

Apples and Oranges? Actor Profiles and The Choice of Violent and Non-Violent Tactics

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Abstract

We examine the technology of violent and non-violent coercion in conflict and how group characteristics influence the choice of tactics. Existing research on non-violent and violent tactics tends to see choice as completely unconstrained or assume that one type of tactics is a strict precursor for the other. We argue that violent and non-violent tactics rely on different forms of coercion and that actor characteristics shape the choice of tactics. Non-violent tactics are likely to be attractive for large groups with a mobilization advantage and these have little to gain from shifting to violence. By contrast small groups can have feasible prospects for guerrilla warfare in the periphery, and are unlikely to improve their position by shifting to non-violence. Organizations rarely substitute between tactics, since actor profiles in practice change little over time and actors rarely have incentives to unilaterally change the tactics they chose at the outset of a conflict. We provide evidence consistent with our claims through demonstrating observable differences in actor profiles in violent and non-violent campaigns as well as the risk of conflict across country profiles.

Introduction

The so-called Arab Spring illustrates the wide range of different possible non-violent and violent dissident tactics. Whereas the Tunisian movement that brought down the Ben Ali regime was mainly non-violent, the campaigns in Libya that toppled Gaddafi and the ongoing civil war in Syria both entailed extensive violence by dissidents (see, e.g. Anderson, 2011; Goldstone, 2011; Lynch, 2012). These sharp differences have frequently been recognized, and there has been much attention to how the nature of a conflict may influence subsequent outcomes, for example in how violence may undermine the prospects for democracy (see, e.g. Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Celestino and Gleditsch, 2013). However, we still lack good explanations for why efforts to topple non-democratic regimes take on such different forms in the first place. We develop a theory to explain tactic choice based on the potential resources that groups can leverage and their objectives.

Our study extends existing research on disaggregated and more actor-oriented approaches to violent conflict to the domain of non-violent dissident tactics, outside regular non-violent political activities. Non-routine direct action lies outside normal political channels and is typically illegal and in violation of what is sanctioned by the state (see, e.g., Bond, 1994; Sharp, 1973). Civil war or violent collective action is clearly a form of non-routine direct action, and our aim here is to understand when dissidents chose non-violent over violent alternatives. Non-violent direct action can encompass both “acts of commission” (i.e., doing something not sanctioned by the state) as well as “acts of omission” (i.e., refusing to do something ordered by the state). Although many routine political activities are clearly “non-violent”, especially in democracies that permit a wide range of political protest, the space for dissent through routine activities can be very limited in non-democracies, and dissent will thus need to rely on direct action.

Violent and non-violent dissent have traditionally been studied in separation of one another, and there is a clear need for more comparative studies (see, e.g., Schock, 2013). Studies of violent

conflict typically disregard all variation within periods of “peace” where we do not see manifest violence, without distinguishing instances of active non-violent dissent from the absence of incompatibilities or failure to achieve collective action (see, e.g., Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug, 2013). By contrast, studies of non-violence have tended to focus on individual cases and ideological motivations for refraining from violent tactics rather than to explain why actors can have strategic reasons to chose non-violent tactics (see,e.g., Burrowes, 1996; Sharp, 1973; Wehr, Burgess and Burgess, 1994).

Only recently have we seen the emergence of more systematic comparative studies contrasting violent and non-violent campaigns (see,e.g., Stephan and Chenoweth, 2008; Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Chenoweth and Cunningham, 2013). However, so far very few studies have examined the onset of non-violent direct action. Most focus on comparing the outcomes of campaigns by tactics, highlighting the higher success rate of non-violent campaigns rather than explaining the initial choice of tactics. One of the few broadly comparative studies of non-violent campaign onsets, Chenoweth and Lewis (2013), is primarily intended as illustrative, and to show that common predictors of civil war have very different coefficient estimates when applied to data on non-violent campaigns. Thus, although the existing studies on non-violent conflicts are suggestive, they essentially bypass the key question of whether different groups with different resources and potential power may be more likely to chose specific tactics. If so, the observed success rates may owe less to the specific tactics than features that make them likely choices, and it will not be the case that all groups can achieve the same success rate by simply adopting non-violent tactics.

The possibility that groups can use either violent or non-violent tactics has of course been recognized in previous research. Some research on non-violence privileges agency over structure and argues in essence that any group can use non-violent methods (see, e.g., Schock, 2005). Much of the existing comparative research focusing on choice under structural constraints assumes strict sequencing in the choice of tactics. Many studies, for example, see the use of non-violent tactics

as a precursor to subsequent violence, either through the need for initial mobilization to mount a subsequent armed attack, or through disillusionment with the perceived ineffectiveness of non-violent dissent (see, e.g., Tarrow, 1994; Regan and Norton, 2005). A related alternative view holds that non-violent direct action primarily works through a radical flank effect, where concessions are granted through the threat of escalating to violent conflict or the use of violence by more extreme factions (see, e.g., Haines, 1988). More generally, it is common in existing research to see non-violent direct action as a functional substitute to violent tactics. Many researchers point to how violent movements may switch to non-violent tactics, for example if a government indicates that it is prepared to engage in negotiations (see, e.g., Sandler, Tschirhart and Cauley, 1983). Others highlight how movements are likely to substitute tactics whenever these have proved unsuccessful, but retain tactics that have elicited certain desired responses such as government accommodation (see, e.g., Lichbach, 1987).

