Alleging Terrorism, Repressing Dissent: Examining the Impact of Armed Groups on State Responses to Nonviolent Resistance

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Abstract:
How does the presence of violent groups influence how states respond to nonviolent resistance? Recent history has witnessed the destabilization of autocratic and oppressive regimes via the most unassuming of catalysts: nonviolent resistance (NVR). However, not all nonviolent movements succeed. Often, we find violent groups compete alongside NVR movements for accommodations by the state. The literature currently examines the two separately regarding their respective successes and failures yet has not grasped the impact one could have on the other. I argue that the presence of armed groups can hinder nonviolent groups' goals due to weakened credibility, state's unwillingness to concede, and increased state repression. However, I also examine how state behavior differs when their presence is more distant (i.e., intrastate but not within the region). By analyzing protest events in temporal and spatial proximity, I estimate the effect of using repression on protests at the subnational level using novel data from Africa from 1990 to 2017. Using an illustrative case study of Cote d'Ivoire, I examine the interplay between violent and nonviolent resistance on state behavior and the subsequent success of NVR. The results indicate that state behavior towards nonviolent groups heavily depends on the territory these groups share.

Key words: civil resistance, terrorism, conflict, repression

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Introduction

In October 2019, three heads of government – in Iraq, Lebanon, and Bolivia - agreed to step down under pressure from mass mobilizations. Considered individually, these are remarkable events. movements has taken place amid a period of declining effectiveness for movements. However, in recent years, the success of protests has steadily declined and it is largely unclear what has caused this (Chenoweth, 2021) - approximately 70 percent of major nonviolent movements in the 1990s succeeded, only around 30 percent did so from 2010 to 2017. The global coronavirus pandemic-and government responses to it forced people in early 2020 to abandon the wave of mass demonstrations that had emerged in 2019. Taking advantage of this sudden lapse in conventional forms of popular resistance, a host of governments across the world pushed forward divisive policies that ranged from the suspension of free speech to controversial judicial appointments to bans on immigrant or refugee admissions. While existing research has extensively explored the outcomes of state responses to nonviolent resistance, there remains a gap in the literature regarding the distinct influence that violent or armed groups may have on the dynamics and outcomes of nonviolent resistance movements.

In the complex landscape of state responses to nonviolent resistance, the Sri Lankan civil war serves as a poignant illustration of the dynamics at play. The internationalization of this conflict not only resulted in the depoliticization and denigration of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the broader Eelam Tamil community (Seoighe 2017: 102) but also highlighted the profound variations in state reactions. Despite persistent grassroots movements campaigning against state-sanctioned violence and the repression of the Tamil people, their endeavors were often dismissed due to a perceived lack of credibility. Complicating the situation further was the LTTE's strategic role as the dominant force in a separatist movement. This positioning, arguable in its influence, seemingly prompted heightened military interventions by the state, exacerbating the deterioration of minority rights (Adayaalam, 2019; Jeyabraba and Phillips, 2021).

Similarly, in 2011, Egypt saw the emergence of various non-violent means of protest during the revolution. The Muslim Brotherhood played a crucial but contentious part in the revolution. The violence employed led to a change in the narrative, as the regime portrayed the protests as a threat to public order and stability, justifying the use of force and further repression. This characterization

was encouraged and utilized by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) to discredit protesters, for example, during the November battles on Mohamed Mahmoud Street and the December clashes in front of the cabinet building. These instances underscore the reality that individuals, when galvanized by shared objectives, can emerge as pivotal actors in the political arena, actively shaping the trajectory of societies on a local and global scale.

Probing this further, Figure 1 reveals how social disturbances, both violent and nonviolent, have been met with repressive acts by the state. We see that repression trails violent events from 1990 through to 2014. It then seems to increase post-2014 unlike violent events, suggesting repression is now being used more frequently targeting both violent and nonviolent movements. In this article, I examine how government response towards nonviolent groups changes as a result of activity from violent groups.

