Ultimate Consequences:
The Significance of Deaths in Bolivian Political Conflict, 1982 to Present

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH PROJECT

Confrontations between large-scale unarmed protest movements and the governments they challenge are critical events in the political evolution of contemporary societies. In the course of these conflicts, the use of deadly force can tip the balance between dramatic political openings and a retrenchment of the status quo, albeit in sometimes unexpected ways. This project will address the interactions among social movement tactics, state violence, and political change in emerging democratic societies. Focusing on Bolivia, the project asks, *How does deadly state violence influence the trajectory and success of social movements? Conversely, how does a society place limits upon the scale of political violence?* This multi-year research project constructs a quantitative and qualitative database of all deaths in Bolivia during the democratic period that began in October 1982, unique in its depth and completeness of coverage, and uses the dataset in a series of analyses. Archival and historical research will be used to fill out the database entries, which currently document over five hundred individuals who died in political conflict; interview methods and other qualitative data gathering will support the study of the meaning of these deaths for social movements and political change. It will contribute to our understanding of the political impact of social movements, political and cultural constraints on violence, and the importance of violence and suffering, life and death in the process of social change.

Since the 1980s, political crises around the world have increasingly involved unarmed mass movements, rather than armed insurgents, who challenge national governments (Zunes 1994; Nepstad 2011; Svensson and Lindgren 2011). Scholars have identified the frequent success of "people power" revolutions (Schock 2005; Ackerman and Duvall 2005; McAdam and Sewell 2001)—unarmed mobilizations that win moral and/or practical leverage over authoritarian states—as a significant shift in how revolutionary political changes are realized. These studies have deepened our understanding of the capacity of movements to make dramatic social change even in the face of state adversaries willing to deploy lethal force. But when large protest movements confront determined adversaries, dramatically different outcomes may occur. The "paradox of repression" (Brockett 1995; Hess and Martin 2006) is that violence against social movements can either tamp down collective mobilization or inspire greater participation and risk-taking by protesters. While intended to forestall rapid political change, deadly state violence can, at times, accelerate it. Understanding this dynamic interaction between movement tactics and state responses is vital to the study of social movements, political change, and contemporary democracies.

This project examines this process by focusing on the past four decades of social movement conflicts in Bolivia. After a mid-twentieth century characterized by political instability and frequent military rule, Bolivia transitioned to elected, civilian government in October 1982. The post-1982 democratic period is marked by continued political dynamism. Bolivians affiliate with social movements—notably indigenous, labor, and famer organizations—and participate in protest at high levels and their mass protests have frequently caused or authorized major political shifts (Dunkerley 1984; Hylton and Thomson 2007). The country's 1977–82 return to democracy, 1985 general strikes, 2000–2005 antineoliberal protest wave, and its political crises in 2006–2008 and

2019–2020 each exemplify the ability of mass disruptive protest to remake national politics (Bjork-James 2013, 55–99).

Bolivian social movement traditions include proclamations of fearlessness and vows to carry on their struggles "until the ultimate consequences," that is, to persist in collective measures and to refuse to be deterred by deadly state violence. These movements invoke a history of indigenous uprisings, labor militancy, and state massacres in narrating their own histories (Rivera Cusicanqui 1987; Hylton 2003; Hylton and Thomson 2007; Dangl 2019). Fears and risks are real and important parts of Bolivian protest, which can involve intense privation, self-sacrifice, and either enduring or inflicting violence. Nonetheless, political violence by state and non-state actors during the past four decades is sharply constrained in comparison with prior periods: deadly state violence is episodic and on smaller scale and nonstate armed actors are both rare and peripheral to political conflict. Mass social movements in Bolivia engage in a range of tactics that has become globally prevalent, principally road blockades, plaza occupations, and sometimes combative efforts to occupy and claim public space (Mamani Ramírez 2004; Bjork-James 2013; 2020b). These more confrontational tactics—which I term "unarmed militancy" (Bjork-James 2020c)—are the same ones responsible for major changes in the governments of Egypt, Tunisia, Thailand, Ukraine, and Argentina (to name just a few of the cases) since 2000 (Auyero 2003a; Tufekci 2017; Channell-Justice 2016; El-Ghobashy 2012; Sopranzetti 2014).

To understand the outcomes of dynamic interactions between protest tactics and state responses to protest, we must address three critical questions:

> (1.) Under what conditions can mass movements survive and succeed in the face of deadly state violence?
>
> (2.) What social and political factors restrain governments from using deadly force, or persuade them to stop using it once they have started along that path?
>
> (3.) And how do protesters' chosen tactics affect both their own success and the degree of repression deployed against them?

The project uses lethal episodes of political conflict as both an index of the severity of repression and as intrinsically important moments in the campaigns of social movements. I have developed and compiled a database of detailed information on over five hundred eighty deaths over the current democratic period. The database allows for analysis of pivotal confrontations between movements and governments, extending the PI's prior qualitative work on the 2000–2011 period. It allows for comparative examination of these questions across twelve presidential administrations, four episodes where protesters successfully sought the end of a presidential term, and 183 protest events in 17 domains of conflict. Studying the unfolding of Bolivian political crises, and in particular the dynamics of lethal episodes of political conflict, offers an important opportunity to examine these research questions, and to do so in a context that includes both confrontational forms of protest and frequent political shifts in response to protest.

With NSF support, I propose to complete the elaboration of the database, provide simple electronic tools for other researchers to access it, and produce quantitative and qualitative analyses on these vital questions of protest, repression, political culture, and social movement efficacy. During the second year, I will conduct interviews with protest participants and others affected by deadly political violence to qualitatively understand the cultural role of risk, violence, sacrifice, and loss in transformative social change.