We believe these arguments go too far in detaching the choices of actors from their objectives and resources and the constraints that actors face. Although there clearly exist cases where we see such sequencing or substitution between tactics, existing data on violent and non-violent direct action suggest that tactic choices are remarkably stable and that substitution is relatively rare. More specifically, the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes Dataset (NAVCO, which we will describe in greater detail below) reports only 31 instances out of a total of 250 campaigns where we see a shift in the predominant method over the course of the campaign. A closer inspection of the campaigns with actual shifts (see list in Appendix) indicates that these changes often reflect a new organization emerging rather than specific actors changing tactics. For example, the turn to violence in the Kosovo autonomy campaign was spearheaded by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). This is a completely different organization from the organization previously engaged in non-violent direct action, namely the Democratic League of Kosovo (DLK) headed by Rugova, and the KLA had an antagonistic relationship to the former group. In other cases, substitution follows clear changes in the strategic environment that an organization faces, as seen in the turn to

negotiations between the African National Congress and the South African Government in 1991 after the end of the Cold War. This suggests that rather than to focus our attention primarily on the possibility of substitution in conflict once underway we need to examine what makes groups more likely to choose specific tactics at the outset of a manifest conflict campaign. In equilibrium, actors tend to choose the tactics that they believe are the most effective, and are unlikely to unilaterally change their choices.

In this manuscript we examine the technology of violent and non-violent actions and the type of actor characteristics and initial motivations that make actors more likely to choose one or the other. We argue that violent and non-violent tactics rely on different coercion mechanisms, have different minimum participation thresholds for feasibility, and that their relative effectiveness depend on the level of participation. Non-violent tactics have a comparative advantage in mobilization when the potential audience is large, but is less likely to work well for small groups in the periphery with limited audiences. Contrary to arguments that hold non-violent tactics to be weapons of the weak (see e.g.: Wright, Franz and Geddes, 2014), we argue that actors with high resource endowments and large mobilization potential have a comparative advantage in using non-violent tactics and stand a better chance of success through such means than they would through violence. By contrast, violent challenges to the state can often be feasible even for very small groups, which are unlikely to be able to mount serious challenges against the state through non-violent direct action. Our approach helps to highlight and understand the motives and opportunities promoting collective action and the features that shape the specific means that actors use. Our arguments provide an explanation for why substitution is observed relatively infrequently, since it is generally rare that the circumstances fundamentally change from the context of the initial tactical choice, and actors rarely are likely to improve on their situation by unilaterally changing their tactics. Furthermore, they help account for some enduring puzzles in existing research on group characteristics and violence such as why some large groups do not launch violent rebellion, despite seemingly having ample resources that would make them better suited to take on the state in a civil war. Empirically,

we demonstrate clear observable differences among actors involved in violent and non-violent conflicts, as well as clear differences in the risk of non-violent campaigns for countries, consistent with our propositions regarding initial motivations and actor resources.

Dissaggregating the Technology of Contention

“[Conflict] is a situation of competition where the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other” (Boulding, 1963, 5).

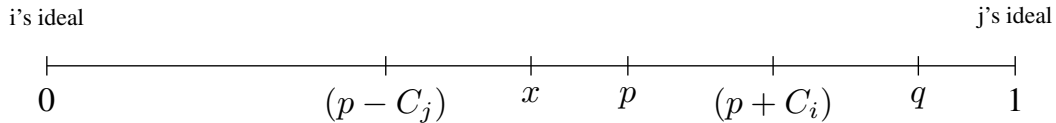
General definitions of conflict such as the definition suggested by Boulding above normally highlight incompatibilities between actors (see also Most and Starr, 1989). Although incompatibilities may give rise to various actions such as resort to violence, violent actions or the specific means are themselves not defining characteristics of conflict. To understand non-state actors choice of tactics we need to consider their objectives, and how tactics relate to these. Stated differently, we must consider the incompatibilities that motivate the actors as well as how specific tactics are expected to change the status quo or enhance an actor’s relative position in conflict. To do so, we look at a simple general bargaining perspective on conflict.

Bargaining and conflict

Following Fearon (1995), we use a bargaining representation of political conflict between two actors, i and j , here representing a dissident group and the government. Figure 1 provides a simple diagrammatic representation. The actors have preferences over a continuous outcome represented by the interval $[0, 1]$, which can be interpreted as any distributional incompatibility, for example the relative political influence held by each actor. The dissident group, i , prefers a division or outcome x closer to 0, while the government, j prefers an outcome closer to 1. The relative power

of the two actors is given by p , here scaled so that higher values of p indicates a relatively stronger government. A status quo distribution q that is far from p means that one actor has an incentive to try to change the distribution through a direct confrontation if the other party is unwilling to agree to a change in the status quo.

Figure 1: Bargaining and conflict



In general, actors in conflict threaten to impose costs (C) on the other side through direct confrontations in an effort to force the antagonist to alter its behavior and agree to a new distribution x that is more favorable to the actor. A battle or direct confrontation is often modelled as a lottery where the government wins or loses decisively with a probability of p and $(1 - p)$ respectively, where the winning party then shifts the distribution to either 0 and 1. However, the fraction p can also be interpreted as a contest success function or the fraction of outcome won in a direct confrontation, given the relative power of the actors (see, e.g., Hirshleifer, 1988; Buhaug, Gates and Lujala, 2009). In Figure 1, for example, p is much lower than q , meaning that the status quo more favorable to the government does not reflect the current relative power of the dissidents. C_j and C_i

In addition to the relative power p , the incentives for a direct confrontation are also shaped by the costs of a confrontation C . It is uncontroversial that direct confrontation entails costs to both parties, even if the final outcome is favorable, as they must expend resources to take on their opponent (see, e.g., Fearon, 1995, 387).¹

¹A great deal of research on the “puzzle of war” has outlined possible factors that may explain why actors fail to reach an agreement in advance of a confrontation, without incurring the associated costs, including various forms of incomplete information and commitment problems. These explanations are not tied to the specific forms of tactics per se, and here we are primarily concerned with how violent and non-violent tactics may differ in terms of the core parameters within a conventional bargaining model.