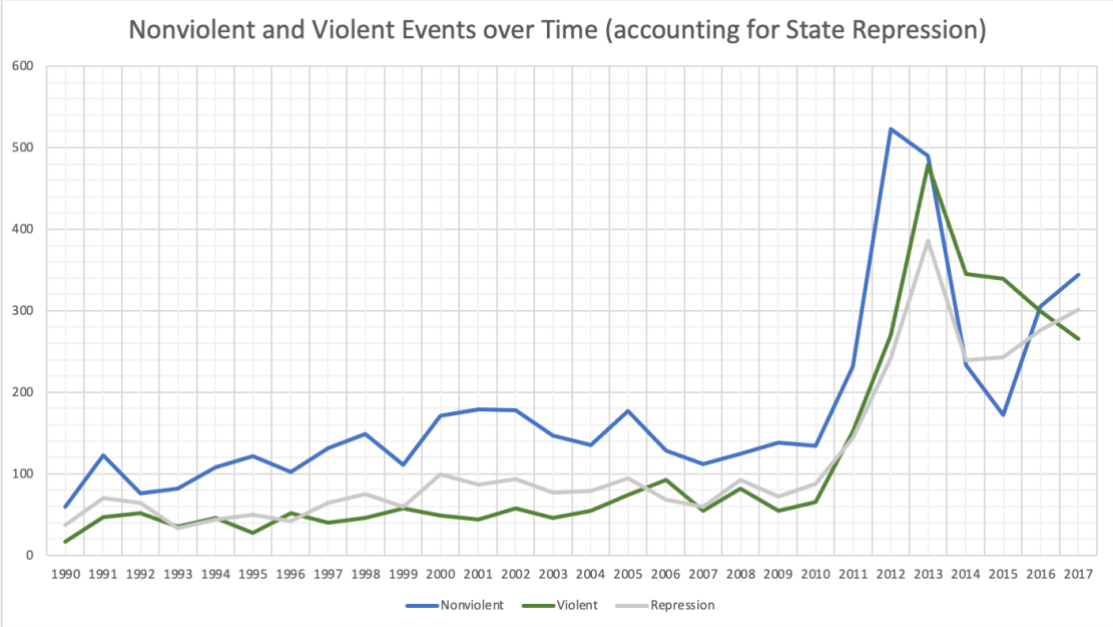

Figure 1: Tracking Repression over Social Disturbances in Africa (Source: SCAD Data, 2017)

Despite a few notable exceptions (Butcher & Pinckney, 2022; Cunningham, 2011; Klein & Regan, 2018; Mueller, 2022; Vüllers & Schwarz, 2019), the rich literature on the government's responses to protest has predominantly focused on state repression's implications for protesters (Carey, 2006; Davenport, 2007; Opp & Roehl, 1990; Steinert-Threlkeld et al., 2021). Less attention has been paid to what shapes and influences state behavior. Ives and Lewis (2019) argue that violent escalations

are more likely to occur following recent repression, resulting in even more violent and destabilizing protests. This article, however, considers a critical factor which shapes the behavior of states: the presence of violent groups (or competition).

State responses have been heavily discussed as being dependent on the cost of concessions (see David and Ward, 1990; Rasler, 1996; Carey, 2006), I argue that the presence of violent groups that share territorial or ideological attributes to the NVR group, can influence the way in which states choose to accommodate or repress NVR groups. It begins with the assumption that states brandish NVR groups as "extremists" or "a concern for national security" when in the presence of other violent groups. This, in turn, spoils any peaceful efforts made by NVR groups toward their goals. If this is true, then we would see that states are less likely to concede and more likely to increase their military power in order to defeat the groups. Utilizing expanded data from Africa, I analyze protest events in temporal and spatial proximity. I estimate the effect of repression on protests at the subnational level and, in so doing, I examine the interplay between violent and nonviolent resistance on state behavior and the subsequent impact on NVR. The results indicate that state behavior towards nonviolent groups heavily depends on the territory these groups share.

This study contributes to related literature in several ways. First, it adds to the body of research on nonviolent resistance by pointing out the systematic differences in campaign attributes and state responses which delineate the environments in which violent and nonviolent resistance occur. Second, it affirms literature which shows social movement resources – such as organizations, networks, and skills of participants – explain the choice of nonviolent resistance (Thurber, 2019; Dahlum, 2019; Clarke, 2014; McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly, 2001). Finally, it makes an empirical contribution by extending data on contentious campaigns in Africa (Cunningham, Dahl & Frugé, 2017). This paper highlights the challenges that arise in contentious politics when multiple types of groups are present in the conflict environment. The findings indicate a worrying precedence where states will likely resort to lethal repression against nonviolent resistance movements independent of their association with armed groups in the same region. This serves as a strategy through which states circumvent democratic norms that safeguard the right to peaceful protest. As such, this paper helps to explain the range of state responses in a variety of settings.

This paper is structured as follows. First, I review the extensive scholarship on nonviolent resistance and the prevalence of violent groups, as well as state responses to mass mobilization. Second, I outline the argument stating what shapes state behavior to nonviolent movements. Third, I describe the data and the operationalization of social conflict data, followed by a quantitative analysis of the relationship between VR presence and subsequent state behavior. To further probe the causal process, I use an illustrative case study of Burundi, covering years 2013 to 2015. I conclude by discussing the implications of the findings for the protest-repression nexus and avenues for future research, particularly with regard to measuring state violence.

Tactics of Resistance: A Dichotomy of Violence and Nonviolence?

Armed struggle used to be the primary way in which movements fought for change from outside the political system. Today, campaigns in which people rely overwhelmingly on nonviolent resistance have replaced armed struggle as the most common approach to contentious action worldwide (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011). It has become a mainstay of political action across the globe. There is extensive debate over the effectiveness of the resistance methods contentious campaigns use to make demands. Nonviolent tactics such as protest reduce barriers to participation in campaign activities and give moral authority to participants (Stephan & Chenoweth, 2008). They generate sympathy among the public, reducing support for state repression of protests (Edwards & Arnon, 2021) and motivating increased participation in resistance when such campaigns are targeted (Pearlman, 2018; Aytaç, Schiumerini & Stokes, 2018). As a result, nonviolent campaigns may grow and eventually overthrow repressive regimes (Chenoweth & Stephan, 2011). However, when campaigns fail in making progress using nonviolent tactics, groups have tended to adopt violent strategies (Ryckman, 2019).

Campaigns may use violent resistance as a form of coercion against a rival campaign or the state (Pape, 2003). Evidence from the Social Conflict Analysis Database (SCAD; Salehyan et al. 2012) provides support for theories of spontaneous escalation. An example from the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2006 shows how a small group of violence-oriented miners can derail a peaceful protest by initiating stone throwing at the police. In incidents like this, protests can easily escalate due

to the spontaneous behaviors of a small group of violence-oriented participants who are not constrained by protest organizers. The use of violence can harden government resolve, result in arrests and repression, raise the costs for future protestors, and limit mobilizing potential (Davenport et al., 2005). Yet, despite the upsides of remaining peaceful and the downsides of turning violent, protests do sometimes escalate into violence.

