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Explaining political jiu-jitsu: Institution-building and the outcomes of regime violence against unarmed protests

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Abstract

The use of violent coercion to repress unarmed protests, such as that seen during the Arab Spring, sometimes backfires on the government – an outcome called 'political jiu-jitsu'. Examining unique global data covering extreme violence used by governments against unarmed protests from 1989 to 2011 (drawn from UCDP) and the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) data, this study aims to explain the conditions under which this outcome occurs. This study contributes to both the nonviolent action and one-sided violence literatures by further disaggregating this effect into both domestic and international outcomes, a distinction that has not previously been made in empirical studies. We find evidence that a pre-existing campaign infrastructure increases the likelihood of increased domestic mobilization and security defections after violent repression, but is unrelated to international backlash. Within ongoing NAVCO campaigns we find that parallel media institutions increase the likelihood of increased domestic mobilization and international repercussions after repression, and that this effect holds true for both traditional media and 'new' (i.e. internet-based) media. One of the novel contributions of this study is that we identify an important selection effect in the NAVCO data and the critical role of organizational infrastructure, especially communications infrastructure, in generating preference changes that create the conditions where killing unarmed civilians becomes costly for repressive governments. We conclude with a discussion of the potential implications of this study and avenues for future research.

Keywords

nonviolence, one-sided violence, repression

Introduction

Several governments resorted to violent coercion during the unarmed uprisings of the Arab Spring. Security forces fired on protesters in Tunisia, utilizing bullets, clubs and tear gas. In Egypt, the regime unleashed police in plainclothes and squads of 'young toughs' paid by the regime. In Yemen, Bahrain and Syria, there were also extreme repressive measures taken against unarmed protesters. In some cases the protests were silenced, while in others repression was followed by larger protests or strikes, security defections, sanctions and embargoes. The phenomenon of government violence backfiring is called 'political jiu-jitsu' in the nonviolent action literature (Sharp, 1973; Schock, 2005; Ackerman & Kruegler, 1994; Martin & Varney, 2003; Chenoweth & Stephan,

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2011; Nepstad, 2011).[1] Although political jiu-jitsu plays a pivotal role in explaining the dynamics of unarmed uprisings, little attention has been paid to explaining how and why this causal mechanism of strategic nonviolence works.

Empirical research on large-scale nonviolent action has expanded in recent years (Zunes, 1994; Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011; Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013a; Chenoweth & Cunningham, 2013; Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008; Ackerman & Rodal, 2008; Carter, 2009; Nepstad, 2011; Schock, 2003, 2005, 2013; Bond et al., 2003; Asal et al., 2013; Cunningham, 2013; Svensson & Lindgren, 2011). Chenoweth & Stephan (2011: 9; Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008) examined 323 cases of radical challenges to the state's authority from 1900 to 2006 and found that nonviolent campaigns were more likely to realize political goals and result in stable, peaceful democracies than violent campaigns. These results are similar to those in Karatnycky & Ackerman (2005) and Celestino & Gleditsch (2013).[2] Other studies have focused on the success and failure of nonviolent movements (Nepstad, 2011; Zunes, 1994; Schock, 2003, 2005; Svensson & Lindgren, 2011) and research has begun to explore why groups choose nonviolent tactics and how nonviolent campaigns emerge in the first place (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013a; Asal et al., 2013; Cunningham, 2013; Butcher & Svensson, 2014a,b).

Less attention has been paid to the circumstances under which repression of nonviolent demonstrations backfires domestically and internationally against the government. There is a large empirical literature explaining the onset, severity and modes of repression (Davenport, 2007a,b; Carey, 2010) and studies have treated repression as an independent variable to find that violent coercion increases the level of opposition activities (Khawaja, 1993; Koopmans, 1997; Francisco, 1995, 2004, 2005, 2010: 32). Others find a nonlinear relationship that fluctuates over time (Rasler, 1996) or follows an inverted-U curve where dissent reaches a maximum at moderate levels of repression, depending upon regime type (Gupta, Singh & Sprague, 1993; Opp, 1994; Almeida, 2003). Lichbach (1987) and Moore (1998) argue that severe repression causes a shift from nonviolent to violent tactics. Chenoweth & Stephan (2011: 68) find that violent repression decreases the likelihood of success for nonviolent campaigns by nearly 35%. They conclude that it is the nonviolent character of the opposition that is a major determinant of violent repression's effect. Nepstad (2011) and Mitchell (2012) reach similar conclusions through case study analysis. More recently, scholars in the nonviolent action theory field have begun to include the effects of the repression/dissent interaction on the government itself, particularly the cases when violent repression of nonviolent protestors leads to very negative outcomes for the regime (Martin, Varney & Vickers, 2001; Martin, 2007; Nepstad, 2011).

There are two key empirical studies that focus on the outcomes of severe regime violence against dissent. Francisco (2004) examines 31 urban massacres in the 20th century, ranging from the Barcelona Workers' Massacre in 1902 to the Ciskei Massacre in 1992, and finds that mobilization typically increases in the days following repressive events. He argues that 'dissident entrepreneurs' mobilize supporters by transmitting information about massacres, coordinating responses and shifting to 'safer' tactics of dispersion. Hess & Martin (2006) examine three case studies and find that the after-effects of repression depend upon a post-repression struggle over the interpretation of violence. This struggle includes moves from the state such as cover-ups, devaluation of the opposition and reinterpretation of events, and the responses by the opposition to counteract these, such as providing witnesses, expressing a commitment to nonviolence and using non-official channels to disseminate information.