Within the conventional bargaining framework, any difference between violent and non-violent tactics must be something that can be characterized as effecting either the relative power of the actors p or the costs of confrontation to the actors C_i and C_j . With regards to p , one can imagine that dissidents can generate a different relative power p^n in a direct confrontation using non-violent tactics than their relative power p^v in a violent confrontation. (Here and elsewhere we use superscripts n and v to denote non-violent and violent tactics.) Alternatively, one can imagine that the choice of dissident tactics lead to large differences in the costs of confrontation to the government C_j^n and C_j^v from non-violent and violent direct action respectively.

Standard discussions of the core conceptual conflict model characterizes “war” as a costly exit option but make no distinction between violent and non-violent tactics. Indeed, one may wonder whether could not simply assume that confrontation is costly and disregard the specific tactics. We posit that violent and non-violent tactics rely on substantively different coercion mechanisms and that there are important differences in how non-state actors impose costs on governments. Moreover, conflicts differ in terms of the specific target audiences of the actors in ways that are likely to be relevant to tactics. Finally, groups have different resource endowments and abilities to mobilize and retain personnel, which make certain tactics more or less feasible. We expand on these technological differences between violent and non-violent conflict below, and then detail implications for tactic choice and develop propositions on how specific groups are better suited to use one tactic over the other at the outset of a conflict.

Costs and coercion mechanisms

We start by looking at how the specific costs inflicted on the other party are plausibly related to the choice of violent and non-violent direct action. Violent tactics are intended to either defeat the government militarily or coerce the government through the threat of a violent conflict sufficiently costly that the government will provide some accommodation or settlement. Violent tactics (such

as civil war or terrorism) by non-state actors seek to coerce the government through killing people or threatening to do so. This imposes direct costs on the government in terms of the military response required, or indirect costs through the economic ramifications or ability for the government to maintain political support.

The ability to inflict costs through violence are roughly proportional to the number that the non-state actor can kill, either directly by targeting soldiers and police, or indirectly through targeting civilians. Indeed, beyond metaphorical usage, “wars” are normally identified on the basis of casualties or battledeaths (see, e.g., Most and Starr, 1989), while definitions of terrorism stress the use or intent to apply lethal violence (see, e.g., Schmid and Jongman, 1988). Moreover, the number of casualties from a conflict is often used as a measure of the “severity of violent conflict” (see, e.g., Doyle and Sambanis, 2000). The ability to kill is in turn a function of military mobilization, in particular the ability to recruit soldiers.

By contrast, non-violent direct action seeks to generate costs or coerce the government through popular non-cooperation, either by acts of omission or commission. Non-cooperation imposes governance costs by making it more difficult for the government to extract resources or implement policies (see, e.g., Lake, 1999). Extensive non-compliance by citizens can make it difficult for a government to remain in power, or credible threats about future non-compliance can be sufficiently large that the government will offer concessions. At the extreme, ruling is impossible without implicit compliance by subjects with state authority (see, e.g., Sharp, 1973). Lichbach (1995) for example argues that no government has survived collective action dissent involving 5% of the population. The costs of non-cooperation is roughly proportional to mobilization, or the number of people participating and actively supporting activities. Again, the actual number of people mobilized in an ongoing campaign is likely to shape perceptions on how many can be mobilized and the resulting governance costs.

To simplify, we assume that both types of cost are imposed with only one input, namely the

number of active participants or mobilization m . In general, a group with a high level of mobilization m can in principle impose higher costs through both violence and non-compliance. However, there are strong reasons to suspect that the feasibility of a confrontation at different levels of m will depend on the specific tactics chosen, and that the number that can be mobilized m itself is shaped by tactic choice. We discuss each in turn.

Feasibility and mobilization

An activity is infeasible if a group cannot sustain a confrontation with a government. For example, if a large share of participants are likely to be killed off in the first confrontation the dissident group will have no capacity to resist, and people will be deterred from participating. To see how feasibility may differ for non-violent and violent direct action we explore the possibility that the relative strengths of dissidents using violent and non-violent tactics $p^v(m)$ and $p^n(m)$ may differ at different levels of participation m .

We first posit that the absolute threshold of participation to make a violent confrontation feasible is likely to be much lower than for non-violent direct action, and that groups can have a $p^v(m)$ sufficiently away from 1 (i.e., complete government predominance) even with low participation m . Obviously, military efforts can be more effective with more combatants, but even small rebellions or terrorist groups can be difficult for governments to conclusively defeat in asymmetric conflicts or guerrilla warfare where activities tend to be largely covert (see, e.g., Arreguin-Toft, 2001; Butler and Gates, 2009; Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan, 2009). Covert operations can help the insurgency survive in the short term with a low m , and advertise its presence so that it eventually can grow the movement and attract new participants (see, e.g., Bapat, 2005; Guevara, 1961). A small and sufficiently aggrieved group can have low thresholds for inflicting costs on the state through violence, especially if they select weak targets or target the government indirectly through attacking civilians. Violent bands can hide and make it difficult for the government to identify and