Intellectual Merit

My research questions are designed to contribute to ongoing conversations about when and how deadly violence can act as a deterrent to social change, how state use of such violence can be restrained, and under what circumstances this deterrent effect can be overcome. Several generations of studies of revolution (Foran 1993; Moore 1966; Skocpol 1979; Wolf 1969) understood violence as an important, perhaps intrinsic part of transformative political change, and violence indeed played a central role in classic liberal, antislavery, communist, and anticolonial revolutions. However, changing forms of political praxis have prompted a shift in scholarship towards studying the interactions of unarmed political revolutionaries and the states they confront (Ackerman and Duvall 2005; Roberts and Ash 2009; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Chenoweth 2020). These conversations range across the fields of political science, history, anthropology, peace studies, human rights, and the interdisciplinary scholarship around social movements, "contentious politics" and "civil resistance."

Contentious politics scholars Douglas McAdam and William Sewell (2001, 113–16) perceive a worldwide shift toward "people power" revolutions, signaled by the 1986 overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines but extending to the 1989 revolts in Eastern Europe. In these instances, the preferred tactic was "nonviolent mass demonstrations" to "simply [show] their disgust, lack of fear, and unwillingness to cooperate." Unarmed militancy is the central approach in a number of other "people power" events, including the successful campaign to end apartheid in South Africa and the 1977–82 effort to end Bolivian military rule. Early twenty-first-century protests against neoliberalism in Latin America followed this broader tactical repertoire: combining mass demonstrations with unarmed militancy (Auyero 2003b; 2006).

In many instances, governments intend to quell protest movements by using deadly force against protesters, but the effects of such state violence can vary radically. There are important cases of deadly violence ending a protest movement and human rights movements often point to the dissuasive or chilling effects of state violence on political participation (Davenport 2007, 6–10; Koopmans 2004; Demirel-Pegg 2017). On the other hand, strategists of nonviolence and civil resistance scholars have also described the phenomenon of "backfire": "when an unjust act—often violent repression—recoils against its originators, leading to power shifts by increasing the internal solidarity of the resistance campaign, creating dissent and conflicts in the opponents' supporters, increasing external support for the resistance campaign, and decreasing external support for the opponent" (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 68, citing Martin 2007; see also, Francisco 2004; Hess and Martin 2006; O'Brien and Deng 2015).

The civil resistance literature attempts to translate and empirically test the theories of strategic nonviolence, such as those of Martin Luther King Jr. (1964; 1968) and Gene Sharp (1973; 2012), which argued that nonviolent tactics are more effective tools for social change than violent ones. Sharon Erickson Nepstad (2011) and Kurt Schock (2005) used people power revolutions of the 1980s and 1990s as comparative case studies. Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan applied the same approach to a dataset of twentieth-century movements attempting to end colonial occupations or overthrow governments. Their core finding is that "nonviolent resistance has been strategically superior to violent resistance during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries" (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 17). While these works categorize protesters' tactics according to

a violence–nonviolence dichotomy, the actual tactics used by people power revolutionaries blur this boundary, even in the paradigmatic cases highlighted by Chenoweth and Stephan such as the South African anti-apartheid struggle and the first Palestinian Intifada. My recent scholarship (Bjork-James 2020c) suggests that unarmed militancy needs to be treated as occupying a space between and beyond these two extremes, and examined as a strategically distinct form of praxis. The database on Bolivia offers an opportunity to systematically characterize the ways that protest–repression dynamics function when protesters engage in unarmed militancy.

By setting up protest tactics as the key explanatory variable, civil resistance studies risk bypassing the critical first and second questions of protesters' resiliency to repression and political actors' aversion to, or embrace of, deadly violence. In my research on twenty-first century Bolivian protest, I found that even the severe use of deadly force—such as the killings of over 60 protesters during the 2003 "Gas War" protests—may not be decisive in quelling protest (Bjork-James 2020b, 131–39). In that instance, tactical strategies such as geographically distributed protests, a cultivated collective willingness to persist in the face of violence, and revulsion against state violence on the part of previously unmobilized segments of the population led the president who ordered the crackdown to lose political support and then resign from office.

Anthropologists have long analyzed political upheavals by studying the cultural construction of politics, the ritualistic nature of revolutionary actions, and the lived experience of disruptive events. Emile Durkheim (1915, 210–11) and Victor Turner (1969; 1974) saw heady moments of political transformation as akin to ritual or even sociality itself. Edith Turner (2012) surveys the history of emotionally intense experiences in violent revolution and nonviolent protest in her elaboration of the concept of *communitas*. Understanding this process requires analysis of a country's political culture: the ensemble of behaviors, attitudes, values, and cultural meanings routinely associated with political life in a given society (Baker 1990; Knight 2005). In particular, forms of political contention interlock with laws, legal precedents, and ethical attitudes regarding the acceptable and unacceptable forms of protest and state violence. Shifts in political culture are thus vital parts of the success or failure of a transition from military to democratic rule, something scholars elsewhere in South America have considered around the 1980s civilianization of the region's governments (Brysk 1994; Weschler 1990; Kaplan 2004). My analysis of the constraints on state violence in Bolivia, laid out in a 2020 white paper (Bjork-James 2020a), extends this analysis of political culture.

