kilcullen emphasized that while insurgent groups would establish a presence in an ungoverned area, it was not until after foreign military intervention that the local population would ally with the insurgents. A study on Russian military operations in the North Caucasus from 2000 to 2008 showed a similar impact when confronting armed resistance within the territory. Russian offensive operations in contested areas were far less effective at containing violence than blocking operations, frequently leading to the amplification of violence in existing areas and the spillover of violence into new areas.<sup>39</sup>

This same blowback effect can be seen to benefit organizations that employ mixed or nonviolent methods. On February 1, 2005, King Gyanendra seized power in Nepal, initiating a civil war between government forces and the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoists (CPN-M). Following several months of fighting and a failed election, thousands of Nepalese instigated street-protests that the government attempted to quell with violence, killing 18 and injuring some 4,000 people.<sup>40</sup> This only served to increase the size of these protests, which eventually forced King Gyanendra to reinstate the House of Representatives on April 24, 2006. Chenoweth's study supports and expands this claim, arguing that these nonviolent organizations are more effective than their violent counterparts. She hypothesizes that, similar to the CPN-M in Nepal, they can separate

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<sup>38</sup> David Kilcullen, *The Accidental Guerrilla: Fighting Small Wars in the Midst of a Big One* (Cary: Oxford University Press USA – OSO, 2009).

<sup>39</sup> Monica Duffy Toft and Yuri M. Zhukov, "Denial and Punishment in the North Caucasus: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Coercive Counter-Insurgency," *Journal of Peace Research* 49, no. 6 (2012): 785–800, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343312448389>.

<sup>40</sup> Human Rights Watch, "Nepal: Events of 2006," in *World Report 2007*, 2007, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2007/country-chapters/nepal>.

elites and state security forces from their government and pressure the regime to assume more conciliatory policies.<sup>41</sup>

## 2. Violence and Terrorism

Violence has historically been viewed as the ultimate arbiter of outcomes, so it is unsurprising that many social movements choose violent methods when contesting their government. Using violent tactics can disrupt the status quo more forcefully, garner attention through dramatic actions, and exert immediate pressure on the ruling authorities. Violence can generate media coverage and international attention, drawing sympathy and support even from across borders.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, the threat of violence can create a sense of urgency for the government to address the movement's demands, potentially accelerating negotiations or concessions.<sup>43</sup> In situations where individuals feel frustrated with a lack of progress through nonviolent means or a government's repression has escalated to a point where nonviolent methods are met with excessive force, violence may be seen as a necessity for the movement's survival.<sup>44</sup>

Terrorism is a form of violence that some movements employ to achieve their political goals through the targeting of civilians and the creation of fear and chaos. While terrorism can be effective in some cases, it is also a very risky strategy. Frequently shadowed in mystery or intrigue, terrorism is still a resource dependent activity and occurs under the externally constrained environment of the terrorists' society. It is therefore still inhibited by the ability to obtain people, money, and material.<sup>45</sup> Terrorists frequently seek to use the blowback effect to elicit an overreaction from the government

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<sup>41</sup> Chenoweth, *Why Civil Resistance Works*.

<sup>42</sup> William A. Gamson and Gadi Wolfsfeld, "Movements and Media as Interacting Systems," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528 (July 1, 1993): 114–25, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716293528001009>.

<sup>43</sup> Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, "Conciliation, Counterterrorism, and Patterns of Terrorist Violence," *International Organization* 59, no. 1 (January 2005): 145–76, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818305050022>.

<sup>44</sup> Donatella della Porta, "Social Movement Studies and Political Violence," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Political Violence* (2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN: Routledge, 2012), 245.

<sup>45</sup> David Boyns and James David Ballard, "Developing a Sociological Theory for the Empirical Understanding of Terrorism," *American Sociologist* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 5–25, <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02692394>.

that then mobilizes sympathy and support for their movement.<sup>46</sup> While many analysts have concluded that these clandestine networks are fluid, adaptable and highly resilient to their opposing hierarchical states, this ignores the many vulnerabilities and inefficiencies of these threat networks.<sup>47</sup> The reality is that the average terrorist faces substantial barriers and may rely as much on a faith in their ultimate success to persist as on credible chances of success.<sup>48</sup>

The decision to resort to terrorism, therefore, can also be viewed through the lens of both grievances and perceived outcomes. Studies indicate that while higher levels of the rule of law can decrease domestic terrorism, democratization and any resulting political exclusion can also drive these attacks up.<sup>49</sup> The openness of democracies provides these groups with the ability to operate freely, thereby lowering the costs of resorting to violence. Amongst democracies, those with immature institutions, a deficient rule of law, and poor minority protections experience the highest levels of domestic terrorism.<sup>50</sup> A rational actor theory may thus view the question of whether to join these terrorist organizations from a more transactional perspective. Some scholars posit that the decision to join an insurgency is the sum of the perceived current and future rewards for joining after weighing and subtracting the costs.<sup>51</sup> Shifting this perceived calculus will correspondingly affect the ability of these organizations to attract and maintain members.

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<sup>46</sup> “Another Look at Jujitsu Politics | START.Umd.Edu,” accessed June 16, 2023, <https://www.start.umd.edu/news/another-look-jujitsu-politics>.

<sup>47</sup> Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Calvert Jones, “Assessing the Dangers of Illicit Networks: Why al-Qaida May Be Less Threatening Than Many Think,” *International Security* 33, no. 2 (October 1, 2008): 7–44, <https://doi.org/10.1162/isec.2008.33.2.7>.

<sup>48</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, “Revolutionary Dynamics: The Inherent Inefficiency of the Underground,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 2, no. 2 (1990): 193–211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546559008427061>.

<sup>49</sup> “Domestic Terrorism in Democratic States: Understanding and Addressing Minority Grievances – Sambuddha Ghatak, Aaron Gold, Brandon C. Prins, 2019,” accessed June 16, 2023, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0022002717734285>.

<sup>50</sup> “Challenging the State: Effect of Minority Discrimination, Economic Globalization, and Political Openness on Domestic Terrorism – Naval Postgraduate School,” accessed June 16, 2023, <https://nps.primo.exlibrisgroup.com>.

<sup>51</sup> Gordon H. McCormick and Frank Giordano, “Things Come Together: Symbolic Violence and Guerrilla Mobilisation,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2007): 295–320.

### 3. Nonviolent Resistance

Nonviolent resistance is a strategy of social change that relies on the power of persuasion and the mobilization of public opinion to achieve its goals. It is a form of protest that does not use violence, but instead uses methods such as boycotts, strikes, civil disobedience, and mass demonstrations to bring about social change.<sup>52</sup> Nonviolent resistance has a long history of success in achieving societal change, including the American civil rights movement, Indian independence movement, and South African anti-apartheid movement. It should not be conflated with a pacifist ideology, or the rejection of violence on ethical, moral, or religious grounds. Nonviolent resistance involves a coordinated campaign of collective action employing nonviolent methods to achieve movement goals and is based upon the logical utility of that approach for achieving success.<sup>53</sup>

An important issue revolves around defining the margins between nonviolent and violent action in social movements. Often, nonviolent movements coexist with violent factions or subgroups conducting violent operations.<sup>54</sup> However, the academic community lacks clarity on when a movement or campaign can be distinctly categorized as nonviolent, often focusing on perfect representations rather than assessing the ratios when weighing violent and nonviolent actions.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, the definition of violence within the civil resistance literature is contentious, with differing views on whether actions like property destruction should be deemed violent based on the harm caused to individuals. Establishing constant definitions and measures is crucial to prevent definitional confusion of the various forms of opposition.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> “198 Methods of Nonviolent Action,” AEI/ Empowering Humankind, accessed September 15, 2023, <https://www.aeinstein.org/198-methods-of-nonviolent-action>.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1994), <https://nps.primo.exlibrisgroup.com>.

<sup>54</sup> Erica Chenoweth and Kurt Schock, “Do Contemporaneous Armed Challenges Affect the Outcomes of Mass Nonviolent Campaigns?,” *Mobilization (San Diego, Calif.)* 20, no. 4 (2015): 427–51, <https://doi.org/10.17813/1086-671X-20-4-427>.

<sup>55</sup> Chenoweth and Lewis, “Unpacking Nonviolent Campaigns.”

<sup>56</sup> Chenoweth and Lewis.

#### 4. Mixed Methods and a Radical Flank Effect

While a movement may be largely characterized as either violent or nonviolent, many movements will employ some combination of both strategies to achieve their aims. This may result from a conscious decision to employ mixed methods, a divergence of preferred tactics within the group, or the presence of both more moderate and radical elements in a given competition space. The impact that these more violent or extreme elements have on the outcomes of their moderate equivalents is termed the radical flank effect (RFE).<sup>57</sup> The ultimate utility of this mixed methods approach, and thus the presence of a positive or negative RFE, is frequently debated and contrasted sharply against their purely violent or nonviolent counterparts.

The positive radical flank effect concept suggests that the presence of more extreme elements within a movement can enhance its bargaining power and leverage, as it introduces the possibility of escalated actions if negotiations or reforms are not considered. This can make the demands of the moderate factions appear more reasonable in comparison and potentially lead to a more receptive response from the government or ruling authority. However, Chenoweth and Schock contend that nonviolent resistance movements with a violent radical flank are less successful than those nonviolent movements without them.<sup>58</sup> They argue that when the actions of violent factions within a movement garner attention and overshadow its nonviolent efforts, the movement may face criticism, marginalization, and reduced public sympathy. Moreover, the government or ruling authority may exploit these violent actions to justify repressive measures, framing the movement as a threat to stability.

More recently, scholars have challenged this assertion, with many arguing for the utility of these radical flanks to act as spoilers for their nonviolent counterparts. Quantitative analysis of non-maximalist movements has shown increased support for

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<sup>57</sup> Tompkins, “A Quantitative Reevaluation of Radical Flank Effects within Nonviolent Campaigns.”