Furthermore, a sense of injustice, oppression, or marginalization can fuel anger and the belief that violent action is necessary to achieve justice or equality. When individuals or groups feel excluded from the political process, they may turn to violence as a means to assert their presence and demands. Groups that adopt violent tactics have various names in the literature, which include but are not limited to insurgent groups, rebel groups, militant groups, and terrorist groups. Terrorism is a form of violence deliberately used to instill fear and intimidate civilian populations, often for political or ideological purposes (Asal et al., 2022). In the context of state responses to nonviolent movements, the presence of violent groups can complicate the situation and potentially impact how states perceive and react to nonviolent movements.[2] Rebel groups are thought to be motivated by a political agenda or the "advancement of some political, ideological, social, economic, religious, or military agenda" (Shanahan, 2010: 174). As state oppression further emboldens identities and mobilizes individuals, ethnic rebel groups' goals often resonate with a pre-existing group of people (e.g., Polo, 2020). The sharing of a similar political status is a relevant attribute that fosters mutual identification among ethnic groups (Polo, 2020).

Historically, nonviolent struggles have been waged with various methods of contentious direct action. In reality, however, the boundaries between these various forms of struggle are very fluid. Movements are not always exclusively and explicitly armed or unarmed – many involve a combination of both. Emerging scholarship has examined violent flanks of nonviolent movements, or subgroups launching violent operations (Chenoweth & Schock 2015). During South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, for instance, primarily nonviolent mobilization from within Black townships existed

[2] It's crucial to note that while some violent movements may be labelled as "terrorist," not all violent resistance should be automatically categorized as such. Additionally, understanding the motivations behind violent resistance can aid in addressing the root causes of conflicts and exploring ways to reduce violence and promote peaceful solutions.

contemporaneously with Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress. Yet, scholarship is not always clear about when a movement or campaign can still be considered nonviolent, and much existing literature focuses on ideal types rather than proportional levels of violent and nonviolent action (Chenoweth & Lewis, 2013). While nonviolent movements offer less protection and material benefits than rebel armies - even less than lower-level violence - many countries also respond to nonviolent resistance with less harsh measures than they would for armed insurgency or lower-level violence and practise higher thresholds for repressing nonviolent action.

The Spectrum of State Responses

Governments worldwide have exhibited a diverse range of reactions to protests, with responses ranging from accommodation and engagement to repression and hostility. This section delves into the multifaceted nature of government responses to protests, exploring the factors that shape these reactions, the strategies employed by authorities to address dissent, and the broader implications for democracy, human rights, and social stability. When faced with challenges posed by various forms of dissent, states often resort to a diverse range of strategies to manage and control the dissenting forces. Table 1 details the multifaceted nature of state responses to dissent, encompassing a spectrum of approaches.

Table 1: Categorizing State Reactions: From Accommodation to Repression

State Response:	Definition:
Accommodation/Concession	Accommodation refers to the state's willingness to address the concerns or demands of dissenting actors by making policy changes or implementing reforms that aim to alleviate the underlying issues. It involves a more conciliatory approach, whereas concessions require the state to grant specific demands or compromising on certain issues put forth by the dissenting actors. This response typically involves the government yielding to pressure from dissidents.
Containment/Tolerance	Containment or co-option is defined as: “committing to reform rhetorically or making very limited concessions to buy time and to forestall more extensive protests” (Davenport, 2007). States would try to include protest members in political decision-making processes without

	granting them any political power or buy out protest members with monetary or political resources.
Covert Repression	Covert repression includes tactics of counter-mobilization. An example of this is where states secretly support violent counter-movements, or pay private agents to intimidate protestors, e.g., through threatening messaging on social media or phone calls. States could also launch disinformation campaigns, including and via social media.
Overt Repression	Overt repression includes but is not limited to: the use of force against protestors; political arrests; curtailing the right to protest by changing protest laws; imposing tax restrictions on non-governmental organizations; and internet and social media shutdowns (Davenport, 2007).

Dissent always evokes state repression in some form - what Davenport calls the "law of coercive responsiveness" (2007, 1). Most civil resistance scholars are likewise aware that state repression is a near guarantee when movements seek to alter the status quo. Within the social sciences, the literatures on state repression and nonviolent resistance have evolved somewhat separately from one another. For states, the degree to which the government is democratic or autocratic changes the relationship between political conflict and repression, as does the process of democratization (Hill & Jones 2014; Davenport 1995, 2004, 2007c). And even in the context of nonviolent uprisings, regimes may face threats from other sources, which can lead to even greater levels of repression against nonviolent dissidents (Ritter 2014; Danneman and Ritter 2014).

Tilly (1978) defines repression as actions that increase the costs of protest. Ritter and Conrad (2016, 86) define state repression as "any realized or threatened limit or coercive action taken by state authorities to control or prevent challenges that could alter the status quo policy or distribution of power." More precisely, Davenport and Inman (2012, 620) argue that repression "deals with applications of state power that violate First Amendment–type rights, due process in the enforcement and adjudication of law, and personal integrity or security." Such wide-ranging definitions are common, and they capture the diverse array of repressive activities including surveillance, harassment, denying permits to assemble and protest, unlawful arrests, torture, and targeted killings. Furthermore, more limited lethal violence is still very much a common response to resistance movements, including nonviolent ones, and its use has recently increased: 92% of nonviolent

campaigns since 2007 experienced some form of lethal violence against them compared to 80% of nonviolent campaigns 1900-2006 (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011). A strict focus on a single form of repression might mask important changes in government strategy, like shifts from violations of civil liberties to violations of human integrity.