My qualitative study of the meanings of death in political conflict will build on area of prior anthropological interest. Benedict Anderson's foundational study of nationalism highlights the political meanings given to the anonymous sacrifice of soldiers and participants in founding revolutions (2006: 9–12, 197-199, respectively). Katherine Verdery (1999) examined the political significance of buried, mourned, and monumentalized dead bodies in Eastern Europe, while Claudio Lomnitz (2005) explored the national importance of familiarity with death itself in Mexico. Attempts by governments in Latin America's Southern Cone to "disappear" the deaths of their political opponents behind a veil of secrecy, and activists' and human rights workers' efforts to restore this visibility and recover those killed or detained spawned a wide-ranging scholarship on memory and accountability (Feitlowitz 1998; Weschler 1990; Roniger and Sznajder 1998; Crenzel 2012; Drunen 2010; Robben 2018). Winifred Tate's (2007, 292) ethnography of the

practice of human rights activism in Colombia argues that its goal is to "make public what was known but cannot be said, transforming the public secret into the public transcript."

The meanings of death, sacrifice, and loss are also significant to our understandings of social movements. Nonviolent action is structured around transforming private suffering into public acts of protest. Martin Luther King (1964, 37; 1986, 18) argued that the nonviolent protester "would force his oppressor to commit his brutality openly." The resultant (and newly visible) "unearned suffering is redemptive" and with "tremendous educational and transforming possibilities." Scholarly inquiries into the techniques of the body (Mauss [1934] 1973) involved in protest situate the suffering, resisting, or killed body as a vital political sign and a prolific source of social meaning. Allen Feldman (1991, 250; see also Machin 2016) describes hunger striking by Irish Republican prisoners as "a newly acquired discipline of the body" that made sacrifice and the threat of death visible. Hyojoung Kim (2008; see also Frye 2012) argues that self-sacrificial protest can be a form of "micromobilization" within a larger movement. A variety of movements utilize memorials to the dead as part of their activism (Santino 2016; Margry and Sánchez-Carretero 2011). In short, deaths in the course of social movement mobilization constitute a rich qualitative domain of cultural and political significance that merits an anthropological inquiry.

Why Bolivia?: National Context

Bolivia is a particularly useful country for examining the dynamics of protest and repression. Based on survey data, it ranks as one of the top countries in the Americas and the world in protest participation and frequency of major protest events (Dunning et al. 2011; M. Moseley and Moreno 2010; M. W. Moseley 2015). Public protests are frequent and often large in scale (Laserna and Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Económica y Social (Bolivia) 2013; Rojas Ríos 2015), and membership in social movement organizations is widespread. Despite the use of deadly violence by the state, armed political opposition (whether by left-wing guerrillas or right-wing paramilitaries) has been only peripheral and intermittent. Instead, Bolivian movements deploy a repertoire of tactics that combine vast numbers, prolonged economic interruptions through road blockades and civic strikes, and confrontational encounters with security forces (Hylton and Thomson 2007; Dunkerley 1984; Mamani Ramírez 2004). I have explored this process, ethnographically and historically, to explain how takeovers of urban public spaces generate political legitimacy, offer movements the means to effectively pressure the government, and contribute to major (sometimes revolutionary) transformations in the balance of power (Bjork-James 2013; 2020b). Regardless of the movements' abilities to set the agenda, however, the outcomes of these pivotal moments are intertwined with the deployment and cessation of deadly force.

My prior research has focused on identifying and characterizing key elements of the Bolivian repertoire of contention (Tilly 1978, 232), including marches, road blockades, civic strikes, *cabildos abiertos* (mass public meetings that generate demands and direct the mobilization), and hunger strike pickets, as well as street confrontations and property destruction. Many Bolivian mass mobilizations have a tactical approach located between disciplined nonviolence and armed struggle, which I have characterized as unarmed militancy (Bjork-James 2020c). This mode of action, typified by the use of forceful, combative tactics such as barricades, property destruction, hands-on pushing, and thrown projectiles, is present in many parts of the world, but rarely considered in scholarly analyses of protester–state dynamics.

The 1952 National Revolution, a three-day insurrection in support of the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement, a party whose 1951 electoral victory had been suppressed, was a defining moment in the country's politics. It established universal suffrage, abolished unpaid rural labor, redistributed agricultural land, and authorized exceptional disruptive forms of political participation by workers' and peasant unions. Nonetheless, military rule was reestablished from 1964 to 1982 (with brief interludes) and massacres, "disappearances," and other extrajudicial executions were commonplace during the years of dictatorship. Mass disruptive protest vied with military coups and government massacres to shape the direction of the country during these years. Eventually, campaigns involving general strikes, coordinated road blockades, and hunger strikes precipitated a shift to democracy in halting steps from 1977 to 1982. Protests have affected policy and presidential succession on numerous occasions, and prompted fundamental changes in government direction and structure in 1936, 1952, 1969, 1982, 2005 and 2019, while reversing attempted military coups in 1970, 1971, and 1979. The post-1982 study period corresponds to the restoration of electoral democracy after 18 years of military rule. Deaths suddenly fell from 50 to 500/year to fewer than 8/year (mostly people killed by state security forces) for the next 15 years (see Figure 1 for annual averages for all presidents since 1964). Deaths peaked at over 130 in 2003 under President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada, before dropping to approximately 10/year (only a quarter of whom were killed by security forces) from November 2003 through October 2019. The October–November 2019 political crisis saw 38 violent deaths in six weeks. As such, Bolivia represents a remarkable example of the significant impacts of both the political system and changes in the political culture on the scale and nature of political violence.