Francisco (2005) and Hess & Martin (2006) lay much of the theoretical groundwork for this article, but both studies primarily examine cases where backfire occurred after repression. As such, the ability of this research to identify the independent empirical conditions that make backfire more likely is limited. In particular, the critical role of communications infrastructures that both studies posit has not been tested with large-N comparative analysis that incorporates variation in cases that experienced backfire, and cases that did not. Nor has empirical research disaggregated the phenomena of political jiu-jitsu into domestic and international forms.

We address this lacuna by analyzing the determinants of domestic and international backlash with data covering all cases of extreme government repression against

[1] Several terms are used to discuss the unintended consequences of repression in the literature. 'Backfire' refers to any situation where attempted repression, whether by governments, large corporations or any other powerful entity, has serious, undesirable and unanticipated side-effects (Martin, 2007). 'Political jiu-jitsu' refers to the occurrence of backfire when repression is both violent and used against a nonviolent opposition (Sharp, 1973). We use it synonymously with the term 'paradox of repression'. In all of these cases attacks on opposition movements are counterproductive, that is, the outcome is worse than if nothing had been done at all.

[2] See also Johnstad (2010).

unarmed protests worldwide from 1989 to 2012 based on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) One-Sided Violence Dataset (v1.3, UCDP, 2011; Eck & Hultman, 2007) as well as data on unarmed protests in the context of nonviolent campaigns as defined by the NAVCO 2.0 project (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013a).

We draw upon the collective action and dissent literature and argue that the likelihood of extreme repression backfiring against the government is a function of prior institution-building, especially institutions that facilitate communication and tactical adaptability. Activists face two challenges in the wake of government violence. First, they must communicate government brutality to would-be participants in an environment where state media will suppress the release of information or claim that violence was used in self-defence. Second, they must be able to lower the perceived costs of participation in further dissent when government violence has established that these costs are high. We argue that pre-repression leadership and mobilization structures along with parallel media institutions enable dissidents to communicate the repressive event to potential allies (including the international community) and use lower-risk diffusion tactics (such as strikes) in the wake of repression. Our empirical analysis generally supports these ideas. We proxy the ability of protesters to compete in the post-repression information struggle in two ways – as the presence of a pre-existing campaign organization and, within ongoing campaigns, the presence of media institutions (traditional and internet-based) operating independently to state media. Our empirical results show that the presence of a campaign infrastructure is an important precondition for increased domestic mobilization after repression, and to a lesser extent, security defections. Within ongoing campaigns we find that both traditional and internet-based parallel media institutions significantly increase the likelihood of backfire.

This article is structured in the following way. We start with a conceptual and theoretical discussion of strategic nonviolence and the role of organizational and communications infrastructure in generating backfire. We then present our research design and coding decisions. Third, we present regression analyses of unarmed protests in the context of severe government repression during the period 1989 to 2011 as well as in the context of ongoing nonviolent campaigns. Fourth, we discuss the implications of this research while acknowledging the limitations of our empirical framework. Fifth, we highlight our main findings and identify avenues for future research.

Theoretical framework

Political jiu-jitsu and nonviolence

The roots of the concept of political jiu-jitsu lie in the work of Gregg (1935). He developed the idea of 'moral jiu-jitsu' – the outcome of a process affecting the attacker's emotions; remaining nonviolent in the face of physical harm was alleged to convert the attacker to the activist's cause. While this personal-level effect has been discredited (Weber, 2003; Martin, 2007), Gregg nevertheless correctly identified that violence could, in some circumstances, be inefficient and have unintended consequences for the attacker.

Sharp (1973) developed the concept of 'political jiu-jitsu' by situating it within the study of strategic nonviolent action. 'Nonviolent action' is 'a generic term covering dozens of specific methods of protest, noncooperation and intervention, in all of which the activists conduct the conflict by doing – or refusing to do – certain things without using physical violence' (Sharp, 1973: 64; see also Schock, 2003: 705; 2013). Here we are concerned with nonviolent action that targets the central government, but nonviolent tactics have been used to target corporations and local governments, and nonviolence has been proposed as a means of national defence. Sharp argued that political jiu-jitsu functions when 'the violence of the opponent's repression [is] exposed in the worst possible light' and generates dissension within the government's ranks, increased support for the opposition, shifts in opinion in the regime's support base and the conversion of uncommitted third parties to the opposition's cause (Sharp, 2010, 1973: 657).

This article deals specifically with situations where governments use severe repression against nonviolent activists.[3] Repression can involve coercion short of physical violence such as legislation, supporting countermovements and censorship (Davenport, 2007b) but we examine what Earl (2003: 48) calls 'observable' repression by government agents. This is coercion that is intended to be seen and known about by the opposition and the general public, or at least is carried out in such a way that its intent is clear. It includes blatant acts of

[3] The theoretical arguments developed here are premised on an assumption of rationalist actors, which is currently the mainstream view in conflict studies. We recognize that this is a theoretical limitation and that there may be other, non-rational mechanisms affecting the dynamics of repression and backfire, such as miscalculation, social-psychological obstacles to learning from previous experiences, pride and fear, etc.

violence against demonstrators, political assassinations and so-called disappearances of opposition activists (Earl, 2003). While governments should use harsh repression under the assumption that it will effectively deter protest, the empirical record clearly shows that this is not always the case (Francisco, 2004, 2005). While milder or unobservable forms of repression may also backfire (Martin, 2007), it is this particularly stark contrast between social expectations and reality that motivates our focus on the use of lethal violence against nonviolent protestors.