Since states claim to be the legitimate governing authority with a monopoly on the use of force, scholars tend to see repression as an inevitable result of any challenges to the domestic order or political survival. Regime type and institutions are one way for campaigns to assess likely state response.[3] While previous studies provide substantial insights into the tactics employed by states responding to dissent, the literature typically treats state behavior as a result of institutional characteristics. This offers little explanation for the influence violent and nonviolent groups have on the ways in which states respond to conflict.

Carey (2010) evaluates which dissident tactics tend to elicit state repression. She compares demonstrations, strikes, riots, guerrilla attacks, and revolutions and finds that guerrilla warfare is the only type of dissent that tends to increase the likelihood of state repression (see also DeMeritt 2016, 4). Similarly, Conrad and Moore (2010) evaluate the use of torture and find that states only cease such activities when they no longer face violent dissent (although they may continue to face nonviolent dissent). Asal et al. (2019) considered how government actions, both carrots (conciliatory tactics) and sticks (coercive tactics), affected civilian targeting by rebel groups that sought to signal their responses. They argued that carrots should be associated with less terrorism, contrary to some arguments in the literature, while sticks should lead to more terrorism.

Moreover, existing research prioritizes a dual framework between state and non-state actors. In this view, the conflict environment is dominated by interactions between the state and non-state actors and between non-state actors themselves. This often excludes interactions between nonviolent

[3] Authoritarian regimes tend to limit political competition and exclude, repress, or co-opt potential challengers to the state (Levitsky & Way, 2010; Gandhi, 2008). Democratic systems are designed for power-sharing and permit more political participation by non-state actors (Carey, 2009; Davenport, 2007a), offering institutional channels, such as constitutional guarantees of civil liberties, free and fair elections, and representative government, for campaigns to express their demands (Young & Dugan, 2011; Cunningham, 2013b; Heger, 2014). These institutional channels in democratic systems suggest that states will accommodate campaigns whose methods of resistance are consistent with the methods permitted within those channels.

and violent groups. Furthermore, existing research does not account for competing demands of the state when in conflict nor the spatial profile of violence. Notable exceptions include Welsh's (2021) study on the spatial profile of militant violence against civilians, which advances the study of violence by providing a finer, granular analysis.

While a large literature exists on competition and outbidding, it does not stand without criticism. Much of the literature that seeks to contest or question outbidding draws on three concerns. First, its inability to account for alternative explanations, such as territorial concentration (Rasler, 1996). Second, its failure to account for specific intergroup attributes which may affect competition, such as ethnicity or ideology (Carey, 2010). Third, the lack of empirical testing at a finer unit of analysis (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011). Despite these limitations, I argue territorial concentration of violent and nonviolent groups allow for states to use repressive tactics in the name of protecting national security. My focus on the interaction between nonviolent and violent groups moves beyond traditional tests of state behavior (e.g., Carey, 2010; Davenport, 2007a) and considers issues of aggregation in studies of dissent.

While all governments respond to violence with violence, the use of deadly force to respond to peaceful dissent is both an egregious violation of human rights and a potential catalyst for further instability. Therefore, even if lethal repression is not a viable strategy for long-term regime survival, it is often used for its short-term results. While my research is not about campaign success per se, it does suggest that differences in violent and nonviolent competition shape the likelihood that governments will stand firm in the face of popular dissatisfaction. This paper provides a framework for making detailed predictions about the likelihood of state violence in certain spaces in the subnational conflict environment. In particular, it suggests state repression occurs not only as a consequence of overall market competition; rather, state repression is likely to vary over space based on the contextual intensity of competition vis-à-vis the presence of territorial concentration.

Complexities of Dual Dynamics: Selective Engagement by States

In conflict environments characterized by the coexistence of violent and nonviolent groups, the territorial concentration of these forces plays a pivotal role in shaping state behavior and government

responses to nonviolent movements. The intricate interplay between violent and nonviolent actors creates a complex landscape, where state behavior is influenced by the presence, actions, and objectives of both factions. The dynamics of this complex relationship can lead to multifaceted outcomes, as governments are forced to navigate the delicate balance between addressing legitimate grievances raised by nonviolent demonstrators and confronting the potential security threats posed by violent elements.

In line with past research, internal dissent is seen as a threat to the authority of the ruling government. The higher the perceived level of threat, the more likely it is that the government will respond with severe measures, such as widespread repression. When faced with less threatening opposition tactics, it would be too costly to kill systematically large parts of the population, both in terms of organizing and funding the necessary killing machine, but also with respect to the international condemnation and shaming that these actions would trigger. Carey (2010) has argued that governments, when faced with particularly threatening forms of dissent, such as guerilla warfare, are willing to use a severe response in order to maintain, or restore, the stability of the government and the regime itself. However, in recent years, it seems that governments have chosen to repress to quash even peaceful dissent under the pretense on national security. The question is, therefore: when do violent groups impact how states respond to nonviolent ones?