<sup>58</sup> Chenoweth and Schock, “Do Contemporaneous Armed Challenges Affect the Outcomes of Mass Nonviolent Campaigns?”

moderate factions when the population is presented with their more radical alternatives.<sup>59</sup> Countries such as South Africa and Ukraine have also credited the specter of violence from large, predominately peaceful movements in the success of the apartheid-era African National Congress (ANC) and the Orange Revolution in 2014.<sup>60</sup> While these studies do advocate for positive radical flank effect, the evidence supporting mixed methods in maximalist campaigns is more limited. Acosta's research with the REVMOD dataset, previously described, showed that a mixed-method approach was the most likely to succeed in maximalist campaigns, though the author does not argue for that approach specifically.<sup>61</sup>

The potential utility of mixed methods in social movements, particularly in the context of maximalist campaigns, lies in their ability to harness a broader spectrum of tactics to achieve strategic goals. While adhering to nonviolent principles can resonate with moral values and attract a wide range of supporters, the inclusion of a mixed-method approach can serve to amplify the movement's impact. The strategic advantage of mixed methods is its multidimensional challenge to the status quo. Peaceful demonstrations, civil disobedience, and mass mobilization can generate public sympathy and foster international support, highlighting the movement's legitimacy. Simultaneously, the threat of escalated actions or disruption posed by more radical factions can influence decision-makers to take the movement's demands seriously. This comprehensive approach not only demonstrates the movement's determination but also showcases its ability to maneuver across tactical spectrums and can effectively fragment the government's response strategy.

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<sup>59</sup> Brent Simpson, Robb Willer, and Matthew Feinberg, "Radical Flanks of Social Movements Can Increase Support for Moderate Factions," *PNAS Nexus* 1, no. 3 (July 1, 2022): pgac110, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgac110>.

<sup>60</sup> John Braithwaite, "Rethinking Radical Flank Theory: South Africa," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY, January 1, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2377443>; Serhiy Kudelia, "When Numbers Are Not Enough: The Strategic Use of Violence in Ukraine's 2014 Revolution," *Comparative Politics* 50, no. 4 (July 1, 2018): 501–21, <https://doi.org/10.5129/001041518823565623>.

<sup>61</sup> Acosta, "Reconceptualizing Resistance Organizations and Outcomes."



## 5. Political Leadership

The importance of political leadership at the head of a resistance movement can be drawn back at least to Lenin's 1902 work, *What is to be Done?*, where he argued for the creation of a political vanguard to spread the revolution amongst the masses.<sup>62</sup> Political leaders are able to develop and articulate a clear vision for a new society, organize the masses to take action, and represent the movement in negotiations with the government. Hezbollah, for example, is led by a Secretary-General that provides the theological basis for their resistance (*muqawama*), while exerting tight control over their military and political activities.<sup>63</sup> The political component can vary greatly in the degree to which they command their respective organizations, but a minimal capacity for instituting political programs can be valuable for those that seek to execute a maximalist campaign.<sup>64</sup>

Many resistance movements, particularly those in Europe during World War II, were organized and led by political leaders.<sup>65</sup> This was because political parties had pre-existing networks of activists and supporters, and because political leaders had the skills and experience necessary to organize and lead a resistance movement. There can, however, also be split leadership, in which the guerrilla forces are led by an independent military leader. This was the case for the Provisional Irish Republican Army of the 1990s, which employed terror tactics until their political wing Sinn Fein was admitted into peace talks, resulting in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.<sup>66</sup> While successful in that case, the

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<sup>62</sup> Vladimir Ilich Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, Penguin Classics (London, England: Penguin Books, 1988).

<sup>63</sup> Marco Nilsson, "Hezbollah and the Framing of Resistance," *Third World Quarterly* 41, no. 9 (September 1, 2020): 1595–1614, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2020.1779587>.

<sup>64</sup> Acosta, "Reconceptualizing Resistance Organizations and Outcomes."

<sup>65</sup> Paul J. Tompkins, *Undergrounds in Insurgent, Revolutionary, and Resistance Warfare*, Second edition., Assessing Revolutionary and Insurgent Strategies (Fort Bragg, North Carolina: United States Army Special Operations Command, 2013).

<sup>66</sup> James C. Dingley, *The IRA: The Irish Republican Army*, PSI Guides to Terrorists, Insurgents, and Armed Groups (Praeger, 2012).

Resistance Operating Concept advocates for the political leadership to be the de-facto organizer for a resistance network operating against an occupier.<sup>67</sup>

## 6. Third-Party Support

The influence of third parties plays a significant role in the struggle between governments and nonviolent social movements.<sup>68</sup> Third parties may include international organizations, religious groups, media outlets, or other social movements and governments. These third parties can influence the outcome of the struggle by providing training, resources, or international attention to the movement. Third parties may also play a role in mediating the conflict between the government and the movement or provide an avenue for the movement to bring its grievances to the international community. This third-party support, however, is not universally positive as it presents both opportunities and dangers to both governments and social movements.

Third parties may provide political, military, or economic support to help stabilize a government or strengthen its legitimacy, as it seeks to combat a maximalist campaign. Other governments may seek to support their allies by attempting to reduce the duration, magnitude, or violence associated with the conflict to enable a rapid return to stability.<sup>69</sup> The U.S., for example, provides security cooperation in the form of funds, arms transfers, joint training, humanitarian assistance, and military to military engagement to over 200 countries and international organizations.<sup>70</sup> Tolstrup, Seeberg, and Glavind, however, provide insight into how this international aid can disconnect a repressive government from its population and enables it to assume riskier strategies.<sup>71</sup> Great power patrons,

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<sup>67</sup> Otto C. Fiala, *Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)* (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: The Joint Special Operations University Press, 2020).

<sup>68</sup> *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*.

<sup>69</sup> PATRICK M. REGAN, “Third-Party Interventions and the Duration of Intrastate Conflicts,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46, no. 1 (February 1, 2002): 55–73, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002702046001004>.

<sup>70</sup> Congressional Research Service (CRS), “Defense Primer: DOD ‘Title 10’ Security Cooperation,” CRS Report IF11677, In Focus, May 17, 2021, 10, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11677/4>.

<sup>71</sup> Jakob Tolstrup, Michael Aagaard Seeberg, and Johanne Grøndahl Glavind, “Signals of Support From Great Power Patrons and the Use of Repression During Nonviolent Protests,” *Comparative Political Studies* 52, no. 4 (2019): 514–43, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414018784047>.

especially, provide insulation from negative international pressure such as name-and-shame tactics or sanctions. Thus, while greater defense ties to other governments can increase resources, they may lead to fewer ties and even alienation of their population.

In opposition, third parties can support social movements by providing resources, training, advocacy, or protection/sanctuary. International actors can shield portions of their sponsored movement by granting asylum or refugee status to movement leaders and members who face persecution, or by monitoring and documenting human rights abuses. Foreign governments or international organizations can also use their diplomatic influence to advocate for the rights and freedoms of social movements, while providing them with training and technical expertise.<sup>72</sup> Other social movements can train, recruit, fund, and provide safe havens to movements, increasing their odds of success. While this support can be beneficial, it can also signal threatened governments to increase their repression and has been used to paint movements as puppets of foreign influence.<sup>73</sup> Third parties play an important role in shaping the dynamics of the struggle between governments and social movements but they are not a panacea and may cause unintended consequences, such as strengthening the hand of repressive governments or undermining the legitimacy of social movements.

## **B. HYPOTHESES**

Hypothesis 1: *The use of both nonviolent and violent techniques provides the greatest probability of movement success.* Some scholars argue that movements employing a wide range of tactics, including both nonviolent and violent methods, are more likely to achieve their goals than those that rely on a single approach. For example, the Resistance Operating Concept (ROC) advocates nonviolent protest and armed struggle to broaden a movement's appeal and increase its leverage.<sup>74</sup> Michael Gross

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<sup>72</sup> Kiyoteru Tsutsui, Claire Whitlinger, and Alwyn Lim, "International Human Rights Law and Social Movements: States' Resistance and Civil Society's Insistence," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 8, no. 1 (2012): 367–96, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-lawsocsci-102811-173849>.

<sup>73</sup> Sabine C. Carey, "The Use of Repression as a Response to Domestic Dissent," *Political Studies*, *Political Studies*, 58, no. 1 (2010): 167–86, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2008.00771.x>.

<sup>74</sup> Fiala, *Resistance Operating Concept (ROC)*.

states that even nonviolent movements will intentionally provoke violence from their opponents, blending violence and nonviolence to achieve political objectives.<sup>75</sup>

Hypothesis 2: *Increased movement size increases the probability of movement success.* Many scholars have argued that larger movements are more likely to achieve their goals, as they have greater resources, broader support networks, and more bargaining power. For example, Chenoweth and Stephan found that nonviolent movements with high numbers of participants were much more likely to succeed than those with low levels.<sup>76</sup>

Hypothesis 3: *Government strategies that rely heavily on violence are more likely to experience the blowback effect and lead to greater movement success.* This hypothesis revolves around the notion that governments employing extensive violent repression against social movements may inadvertently contribute to the strengthening and resilience of those movements. Scholars have argued that excessive government violence can provoke public outrage, galvanize sympathy for the movement's cause, and lead to increased recruitment and participation.<sup>77</sup> When governments respond with excessive force, it can alienate segments of the population and even push moderates towards more radical positions within the movement. The potential for a blowback against oppressive tactics may create a dynamic through which the movement gains moral legitimacy and garners broader societal support, ultimately undermining the government's attempt to quell the movement through violent means.

Hypothesis 4: *Social movements with third party support are more likely to successfully overcome the asymmetrical material advantages of governments.* Social movements often face significant challenges in their efforts to overcome the material advantages of governments, which can include access to resources, authority, and institutional power. Third parties can provide social movements with a range of resources, that could help to level the playing field between social movements and

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<sup>75</sup> Gross, "Backfire."

<sup>76</sup> Chenoweth, *Why Civil Resistance Works*.

<sup>77</sup> Gross, "Backfire."

governments. Scholars like Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow have argued that third parties can play a crucial role in the success of social movements, particularly by providing material resources like funding, expertise, and media coverage.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly, "Contentious Politics and Social Movements," in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, Oxford Handbooks of Political Science (Oxford University Press, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199566020.003.0019>.

### III. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the data sources, variables, hypotheses, and methods used to conduct a quantitative analysis of social movements engaged in maximalist campaigns. It then uses network analysis to explore the topography and centrality of different types of movements and their connections. Using existing datasets, such as ICEWS and REVMOD, four hypotheses about the factors that influence movement success are tested using logistic regression. The results and robustness checks of the statistical analysis are reported and the findings and their implications for the theory and practice of resistance movements discussed.

#### A. DATA DESCRIPTION

To effectively identify the critical components of movement success and failure, a substantial and detailed dataset is required. Acosta's REVMOD dataset was selected to serve as the foundation for study, as it contained the necessary information on the greatest variety of factors. While REVMOD was beneficial, significant gaps in the dataset, particularly in areas of regime type and economic development, required the inclusion of data from the V-DEM dataset. Finally, ICEWs data was used to generate measurements of the types of tactics used by governments and social movements in each county-year.