These dramatic shifts in the use of violence occurred in complex relation to political shifts during the period. (See Figure 2 for breakdowns of deaths and state responsibility by president.) The left-leaning government of President Hernán Siles Zuazo (1982–85) pledged to avoid bloodshed altogether. Five presidencies from 1985 to 2002 enacted neoliberal economic policies and worked to suppress coca growing against significant popular resistance, occasioning substantial lethal violence (on both sides, in the case of the coca conflict). Nonetheless, the fourteen-month second presidency of Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada (2002–03) saw the killing by state security forces of nearly as many as in the previous twenty years. Significantly, these killings inspired revulsion in the country's intelligentsia and upper and middle classes and only strengthened protests that successfully demanded his resignation. Afterwards, three presidents, including Evo Morales, publicly pledged their desire to avoid bloodshed against protesters. However, during Morales's fourteen years in power at least 126 people died in political conflicts, 31 of them at the hands of state security forces. During a six-week political crisis in 2019, new governments sent security forces to quell protests, resulting in 33 deaths, between 25 and 28 perpetrated by security forces. At the broadest level, then, an effective account of this history needs to explain both the intense, concentrated use of violence (and its divergent effects on protest) and the political forces that restrained deadly violence during major parts of the democratic period.

The scale of conflict deaths for this period is both large enough to identify significant patterns and small enough (unlike the datasets for some other Latin American countries) to permit the construction of a database that includes detailed information about every death. Most comparable datasets are either specific to a single arena of conflict (e.g., Houghton and Observatorio Indígena de Políticas Públicas de Desarrollo y Derechos Étnicos 2008), or aggregated by year or nation (Duff

1976). Precisely because its coverage is nearly comprehensive, the database offers a systematic sample of cases for quantitative and/or qualitative analysis, untainted by selection bias. This underlies the objective to make these data available to investigators with a variety of potential research questions. The database will be made available as a new tool for social scientists, oral historians, and human rights advocates to use in answering these and other questions.

Results from Prior NSF Support and Relevant Prior Work

While no funding has been awarded in the last 5 years, this project builds upon my prior work ethnographically documenting the tactics of mass protest in Bolivia, and using oral historical and documentary research to describe transformative political events. An NSF doctoral dissertation improvement grant supported one year of fieldwork in 2010–11, the longest of series of field visits from 2008 to 2015. I developed an explanatory model (2013; 2020b) centered around *space-claiming protests* which seize public spaces and use a variety of tactics within them to advance their political claims. Deadly repression occurred in several of the major events documented in this research, and the ability of movements to survive such repression and continue their protests was part of the model for movement success I developed. My ethnographic description of combative, but unarmed protesters also analyzed the role of suffering, violence, and loss in social movement dynamics (Bjork-James 2020c).

In 2017, I was invited by the Harvard Human Rights Law Clinic to serve as an expert witness in *Mamani et al. v. Sanchéz de Lozada and Sánchez Berzaín*, the first civil case in United States Court to bring a former head of state to trial for human rights violations. My fifty-one-page expert report describes Sánchez de Lozada's administration as an outlier of general trends around the use of force during the democratic period, and analyzes the place of disruptive protest in the political culture of Bolivia. Following the 2019 political crisis, I extended that analysis to quantitatively contextualize these two brief episodes of high levels of deadly violence within the larger democratic period (Bjork-James 2020a).

The Database

My preliminary work on the record of violence surrounding Bolivian social movements began during my 2010–11 ethnographic fieldwork, and has been systematically documented since 2015. The database enumerates individual deaths in Bolivian political conflict since 1982, the end of military rule in the country. Its purpose is to provide a systematic basis for scholarly claims about lethal violence, protest, and social movements in Bolivia. As a Mellon Digital Humanities Faculty Fellow in 2018–19, I worked to make this database a comprehensive record of the lethal consequences of Bolivian political struggle and built electronic tools with which to summarize and explore the dataset. The database is maintained as a Google Docs spreadsheet, which can be queried by R scripts, and whose reports can be generated internally or exported for further manual coding.

I have been working directly on researching and coding entries for the database, as has anthropology graduate student Chelsey Dyer. (Use of the first-person plural in the rest of the proposal refers to that research team.) The database is compiled based on multiple sources, including media reports, governmental, intergovernmental, and private human rights reports, and use of the research literature on political conflict. Our dataset now includes nearly all of the deaths

identified by a Permanent Assembly of Human Rights-Bolivia (APDHB) study of deaths from 1988 to 2003, and a study of the coca conflict from 1982 to 2005 (Navarro Miranda 2006; Llorenti 2009; Salazar Ortuño 2008). Unlike prior compilations by human rights organizations, however, this database includes a variety of qualitative variables designed to understand how and why the deaths occurred and what policies and patterns underpin them. (After consulting the archives of the Permanent Assembly, the leading compiler of deaths during the dictatorship, it is clear that constructing a complete database of deaths during the 1971–82 period is not practicable, but meaningful quantitative comparisons can draw on their published studies (Asamblea Permanente de los Derechos Humanos de Bolivia 1980a; 1980b; Navarro Miranda 1999).)

We designed the database to both catalog the lethal consequences of participation in social movements and political activism, and to assess responsibility, accountability, and impunity for violent deaths. All deaths are significant as signs of the price that has been paid to seek social change. Some deaths are also significant as elements of repression or violence for which someone might ultimately be held accountable. Rather than begin by asking, "Is this death someone's fault?," we are coding each death according to multiple factors that enable us to extract different subsets of the overall database for different purposes. There have been an estimated 580 to 600 deaths associated with Bolivian political conflict since October 1982. As of June 2020, the project had identified at least 578 of these deaths, including those of 540 named individuals.