Political jiu-jitsu, repression and communication

Repression is a communicative act targeted at three main audiences: currently engaged protestors, the general (but inactive) civilian population and the regime's support base (Sharp, 1973). Repression aims to convince currently engaged activists that the costs of continued dissent are high, to convince potential dissidents that the costs of joining the movement are high, and possibly to convince segments of the military that the government is taking a hardline approach (Lichbach, 1987; Pierskalla, 2010). But repression is also risky. Killing unarmed protestors violates social norms. Repression causes dissidents and potential dissidents to update information regarding the risks of protest *and* the risks of continuing to live under a regime prepared to kill unarmed protestors (Francisco, 2004). Flagrantly violating social norms can signal that the government's policy preferences are further from the average citizen's preferences than originally thought (Francisco, 2010: 11). This information may induce groups already opposed to the regime such as workers' unions or opposition political parties to mobilize against the regime (Nepstad, 2011: 15; Stephan & Mundy, 2006: 24; Sharp, 2010).[4] Killing unarmed protestors also violates human rights norms and repression carries the risk of international condemnation, sanctions and even military intervention.

Governments manage these risks by controlling the release of information (Hess & Martin, 2006). Accusations of stone throwing, property damage and the killing of security forces are common and play down the extent to which social norms were violated. For example, more than 20 protesters were killed during anti-election demonstrations in 1989 in South Africa. Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Reverend Allan Boesak held a press conference after the event with witnesses and claimed that the police had shot and killed unarmed demonstrators and bystanders. Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok then claimed that Boesak and Tutu were deliberately misleading the world about the nature of the protests, and that 26 policemen had been injured in protestor-instigated violence (Venter, 1989). Governments may also suppress the release of information to limit exposure to international condemnation, satisfied that the activists and would-be activists have understood the government's threat of future violence (Davenport, 2007b; Martin, 2007). The Nigerian government successfully covered up the deaths of 80 villagers in peaceful demonstrations in the Niger Delta for two years until an official inquiry was leaked (Frynas, 2000: 159).

What emerges after the use of overt violent repression is a battle over the nature and meaning of the repressive event (Hess & Martin, 2006). The challenge for activists is to communicate the extent of government brutality to key groups that are likely to join the movement (Francisco, 2004). Where uncommitted individuals or groups cannot obtain information about government massacres they cannot induce preference changes and we would not expect increased mobilization after repression, domestically or internationally. Ideally, activists will communicate with groups that already oppose the regime and control organizational infrastructures that enable further information dissemination, independent of the state, and solve coordination problems. However, communicating severe government repression may lower mobilization by generating fear. Activists can lower the costs of post-repression dissent by utilizing diffuse rather than concentrated tactics. Sit-ins and strikes, for example, still hurt the government by withdrawing resources but dissenting actors are widely spread, making it more costly (in some cases impossible) for the government to violently repress. Francisco (2004) finds that diffusion tactics are the modal contentious event after government massacre and notes that diffuse tactics require a high level of intragroup and impersonal trust (Francisco, 2004, 2010: 32). These two factors – the ability to communicate independently of the state and the ability to use diffusion tactics – would appear to make backfire more likely after repression.

Hypotheses

Based upon the above discussion we argue: (1) that activists that lay institutional groundwork for the use of nonviolent tactics (a 'campaign infrastructure') before repression will stand a better chance of generating

[4] Keeping in mind that perceived probabilities of success also influence this equation.

backfire than spontaneous protests and (2) that the presence of parallel media institutions within ongoing campaigns increases the ability of activists to disseminate information independently of government sources and coordinate post-repression actions. Each hypothesis is dealt with in turn.

We see the presence of a pre-existing 'campaign' infrastructure as a key prerequisite for backfire after repression. Chenoweth & Stephan (2011: 14) define campaigns as 'a series of observable, continual tactics in pursuit of a political objective' that have 'discernible leadership and often have names'. We understand the key difference here to be between intentional, organized nonviolent movements ('campaigns') and spontaneous protests. Nonviolent 'campaigns' are more likely to have engaged in prior institution-building for the specific and effective use of nonviolent tactics, or, in Gene Sharp's terms, to have laid the 'groundwork' before repression (Sharp, 1973). We see two types of institution-building – external and internal – as being conducive to backfire after repression. First, backfire will be more likely when movements have forged connections with other activists and social groups opposed to the government, especially churches and trade unions (or even sectors of the military) that may have broad social reach, dense networks of solidarity and (potentially) strong norms against violence. These are crucial institutional channels for communicating information about the repressive event and stimulating rapid mobilization (Hess & Martin, 2006). Insofar as protesters are networked to trade unions and churches, or other non-state actors with extensive social networks, these links also enable the use of low-cost diffusion tactics after repression. For example, prior to 'Bloody Monday' on 28 September 2009 in Guinea, the opposition had united six of Guinea's political parties, the major trade unions and civil society organizations together under the umbrella organization of the Forum of the Forces Vives of Guinea (Human Rights Watch, 2009: 20).[5] On 28 September, 157 people were killed during a 50,000 strong protest march to Conakry's main football stadium. Following the massacre, the movement was able to organize a stay-at-home strike that mobilized up to 90,000 government workers (Heck, 2010).

Second, regarding internal institution-building, discernible leadership makes it more likely that the movement has the cohesion and organizational capacity to effectively communicate changes in strategy to activists, and to motivate high-risk, high-cost activism (McAdam, 1986; Fernandez & McAdam, 1988). Internal organizational capacity also facilitates the formation of strong in-group norms of solidarity and obligation and makes it more likely that the leadership can credibly promise and distribute material support to the families of activists (Nepstad, 2008).