The Revolutionary and Militant Organizations dataset (REVMOD) is a comprehensive dataset that contains information on the structure, goals, tactics, and outcomes of revolutionary and militant organizations around the world up to 2014.<sup>79</sup> The dataset covers a wide range of groups, including those that use nonviolent tactics as well as those that employ violent methods, and provides a wealth of information for scholars studying the dynamics of social movements and armed conflict. REVMOD has been used in numerous studies to analyze factors such as leadership, group size, external support, and the effectiveness of tactics, and its detailed information on specific groups and their activities allows for comparative analysis. REVMOD was used to measure the dependent

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<sup>79</sup> Acosta, "Reconceptualizing Resistance Organizations and Outcomes."

variable of social movement success, as well as the independent variables of leadership decapitation, use of terrorism, selected movement strategy, and third party support to the movement.

V-DEM, the Varieties of Democracy dataset, is highly regarded for its use of expert-coded data on differences between political regimes, while also providing information on total population, and GDP per capita.<sup>80</sup> The V-DEM dataset has long been utilized by political scientists due to its granular detail on a wide range of government indicators. By incorporating this information, important factors, such as differences in movement success across regime types, could be investigated for corroboration with previous research.

The Integrated Crisis Early Warning System (ICEWS) is a database that collects dynamic information on global political events and social unrest starting in 1995.<sup>81</sup> The system monitors news reports, social media, and other sources to identify potential crises and conflicts, and provides alerts to governments and other organizations to facilitate early response. ICEWS covers a wide range of events, including protests, strikes, armed conflicts, and diplomatic negotiations, and provides detailed information on the actors involved, their goals and strategies, and the outcomes of their actions. The system's broad coverage and up-to-date information make it a valuable resource for scholars studying the dynamics of social and political change.

A logit regression model using lagged independent variables was selected for this research with the unit of analysis being social movement-country-year, enabling the analysis of changes in size, leaders, strategic approach, and other factors over time, shown in Figure 1. The dependent variable of social movement success was coded as a

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<sup>80</sup> Coppedge, Michael, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, Nazifa Alizada, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, Agnes Cornell, M. Steven Fish, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerløw, Adam Glynn, Sandra Grahn, Allen Hicken, Garry Hindle, Nina Ilchenko, Katrin Kinzelbach, Joshua Krusell, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Valeriya Mechkova, Juraj Medzihorsky, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Josefine Pernes, Oskar Rydén, Johannes von Römer, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jeffrey Staton, Aksel Sundström, Eitan Tzelgov, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, Steven Wilson and Daniel Ziblatt, "V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Date] Dataset V12" (Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project. <https://doi.org/10.23696/vdemds22>, n.d.).

<sup>81</sup> "Integrated Crisis Early Warning System," Lockheed Martin, January 23, 2023, <https://www.lockheedmartin.com/en-us/capabilities/research-labs/advanced-technology-labs/icews.html>.

binary measure to identify whether a portion of the movement’s outcome goals were achieved or not. This is a lower bar for success than some other research in the field and does not require the full accomplishment of all the movement’s outcome goals. The independent variables of social movement messaging, protesting, and violence are recorded as a ratio of those events in ICEWS to the overall number of events attributed to dissidents in that country-year. These were identified by selecting the relevant Conflict and Mediation Event Observation (CAMEO) coded events in the ICEWS data (CAMEO codes 01, 14, and 19 respectively) and filtered by role. Agents identified as “dissidents” provided the data for social movements, as the ICEWS coding covers banned parties, insurgents, protestors, rebels and separatists.<sup>82</sup> The independent variables of government population control measures and violence are investigated as a percentage of their overall events recorded in ICEWS by country-year. Government atrocities, however, were considered to be so potentially significant and uncommon that they are measured by number of occurrences as opposed to a percentage of the ICEWS recorded government actions.

<b>Dependant Variable:</b>	<b>Unit of Measurement:</b>	<b>Source:</b>
Social Movement Success	Binary	REVMOD
<b>Independent Variable:</b>		
Leadership Decapitation	Binary	REVMOD
Terrorism	Binary	REVMOD
Strategy (Violent, NV, Mixed)	Binary	REVMOD
3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Support to SM	# of Supporting Orgs	REVMOD
SM Messaging	% of Overall Events	ICEWS
SM Protesting	% of Overall Events	ICEWS
SM Violence	% of Overall Events	ICEWS
GOV Pop Control Measures	% of Overall Events	ICEWS
GOV Violence	% of Overall Events	ICEWS
GOV Atrocities	# of Events	ICEWS
<b>Control Variable:</b>		
Polity	Continuous (1 – 20)	V-DEM
Population	Continuous	V-DEM
GDP Per Capita	Continuous	V-DEM

Figure 1. Variables Included in Modeling

<sup>82</sup> Elizabeth Boschee et al., “ICEWS Dictionaries” (Harvard Dataverse, May 6, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/28118>.



While significant effort was made to maintain the large sample size of the REVMOD dataset, significant design choices and associated constraints were required to produce the final dataset. REVMOD was inconsistent with the listed areas of operations and opponents of each social movement, frequently listing whole continents or even global operational areas. These movements were often seeking to create regional empires and were re-coded to include only the primary countries of their operations. Additionally, incorporating ICEWS data proved challenging. As ICEWS does not list specific social movements within their coding, all dissident, insurgent, and protestor events within a country's borders were consolidated and then listed for each social movement operating in that country, in that year. This is problematic for any movement that operated within a country that was competing with multiple movements in a given year, as was the case in Iraq or Afghanistan. Movements with an average of five or fewer ICEWS events per year were also excluded from the dataset, though this may impact findings from areas with little media attention or coverage. Additionally, only the years 1995 to 2014 could be observed due to the limited overlap of REVMOD and ICEWS data. Finally, the decision to lag the independent variables means that the first year of all movements and any movement that existed for only a single year were not included in the models.

## **B. THE NETWORK**

Examining the unique character of the movements within this dataset is important to provide context to later findings. While a quantitative approach utilizing regression models enables the identification of statistically significant trends, it can often 'miss the trees for the forest.' To provide an interdisciplinary understanding of the movements being studied, network analysis was employed due to its ability to visualize and describe the complex web of movements. Network analysis can also be beneficial in understanding how movements may be supporting and influencing each other, and how this may impact their political outcomes.<sup>83</sup> This is significant, as a movement's location within these networks of support, or outside them, could greatly impact their probability of success.

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<sup>83</sup> Stephen P. Borgatti et al., "Network Analysis in the Social Sciences," *Science* 323, no. 5916 (February 13, 2009): 892–95, <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1165821>.

The value of third-party support is especially relevant to SOF as the efficacy of support to resistance and unconventional warfare is dependent on this factor. If third-party support has limited or negligible impact on success outcomes of a movement, then special operations efforts to support them would be equally inconsequential, with significant implications for funding and training. Therefore, the network of movements deserves to be investigated from more than a single discipline to better ascertain the potential impacts on overall movement success.

Network analysis of 267 movements with 448 unique relationships was conducted, though important caveats must be stated. Each relationship is derived from the REVMOD dataset based upon “a formal alliance, affiliation, or partnership” between the organization and other non-state organizations.<sup>84</sup> The REVMOD dataset contains 537 unique movements dating back to 1866, so 89 movements outside of the previously mentioned 1995–2014 timeframe were excluded. Additionally, the value of REVMOD lies in its movement-year measurement, which allows for the analysis of the changing strategies of a movement over time. For this network analysis, a movement had to be generally characterized as either violent, nonviolent, or mixed. This simplification, while necessary, masks many nuances, though attempts will be made to ensure these are fairly presented. Finally, this method does not absolve the issues most commonly associated with the study of dark networks: incompleteness, fuzzy boundaries, and dynamic relationships.<sup>85</sup>

## 1. Network Topography

First, the movements in this data have distinct geographic concentrations that are immediately observable (see Figure 2). The highest levels of movement contention occurred in the India-Pakistan region, followed by the Middle East. Iraq, notably, has a high concentration of movement years, which can be reasonably associated with the U.S. invasion of that country beginning in 2001. Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Columbia, and

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<sup>84</sup> Acosta, “Reconceptualizing Resistance Organizations and Outcomes.”

<sup>85</sup> Valdis Krebs, “Mapping Networks of Terrorist Cells,” *Connections* 24, no. 3 (April 10, 2002): 43–52.

Russia also experienced moderately high levels of activity during this time. Surprisingly, the dataset does not show activity in much of central and southern Africa. This highlights a potential gap in the research, as countries like the Central African Republic should be well represented due to the presence of multiple rebel groups, ultimately capable of seizing the capital.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, China is not represented in the data despite a Uyghur independence movement that was active in that region, with deadly attacks occurring throughout the 1990s.<sup>87</sup> There is only limited presence in much of the Asian-Pacific, eastern Europe, and most of the Americas.