One of the most prominent characteristics of violent and nonviolent groups dynamics is whether they spoil or complement the other. Most cross-national studies of separatism have largely ignored the role of violent movements' impact, even though violence in the form of fringe terrorism is common during nonviolent campaigns (Belgioioso, Costalli & Gleditsch, 2021). Belgioioso et al. (2021) argue that fringe terrorist activities in a nonviolent campaign under certain conditions can induce an advantage for well-organized moderate factions. The risk of escalation following terrorism can give the government more incentives to offer concessions to moderate campaign leaders if the movement can credibly prevent armed escalation. As such, the accompanying nature of violent groups has been examined, but not so much their role in "spoiling" dissent activities. Previously, in Figure 1, we see an increase in the disproportionate use of violence by the state to quash nonviolent

dissent post-2014. This could partly be explained by states growing more intolerant of dissidents and using tactics of delegitimization to justify state terror.

States purport this behavior in several ways. Firstly, they may use the presence of violent groups to label nonviolent movements as more radical or dangerous than they are. This labelling can result in greater state repression and decreased support from the general population. If nonviolent movements are perceived as being associated with violent groups or failing to distance themselves adequately from them, their legitimacy in the eyes of the public and the international community may be undermined. Secondly, states may justify repressive measures against nonviolent movements by arguing that their actions are necessary to combat terrorism or prevent further violence. This can result in the restriction of civil liberties and human rights protections for nonviolent activists.

It can be argued that some states, when faced with an existing national security issue of violent extremists, are more likely to crack down on peaceful protests as they consider the two types of threats to be the same. In Sri Lanka, for example, from as early as 1985, the Tamil Tigers - renowned for their violent tactics - began negotiations with the Sri Lankan government, where the negotiations were supported by the Tamil Liberation Front, a group who sought independence by nonviolent means (Al Jazeera, 2009). However, multiple rounds of negotiations failed and were interrupted by violent clashes between both sides. After that, the Sri Lankan government repressed the call for an independent state with armed conflict and the detainment of the leaders (US Department of State, 2023). It used a series of military offensives and counter-insurgency operations, erupting in a civil war that saw several state-perpetrated mass atrocities. In this case, we see how a violent group's activity can essentially "spoil" the cause of nonviolent groups.

The existence of violent groups can also divert attention from the underlying issues that nonviolent movements are advocating for, as the focus shifts to security concerns and countering the violent threat. This diversion may reduce the state's willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue with nonviolent protesters. Furthermore, the presence of violent groups can escalate conflicts and create a cycle of violence, making it harder for nonviolent movements to maintain their commitment to peaceful methods. For example, there has been a significant wave of protests began in 2014 and continued into subsequent years. These protests were largely driven by concerns over political and

economic marginalization of the Oromo people, who make up the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia. More recently, government crackdowns on protests, particularly in regions like Oromia and Amhara, have been widespread and caught international attention (Human Rights Watch, 2016). The government, led by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) at the time, was accused of using excessive force against demonstrators and restricting freedom of expression. The government often framed its actions as necessary for national security, especially in the context of dealing with ethnic tensions and separatist movements. Various armed groups were present in Oromia and Amhara, namely the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA), Fano and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). All groups have been involved in various stages and waves of conflict in Ethiopia. When an armed group is present in the same environment as a nonviolent group, it is easier for a state to: (i) use lethal repression to crackdown on protests; and (ii) justify the use of violence by association the nonviolent group to the armed group. Therefore, I expect that states are more likely to employ widespread repression when a violent group is present in the same sub-national region.

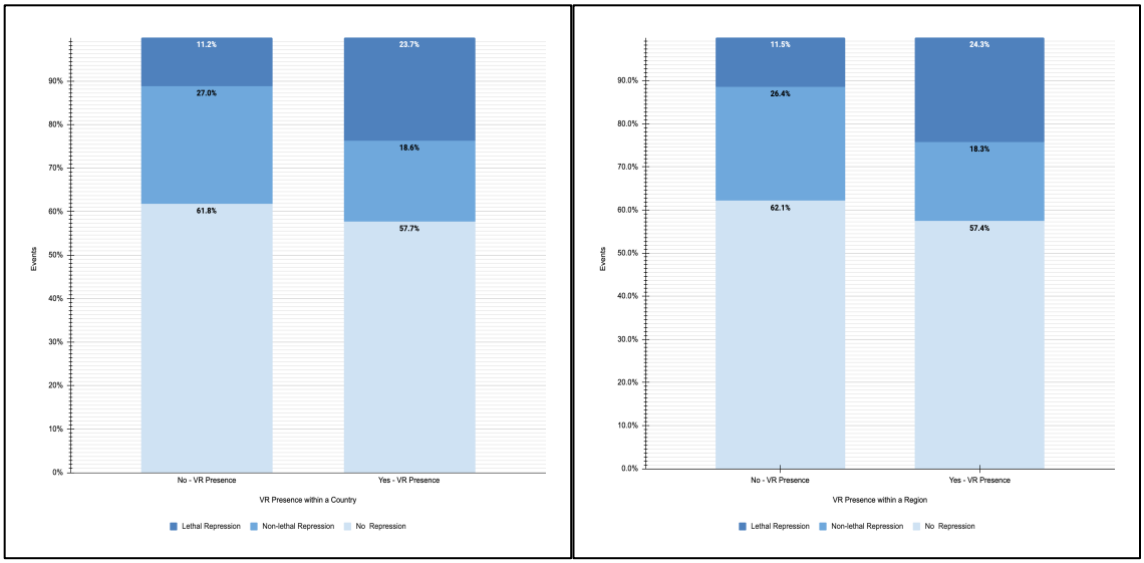

Figure 2: State Responses to Nonviolent Events against Violent Group (VR) Presence

Table 2 summarizes the arguments made above and distinguishes between the presence of a violent group in a country and within the region. This delineation is crucial to highlight the causal mechanism. Governments are not expected to respond to nonviolent events that are not accompanied by a violent group with widespread violence, since they pose a relatively minor threat. The cost of

repression as a response to non-violent event that have no violent element, is expected to be too high to make such a strategy worthwhile. Repression might trigger international condemnation, as well as increase frustration and dissent among the wider population due to the perceived lack of legitimacy of such a severe and violent response.