Spontaneous protests or other protests that emerge outside of a nonviolent 'campaign' are less likely to have built institutions designed for the effective use of nonviolent tactics under repression. Protests organized by political parties, for example, may be less likely to connect with other social groups before repression. An example here might be the pro-opposition women's protests that were violently repressed by the government of Laurent Gbagbo in January 2011, in Côte d'Ivoire. Peaceful protests emerged after the disputed 2010 election, amid much violence (Human Rights Watch, 2011: 26, 41). While the killings were condemned domestically and internationally and the opposition leader, Alassane Ouattara, publicly called for an 'Arab Spring' style nonviolent uprising, his supporters failed to mobilize beyond their strongholds in the capital Abidjan. An explanation for this failure may be the lack of institution-building beyond Ouattara's political party, or the choice to invest in institution-building for organized violence rather than nonviolence. Ouattara eventually took power, but after a civil war.

From this we argue that attacks on spontaneous protests are unlikely to result in political jiu-jitsu, as they are more easily overcome by government propaganda, have difficulties with tactical adaptability and, therefore, have difficulty convincing would-be participants that the costs of dissent are worth the gain. This factor is more likely to be related to domestic political jiu-jitsu because it is related to internal dynamics of the country, although the additional communication lines available to organized movements may also influence international actors.

> *Hypothesis 1:* The presence of a pre-existing campaign structure that the nonviolent protests are a part of will be associated with a higher likelihood of political jiu-jitsu.

Some campaigns have better communications structures than others, however, and for reasons similar to those mentioned above we would expect that campaigns with a formal media communications infrastructure will be more effective at generating political jiu-jitsu. Especially important here will be the presence of parallel

[5] The forum had organized demonstrations in August and early September 2009.

media institutions that enable the opposition to communicate with potential supporters independent of the regime and coordinate the actions of dissidents in the wake of repression. Parallel media institutions can involve the distribution of print materials, television and radio broadcasts and, more recently, internet-based dissemination, such as via Youtube. The Otpor movement in Serbia, for example, invested in a 'superior communication strategy' that 'was able to beat the propaganda apparatus' and targeted Otpor membership and supporters, the 'wider audience', 'potential allies within oppositional parties and NGOs' and the 'international community' (Manea & Popovic, 2012: 3–4). Indeed, convincing the government that atrocities will be broadcast domestically and internationally can have a deterrent effect. We return to this point in the concluding discussion.

Hypothesis 2: The presence of a parallel media structure to the state in ongoing nonviolent campaigns will be associated with a higher likelihood of political jiu-jitsu.

Research design

Our hypotheses relate to the role of communications infrastructure and political jiu-jitsu within ongoing nonviolent campaigns, but also outside of them. As such, we use two datasets to examine the hypotheses, our own coding of nonviolent protests within the UCDP One-Sided Violence Dataset (UDCP-OSV) and the NAVCO 2.0 dataset. These are described below, along with our choice of dependent and independent variables.

Methodology and variables

The 'campaign' variable is an independent variable in Hypothesis 1. This precludes us from using the NAVCO 2.0 dataset that selects on the presence of a campaign infrastructure. To examine the impact of campaign infrastructure on the likelihood of political jiu-jitsu we have generated a new dataset drawing on the UCDP. Our method was to identify instances in the UCDP One-Sided Violence Dataset (Eck & Hultman, 2007) where the government used extreme repression against civilians participating in nonviolent resistance. The UCDP-OSV dataset includes data on 'the intentional and direct killing of civilians' by organized groups, whether government or insurgent (Eck & Hultman, 2007: 233). We define the extreme repression of unarmed protests as 'the use of armed force by a government or its agents against civilians pursuing an incompatibility over government, territory or policy with nonviolent tactics, resulting in at least 25 deaths per year'. Nonviolent tactics are public, transgressive, conflictual acts that challenge the government or its agents without the use of physical force, and include acts of commission, omission or both. Our unit of analysis is thus an annual severe repression against unarmed protestors episode; that is, the calendar year in which severe repression occurs.[6] The data were sourced from news reports drawn from the Factiva database, which covers approximately 20,000 sources in several languages and allows for the construction of detailed search strings. Where news reports are not sufficiently detailed we have used NGO reports, mostly from Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and the International Crisis Group. These organizations are known for the quality of their reporting and relatively unbiased coverage (Sundberg & Harbom, 2011). Academic sources have been used for some conflicts that have received very little coverage elsewhere. The combination of news reports for comprehensiveness and written narratives for background detail retains a systematic, consistent approach to identifying cases of political jiu-jitsu while not neglecting the detail that is available in non-news sources. This method yields 46 cases from the period 1989–2011.

We operationalize political jiu-jitsu by dividing it into two observable outcomes: increased domestic costs for the regime after the use of repressive violence, and international backlash. This separation was motivated by the observation that in some cases of extreme repression, such as the Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor in 1991, there has been international backlash against the regime but limited domestic consequences. This suggests that separate processes may underlie each outcome.[7] Domestic political jiu-jitsu is operationalized as an escalation of civilian resistance or security defections following the use of violence. These outcomes were also disaggregated and are analyzed separately in the empirical section. International political jiu-jitsu is defined as the government suffering economic sanctions by world or regional powers, or arms embargoes being put in place as a result of repressive violence against unarmed protests. Economic sanctions are recorded in Hufbauer et al. (2008) and researched by the authors. Arms

[6] The 25 deaths do not have to occur in a single incident and can be accumulated over multiple repressive events within a year.