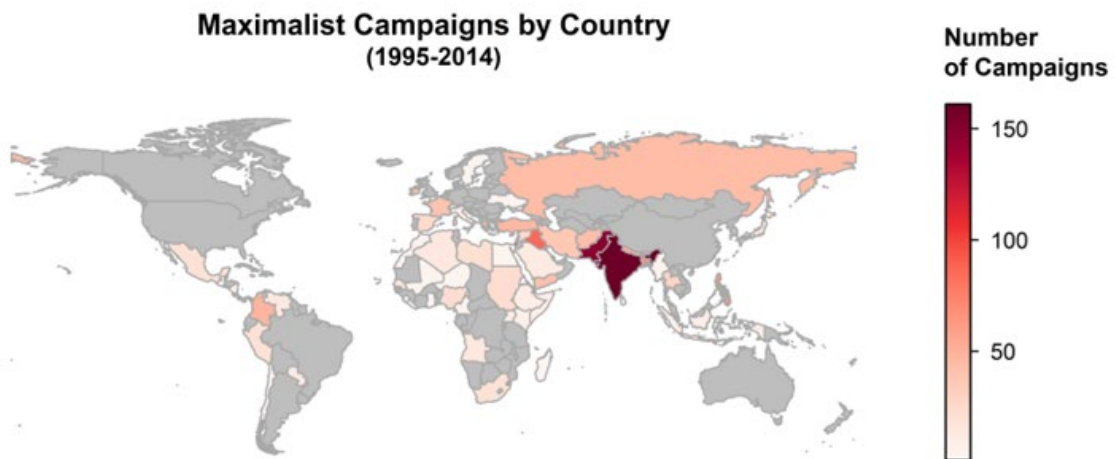


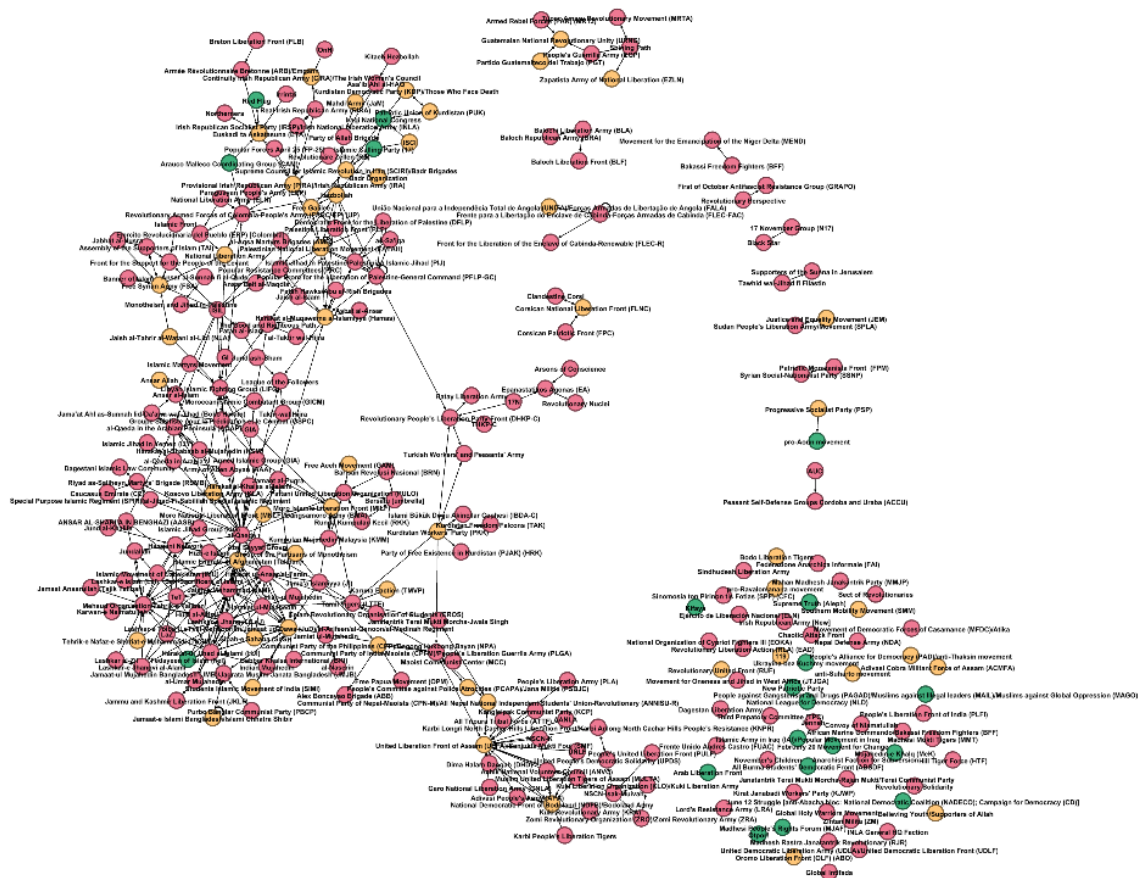
Figure 2. Locations of Maximalist Movements in 89 Countries in the Data

Second, when analyzing the overall composition of the network, a preference for violent methods within the dataset is apparent (see Figure 3 and 4). In these figures, each social movement in the dataset is represented by a single node and connected by lines that represent their ties to other movements. Nodes are colored by their movements’ characterization, with green nodes representing nonviolent movements, red nodes

<sup>86</sup> “The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic – Final Report (S/2014/928) – Central African Republic | ReliefWeb,” January 8, 2015, <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/international-commission-inquiry-central-african-republic-final>.

<sup>87</sup> “China: Human Rights Concerns in Xinjiang (Human Rights Watch Backgrounder, October 17, 2001),” accessed September 19, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/legacy/backgrounder/asia/china-bck1017.htm>.

representing violent movements, and orange nodes representing mixed-method movements. Of the 267 movements studied, approximately 73% can be characterized as violent, with only 19.5% employing mixed methods, and a paltry 7.5% employing strictly nonviolent means. This seems to conflict with Chenoweth's contention that nonviolent campaigns enable a wider breadth of participation within a population, as the dataset shows that movements with maximalist goals are better represented in data. If nonviolent tactics are enabling greater participation, it appears to only increase the size of the existing movements when compared to their violent counterparts and not enabling a greater ratio of nonviolent movements overall. It is, however, also possible that the geographic concentration can partially explain this disparity. In countries that are not capable of suppressing violent movements, multiple movements will appear to challenge the state. Another possibility is that nonviolent movements are less well documented than their violent counterparts, with each actor in the data being an amalgamation of several smaller movements that did not gain significant media or academic attention.



The relationships between social movements as depicted s in Gephi. Violent movements are depicted in red, mixed in orange, and nonviolent movements are depicted in green.

Figure 3. Overall Movement Network Analysis Diagram

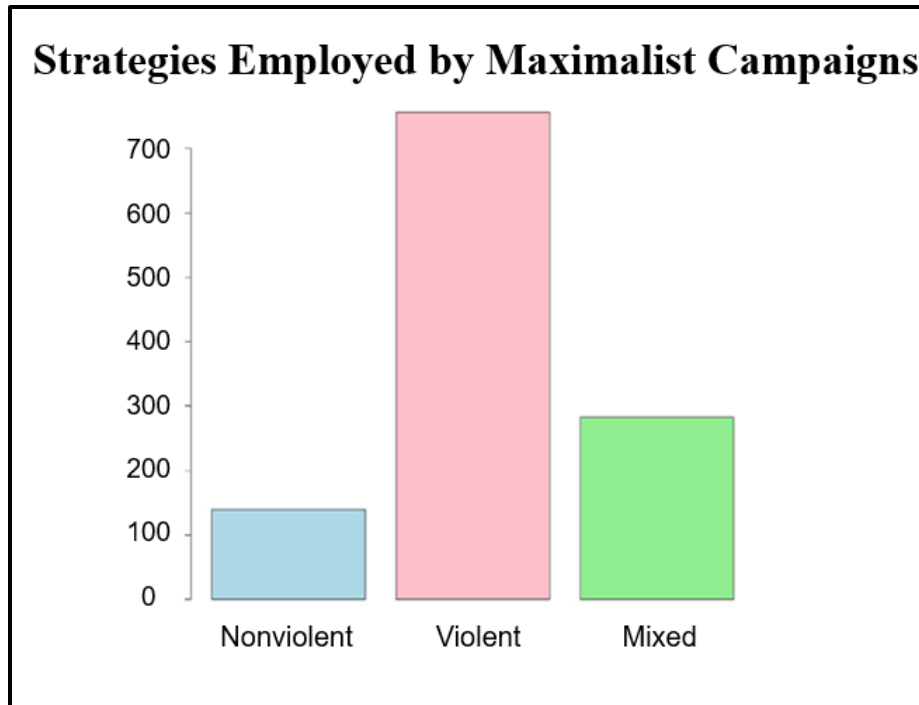


Figure 4. Overall Strategy Selection

The disparity is even more pronounced when observing the movements with supporting relationships. The largest web of connected movements, also known as the giant component, sees the ratio of violent movements rise to 77%, while the nonviolent movements drop to less than 3% (see Figure 5). This shows an interesting trend: that violent and mixed methods social movements are far more likely to be supported by other social movements than their nonviolent counterparts. In fact, most violent social movements are more likely to have multiple supporting relationships (70%) than just one (12.3%) and only 17.5% of recorded violent movements had no recorded relationships.

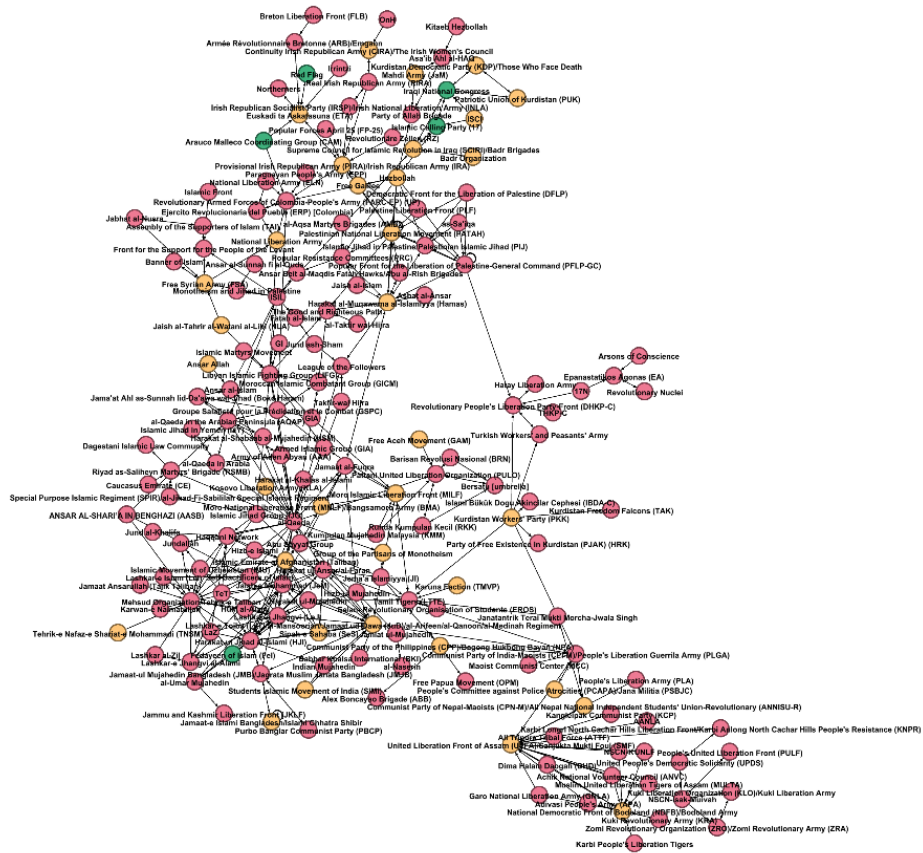


Figure 5. Giant Component of the Movement Network

The five nonviolent movements that are embedded in the giant component of Figure 5 are unusual as, while officially categorized as nonviolent, they frequently dabbled with mixed methods or violence. Fedayeen of Islam (FeI) was a fundamentalist group in Iran with a history of employing terrorism and political violence until being officially recognized as a political party within Iran in 1989.<sup>88</sup> Similarly, the Red Flag movement in Venezuela started in 1967 as a violent organization intent on a Maoist state, but three decades later had become a much more traditional political party, campaigning for greater social welfare programs. The Arauco Malleco Coordinating Group (CAM) sought to create an independent Mapuche state and while listed as nonviolent, employed

<sup>88</sup> “Shirin Science Center: Iran Oil Nationalization,” accessed September 19, 2023, <http://web.mit.edu/taalebi/www/soscof/oilNationalization/ciaQuo/kazemzadehReview.html>.

arson and property destruction that would see the movement listed as a terrorist organization in Chile.<sup>89</sup> The final two groups, the Iraqi National Congress and Islamic Calling Party, were opposition parties to Saddam Hussein’s Iraq that received U.S. backing and would come to serve in the Iraqi government following its collapse.<sup>90</sup> In sum, while strictly meeting the definitions of nonviolent movements, there are certainly factors in many of these cases that would keep them from being the paradigm of nonviolence that Chenoweth and others described.