We are including deaths from the following scenarios:

1. Deaths from repression or confrontations with security forces during protest
2. Deaths from security force incursions into politically active communities that are related to their activism
3. Deaths from inter-movement and intra-movement confrontations
4. Deaths of all kinds related to guerrilla or paramilitary activity
5. Deaths of all kinds related to the conflict over coca growing
6. Political assassinations of all kinds, including officials, activists, and journalists
7. Deaths of social movement participants while in police custody for their activism
8. Deaths from the hardships of protests and acts of self-sacrifice such as hunger strikes, long-distance marches etc.
9. Acts of suicide as a form of protest
10. All deaths related to land conflicts that involve a collective/social movement organization on at least one side.

We are also recording, but excluding from quantitative analysis: "non-conflict accidents," unintended deaths that occurs through no deliberate attempt to harm, and outside the context of open physical confrontation, and "indirect deaths" that occur as secondary, collateral consequences of acts of protest or repression, since our ability to locate and enumerate such deaths is likely to be highly uneven across time and space. This broad scope means that the project intersects with a variety of areas of inquiry, including human rights; regional history; histories of labor and indigenous peoples; social scientific studies of the state, social movements, agrarian life; and studies of the role of violence, nonviolence, protest, and policing.

Each death is coded according to several categories, including the individual's relation to a specific social movement, protest campaign, cause of death, responsible parties, and location. For each death, we are recording identifying information about the person who died, the individual or

group who caused the death, the place and time of the death, the cause and circumstances of the death, whether the death appears to be deliberate or intended, the geographic location, the death's connection to social movements and social movement campaigns, sources of information available about the death, types of investigation that have been performed, accountability processes, and relationship to the Bolivian state. Analytical variables used so far include: political assassination (a binary yes/no category); protest domain (aggregating all protest campaigns into a small number of topics such as "labor" and "municipal governance"); and state responsibility (a four-category variable on the involvement of the state). In creating database entries, we create brief narrative descriptions of the events involved and/or quote such descriptions directly from sources of reporting. We also are collecting textual segments of reporting and testimonial narrative relevant to each death. See Figure 3 for a current tabulation of the number of database entries with each of these variables stated in the database.

Plans for the Database Itself

The database plays a foundational role in the research project, as well as serving as an information source for the Bolivian public and for other scholars. Hence, ensuring the information within it is comprehensive and complete, and building simple software tools to access and analyze that information is essential for both the research questions I want to examine and its use by others.

Acquiring new archival and documentary sources: A minority of the database relies on a one or two summary sources, such as tables of deaths in human rights reports, to provide currently partial information about the circumstances of a movement-related death. Alongside planned ethnographic fieldwork in La Paz and El Alto in 2021–22, graduate student Nathan Frisch will digitally photograph archival material held by the Archive of the Plurinational Legislative Assembly, the Archive of La Paz at the Universidad Mayor San Andrés, and by the Permanent Assembly for Human Rights, and acquire print material relevant to the project. These sources include newspaper accounts, human rights reports, court transcripts, and testimonial accounts of survivors of lethal political conflict speaking about their experience. We expect examination of these sources to unearth a small number of additional deaths, as did the PI's archival work in May 2019.

Completing, refining, and coding the database: Funds would support work by myself and research assistant Chelsey Dyer to continue to advance the database towards complete coverage of the study period, as fully coded as the sources allow, by finding and incorporating additional historical sources. We will contact members of human rights organizations, scholars of social movements, and members of non-governmental organizations that work with social movements that have been involved in deadly conflict. We will solicit information on deaths that should be listed in the database from these intermediaries, as well as relevant documentation. This work includes both acquiring additional information and simplifying categorical variables, using our codebook, to facilitate comparative analysis.

Detailed narrative accounts of major events: As part of the project, we will write narrative accounts for each of the events in which 3 or more people were killed (currently n=48). The accounts will summarize the protest campaign underway, participating movements, nature and sequence of deadly events, responsibility for deaths, outcomes for movements, and accountability for perpetrators of violence.

Creating exploration tools for the database: Over the past year I have crafted a series of simple tools to summarize and access the data contained in the database using the R statistical visualization programming language. Using R Shiny (an extension of R designed to produce interactive, user-friendly tools), I will work with a student programmer to design and code an interactive interface for exploring the dataset. This will include month-by-month heatmaps of events, histograms by year and presidency, charts illustrating how deaths are distributed by geographic region, and comparative charts looking at the temporal or spatial distribution of deaths chosen according to two or more search criteria. Each of these data visualization formats will be connected to a series of menus or toggle switches that allow the user to include, exclude, or mark by color different aspects of the data. These tools will be designed to facilitate my own, and other researchers' systematic exploration of the dataset.

Proposed Analysis

The core research work I am proposing has two phases: a quantitative and case-based investigation of questions of protest and repression, and a qualitative study of the consequences and meanings of deaths for the social movements that endure or inflict them. During the first year of the fellowship, I will primarily focus on writing three analytical articles using the dataset. During the second year, I will turn to more in-depth collection of qualitative data in the form of interviews, documentary records, and other forms of historical evidence to more completely describe the context, consequences, and meanings of deaths in political conflict.