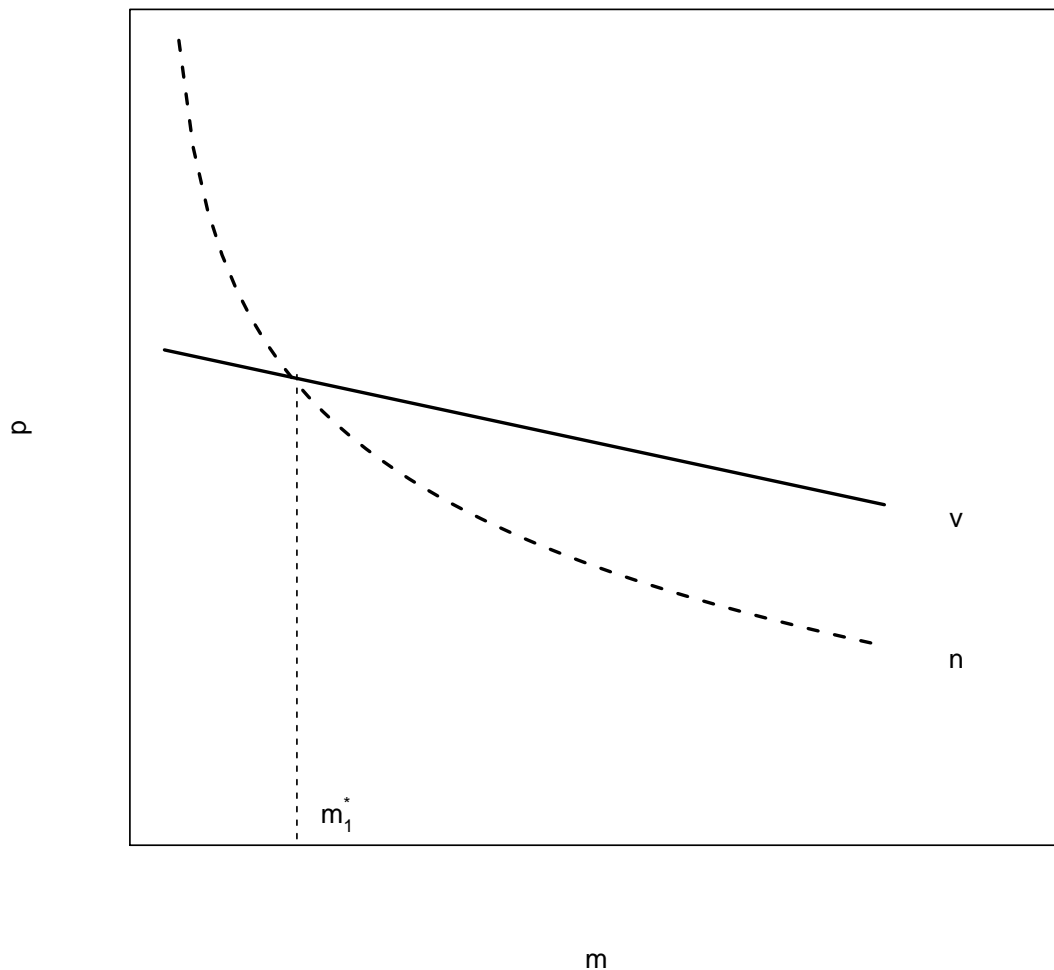
target participants. Government retaliation, especially indiscriminate violence against civilians, is often counterproductive and undermines support for the government (see, e.g., Kalyvas, 1999).

In contrast, efforts to generate non-compliance or governance costs through non-violent direct action are unlikely to have much impact on the government unless large numbers actively withdraw consent, meaning that $p^n(m)$ will not be much below 1 unless m is large. Whereas a violent insurgency can have a low threshold for feasibility through covert action, non-violent action has few feasible covert options. Non-violent campaigns can only inflict costs when non-compliance is public and explicit, which means that participants must expose themselves to the government. There is some safety in numbers, and very large non-violent direct action campaigns can afford more protection to individual participants since it is normally difficult for the government to target all participants, and efforts to repress larger groups are more likely to be politically counterproductive and resisted by the security apparatus (see, e.g., DeNardo, 1985; Kuran, 1989; Sharp, 1958). Individuals in groups with limited resources and small campaigns are very exposed under non-violent campaigns, and highly vulnerable to government repression. However, whereas a military campaign can be a nuisance, extensive non-compliance with a large m is likely to lead to state collapse. Empirical evidence suggest that the actual number of people m that must be mobilize to topple a government can be quite low, as suggested by Lichbach's (1995) 5% rule.

Figure 2 summarizes our arguments about how relative power p depends on mobilization m for a violent tactic v (solid line) compared to a non-violent tactic n (dashed line). Recall that p is scaled so that higher values indicate a relative advantage of the government. Both p^v and p^n decline in m . However, in line with our arguments above, we assume that the relative power of the dissidents using violent tactics is non-negligible even with relatively low participation, while non-violent tactics do little to undermine the government's power when participation is minuscule. However, it is also reasonable to assume that if the number of participants m is high, the relative power or ability to undermine the government through non-cooperation is much higher than for

a group using violent methods with the same level of mobilization. If so, there will exist some threshold m_1^* , where dissidents $p^n(m) < p^v(m)$, meaning that the group can maximize its relative power by relying on non-violent tactics.