Mostly, nonviolent movements exist as isolates, with no recorded ties to other social movements, though this point should be debated as a practicality (see Figure 6). For example, the REVMOD data has no record of the U.S. support to the Iraqi National Congress. The available REVMOD data does, however, show that nonviolent movements are almost the direct inverse of violent movements, with 70% of movements without any support relationships, 10% with a single relationship, and 20% with multiple relationships (previously described). In actuality, the isolates contain many of the movements championed by proponents of nonviolent resistance. Otpor, for example, was famously led by Serbian college students and ended with the nonviolent ousting of their dictator, Slobodan Milosevic. While admittedly Otpor had no outside support, it did bring together large swathes of the Serbian political opposition which could have been registered as ties within REVMOD but were not.<sup>91</sup> The apparent lack of backing for many of these movements should therefore be treated with some skepticism.

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<sup>89</sup> Fernando Pairicán Padilla and Rolando Álvarez Vallejos, “La Nueva Guerra de Arauco: la Coordinadora Arauco-Malleco y los nuevos movimientos de resistencia mapuche en el Chile de la Concertación (1997-2009),” *Revista Izquierdas*, no. 10 (2011): 66–84.

<sup>90</sup> “CRS Report: Iraq’s Opposition Movements,” accessed September 19, 2023, <https://web.archive.org/web/20121103122106/http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/crs-iraq-op.htm>.

<sup>91</sup> “Bringing Down a Dictator (English),” ICNC, accessed September 19, 2023, <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/bringing-dictator-english/>.



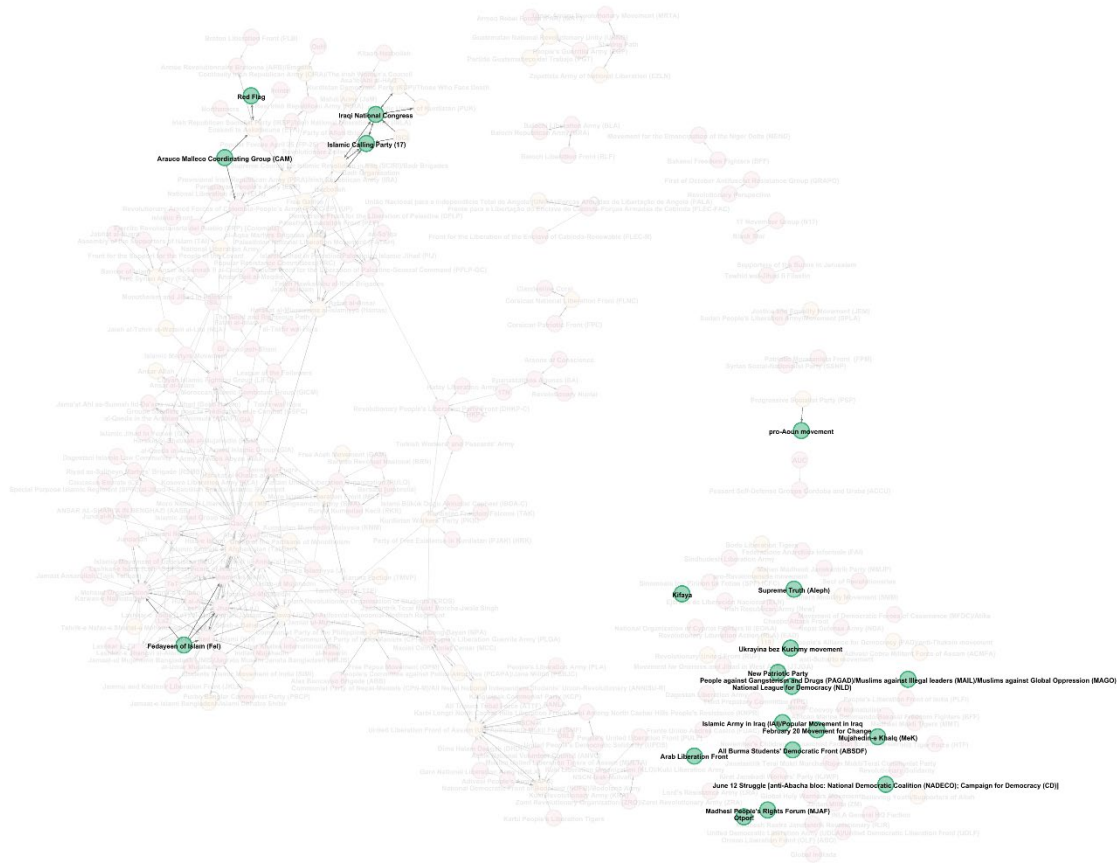


Figure 6. Nonviolent Movement Network Analysis

Mixed movements appear to fall in between the two extremes of violent and nonviolent movements regarding support (see Figure 7). While 60% of mixed movements maintain two or more support relationships, 21% maintain just one and 19% have no recorded supporting relationships. This group is represented by the well-known Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK) and the Taliban in Afghanistan, which employ a mix of violence with governance and welfare programs. Interestingly, most of these movements, 35 of 52 (67%), were recorded as employing terrorism in their methods. It should not, therefore, be assumed that mixed movements can easily be characterized.

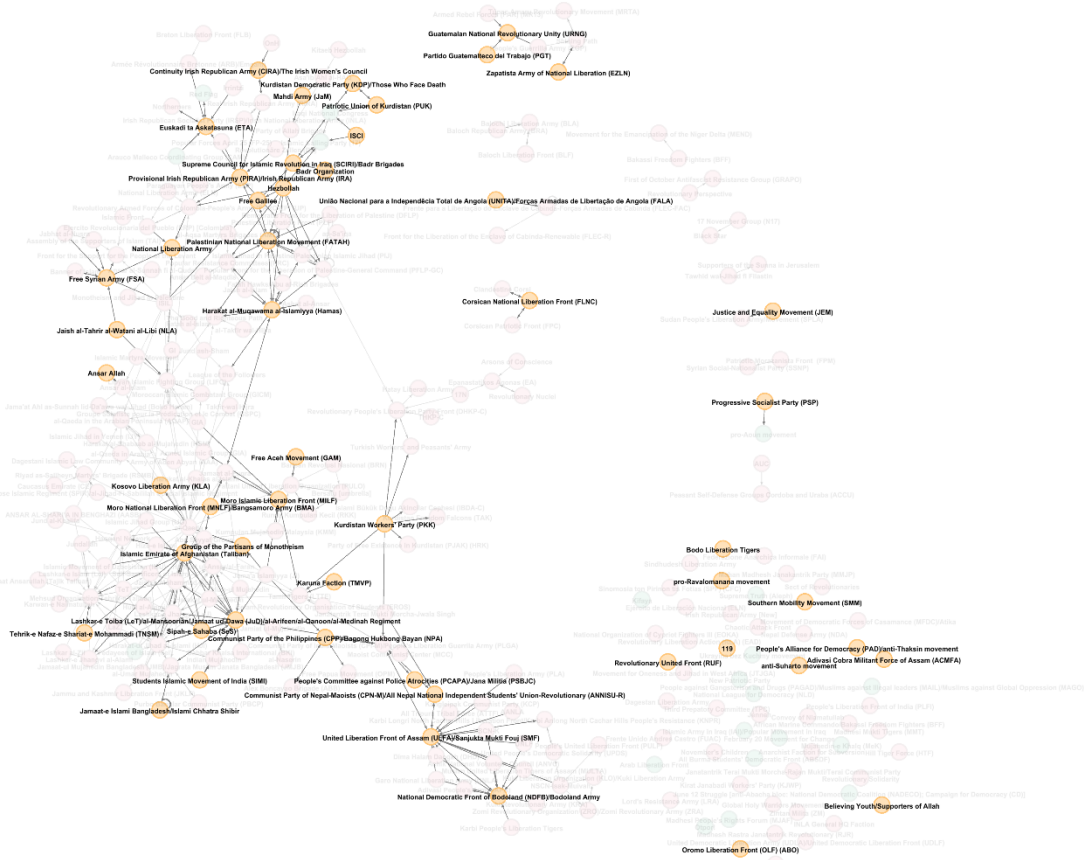


Figure 7. Mixed Method Movements Network

## 2. Network Centrality Measures

Multiple measures of network analysis were employed to determine the most central actors. Weighted Degree is the number of relationships that a movement has with other movements. Harmonic closeness, eigenvector centrality, and betweenness centrality all attempt to capture the relative importance of a node within a network. Specifically, harmonic closeness measures how efficiently a node can reach all other nodes. Betweenness centrality is the degree that an actor lies on the shortest path between all other actors in the network. Eigenvector centrality is similar but values ties to highly central actors over ties to peripheral actors. Taken collectively, these four measures should provide a better understanding of the most important movements based upon the available data.

When employing these centrality measures, it is apparent how the most critical movements share ideological or religious ties that help explain their connections. The proliferation of violent extremist organizations, in the Middle East especially, can be observed when reviewing the most central movements in the network (see Table 1). In this table, violent movements are in red text, nonviolent are in green text, and mixed movements are in orange text. Some of the movements that appear most consistently include Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ), Harakat-ul Jihad al-Islami (HJI), and Lashkar-e Toiba (LeT). These can all be broadly described as Islamist movements that operated in the Afghan, Pakistan, or Kashmir region. The United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) is an interesting exception to the strong representation of radical Islamist movements in the metrics. This organization, conversely, was an ethnic Assamese movement that sought to create an independent Assamese state.