[7] The same process of generating outrage may drive domestic and international backlash, but regimes have different abilities to cover up massacres and deter protest in the domestic and international arenas. We thank Professor Brian Martin for this insight.

embargoes are recorded in the SIPRI Arms Embargoes Database (2012).

To test Hypothesis 1 we have recorded whether the unarmed protests were part of a larger campaign as defined by Chenoweth & Lewis (2013a). For the period 2007–11 which the NAVCO data did not cover at the time of writing, we have coded this ourselves. We coded a campaign structure if, before the onset of repression, the movement was named with clear leadership, or used nonviolent tactics systematically over a sustained period of time in pursuit of the same objective. For the period 2007–11 we have coded the following cases as having a campaign infrastructure: Guinea, 2007, 2009; the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2007; Madagascar, 2009; Yemen, 2011; Bahrain, 2011; China, 2008; Myanmar, 2007. We used the case histories provided by the Global Nonviolent Action Database (Lakey, 2011) and the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict[8] to augment news sources when coding the presence of a campaign infrastructure.[9]

We draw upon the NAVCO 2.0 data to test Hypothesis 2 (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013b). Only 28 of the 46 cases in our dataset (generated from the UCDP-OSV data) are coded as having a campaign infrastructure and this sample is too small to allow for us to control for the factors mentioned below. A campaign year is the unit of analysis in the NAVCO 2.0 dataset, which includes cases of violent and nonviolent insurgency from 1946 to 2006. A campaign is a 'series of observable, continuous, purposive mass tactics or events in pursuit of a political objective' (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013a: 416). We restrict the sample by including only campaign years where the primary method of resistance was nonviolent and the government used 'extreme repression' as defined by Chenoweth & Lewis (2013b).[10] 'Extreme' repression entails the intent to kill and violently silence opponents, the use of torture or severe violence which could kill someone, or 'mass violence' (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013b: 13).

The NAVCO 2.0 data also include variables specifically designed for the analysis of political jiu-jitsu. For the purposes of this study we examine the 'campaign backlash' variable where there is increased domestic mobilization after severe repression and 'security defections' during the campaign year. We are cognizant that security defections in the NAVCO data do not necessarily occur after the onset of extreme repression and it remains possible that security defections cause repression, rather than the other way around. To study international political jiu-jitsu we draw upon the 'international material backlash' variable denoting when economic sanctions or arms embargoes are imposed, international investors withdraw, or another state economically or militarily aids the rebels (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013b: 14–15).

To test the impact of communications infrastructure on the likelihood of domestic and international forms of political jiu-jitsu we use two of the 'parallel institutions' variables in the NAVCO 2.0 data, specifically the presence of a parallel traditional media institution (newspapers, radio and television broadcasting) and a parallel new media institution (internet-based) (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013b: 13). Parallel institutions are those set up by the campaign independent of government institutions, including those that may be co-opted by the opposition in the course of a movement.

In the analysis of our dataset from the UCDP-OSV data and the NAVCO data we include a number of control variables. These include the goals of the unarmed demonstrators, specifically whether the movement aimed at regime change (Government goals), territorial succession or autonomy (Territorial goals) or institutional reform (Reform goals). A dummy for anti-occupation movements (Anti-Occupation) was also included for the analysis of the NAVCO data. It may be that groups seeking regime change, for example, are more likely to build campaign organizations or media institutions but are also, independently, more likely to generate international and domestic backlash (Svensson & Lindgren, 2011). Variables indicating the presence of concurrent organized violence were also included. In the analysis of the UCDP-OSV data, variables denoting whether there was an ongoing UCDP civil war (Ongoing civil war) or 'non-state war' (Ongoing non-state war) during the period of repression were included (Themnér & Wallensteen, 2012; Sundberg, Eck & Kreutz, 2012). For the analysis of the NAVCO data we use the 'radical flank' variable (Radical flank). The presence of a 'liberated zone' may enable nonviolent activists to establish campaign

[8] For the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, see http://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/.

[9] At the time of writing we were unclear whether a campaign infrastructure existed in Syria before the onset of repression. The models reported below treat this case as missing. If we impute that Syria did not have a campaign infrastructure then the findings reported below largely hold. There remains a positive and substantively large relationship between domestic political jiu-jitsu and campaigns. Increased mobilization after repression is significant at the 0.10 level ($p = 0.060$).

[10] The findings reported hold if we widen the sample to include cases of 'moderate repression' in the NAVCO 2.0 data.

infrastructure or media institutions and these networks may be crucial to increased mobilization in the face of repression. We have also included a variable for the severity of repression. In the UCDP-OSV data we have included a dummy variable signalling whether 100 or more unarmed dissidents were killed in the year.[11] We have also included variables for (logged) population, (logged) GDP per capita and institutional democracy (Log population, Log GDP per capita, Polity2). Population is a correlate of nonviolent campaign success (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013a: 422), which may include either security defections or increased mobilization. Larger populations may also make it more difficult for the government to control the population, opening spaces for alternative organizations and institutions to develop. GDP can be used as a measure of state capacity and individual wealth and again, we think it may be easier for groups to establish campaigns and institutions in wealthier states where communications and media technology are widely available. Wealthier citizens are also likely to be able to hurt the government after repression as their taxation revenue can be effectively withdrawn. This may increase the perceived probability of the success of civil resistance after repression and stimulate mobilization. For both population and GDP we have used Gleditsch's (2002) expanded GDP data and augmented these values from 2004 onwards with the Penn World Tables Version 7.1 (Heston, Summers & Aten, 2012).[12] Finally, we have included a measure of institutional democracy because of the possibility that open political spaces in democratic states make it easier to set up organizational infrastructures and parallel media institutions, while, at the same time, opposition parties and civil society groups may facilitate mobilization in the face of repression, or the security forces may be more likely to hold strong norms against killing unarmed demonstrators. This measure is based on the Polity2 scale in the Polity IV data (Marshall, Jaggers & Gurr, 2012).