Figure 2: Relative power p by mobilization and tactic



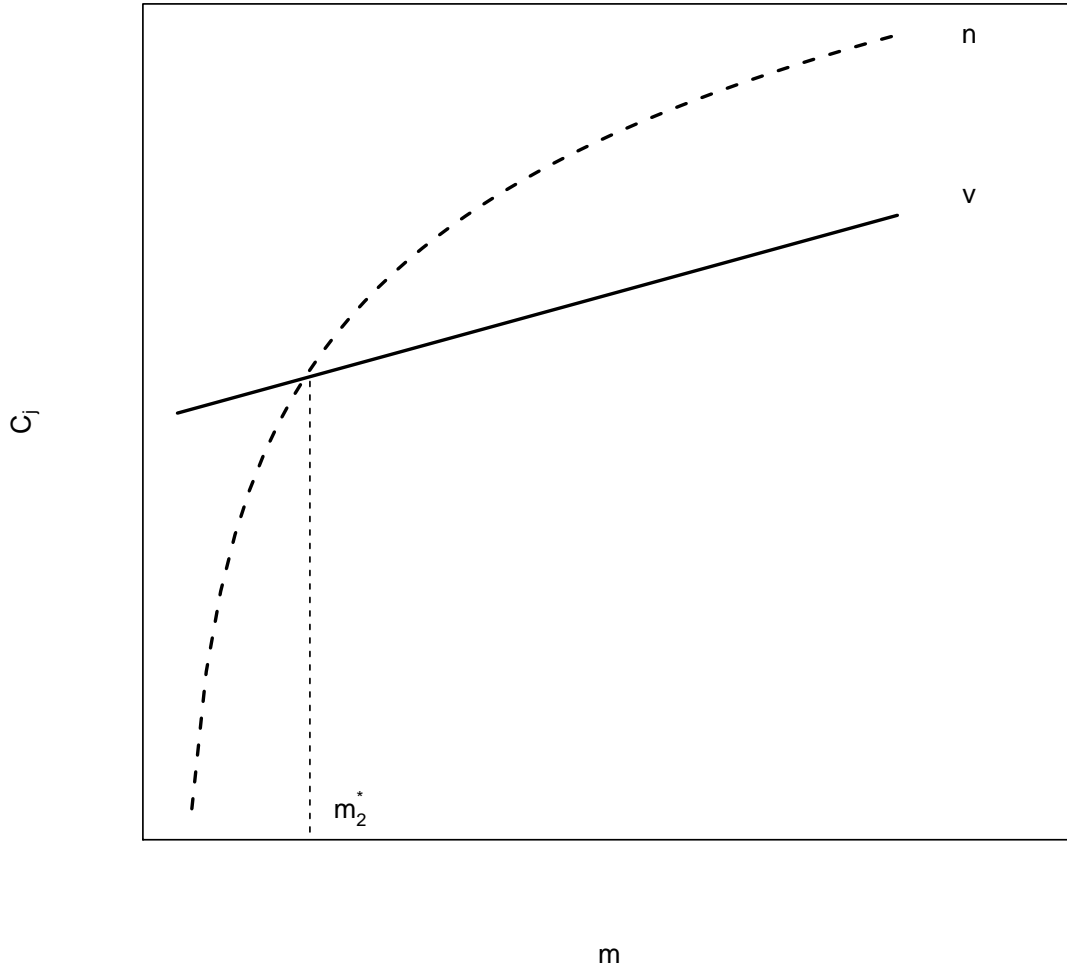
We now turn from p to how different tactics may plausibly affect the costs of conflict to the two actors. As we have argued above, conflict is costly to all actors, but we believe that there are important asymmetries between states and non-state actors and that important features are

likely to depend on the number mobilized m and the specific dissident tactic chosen. Figure 3 illustrates our arguments about the relationship between mobilization m and the costs imposed on the government C_j for dissidents using violent and non-violent tactics respectively. These costs are generally likely to be proportional to dissident mobilization m for any tactic, but we believe that there are important differences between violent and non-violent tactics. It seems reasonable to assume that the costs to government of a small violent insurgency are greater than the essentially 0 costs of a non-cooperation campaign with low participation. However, as mobilization increases the costs of widespread non-cooperation will be much larger, and plausible larger than for violent conflict. Many guerrilla movements have been able to sustain fighting for long periods of time, but greater manpower is unlikely to yield an equally strong increase in the ability to impose costs on the government, since larger armies are more likely to be exposed and will thus lose some of the tactical advantages of covert action. By contrast, widespread non-cooperation has the potential to paralyze the functioning of a government and undermine rule. We thus believe it is reasonable to assume that the costs to the government with greater mobilization increases more quickly for non-violent tactics than violent tactics. Under this assumption there will be some threshold of mobilization m_2^* where the costs imposed by dissidents through non-violence tactics exceed those under violence.

We now turn to the plausible costs to the dissidents C_i , i.e., the costs of conflict to the dissidents reflecting the government efforts. At first it might seem odd not to take this as fixed, since we look only at the choice of the dissidents; The government can be assumed to repress any serious challenge to its rule with violence, and does not choose tactics in the way that the dissidents do in this setup. Moreover, m refers only to dissident mobilization. However, we believe that the costs from government retaliation to dissidents plausibly vary by tactic and in m if one type of tactics make the dissidents more or less vulnerable to retaliation given the number of people mobilized.

We consider the case of violent conflict first. The ability of the government to impose costs