Table 1. Movement Topographical Measures

Weighted Degree	Eigenvector Centrality	Harmonic Closeness	Betweenness Centrality
Al-Qaeda 29	Al-Qaeda 1	FLEC-FAC 1	Al-Qaeda 6031.498
HJI 23	LeJ 0.873	FLNC 1	CPI-M 4166.655
LeT 23	HJI 0.844	BLA 1	LeT 3278.474
Mehsud Org 22	JeM 0.809	Pro-Aoun movement 1	ULFA 3262.5
LeJ 22	Taliban 0.785	MEND 1	DHKP-C 2165.241
ULFA 21	LeT 0.737	Supporters of the Sunna in Jerusalem 1	PKK 2099.181
JeM 19	Mehsud Org 0.683	ACCU 1	PFLP-GC 1907.772
FATAH 18	Harakat ul-Ansar 0.645	Black Star 1	FARC-EP 1903.558
Taliban 18	SeS 0.465	SPLA 1	PIRA 1844.695
Hamas 17	Harakat ul-Mujahedin 0.423	SSNP 1	ISIL 1823.806

### 3. Summary and Implications

In the context of this dataset, understanding the unique nature of these social movements contextualizes subsequent findings. The most common movements in the dataset were violent Islamic extremist organizations, generally operating out of the Middle East and India with multiple connections to other violent or mixed organizations. The much less common nonviolent organizations generally have no registered connections, though if they do, it will usually be to a violent or mixed movement, not another nonviolent organization. This may indicate a failing of the original dataset to properly record support relationships, especially those from states to movements and amongst nonviolent movements.

It is also important to note the potential impact of the Global War on Terror on the results. During the time-period of this dataset, the U.S. was investing significant resources into the disruption of violent extremist organizations, many of which are present in this dataset. In fact, of the top ten organizations previously identified by weighted degree, seven were on the U.S. Designated Foreign Terrorist Organization List, enabling the direct targeting of these organizations with kinetic, diplomatic, and economic tools.<sup>92</sup> In combination with the significant increase in foreign military aid, security force assistance, and counter-threat financing made during this period, the violent movements in the dataset were facing an unusually challenging global environment. Whether this same support to governments opposing violent movements, and thus the decreased viability of these violent movements, will continue in the new era of great power competition remains to be seen.

#### C. REGRESSION MODELS

To test the validity of the previously identified hypotheses, five logit regression models were estimated. Table 2 reports the results of these models. The dependent variable of movement success was defined using the REVMOD criteria of “partial success” which occurs when an organization reaches its goals in a limited way.

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<sup>92</sup> “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” *United States Department of State* (blog), accessed September 20, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>.

Movement success equals 1 for a movement-year in which the organization achieved a partial success and equals 0 for all others. Key independent variables included in the analysis were movement employment of protesting and violence as well as government employment of violence and population control measures. All independent variables were lagged by one year to prevent spurious results generated by reverse causation.

Model 1 is a baseline specification with control variables, including GDP per capita, polity and population size. In addition to the main independent variables of movement and government strategies, several control variables were included in the analysis, all of which have featured prominently in the contentious politics literature. GDP per capita measures a country's level of economic development and wealth. Population and polity measure these factors for the state in which the movement is operating. Polity which is a measure of a country's democratic and autocratic qualities ranges from -10 (hereditary monarchy) to +10 (consolidated democracy). A squared polity variable is used to account for the possibility of non-linear relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Population and GDP per capita are log-transformed because they are expected to have diminished marginal effects as they grow larger.

Model 2 introduces the variables of third-party support, leadership decapitation, movement size and political leadership. Third-party support is a continuous variable that measures the number of ties a resistance organization has with other non-state organizations. This is not a measure of the quality of these connections, merely the presence of an alliance, affiliation or partnership. Leadership decapitation is a binary variable identifying if the movement lost a top leader due to assassination, indefinite detention, or execution. The political leadership measure is binary and indicates a movement with a political wing or party, reliant on a political leadership component, or taking direction from a separate political party or organization.

Table 2. Regression Results

	Movement Success				
	Logit (1)	Logit (2)	Logit (3)	Logit (4)	Logit (5)
Log of GDPPC	-0.028 (0.107)	0.397*** (0.157)	0.377*** (0.171)	0.420** (0.171)	0.422** (0.172)
Polity	-0.033* (0.018)	-0.020 (0.022)	-0.018 (0.023)	-0.019 (0.023)	-0.022 (0.023)
Polity^2	-0.009*** (0.003)	-0.012*** (0.004)	-0.013*** (0.005)	-0.012** (0.005)	-0.014*** (0.005)
Log of Pop	-0.507*** (0.079)	-0.563*** (0.121)	-0.604*** (0.132)	-0.584*** (0.129)	-0.576*** (0.133)
Log of Size		0.331*** (0.050)	0.275*** (0.056)	0.339*** (0.056)	0.301*** (0.056)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Ties		-0.051 (0.049)	-0.053 (0.054)	-0.087 (0.055)	-0.077 (0.055)
Leadership Decapitation		-0.456 (0.486)	-0.449 (0.486)	-0.543 (0.487)	-0.454 (0.483)
Political Leadership		1.152*** (0.297)	0.745** (0.331)	1.093*** (0.314)	0.684** (0.336)
Violent Strategy			-0.980*** (0.330)		
Non-V Strategy				-0.584 (0.394)	
Mixed Strategy					0.984*** (0.273)
Terrorism			0.149 (0.255)	-0.048 (0.261)	-0.080 (0.255)
GOV Violence	2.051*** (0.661)	2.613*** (0.874)	3.001*** (0.981)	2.438** (0.949)	2.688*** (0.971)
GOV Pop Control	-1.142 (0.899)	-0.974 (1.246)	-0.565 (1.300)	-0.550 (1.284)	-0.439 (1.307)
MOV Protesting	0.589 (0.782)	0.536 (1.120)	0.089 (1.160)	0.178 (1.144)	-0.115 (1.171)
MOV Violence	-1.016 (1.121)	0.745 (1.411)	0.837 (1.513)	1.257 (1.481)	1.037 (1.514)
Constant	2.064*** (0.709)	-1.514 (1.105)	-0.090 (1.275)	-1.207 (1.208)	-1.221 (1.234)
Observations	2,354	1,688	1,300	1,300	1,300
MAE	0.11628	0.10047	0.11948	0.11992	0.11764
RMSE	0.24169	0.22483	0.24600	0.24589	0.24351
AIC	1,034	626	561	568	557
BIC	1,086	697	639	645	635
Log Likelihood	-508	-300	-266	-269	-264
Note:	*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01				

Models 3 through 5 add the terrorism variable while alternating through the overall movement strategies of violence, nonviolence, and mixed methods. The variable

of terrorism tracks whether the organization launched violent attacks against civilians or non-combatants. This definition will differ from many state or government uses of the term, which tend to label any guerrilla movement that relies on its ability to hide amongst the population and attack government forces asymmetrically as terrorist. Model 3 examined the efficacy of violence as a movement strategy. Model 4 delved into the potential of nonviolent methods in achieving movement success. Model 5 explored a mixed approach, considering a combination of violent and nonviolent strategies.

#### **D. RESULTS**

The regression models provide robust support for the impact of several variables previously highlighted. While Model 5 was selected as the focus of the analysis due to its low AIC score, other models will be discussed to show general trends. Figure 8 shows the impact of each independent variable on movement success, as estimated in Model 5. The bars on the plot represent the substantive effects for each independent variable. The substantive effect shows how much the dependent variable would change if the independent variable was shifted and allows researchers to understand whether the size of the effect is large or small. A positive effect, indicated by a blue bar, indicates that the independent variable is positively associated with the dependent variable. This means that higher values of that independent variable are associated with higher probabilities of movement success. A negative substantive effect, represented by the red bars, indicates that the independent variable is negatively associated with movement success. This was calculated by shifting the variable of interest from its 5<sup>th</sup> to 95<sup>th</sup> percentile, which excludes outliers at the extremes, while holding all other variables constant at their mean values.

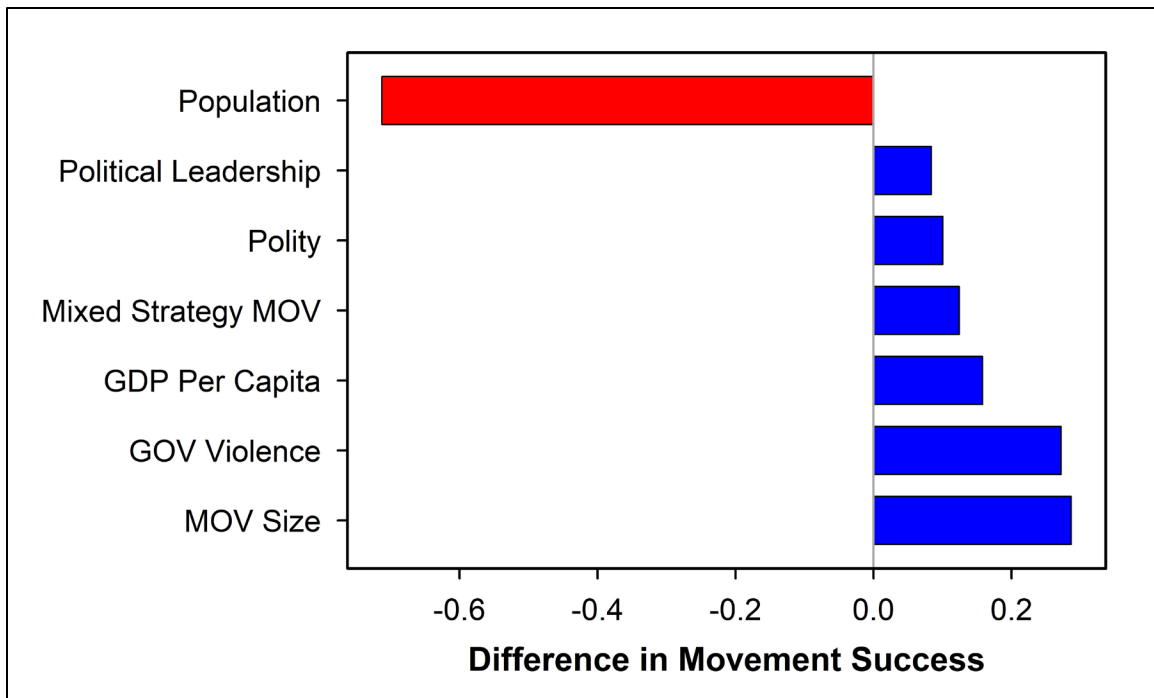


Figure 8. Substantive Effects Comparison Plot

Figure 9 displays the regression prediction plots of six variables which serves as a graphical representation of the relationship between one of the impactful variables (the predictor variable) and movement success (the response variable). The plots show the predicted values of the response variable based on the values of the predictor variable. The plot includes a bold red line that represents the predicted values of the response variable, as well as a shaded red area that represents the 95% confidence interval around the predicted values. The confidence interval provides a range of values within which we can be reasonably confident that the true value of the effect lies.