In all we have two batteries of tests – one with the dataset built from the UCDP-OSV data that does not select on the campaign, but treats the campaign as an independent variable and one of political jiu-jitsu in ongoing campaigns as defined by Chenoweth & Lewis (2013a). We use logit regressions throughout. In each of the batteries the first model tests the independent variables against the outcomes of domestic political jiu-jitsu. Model 2 tests the outcome of international political jiu-jitsu while Model 3 and 4 disaggregate domestic political jiu-jitsu into increased mobilization and security force defections, respectively. The results of this analysis are presented below.

Results

Government one-sided violence and unarmed protestors data

We have 46 cases of OSV against unarmed demonstrators. The majority of these (21) occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, while there were 12 cases in South and South East Asia, nine cases in the Middle East and North Africa, three in Central and South America and one in Europe. In roughly 30% of these cases violence resulted in increased domestic mobilization and 17.4% saw security defections. International sanctions or arms embargoes were experienced in 30% of cases. A pre-existing campaign infrastructure was present in 60.1% of these cases. Summary statistics suggest a plausible relationship between campaign infrastructure and domestic backlash. Eighty-five percent of the cases of increased domestic mobilization occurred when a pre-existing campaign infrastructure was in place and 75% of security defections. Only half of the cases of international backfire occurred where a campaign infrastructure was present. Initially this suggests that campaigns are related to domestic political jiu-jitsu, but not international political jiu-jitsu. Of course, these patterns could be accounted for by confounding variables. Table I shows the results of logit analysis of domestic and international forms of political jiu-jitsu using our dataset generated by the UCPD-OSV.

The results suggest that a campaign infrastructure significantly increases the likelihood of domestic political jiu-jitsu but not international political jiu-jitsu. Table I shows a positive and statistically significant coefficient on the campaign infrastructure variable and domestic political jiu-jitsu, which holds when we include measures of institutional democracy, population and GDP per capita. The coefficient is quite large. The odds of either security defections or increased mobilization occurring after severe repression are roughly 60 times higher when the protests are part of an ongoing campaign. We used the CLARIFY method to simulate the marginal effects of a campaign infrastructure (Tomz, Wittenberg & King, 2003). With all other variables set to their means, government repression has an average probability of inducing domestic political jiu-jitsu of 3.5%.

[11] We have not included a severity measure in the NAVCO 2.0 data due to data unavailability.

[12] For Myanmar 2007 there was missing data in the SVUP data. We imputed from the 2005 value for this single case.

Table I. Logistic regression, domestic and international political jujitsu, severe repression against unarmed protestors, 1989–2011

Variable	*Domestic*	*International*	*Increased domestic mobilization*	*Security defections*
Territorial goals	−3.044	1.405	−0.778	excluded
Reform goals	−5.629†	−1.822	−1.71	excluded
Campaign	4.219*	−0.008	3.066*	2.656
Ongoing civil war	−4.315†	3.275*	−1.546	−0.572
Ongoing non-state conflict	0.881	−3.194*	−0.739	−1.033
Severe violence	−1.287	0.661	−0.516	4.302*
Log population	−0.254	0.362	−0.34	−0.912
Log GDP per capita	2.357*	−1.327*	1.150†	0.245
Polity 2	−0.113	−0.174	0.004	0.050
Constant	−13.896	4.214	−6.497	1.398
n	45	45	45	45

†$p < 0.1$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$.

Government repression of a protest event that is part of a pre-existing campaign, however, has a 46% chance of inducing domestic political jiu-jitsu, with a lower bound on the 95% confidence interval of 15% and an upper bound of 81.4%. Moving to the disaggregated measures of domestic political jiu-jitsu, the campaign infrastructure is most confidently related to increased mobilization after repression as indicated by the statistically significant coefficient in Model 3. However, the coefficient for security defections is positive and approaches conventional levels of significance ($p = 0.113$). We interpret this as speaking to our causal mechanisms. It may be easier for activist groups to establish and exploit links with civil society groups in the face of repression than with sectors of the security forces. It is also worth noting that in no cases in our UCDP-OSV dataset did a 'spontaneous' protest successfully achieve its aims.

Staying with domestic political jiu-jitsu, we also find that backfire is less likely when protesters demanding institutional reform are repressed. This could reflect a number of mechanisms, including that the government is more willing to concede in these circumstances. Similarly, protests over territorial autonomy or secession are less likely to backfire when compared to protests seeking regime change, and this result approaches but does not meet conventional levels of statistical significance. This is largely in line with previous research. Chenoweth & Stephan (2011) find that nonviolent conflicts over government are more likely to be successful than conflicts over territorial issues, as do Svensson & Lindgren (2011). When the opposition can unite against the radical but unifying demand of regime change, rather than a more modest reform agenda or the potentially splintering demands of a change of territory, then the chance that severe repression will backfire is increased.

We also find a significant and positive relationship between (log) GDP per capita and domestic political jiu-jitsu, especially increased mobilization after repression.[13] This could reflect a number of mechanisms. It may be that it is simply easier to communicate information of repression in wealthier states with higher levels of technology diffusion and tighter, economically-based intergroup networks. It may also be that citizens in wealthier states feel they can more effectively 'hurt' the government for violating social norms through diffusion tactics such as strikes and boycotts after repression. It may be a combination of these or, indeed, a different mechanism. This may be an interesting area for future research.