Figure 3: Costs to the government C_j by mobilization and tactic



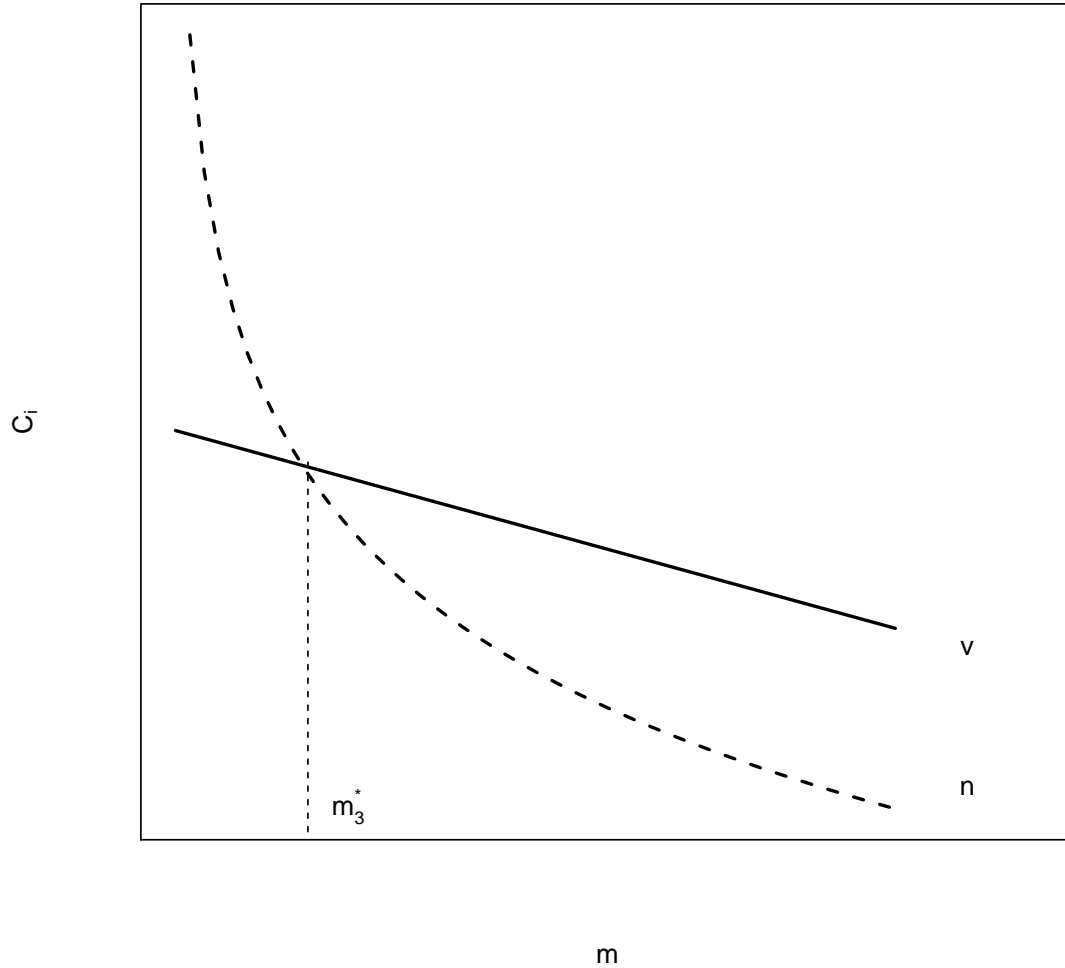
on dissidents are unlikely to depend much on the size of the violent movement. One might even argue that the costs can be higher if the advantages to operating covertly dissipate with size and larger violent groups are easier to detect and infiltrate. However, as a generous assumption we will for simplicity assume that larger groups are more difficult to repress so the costs imposed by the government decline slightly in m . This relationship is displayed as the solid line for C_i^v with m in Figure 4.

By contrast, when dissidents choose non-violent tactics we would expect the potential costs imposed by the government to vary greatly with the numbers mobilized. For simplicity, we here treat C_i^m as a collective cost to the group, although one could imagine partitioning this into costs for individual participants. Since non-cooperation must be public, individual participation at low levels of mobilization is extremely dangerous, as one immediately makes oneself exposed to government retaliation as part of a small identifiable group. Although the costs imposed by the government to non-violent dissidents C_i^n are high when m is low, it will generally be more difficult for the government to repress large groups. It is difficult to repress a larger number of individuals in a purely logistical sense. The likelihood of an individual being targeted fall with mobilization m . Moreover, repression of large groups increase the chances of defection by the security apparatus on the government side. In light of this, it is reasonable to assume that the costs imposed by the government will fall more rapidly with higher mobilization under non-violent than under violent tactics. Thus, there will exist some threshold mobilization value m_3^* beyond which dissidents can minimize the costs of confrontation with the government by choosing non-violent tactics.

We summarize our arguments in Figure 5 by displaying the key parameter values for four hypothetical cases with differences in tactics and level of mobilization. The upper and lower rows indicate cases with violent (C) and non-violent tactics (N) respectively, while the left and right column indicate high and low mobilization m . With regards to p , we can see that p here is always closer to 0 (i.e., more favorable to the dissidents) with higher m , but p also differs across tactics. When m is low in this case, p is substantially lower/more favorable to i for violent tactics V in the upper right corner than non-violent V tactics in the lower right corner. Non-violent tactics here impose lower costs C_j on governments than violent tactics when mobilization m is low.² However, p is lower for non-violent tactics N in the lower left corner than for violent tactics V in the

²If the costs to the dissidents of confrontation are substantial, the upper end of the bargaining range ($p + C_i$) is likely to be larger than the segment $(p, 1)$ or above 1. Thus, the relative power of the dissidents is so low and the costs of conflict C_i sufficiently high that the expected outcome of a confrontation is worse than an offer of $x = 1$ where the dissidents receive nothing.

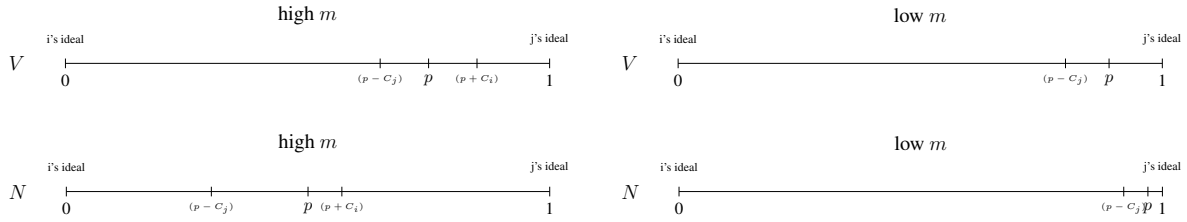
Figure 4: Tactics and mobilization in bargaining



upper right corner. Furthermore, the higher costs imposed on the governments under non-violent tactics and the lower costs to dissidents shifts the bargaining range much further to the left. Thus, non-violent tactics will be more attractive to dissidents in the high mobilization scenario higher m due to the effects on relative power p , their ability to impose costs on the government C_j and their sensitivity to costs imposed by the government C_i .