The results of the models show that several factors are associated with movement success, including population, polity, and GDP per capita (see Figure 9). Larger population sizes were shown to have a statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) and substantively large (8x) decrease in the probability of social movement success. While the exact reasons for this are unclear, it may be due to such factors as communication challenges in larger populations, greater diversity of goals, or the increased resources available to governments in these locations. Polity also showed a statistically significant



( $p < 0.01$ ) and substantively large (3x) impact with greater likelihoods of success in anocracies when compared with more stable democracies and autocracies. Finally, GDP per capita had a statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) and substantive (2x) positive impact on success, indicating that the additional financial resources available to the movements in these countries contribute to better success outcomes.

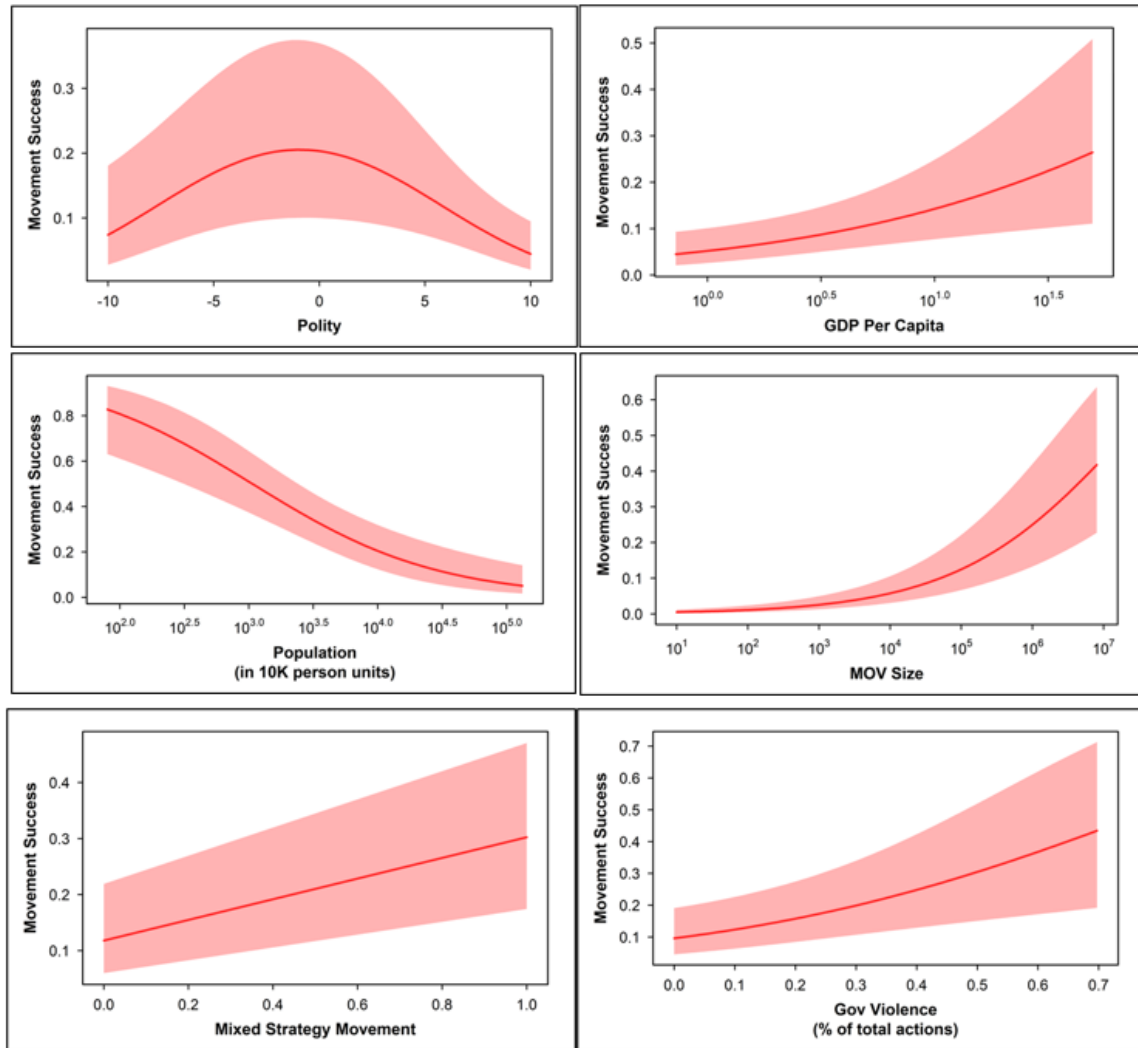


Figure 9. Predicted Effects of Variables on the Probability of Movement Success

Interestingly, the results of the models contradict Acosta's assertion that having a political component in control of the movement far outweighs any strategy choice related

to the use of either violence or nonviolence. While political leadership was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) and showed moderately large substantive effects (1.5x), when controlling for all other variables, the selection of a mixed-methods strategy showed a statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) and substantively larger (2x) positive effect. More remarkably, the selection of a violence only strategy in Model 3 had a statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) and substantively (2x) negative effect toward movement success, which supports Chenoweth's arguments. Contrary to Acosta's previous bold claim, it seems that it is actually the violent organizations who succeed despite their violence- not because of it. These findings indicate support for a positive radical flank effect, which occurs when states offer rewards to moderate competitor groups to isolate or thwart violent elements in the movement.<sup>93</sup>

Two additional assertions of Chenoweth and Stephan are supported within the models: the importance of movement size and the backfire effect. Movement size was found to provide statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) and substantively large (3x) support to social movement success. While movement numbers do not guarantee success, they greatly contribute to the durability and leverage of the movement. When taken in conjunction with a mixed-methods strategy, this lends credence to the assertion that the greatest diversity of participants and tactics are key to success against an adapting and innovative government opponent. Equally, government violence, as a proportion of their actions, also showed a statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ) and substantively large (3x) support to social movement success. Stated more clearly, as government violence increased so did the odds of movement success. This indicates that when facing off against its own population, the traditional strengths of the state are turned into weaknesses, shifting domestic and international support to the movement.

While the models produced many interesting results, they showed little evidence that leadership decapitation, terrorism, or any other use of government or movement tactics correlated to movement success. The lack of significant effects in these areas suggests that their influence on the success of social movements engaged in maximalist

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<sup>93</sup> "The Practice and Study of Civil Resistance – Kurt Schock, 2013," accessed June 13, 2023, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0022343313476530>.

campaigns may be more nuanced or context-dependent than previously assumed. It is possible that the complexities and dynamics of these tactics require further investigation, considering specific contextual factors, variations in implementation, or interactions with other variables. Future research could delve deeper into these aspects to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their role in determining movement outcomes.

## IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The insights gleaned from this research have far-reaching implications for the current and potential landscape of resistance, particularly in contexts involving the United States and its global counterparts. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine stands as a stark example in which Russia is navigating violent and nonviolent resistance, both within its borders and beyond. The territories in Ukraine under Russian control present a dynamic where these resistance movements could fortify their connections and pose considerable challenges to maintaining stable governance. Conversely, China's keen interest in Taiwan creates a scenario where significant resistance could materialize from the local population in the event of a forceful takeover. Integrating the principles distilled from this study into Taiwan's defense strategies could significantly bolster the anticipated effectiveness of these resistance organizations, thereby augmenting their deterrence capabilities.

The dynamics in Russia and Ukraine indicate that the potential of increasing resistance efforts is likely. Violent networks tend to forge connections with other violent networks, indicating a troubling dissemination of violence, especially within conquered Ukrainian territories and along the outlying regions of Russian territory. With a long history of violence within the Caucasus, these networks may begin to funnel training, equipment, and personnel deep into Russian territory. The increasing incidence of short-range drone attacks on Moscow hints at a potential escalation of violence within the country. Combined with a long-suppressed domestic population within their eastern territories, the backfire effect may see the radicalization of both civilians and former conscripts. Additionally, in the conquered Ukrainian territories, low population and anachronistic governance create an environment ripe for resistance movements. Combined with the appalling mistreatment endured by the Ukrainian population, Russia appears set to face increasing levels of resistance for some time.

Looking ahead, the China-Taiwan dynamic presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. China's substantial population implies that an internal threat to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is unlikely to succeed in the short term. However, long-

term demographic and economic trends suggest a possible rise in this risk over time.<sup>94</sup> If China were to pursue its vision of invading Taiwan, a robust resistance movement with political leadership would be indispensable in boosting the Taiwanese chances of success. This scenario draws parallels with numerous resistance movements during the Second World War, emphasizing the necessity of a well-structured continuity of government plan. Additionally, empowering the civilian population to contribute through a mixed methods approach, encompassing large-scale protests, sabotage, and, if circumstances dictate, violence, could significantly enhance the effectiveness and resilience of the resistance movement, ultimately shaping the trajectory of these critical global events.

#### **A. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOF**

SOF professionals must stand ready to either assist or suppress resistance movements within their purview. This research can help with understanding and shaping both how that resistance force can be most successfully employed or how to best combat it. Some of the most important decisions related to supporting resistance rely on the identification of many factors covered here, including reasonable strategy outcomes for the campaign, type of tactics to employ, training of political leadership, and the means to maintain resistance support when confronted by hostile forces.

First, U.S. policymakers must have clear strategic goals when determining whether to support a resistance movement. The success of a social movement in this study was determined by comparing its stated maximalist goals with the movement's outcomes, but U.S. objectives frequently fall short of regime-change. When studying U.S. STR from the 1940s to the present day, Will Irwin found that while many movements will seek to overthrow their oppressive regime with U.S. support, only 29% of the cases achieved regime change.<sup>95</sup> While diverging interests between SOF and their supported resistance should be minimized, the most common objective of U.S. STR was

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<sup>94</sup> "China's Shrinking Population and Constraints on Its Future Power," Brookings, accessed October 23, 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/chinas-shrinking-population-and-constraints-on-its-future-power/>.

<sup>95</sup> Will Irwin, *Support to Resistance: Strategic Purpose and Effectiveness*, JSOU Report 19 (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida: The JSOU Press, 2019).

found to be disruption of an opponent and the most effective utilization was for coercive purposes. Thus, U.S. objectives may be achieved far sooner than the movement's, necessitating a decision to continue support or cut ties.

The decision to support movements in the targeted country's domestic population will frequently occur in denied or semi-denied territory where government violence is likely. As opposed to diaspora populations in permissive areas, supporting resistance amongst these populations can benefit from the blowback effect. Intentionally inducing security forces to violently overreact, even before external supporters are prepared to cross the threshold of violence, can be a useful tool in growing the resistance movement. While doctrine calls for a guerrilla force to execute confidence building attacks prior to crossing the threshold of violence, a similar mentality should be employed with nonviolent and mixed-method resistance movements. By employing these elements in active protests early, government repression can be weaponized to grow the movement and radicalize its members. Military Intelligence Support Operations (MISO) and Information Operations (IO) can then enhance the narrative of perceived grievances and sway the mental calculus of potential recruits, especially as government repression continues to increase against the population.