Table 2: Characteristics of Actors in the Conflict Environment and Expected Probability of Repression Onset

Nonviolent Event	Violent Group Presence in Country	Violent Group Presence in Region	Expected probability of repression onset
1	No	No	None
2	Yes	No	Low
3	Yes	Yes	High

H_{1a} : **When an armed group is present in the country but not the same region as the nonviolent event, the state is less likely to use repression against the nonviolent event.**

H_{1b} : **When an armed group is present in the country and the same region as the nonviolent event, the state is more likely to use repression against the nonviolent event.**

Extensive literature on negative racial and ethnic stereotyping in social psychology finds that members of minority ethnic groups are often associated with violence and threat. Building on this, Manekin and Mitts (2022) argue that when ethnic or minority groups engage in nonviolent resistance, they may nevertheless be perceived by observers as more violent than their dominant-group counterparts, thereby alienating audiences rather than mobilizing them and undermining what is posited to be the key advantage of nonviolent campaigns - their attraction of widespread participation. As the threat perception is higher, I would expect events that are rooted in ethnic discrimination - assuming that the support base reflects the ethnicity in question - are more likely to face higher levels of repression from the state.

At first glance, we see that states employ repressive tactics heavily on nonviolent events where the goals are primarily human rights and democracy, as shown in Figure 2. Lethal repression is also used heavily on events motivated by religious discrimination and around elections. If we consider the results in Figure 3 as proportions, then events that are motivated by ethnic grievances

experience a disproportionately high amount of lethal repression from states. However, the level of repression employed cannot be explained solely by the goal of the nonviolent event taking place.

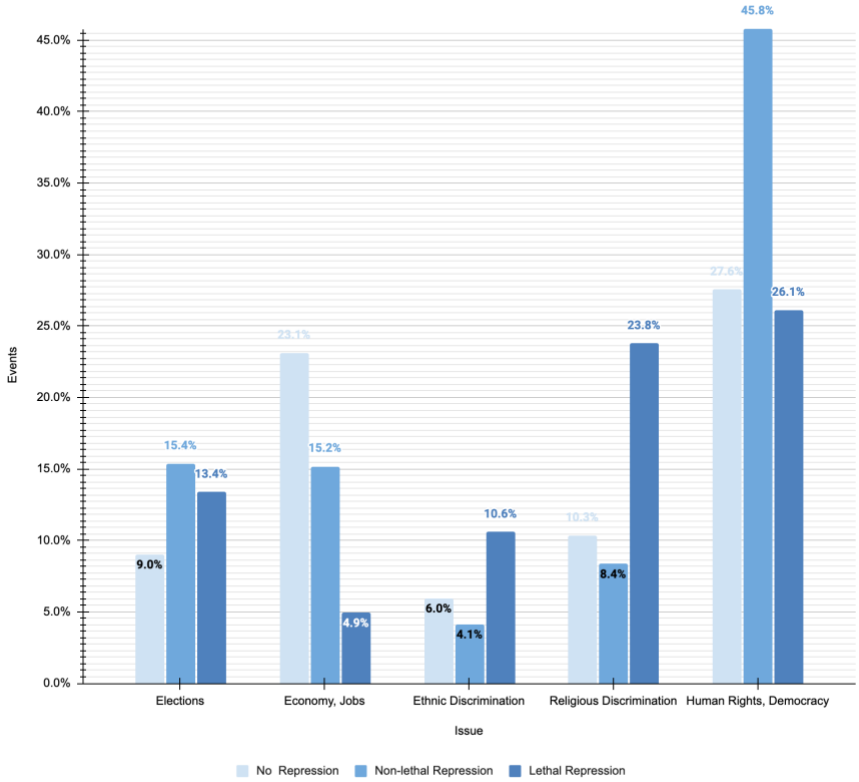

Figure 3: Characteristics of nonviolent events and to what degree they face repression (SCAD, 2017)

There are several confounding factors that must be considered. First, regime type can heavily influence how states respond, where democracies are much more accommodating that semi-democracies and autocracies (Carey, 2003). Second, international scrutiny and pressure on a government can influence its response to nonviolent events as governments may be less likely to employ extreme repression if they fear negative consequences in terms of diplomatic relations, economic sanctions, or damage to their international reputation (Cronin-Furman, 2022). Third, the state's threat perception coupled with political stability will sway how they respond. Leaders, for one, may view nonviolent movements as either a legitimate expression of grievances or as a threat to their authority and term in office. In situations where a government perceives a threat to its stability, it may resort to increased repression to maintain control and prevent the escalation of dissent. These perceptions can shape the level of repression employed.