Quantitative (and mixed methods) studies of political conflict using the database

The database offers a systematic sample of cases for quantitative and/or qualitative analysis. (One of the central advantages of having a comprehensive national dataset like this one is the ability to avoid introducing bias in the process of case selection.) In a first article, I will analyze all protest campaigns that suffered multiple ($n \geq 3$) deaths during the democratic period in Bolivia. This currently corresponds to a group of around 50 events, which differ according to the tactical choices of participants, the presence or absence of deaths among state security forces, the scale of the mobilization, and the existence or absence of international pressure on the government to resolve the campaign in a particular way (most notably, the US government's pressure to continue eradication of coca leaf production).

Second, I want to more systematically describe the dynamics of protest and repression that occur when protesters engage in unarmed militancy. As I have argued, unarmed militancy is the leading tactical stance in a significant proportion of those cases that the civil resistance literature labels as "nonviolent" cases. My approach will include a re-study of the Bolivian cases described in *Why Civil Resistance Works* (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011) and the Global Nonviolent Action Database, which considers three and fifteen Bolivian movement campaigns, respectively. Drawing on my research on the long history of Bolivian grassroots protest, I will reframe this into a somewhat larger set of events aimed at changing the national government and characterize the movements involved in each as primarily engaged in nonviolence, unarmed militancy, or armed struggle. This would allow for some initial conclusions about the role of these three tactical stances in social change and also point the way towards a more systematic study of unarmed militancy globally. Further, using the set of events in the database, I can look at the ways that combative street protest interacts with other causal variables identified within the civil resistance

literature, including scale of participation, protest tactics, and level of mobilization following repression.

A third article will ask what contributes to limiting the use of violence by the state beyond criminal accountability for human rights violations. As I discussed in my expert witness testimony, the large overall patterns in numbers of state-perpetrated deaths suggest that presidential policy, rather that quantity or form of protest is the key determining factor in the amount of state-led violence. This could be tested statistically or in terms of narrative accounts comparing the six states of emergency declared over the study period.

"It has cost us blood": Qualitative aspects of deaths in political conflict

This research project also seeks to understand the role of death in political conflict qualitatively. In the second year of the fellowship (2021), I will focus on collecting information about the role of specific deaths, as well as sacrifice and loss in the course of protest in general, in social movement histories in Bolivia. I will be using the deaths recorded in the database as an origination point for collecting oral historical accounts from movement participants and other survivors of incidents of lethal violence, as well as collecting documents and media recording the events as they happened; the continuing use of tragedies, martyrs, and massacres in present political discourse; and monuments and other physical markers erected in recognition of lethal conflict events. This qualitative data collection extends the methods of my prior research on the forms of protest used in Bolivian political upheavals from 2000 to 2012.

During my research on the Bolivian protests that overthrew two presidents in 2003 and 2005, activists often described their city or sector's participation the nationwide grassroots upheaval in two parallel ways. The first was their tangible participation in protests, but alongside this was their region, sector, or organization's presence among the list of those killed in protests, which marks a distinct engagement, not just as actors who exerted pressure, but as a community that suffered loss in the pursuit of a common goal. For example, two leaders in social movement organizations, Celestino Condori (of the Potosí Civic Committee) and Felix Ticona (Unified Union Confederation of Rural Workers) each described how, in the latter's words, "The historic process [of our struggle] has … cost us blood, has cost us indigenous peoples mourning for our brothers." (Interview 2010). President Evo Morales also spoke in these terms in his 2006 inaugural address, linking the phrase "has cost us blood" to the achievement of universal suffrage through the 1952 National Revolution and nationalization of gas through the 2003 Gas War.

Yet, understanding of death and loss in Bolivian movements goes beyond these notions. Deaths are also framed as criminal acts—massacres and murders—by political actors who need to be held accountable. Particularly when deaths occur as a result of the privations of prolonged protest acts like hunger strikes and cross-country marches, they are framed as tragic extensions of suffering by marginalized groups that demonstrate their worthiness to receive concessions. To advocates for human rights and for conflict resolution, deaths represent the government's failure to properly manage social conflicts or of the police and military to observe legal and moral limits on the use of force. Particularly when the state's violence is large-scale or one-sided, its exercise may be treated as evidence of having lost the democratic mandate to govern.

The ethnographic, interview, and documentary history data I will collect will contribute to a fuller response to each of the research questions since movement persistence, state willingness to inflict violence, and the consequences of protest tactics are all, to a significant extent, questions of

cultural values and meaning. I expect that fieldwork during the second year will contribute to research on the risks involved in protest, ethical interpretations of violence and force, political limits of the use of repression, protesters' willingness to engage in sacrificial protest, and the role of death and loss in transformative political change.

Research Timeline

Phase I: Analysis of Protest and Repression Dynamics using the database

Summer 2021: Analysis of cases with 3+ deaths as to whether repression quelled or energized protest; write and submit article.

Fall 2021: Dyer as RA during this year. Archival data collection by Frisch in Bolivia; Database completion; Tool building; Analysis on the role of unarmed militancy in protest outcomes.

Spring 2022: Draft quantitative analysis on factors contributing to increased violence over the period covered by the dataset.

Phase II: Qualitative Studies

Summer 2022: Qualitative data collection via travel to Bolivia. Interview movement participants on meanings of death, and advocates and current and former government officials on constraints on repression.

Fall 2022–Spring 2023: Frisch as RA during this year. Work on qualitative articles on the role of death in Bolivian political conflict, and on political limits on repressive violence.