When examining which types of movements are best suited to receive SOF support, the findings presented here favor a mixed-methods movement. This aspect lends credence to the employment of Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations forces in various STR scenarios. While creating a capable guerrilla force should still be pursued, these findings show that it should be just one component of a mixed strategy overseen by a strong political leadership within the movement. The favorable role that this political command infrastructure has on conflict outcomes is often overlooked by military professionals due to the limited expertise on governance within the current military.

Creating political command within the movement can therefore benefit from a whole-of-government approach.<sup>96</sup> While SOF is uniquely skilled among the Department

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<sup>96</sup> "A Democracy's Guide to Foiling Autocrats: How Democratic States Can Effectively Support Pro-Democracy Movements," *ICNC* (blog), accessed September 5, 2022, <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/how-democratic-states-can-effectively-support-pro-democracy-movements/>.

of Defense to enhance and support foreign partners, they should be used in conjunction with other levers of government and the private sector to maximize their impact. Professional diplomats in the Department of State can provide a range of assistance, including developing international support for the movement, offering protective accompaniment, magnifying instances of repression, and facilitating conversation between groups. Economic specialists from the Treasury can be beneficial in crafting financial relief packages for supporters and imposing financial sanctions on those that repress the movement. Non-governmental organizations and activists also have a wealth of knowledge in building sustainable grassroots movements and community organizing that can grow the movements reach and effectiveness in recruiting. This broad range of actors is critical in the creation of a powerful political wing within a movement which leads to greater success outcomes. While not every agency and partner will be able or willing to assist depending on the operational approach that is selected (overt vs. covert for example), efforts should be made to include as many as practical.

Covert versus overt forms of support must also be discussed due to their differing abilities to employ the various tools of national power. Overt support enables the whole of government approach critical in the development of strong political leadership within the movement but may risk the movement's domestic credibility. Covert support can avoid these pitfalls for a time but will inevitably restrict support in both scale and scope. Employing a distributed (virtual/online) approach may enable SOF to provide much of this information, training and support to a political wing discreetly. This call-back capability to a wide range of experts within the U.S. can also serve as a powerful means of increasing the capacity and credibility of a movement's political component.

While this research may not advocate for a radical shift in policy for SOF, it does reinforce the decision to continue building on their ongoing counter-terror, counter-insurgency, and Security Force Assistance programs. A more disciplined and capable government force can more effectively avoid the blowback effect that spreads the flames of resistance. The ongoing counter violent extremist organization (C-VEO) operations against ISIS, Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram in Africa and the Middle East shows great

promise in this regard.<sup>97</sup> Special Forces can execute train, advise, and assist missions to increase partner capacity and reduce the freedom of maneuver for violent actors. Civil Affairs can serve to build government and institutional capacity, better integrating disenfranchised minorities, reducing perceived grievances and contributing to national protections. By executing these tasks in coordination, SOF support can be multiplicative in effect.

## **B. TRAINING, DOCTRINE, AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The United States can improve its doctrine and policy relating to foreign internal defense, counterinsurgency, and support to resistance operations by incorporating the findings of this thesis. UW and STR are critical capabilities for SOF to counter state and non-state adversaries, influence the geopolitical environment, and advance U.S. national interests. However, the existing doctrine and policy do not adequately address all elements involved in these operations or their objectives. Therefore, recommendations for improving the training and doctrine of SOF, as well as the policy of the U.S. government, are highlighted here.

First, ATP 3-18.1 (*Special Forces Unconventional Warfare*) should be renamed to ATP 3-18.1 (*Special Operations Unconventional Warfare*). This change would reflect the reality that unconventional warfare and support to resistance are not exclusive to Special Forces, but require the involvement of all special operations elements, such as Civil Affairs, Psychological Operations, and Special Operations Aviation. The term “Special Operations” would better capture the diversity and interdependence of the special operations community in conducting these challenging and complex missions.

Second, ATP 3-05.1 (*Unconventional Warfare at the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force Level*) should be updated to emphasize the role of the JSOTF in advocating for the primacy of political leadership over the resistance organization. The JSOTF should not only provide military support and advice to the resistance, but also facilitate the development of a political vision, strategy, and structure that can unify and legitimize the resistance movement. The JSOTF should also coordinate with other actors,

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<sup>97</sup> “What We Do,” accessed June 16, 2023, <https://www.africom.mil/what-we-do>.



such as interagency partners, host nation authorities, and regional allies, to ensure that the political objectives of the resistance are aligned with the broader interests and values of the U.S. and its partners.

Third, the scenarios of Robin Sage, Sluss Tiller, and Black Knight, which are culminating exercises for Special Forces, Civil Affairs, and Psychological Operations students, respectively, need to be updated. These scenarios should incorporate political leadership and provide necessary role-players to simulate the interaction between these SOF elements and the resistance organization. The scenarios should also encourage the use of mixed-methods movements, such as guerrilla warfare, sabotage, subversion, propaganda, civil disobedience, and nonviolent resistance, to achieve the desired effects. Moreover, the scenarios should foster cross-functional integration among the different special operations elements to enhance their interoperability and effectiveness.

Additionally, U.S. forces should provide additional security force assistance and ethics training to India, Iraq, Sri Lanka and the Philippines which have a history of suboptimal government violence in response to insurgencies or civil unrest (see Figure 10). This training would aim to improve the professionalism, accountability, and respect for human rights of the security forces in these countries, which would in turn enhance their legitimacy and trustworthiness among the population. By reducing the grievances and abuses that fuel insurgency and resistance, this training would contribute to better counterinsurgency outcomes and stability in these regions.

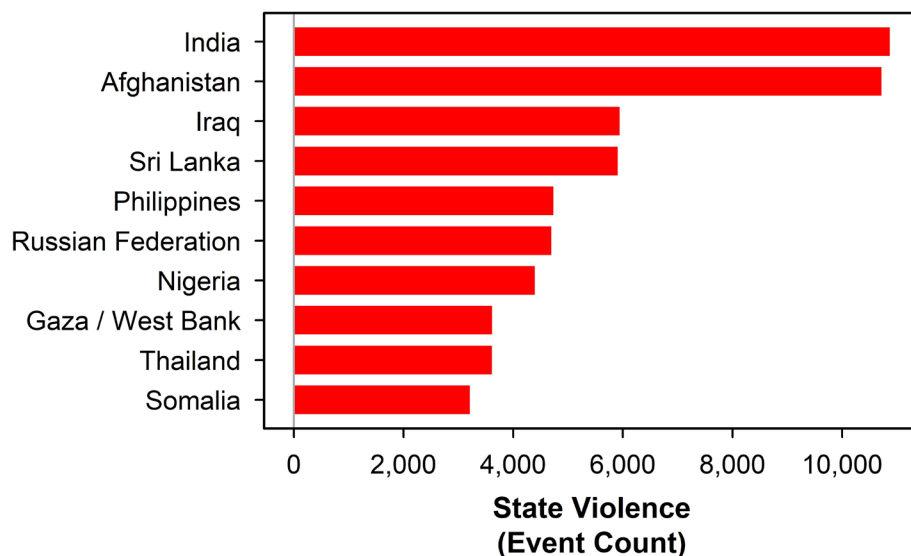


Figure 10. States with Largest Number of Government Violence Incidents, 1995–2014

Finally, the U.S. should conduct training on governance and nonviolent resistance to democratic forces in Myanmar, Syria, and Afghanistan, which are facing authoritarian regimes or violent extremist groups that threaten their freedom and dignity. This training would aim to empower these forces to organize themselves politically, mobilize popular support, and resist oppression through peaceful means. By using nonviolent methods, such as protests, strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, and parallel institutions, these forces would be able to challenge the status quo without escalating violence or alienating potential allies. This training would also help them establish a credible and inclusive alternative to the existing regimes or groups that can offer a better future for their people.

### C. SUGGESTED FUTURE RESEARCH

While this research is beneficial in expanding the understanding of government and social movement interactions, several avenues for future research exist. First, while the REVMOD dataset serves as a useful framework for investigation of movement outcomes, it needs significant edits and improvements to enhance future research. A more comprehensive list of state actors supporting each movement would allow more detailed analysis. Similarly, expanded measurements of organizational ideology would allow for

significantly more detailed network analysis and potentially enable investigation into whether movements of similar ideology are more likely to create supporting relationships.

Second, more research is needed investigating the impacts of state support, especially international coalitions and great powers, on resistance movement outcomes. By more closely analyzing how multiple external actors coordinated their support during the Cold War and other periods of great power competition, this could provide uniquely valuable insights as the United States transitions away from the War on Terror. The release of significant amounts of declassified intelligence memos from the Cold War era, especially related to Argentina, El Salvador, Chile, and the Sino-Vietnamese War could provide incredible insight into how great powers can impact the outcomes of maximalist campaigns.

Finally, further exploration is needed on the impact of hybrid warfare scenarios where both conventional military and irregular tactics are employed by state and non-state actors. Understanding how resistance movements navigate such complex scenarios is vital for contemporary conflict analysis. With an active war in Ukraine and the possibility of a Chinese invasion in Taiwan, a better understanding of social movement outcomes in these scenarios would greatly enhance the ability of planners to prepare and predict outcomes.

#### **D. CONCLUSION**

This study expands earlier examinations of social movement outcomes by incorporating mixed-method movements to movement strategies and exploring additional variables such as leadership decapitation, terrorism, and third-party support. The empirical findings of this research shed light on several important factors that influence movement success. Population size, regime type, and GDP per capita were identified as significant variables, with larger populations and lower GDP per capita contributing to decreased movement success, while movements within anocracies showed a higher likelihood of success compared to those in stable democracies and autocracies. These

results highlight the complexities associated with population dynamics, diverse goals, and resource availability that impact movement outcomes.

Contrary to the assertions of some earlier studies, the selection of a mixed-methods strategy was found to have a large and positive effect on movement success, supporting the notion of a positive radical flank effect. Additionally, the findings supported Chenoweth and Stephan's claims regarding the importance of movement size and the blowback effect. Larger movements were associated with increased success as was government violence directed towards the population. These results underscore the significance of broad participation and diverse tactics, enabling the greatest degree of flexibility when confronting a powerful state opponent. Continued research in this field can provide valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of resistance and its potential to effect transformative change in societies worldwide.

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