In the next section we turn to how mobilization m is higher for non-violent than violent tac-

Figure 5: Parameters by m and tactic



tics, suggesting that non-violent tactics have a mobilization advantage. We return later to other resources that may help increase mobilization.

Audience, mobilization, and recruitment costs

So far we have taken the dissident level of mobilization m as predetermined. However, the level of mobilization m will clearly depend on the size of the plausible audience of the dissident group in the first place as well as the resonance of its aims. In this section we first detail why we expect to see a higher mobilization potential when the potential audience is larger, which in turn will make non-violent methods more attractive. We then show that if there are conditions that impose a ceiling on mobilization m at a low level, then violence can become relatively more attractive.

The relevant audience for a dissident group is in part defined by the objectives with regards to underlying incompatibilities. Many researchers distinguish between civil wars over secessionist aims or governmental incompatibilities, or partially related common distinctions such as ethnic and non-ethnic civil wars (see, e.g., Buhaug, 2006; Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug, 2013; Sambanis, 2001; Sobek and Payne, 2010). The relationship of audiences by incompatibilities does not map directly onto violent or non-violent tactics, but the audience clearly shapes their relative advantages and disadvantages. The potential audience or constituency $A(s_i)$ for a secessionist claim is generally confined to a smaller subgroup, usually based on a common ethnic identity, distinct from a dominant group or the constituency in power. Separatist claims normally have little direct

appeal or resonance to the remainder of the population $A^C(s_i) = 1 - A(s_i)$. Thus, if a secessionist audience $A(s_i)$ is small, the maximum m obtainable by the group may be capped at a low value, below the thresholds where non-violent action is feasible or advantageous. By contrast, efforts to replace the government can in principle have a near universal audience $A(g_i)$, spanning all but the immediate current leadership. Dissidents may be antagonistic to the coalition in power, but generally benefit from appealing to as many as possible and normally compete for the same constituency as the government. Thus, the achievable m is more likely to be above the thresholds discussed previously where non-violent tactics have an advantage.³

Beyond differences in size, more audiences also differ by their implied “othering”, and whether individuals outside the audience are seen as legitimate targets (see, e.g., Asal and Rethemeyer, 2008). Violent groups are generally careful in picking targets that have some political logic and are acceptable to their target audience (see, e.g., Asal and Rethemeyer, 2008; Clauset et al., 2010). For separatists groups with antagonistic relations with other groups, individuals outside the target audience may be seen as legitimate targets, and such attacks can often help advertise the group to its target audience (see, e.g., Bloom, 2004). Thus, if violence is helpful in mobilizing and likely to alienate few potential supporters, violent tactics may stand the best chance of maximizing mobilization m . For a group with a universal audience, violence is more likely to be counterproductive in achieving a high m . Costs from non-cooperation benefit from greater participation, and to maximize mobilization m a campaign must be waged in a way so as to have a wide and inclusive appeal. Normally, the group of plausible supporters will encompass a mix of core supporters who endorse any tactic and some individuals that will not support violent tactics and collateral damage arising from violent attacks. If so, violent tactics will cap m at a lower level while non-violent tactics can allow a higher m , potentially above the threshold where non-violent tactics are more attractive.

³Conceptually, one could also envision demands for changes in policy short of a change in the government. Research on conflict tends to be limited to maximalist claims that challenge the government, although we recognize that articulated aims may be strategic and that calls for change in policy can be a precursor to mounting a challenge to a government. We surmise that calls for changes in policy will tend to resemble governmental incompatibilities.

Stated differently, if violence alienates some people, then the maximum mobilization for violent tactics may be lower than the maximum mobilization using non-violent tactics. Existing research shows that non-violent direct action tends to be particularly effective when it is able to garner widespread support, and especially if individuals in the security apparatus such as the police and armed forces refuse to carry out orders to repress (see, e.g., Nepstad, 2011, 2013). Violent attacks on the security apparatus will make conversion more difficult and thus tend to be counterproductive. The lack of a clear outgroup also means that attacks on civilians will be indiscriminate and more likely to undermine mobilization.

Whether the perceived or actual mobilization potential is realized will of course be influenced by a number of factors, including resources for collective action by the dissident and the ability of the state to repress and deter dissent. The literature on collective action suggests a number of resources that facilitate collective action, and these should make non-violent more likely in so far as mobilization crosses the key thresholds. We note that our results are also consistent with a state being able to deter high active participation discouraging the use of non-violent tactics but increasing the attractiveness of violent tactics, consistent with the famous quote by John F. Kennedy that “those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable”.⁴

Actual mobilization is likely to be idiosyncratic to particular dissident groups and governments, but we posit here the important differences in the initial recruitment costs for non-violent and violent tactics. For violent conflict the initial recruitment costs tend to be high, as it takes substantial training to equip individuals for battle. The costs to individuals participating in violent conflict are high in terms of the risk of death as well as opportunity costs, since it is difficult to combine active participation with civilian life. In general, given the high costs of training militants, the number of individuals recruited for violent tactics is likely to be limited to relatively small numbers. Even if the audience of the group implies a high mobilization potential, it is likely to take time to convert

⁴See “Address on the First Anniversary of the Alliance for Progress”, White House reception for diplomatic corps of the Latin American republics, March 13, 1962. Public Papers of the Presidents: John F. Kennedy 1962, p. 223.

potential recruits to skilled soldiers able to inflict substantial casualties on the government side. Violent groups may also exercise substantial hold over individual participants; they can both reward active combatants and strongly punish efforts at defection. Leaving a movement and returning to civilian life is often difficult, as evidenced by the emphasis on the R in so-called Development, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) in post-conflict countries (see, e.g., Humphreys and Weinstein, 2007).