H_{2a} : **When an armed group is present in the country and the same region as the nonviolent event, the state is likely to use lethal repression against the nonviolent event.**

Data and Research Design

To investigate the arguments made above, I utilize a dataset of longitudinal data on social conflicts. Building on the Social Conflict Analysis Data (Salehyan et al., 2012) on civil violence and resistance movements, I expand the already-established literature on NVR by providing a granular analysis of how territorial concentration of various groups impacts a state's response. The dataset focuses on events in Africa and has been limited to events where the target is the central government. This is a crucial step in isolating the causal mechanism. As one of the specific focuses of this paper is state repression, I believe it is important to examine this at the event level and so, the unit of analysis is event level. The data is structured in time-series longitudinal format, covering social conflicts in Africa for the period of 1990-2017.

The dependent variable, DV, is the repression, *Repress*, which is an ordinal measure. It tells us whether the government used repression or violence against participants in an event. This variable is an ordinal measure coded "0" if no repression was used, "1" if non-lethal repression (e.g., tear gas, arrests, etc.) was used, and "2" if lethal repression was used (deaths must be reported). Lethal repression is just one of several tools that regimes have developed to counter nonviolent resistance movements, and I suggest that it is the development of "more politically savvy" responses that may account for the recent lower success rate of nonviolent events.

The independent variable, IV, is the presence of a violent group. This is first recorded at the state-level, VRpres_country, and then the subnational level, VRpres_region. I measure whether a violent group occupies the same territory as where a nonviolent event is taking place. This dichotomous measure takes the value of '1' where a violent group is recorded in the same location as the nonviolent event occurring, and '0' otherwise. VRpres_country variable was coded first. The dataset used to code this variable is UCDP's Actor Dataset version 21.1 (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2023). Information for the VRpres_country variable was extracted from the location variable on the UCDP dataset (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2023). The names of each group were also

recorded in VRpres_country_1, VRpres_country_2, VRpres_country_3, VRpres_country_4 and VRpres_country_5 with each of them representing the official name of the VR group, as per EDTG (Hou, Gaibulloev and Sandler, 2019). If the VR group is not present on EDTG then I used the official name as per UCDP data (Hou, Gaibulloev and Sandler, 2019; Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2023). It is important to make the distinction between country and region as several actors could be present in the country, but to ascertain the one relevant to the corresponding nonviolent event would be the one present in the same region. As such, I provide a more granular analysis of territorial presence.

The second independent variable is territorial concentration, VRpres_conc. I construct an ordinal variable to indicate how many violent groups occupy the same location as the nonviolent event in the SCAD data. This is coded '0' if there are no violent groups present in the location of the nonviolent event, '1' if there is one violent group present, '2' for two groups and so forth. This is to identify if outbidding within groups can provoke state varied state responses toward the nonviolent event.

There are certain control variables that must be taken into consideration. First, the natural log of GDP per capita, lagged one year. This is because economic development has a robust negative relationship with the probability of violent conflict onset, and we assume that the same relationship would hold for nonviolence. Second, the natural log of the population of a country, which is expected to be positively correlated with the likelihood of all varieties of conflict onset. Furthermore, I control for regime type - whether a state is a democracy or an autocracy using the Polity IV scores. The scope and intensity of repression is conditioned by regime type. In her seminal study of the Iranian Revolution, Rasler (1996) finds that repression tended to reduce mobilization in the immediate term but increased the spatial diffusion of dissent in the longer term (see also Francisco 1995). This is true even in the face of extreme, indiscriminate repression, which "temporarily dampens protests but increases dissident activity over time" (Mason & Krane, 1989; cited in DeMeritt 2016, 9). Countries that are democratic are more likely to experience the onset of nonviolent campaigns than their counterparts in more autocratic neighbourhoods. This is because opposition groups pressing for political reform may anticipate receiving support from neighboring democracies.

I conduct a robustness check utilizing the Political Terror Scale (PTS), standard-based measure employing categories developed by Raymond Gastil (1980). Based on reports from Amnesty International and the US State Department, the Political Terror Scale assigns a value from one to five to each country in each year according to the occurrence of arbitrary imprisonment, torture, disappearances, and extrajudicial killings. I utilize the scale based on the State Department reports (PTS-S) as the scales determined by Amnesty International have several missing data. Finally, I will account for the variation in the structure of the government. Drawing from Geddes, Wright & Frantz (2014), I will identify types of authoritarian rule, including (1) personalist regimes, (2) military regimes, (3) monarchic regimes, and (4) single-party regimes, as well as hybrids of these types: (5) single-party military regimes, (6) military-personalist regimes, (7) single-party personalist regimes, and (8) single-party military personalist regimes.

Empirical Strategy and Estimation

The empirical strategy takes form in several stages. As a modelling strategy here, I adopt a linear regression model, with clustered standard errors, examining the presence of a violent group on whether and what degree of state repression was used. Collapsing the observational data, I produce another panel dataset where the unit of analysis is country-year. This allows me to reproduce the models with country and yearly fixed effects.

In the next stage, I probe the mechanisms in a within-case assessment of Burundi utilizing a dual, mixed-method causal identification strategy. More specifically, I draw upon difference-in-differences model examining the change in the state's use of repression when an armed group is introduced to the environment. Secondly, I examine qualitative evidence of official statements from the Burundi embassy in the UK and US to inductively trace the causal mechanism (Brady et al., 2006).[4] To do this, I use a combination of machine learning and sentiment analysis to determine the framing of government response as either positive, negative neutral.

[4] I use statements from Burundi embassies in the UK and the US as these are: 1) English-language; and 2) are key countries in the West that can sway international norms on human rights and democracy (Cronin-Furman, 2022).