Table I does not reveal any strong associations with security defections, with the exception of the severity of the repression, which substantially increases the likelihood of defections. We do not place much stock in this finding, however, because no security defections occurred when protesters claimed territorial or reform goals. Governments are likely to know this and are willing to use more severe repression in these cases. Nonetheless, this points to an important role for the aims of the protestors and the likelihood of security defections. Where, for example, an ethnic minority is seeking autonomy or independence, units of the military that are not of the same ethnic group may effectively and brutally

[13] The six wealthiest states in the sample were Bahrain (2011), Libya (2011), Israel (1989), South Africa (1989, 1990), Romania (1989) and China (2008).

repress dissent while limiting the release of information to members of the targeted ethnic group.

Turning to international political jiu-jitsu we find that the chances of sanctions and embargoes are largely unrelated to the presence of a campaign infrastructure. An ongoing civil war appears to increase the likelihood of international political jiu-jitsu following severe repression. We speculate that civil wars may already focus the international community's attention on human rights abuses. The killing of unarmed civilians may be a 'red line' that triggers the onset of sanctions or embargoes. Somewhat surprisingly, we find that an ongoing 'non-state conflict' significantly decreases the likelihood of international repercussions, but we are unclear on what, theoretically, this might mean. It may be that non-state conflicts are easily framed as 'tribal wars' where massacres are not considered unusual, or perhaps non-state wars tend not to attract media attention. Of course, it may simply be an artifact of the data. In addition, Table I also shows that wealthier states are unlikely to attract the ire of the international community. We suspect that this reflects the major power status of China and the strategic role of oil-exporting states such as Bahrain.

Nonviolent and violent campaigns and outcomes data

We have 135 cases of state repression of nonviolent campaigns (without missing data on the media institutions variable). Of these, 76% experienced increased domestic mobilization while 24% experienced security defections. Negative international repercussions occurred in 33% of cases. Roughly 77% of campaign-repression years had either traditional or parallel media institutions established. We find some initial evidence of a relationship between increased mobilization and international backlash after repression and parallel media institutions. Eighty-two percent of increased mobilization occurred where a parallel media institution was present and 39% of cases of international repercussions. Twenty-three percent of security defections occurred in this context, slightly lower than in the full distribution. Table II shows the results of our logit analysis.

Table II shows support for our hypothesis that parallel media institutions increase the likelihood of both domestic and international political jiu-jitsu. The coefficients are significant at the 0.01 level across Models 1 and 2 and the effects are large. Like the analysis of the UCDP-OSV-based data, a communications infrastructure is more closely related to increased mobilization after repression rather than security force defections. Again, we think this reflects the ease of communicating to the uncommitted population and civil society groups that stand outside the state apparatus when compared to penetrating security institutions. The odds of repression backfiring domestically are over five times higher when activists set up parallel media institutions and 13 times higher for international political jiu-jitsu. Again using the CLARIFY method (Tomz, Wittenberg & King, 2003) with other variables set to their means or modes, the mean probability of repression backfiring without parallel media institutions is about 60.4% (within a campaign). This increases to 89% if a parallel media institution is present. The mean probability of international political jiu-jitsu is 6.1% for ongoing campaigns after severe repression. Campaigns with a parallel media institution present, however, have a mean probability of 42.3% of drawing sanctions or embargoes against the regime.

We disaggregated the 'parallel media' variable and found that both traditional and new media increase the likelihood of domestic political jiu-jitsu. In fact, in all of the cases where parallel new media (that is, internet-based) institutions were set up ($n = 14$), severe repression was followed by domestic political jiu-jitsu. If we include just the traditional media variable, this returns a positive and statistically significant coefficient similar to media institutions in general. For international political jiu-jitsu we found that traditional media was positively and significantly related (coef. $= 2.298$, $p = 0.003$) while new media was positively related but not at conventional levels of significance (coef. $= 1.149$, $p = 0.250$). We also tested whether opposition social welfare or education institutions accounted for this result, but both of these variables were insignificantly related to domestic and international political jiu-jitsu and did not substantively change the findings regarding media institutions.

Table II shows a number of additional significant findings. Domestic political jiu-jitsu is less likely in anti-occupation struggles, especially increased mobilization. Again, this is likely to reflect deep social cleavages that reinforce in-group solidarity and hinder the kind of intergroup trust and communication required for mobilization (Lichbach, 1994). We also replicate the results of Table I and find that wealthier states are more likely to see increased mobilization after repression. Interestingly, we find that wealthier states are less likely to witness security force defections in the face of a nonviolent campaign, perhaps because the opportunity costs of defection are higher. We also replicate the finding that a concurrent violent campaign significantly increases the chances of international political jiu-jitsu, perhaps, again,

Table II. Domestic and international backfire in ongoing NAVCO 2.0 campaigns

Variable	*Domestic*	*International*	*Increased mobilization*	*Security defections*
Territorial goals	−0.911	−0.736	−1.073	0.474
Anti-occupation	−1.639*	−0.674	−0.811	(omitted)
Radical flank	0.112	1.379**	0.071	−0.572
Log population	0.208	0.367*	0.036	−0.067
Log GDP per capita	0.431	−0.218	0.595*	−0.813**
Polity 2	0.043	−0.058	0.053	−0.005
Media institutions	1.682**	2.621**	1.327*	0.227
Constant	−4.788	−5.632†	−4.659	6.566*
n	120	120	120	89

†$p < 0.1$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$.

by focusing the attention of the international community on human rights abuses.