Personnel

Carwil Bjork-James, Principal Investigator: As a researcher, I am especially well prepared to study the dynamics of protest tactics and state repression, drawing on multiple backgrounds as human rights advocate, protest participant, trainer in nonviolent tactics and strategy, and ethnographic observer of Latin American protest since 2007. When studying for my Master's in Public Policy at the University of Chicago, I specialized in environmental and human rights policy and studied both the normative framework of human rights and the historical performance of Latin American governments in respecting or violating human rights during periods of social conflict. As a practitioner in this field, I documented and advocated around human rights violations associated with the oil industry in Nigeria and Colombia I also received academic and practical training in the theory and practice of nonviolence. My scholarship addresses the evolving international human rights regime (Edelman and James 2011), anti-indigenous racism and state violence in eastern Colombia (Bjork-James 2015), race and violence in Bolivia (Bjork-James 2019), and movement organization and protest tactics (Bjork-James 2020c; 2020b).

Since 2008, I have been documenting the forms, strategy, tactics, and effects of mass protest in Bolivia, building on prior participation and observation elsewhere. Like the current project, this prior fieldwork combined ethnographic, interview, and documentary methods. In the course of this research, I have developed a rich network of contents in Bolivian social movements, human rights organizations, and the government. I am fluent in Spanish, have a basic knowledge of Quechua, and have been trained in oral historical research techniques.

Chelsey Dyer, a fifth-year doctoral student in anthropology whose main research project concerns US human rights activism in solidarity with Colombia, has worked on the database project since 2016. Her M.A. thesis in anthropology, at George Mason University, concerned

military conflict in Colombia. She is a fluent Spanish speaker, has extensive experience in human rights, and serves on the board of Witness for Peace Southeast. Work on this project will complement her studies on US-Latin America human rights work.

Nathan Frisch, a fourth-year anthropology doctoral student and my advisee, is researching social movements and political economy in El Alto, the poorer twin city of Bolivia's administrative capital, La Paz. He expects to conduct prolonged ethnographic fieldwork during the 2021–22 year, following up on shorter visits in 2017 and 2018. Nathan is a capable Spanish speaker with long research experience. Bolivian movements were also the subject of his M.A. thesis at Georgia State University. Since El Alto has suffered 80 deaths during the study period, including 13 in 2019, the research for this project overlaps with his dissertation research.

Broader Impact

- **Integrated research and teaching —** Two Vanderbilt graduate students will gain research experience and knowledge of social movements, political violence, human rights, and both qualitative and quantitative methods. The PI will integrate undergraduate students in a new Human Rights Practicum course into the coding and narrative writing for the project, as well teach them about the issues of social movement mobilization and human rights raised by it. An undergraduate research assistant will be trained in research methods and employed to code interview transcripts and other materials.
- **Dissemination of research findings —** Research findings will be shared at Vanderbilt, in research presentations in Bolivia, and at anthropology, geography, and Latin American studies conferences. By compiling detailed information on political violence into an accessible form, the project facilitates further research on political violence, social movements, and Bolivian history. The project has developed a working relationship with the Bolivian Center for Documentation and Information (CEDIB) to share research findings from the database in Bolivia. The PI maintains an active blog primarily covering Bolivian politics and indigenous rights issues. Through this blog and Twitter, the PI has disseminated real-time analysis of the conflict events, contextualizing current events in light of the longer-term patterns of violent conflict in the country.
- **Potential benefits to larger society —** Understanding the violence associated with political conflict, and ways that societies may limit such violence, is of general practical interest. The project will also extend and deepen on-the-ground research on indigenous, urban, and grassroots social movements in Latin America, contribute to the tradition of oral history work in Bolivia, and increase dialogue between local and foreign social scientists.

Figure 1. **Deaths in political conflict by presidency**, 1964–2019

Presidency			Days in Office	Deaths per year (maximum)	Frequency (deaths in our database)	Estimate from ASOFAMD/ APDH	Estimate from Navarro Miranda 1999	State perpetrator deaths per year	Frequency of state-perpetrator deaths
René Barrientos	11/5/1964	4/27/1969	1420	133.66			520		
Luis Adolfo Siles Salinas	8/6/1966	4/27/1969	995	9.90			27		
Alfredo Ovando Candía	4/27/1969	9/26/1969	152	461.05			192		
Juan José Torres	10/7/1970	8/21/1971	318	59.69			52		
Hugo Banzer (1st)	8/22/1971	7/21/1978	2525	67.65		146	468		
Alberto Natusch	11/1/1979	11/16/1979	15	7,835.33		76 to over 200	322		
Lydia Gueiler Tejada	11/17/1979	7/18/1980	244	0.00					
Luis García Meza Tejada (2nc	7/18/1980	8/4/1981	382	95.55		100	196		
Disappeared 1979-1982						*164*			
Hernán Siles Zuazo	10/10/1982	8/6/1985	1031	2.48	7			0.00	0
Víctor Paz Estenssoro	8/6/1985	8/6/1989	1461	9.74	39	15		6.75	27
Jaime Paz Zamora	8/6/1989	8/6/1993	1461	7.49	17	30		3.00	12
Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (	8/6/1993	8/6/1997	1461	11.99	42	48		7.00	28
Hugo Banzer (2nd)	8/6/1997	8/7/2001	1462	23.97	96	28		8.99	36
Jorge Quiroga	8/7/2001	8/6/2002	364	32.09	32	30		16.04	16
Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada (	8/6/2002	10/17/2003	437	116.93	140	119		87.70	105
Carlos Diego Mesa Gisbert	10/17/2003	6/9/2005	601	10.93	18			1.82	3
Eduardo Rodriguez	6/9/2005	1/22/2006	227	0.00	0			0.00	0
Evo Morales	1/22/2006	11/10/19	5040	10.07	139			2.39	33
Interim military government	11/10/2019	11/12/19	2	1,642.50	9			912.50	5
Jeanine Añez	11/12/2019	11/8/20	362	25.21	25			19.16	19
Totals (1982-present)					**564**				**284**