Analysis and Results

Table 3 presents tests of Hypotheses 1a and 1b, the notion that repression is associated with the presence of an armed group. In these two models, I find that the presence of a violent group within the country does not provide a statistically significant result. The presence of an armed group at the state-level, is not associated with the onset of state repression of a nonviolent event. Model 2, however, suggests that the presence of a violent group within the region increases the likelihood of the state to use repression on the nonviolent event and is statistically significant to p<0.001. This result suggests support for Hypothesis 1b.

Table 3: The Impact of Violent Groups on the Repression of Nonviolent Groups		
	Model 1	**Model 2**
VRPresence_country	0.528	
	(0.54)	
VRPresence_region		0.597****
		(0.68)
GDP per capita	-0.203**	-0.057***
	(0.070)	(0.015)
(Intercept)	-1.65**	-1.68**
	(0.57)	(0.58)
AIC	158.41	154.86
BIC	181.16	177.61
Log Likelihood	-71.20	-69.43
Deviance	142.41	138.86
Num. obs.	8233	8233
Robust standard errors in parentheses, clustered by country. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$		

To briefly discuss the results from the control variable, I not that GDP per capita is statistically significant. This confirms that the richer a country and the more economic growth it experiences, the lower is its risk of state terror.

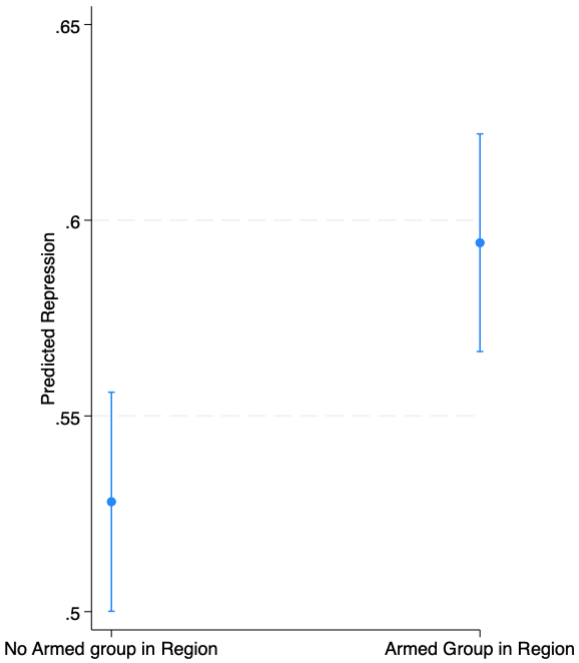

Figure 4: Risk of Repression Onset Varying by the Presence of an armed group in the Region

Figure 4, above, allows us to determine the effects of these probabilities. Here, I find that for no presence of a violent group in the region, the probability of repression is 0.523. When a violent group is indeed present in the country, I find that the probability of repression is 0.596. This indicates an increase of 15% confirming my expectation that states are more likely to use repression when a violent group is present.

To take this analysis further, I will use a country case study to indicate differences within regional and country-specific variation in presence of VR groups.

Case Study Introduction and Analysis

Since April 2015, a bloody conflict has been underway in Burundi: 700 people have allegedly been killed, 4,300 have been arbitrarily detained, hundreds have disappeared and 250, 000 have fled to neighboring countries (Human Rights Watch, 2016b). What started as peaceful demonstrations against another term of president Nkurunziza, quickly turned into violent confrontations between mostly young male civilians and government forces. The demonstrations signaled the beginning of a new political crisis after a decade of peace. Amnesty International's investigation in May and June

2015 found that Burundian police used excessive lethal force, including against women and children, to silence those opposed to President Pierre Nkurunziza's bid for a third-term (Amnesty International, 2015). The country experienced major protests, a coup attempt, and the growth of a new rebellion involving FNL-Ubugabo-Burihabwa , FPB and RED-TABARA. As such, I believe this case study provides a novel opportunity for me to study the dynamics examined in this paper.

Conclusion

Understanding these nuanced responses is essential in unraveling the complex dynamics that shape the outcomes of contentious interactions between states and dissidents, shedding light on the delicate balance between stability and change in societies across the globe. This study revisited the question of when governments use repression in the face of dissent. It brings together different arguments about the relationship between dissent, violent groups and repression and empirically tests those on a global sample ranging from 1990 to 2017. Unlike previous studies, it focuses on the onset of repression. It is reasonable to assume that different factors contribute to the outbreak compared to the continuation of state terror.

Past research has put forward arguments for two types of non-linear relationships: one reflecting the impact of dissent on repression, and the other representing the terrorism on repression. This study has combined both arguments by disaggregating dissent and treating violent groups as a an actor within the environment of the nonviolent event. The results show that the presence of a violent group does indeed impact a state's response to the nonviolent event by giving them reason (be it lawful or unlawful) to use repression.

Finally, the results emphasize again the importance of preventing the outbreak of state terror on nonviolent groups. The ability and willingness of governments to refrain from using repression today significantly affects the ability of people to protest and voice their grievances to civil society. This study, however, is limited in a few ways. First, like past research, this paper treats repression in very broad terms - not distinguishing between different forms of repression, like protest policing, state terror, or human rights abuses - leaving important unanswered questions about how activists can effectively navigate multidimensional repressive contexts. Secondly, SCAD data does not allow for

the probing of ideologies of nonviolent, which may be crucial in determining which events states consider threatening if they are associated with a violent group. As such, I would encourage further research to complement previous scholarship by considering these two pathways.

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