Concluding discussion

The empirical study of nonviolence is in its early stages. This study makes an important contribution to the research frontier. By approaching the study from both the campaign perspective (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011) and the perspective of nonviolent action in the context of government repression, we shed new light on the conditions under which repression rebounds against the regime. We also contribute to the study of one-sided violence, a field which has frequently cast civilians as passive victims and overlooked the many and varied ways they avoid, respond to and co-opt political violence during situations of conflict (Kalyvas, 2006). By treating civilians in the cases recorded here as organized actors, we show that their actions and reactions in the context of one-sided violence are likely to have a significant impact on the course of unarmed uprisings.

Our main contributions to the literature are to examine the role of organizational and communications infrastructure in generating backfire after severe government repression, including both domestic and international forms. While the theoretical literature on collective dissent posits an important role for communications and leadership in regime backfire, especially the work of Roland Francisco, David Hess and Brian Martin, this is, to the best of our knowledge, the first study to empirically test this theory. Our empirical analysis shows strong support for these ideas and, more generally, the role of institution-building in nonviolent movements. One component of the criteria utilized by Chenoweth & Lewis (2013a) and Chenoweth & Stephan (2011) to identify nonviolent movements is an important prerequisite of increased domestic mobilization and security defections following repression. Spontaneous or disorganized protests are likely to have grave difficulties communicating the extent of regime brutality to the uncommitted population and convincing would-be participants that the risks of protest are low enough to induce participation. Within ongoing campaigns we find that parallel media institutions increase the likelihood of mobilization following repression and material international repercussions. We also find that a 'radical flank' increases the likelihood of international sanctions and embargoes but is largely unrelated to domestic forms of backfire. Wealth is *positively* related to backfire after repression in our models, and this effect is independent of the level of institutional democracy.

In line with previous research, especially Sharp (1973) and Schock (2005), we show that it matters what dissidents *do* in the context of a nonviolent campaign, especially the institutions that they set up. If planned, organized nonviolent action is more resilient in the face of repression and stands a better chance of generating increased mobilization and security defections then strategy and organization are ways that outside actors can increase the costs of repression. Likewise, if parallel media institutions make increased domestic and international mobilization more likely then these may be efficient ways in which NGOs and governments can assist such movements.

At the same time we recognize the limited conclusions that we are able to draw from this study. There is likely to be variation in the campaign organizations that dissidents set up, especially the links that they forge with civil society groups (Lichbach, 1994). Future studies could refine our measure of organizational infrastructure and parallel media institutions to include a measure of quality, for instance in terms of material resources and level of unity, cohesion and strategic thinking within the

movement leadership (Pearlman, 2011). We also have not explored *why* media institutions increase the likelihood of mobilization after repression. The theory is based on the rational choice literature on collective action, but we have not tested these conjectures or examined the causal chain through process-tracing. There are also likely to be other variables that influence both institution-building and backfire that we have not considered here, but we welcome this controversy. Future research might also examine in greater depth the variations in radical flanks, an area that is understudied (Schock, 2013). Finally, all conclusions are dependent on the government's use of extreme violence, that is, the use of armed force resulting in 25 deaths or more in one calendar year or severe repression as defined in the NAVCO dataset. We cannot draw any conclusions about unarmed conflict as a whole because this is only a sample of the total population of these conflicts. Likewise we are unable to make any inferences about why or under what conditions governments choose to use severe repressive violence because there is no variation of this in our data (Shively, 2005). A natural continuation of this work would be to extend the UCDP-OSV-based data to events of government killing of unarmed protestors which would allow for a finer-grained empirical analysis and the inclusion of variables that could not be included here due to the structure of our data – especially previous episodes of repression and the cumulative impact of severe repression.

The study leaves us with a puzzle. The high rates of backfire reported here are in line with previous studies. In the UCDP-OSV-based data roughly 30% of repression incidents resulted in increased mobilization or international sanctions while 17.4% resulted in security defections. In the NAVCO 2.0 data, 74% of cases resulted in increased mobilization, 32% resulted in material international repercussions and 24% coincided with security defections. Francisco's (2004) study found that nearly all of the 31 urban massacres he identified resulted in increased domestic mobilization. Why would governments choose to violently repress in these high-risk scenarios? Why would governments choose to kill unarmed civilians when their atrocities are likely to be broadcast and condemned, domestically and internationally? This puzzle is similar to that posed by bargaining theory – why do actors in conflict take the high-cost, high-risk path of violence when they could come to a negotiated settlement (see Powell, 2002; Walter, 2009)? Bargaining theory has been primarily applied to the study of international and civil wars and emphasizes the role of uncertainty and miscalculation in driving decisions of organized violence. We see this as an area for future research but speculate that the secretive nature of dissident network-building in nonviolent conflicts may be an especially information-poor environment. Governments may repress demonstrations without accurate knowledge of activist networks, or repress based on the belief that they can effectively win the propaganda war afterwards. It is also possible that the information revealed by mobilization or defections after repression are crucial in resolving the conflict. A number of the protests in the UCDP-OSV-based data were resolved very quickly after repression either through elite defections or government concessions, as was the case in Madagascar (2009) and Guinea (2009). Applying these insights from bargaining theory to the study of nonviolent conflict may deepen our understanding of this important contemporary phenomenon.

Replication data

All analyses were conducted using STATA, version 11.2. The dataset and command files for the empirical analyses can be found at http://www.prio.no/jpr/datasets.

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