Figure 2. **Deaths and the security forces by presidency**, 1982–2019

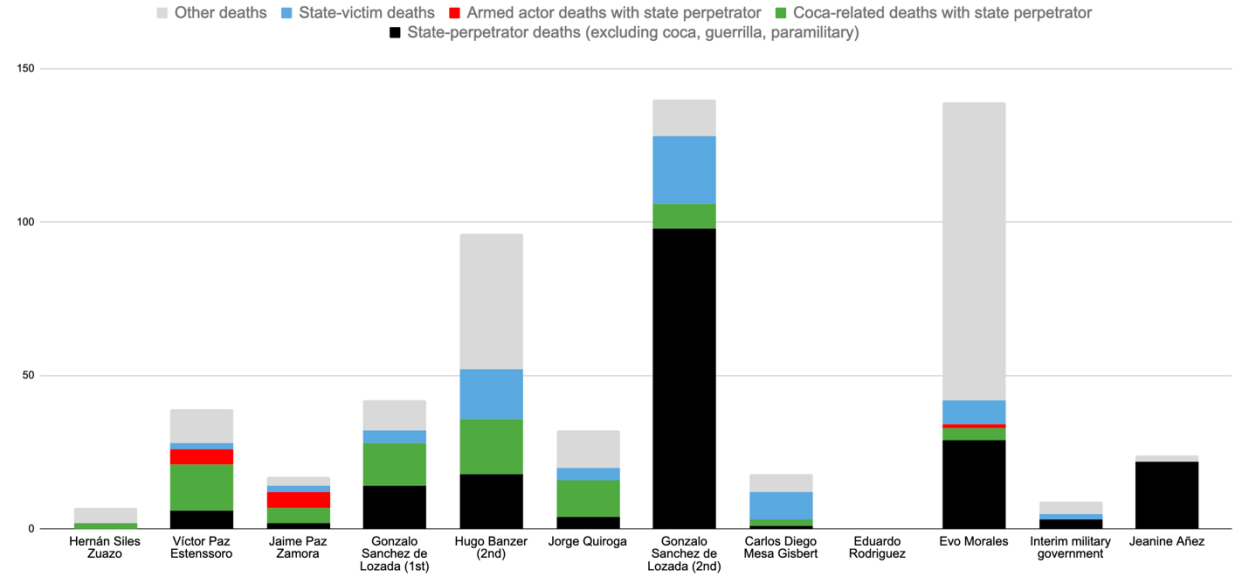

Figure 3. **Variables in the database and completeness**

Gray indicates >80% complete; gray and bold, >95% complete.

	Variable	variable_name	Count
Event	Brief identifier	event_title	**585**
	Unconfirmed flag	unconfirmed	14
When	Year	year	**584**
	Month	month	**581**
	Day	day	**575**
(if died later)	YearLater	later_year	68
	MonthLater	later_month	66
	DayLater	later_day	59
Victim	Deceased First Name	dec_firstname	546
	Deceased Surnames	dec_surnames	543
	Deceased Age	dec_age	340
	Age (alternate reports)	dec_alt_age	53
	Deceased Gender	dec_gender	547
	Deceased Ethnic Identity	dec_ethnicity	66
	Deceased Place of	dec_residence	95
	Deceased Nationality	dec_nationality	**583**
	Deceased Affiliation	dec_affiliation	**577**
	Specific Affliation	dec_spec_affiliation	350
	Deceased Title	dec_title	96
How	Cause of Death	cause_death	502
	Medical Cause	cause_medical	
	Live Ammunition	live_ammunition	498
	Weapon	weapon	438
	Victim Armed?	victim_armed	221
Perpetrator	Individual | Group | None	perp_category	**576**
	Group involved in killing	perp_group	511
	Perpetrator First Name	perp_firstname	47
	Perpetrator Surnames	perp_surname	36
	Perpetrator Gender	perp_gender	22
	Pereptrator Affiliation	perp_affiliation	276
Affiliation during 2006-9, 2019 crisis	Perpetrator Political	perp_pol_stalemate	**73**
	Victim Political Affilation	dec_pol_stalemate	**73**
Intentionality	Intentionality	intentionality	**580**
Where	Address/Intersection/Place	address	242
	Community/Neighborhood	community	424
	Municipality	municipality	524
	Province	province	553
	Department	department	**579**
Confidence / Dispute in	Highest Source	highest_source	90
	Level of Certainty re Perp	certainty_level	476
	Denial?	denial	120
	Denied by	denied_by	94
Accountability Process	Disciplinary?	disciplinary_acct	56
	Judicial?	judicial_acct	104
	Human Rights Reporting	hr_report	69
	Victims Compensated?	victim_compensated	5
Analytical Variables	Presidential Administration	pres_admin	**585**
	Protest Campaign	protest_campaign	539
	Protest Domain (broad)	protest_domain	**580**
	Political Assassination	pol_assassination	**583**
	State perpetrator?	state_perpetrator	553
	State responsibility	state_responsibility	**574**
	State failure	state_failure	68
Qualitative or uncodable information	Complications	complications	179
	Notes	notes	493
	Refs	refs	465
	See also	see also	119
	Navarro 2006 Number	navarro_2006_number	191