By comparison, the barriers to individual participation are much lower for non-violent action. Recruitment is often more or less spontaneous during contentious campaigns. The amount of training required to participate is minimal, if any. Likewise, the opportunity costs from foregoing other activities will tend to be much lower than in the event of violent conflict. This allows campaigns relying on non-violent tactics to quickly add more participants. Individual participants can also switch much more seamlessly between activism and civilian lives (see, e.g., Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011). The “downside” of this is that activism can be more fickle and attrition can be quick, especially since the organization rarely has an incentive structure to reward individual participants or much control over the individual participants. Thus, non-violent direct action campaign can increase in size quickly, but they are also more likely to dissipate, especially if the initial mobilization has little success.

Group characteristics and tactical choice

We have discussed core parameters in a conflict bargaining model and how they may be influenced by level of dissident mobilization m and the choice of violent and non-violent actions. In this section we proceed to detail propositions on how group characteristics influence the choice of specific contentious tactics. Existing research provides insights into how group characteristics shape the risk of civil war, and our focus here is primarily on non-violent direct action. More

specifically, we try to use what we know about group characteristics and civil war and the likely differences in technology between tactics to derive new propositions about group characteristics and non-violent direct action.

First, non-violent direct action should be much more likely when groups are challenging the government. We know from existing research that efforts for territorial autonomy or secession tend to involve groups that are ethnically distinct from the center or dominant groups in state. These groups tend to be politically marginalized and excluded, and often located in peripheral areas. Efforts to change the government are generally carried out by actors that try to appeal to the same audience as the government, and actively seek to convert government supporters or passive bystanders. Whereas efforts to seek secession typically involve peripheral groups, efforts to change the government tend to be urban based and mobilize individual participants in the capital. Groups challenging the government generally have a larger potential support base and resources than groups seeking territorial secession. The potential for rallying larger numbers makes non-violent direct action a more realistic proposal. Moreover, violence against the government may be counterproductive and alienate supporters. This does not mean that non-violent direct action can never occur over territory, but we would expect such cases to be few, and limited to very large groups with special opportunities to enforce significant costs on governments.

Second, beyond the role of potential audience, we should expect to see greater use of non-violent actions against the government among resource rich groups with incompatibilities over the government since mobilization is at least in part a function of resources and endowment. We have already hinted that geography plays an important role for the feasibility of violence, but the prospects for dissent also depend on other resource factors that facilitate collective action. Traditional guerrilla warfare tends to do better when there are largely self-sufficient communities in areas that the state is unable to target. Oppenheimer (1970) argues that urban guerrilla movements are doomed to failure in industrialized societies, as there are few secure bases to organize revo-

lution. However, in more industrialized urban societies the economic vulnerability of the state to disruptive activities such as tax boycotts is also likely to be much higher than in a rentier state, relatively independent of taxes. Smaller and more resource poor groups pursuing autonomy or territorial separation have feasible prospects of sustaining violent rebellion, but are unlikely to be able to muster sufficient number of people to generate significant costs of non-cooperation to the government.

Third, geographic location matters in that groups have better opportunities to inflict costs through non-violent methods when groups can mobilize in the capital city and widely throughout the country, while groups that primarily can mobilize in smaller and isolated areas should be more likely to chose violent tactics. Location will in part reflect the objective or the strategic rationale of a dissident group. Separatists groups tend to try to liberate a claimed homeland, and will normally have less interest as well as capabilities in acting outside the area claimed. By contrast, challenges to the government itself are unlikely to generate much impact unless they can engage the area around the capital. Moreover, since spread is a function of resources and mobilization we would expect these to see a higher share of non-violent conflicts extending over large areas and including capital cities. In contrast, violent civil conflicts are more likely to be concentrated in the periphery.

Before turning to our efforts to provide an empirical evaluation we note that our above discussion focuses on cases where there exist a manifest incompatibility and generates a direct confrontation, wether violent or non-violent. Our first set of analyses considers actor characteristics in manifest conflicts, without trying to account for the origin of incompatibilities, mobilization, or possible alternatives to a confrontation. Our second set of analyses looks at cases with plausible motivation for conflict with the state, based on whether a country is a non-democracy or has significant ethnic exclusion. We expect that political democracy would be a possible way to solve incompatibilities short of confrontation, since control of the government and policy can be altered

through route political activities and elections. Stated differently, if power can be determined by mobilization at the ballot box, we should be less likely to see non-violent direct action and more likely to see preemptive accommodation by governments if there is a large discrepancy between the existing status quo q and the relative balance of actors p .

Empirical Analysis

To evaluate our claims, we first examine conflict cases where we can easily identify additional disaggregated information about the actors involved from existing data on violent civil wars and non-violent campaigns. We examine these propositions using data on both violent civil wars as well as campaigns that rely on non-violent tactics. The NAVCO 2.0 dataset identifies non-violent campaigns making maximalist claims on the state with more than 1000 participants between 1900 and 2006 (Chenoweth and Lewis, 2013).⁵ We compare these with violent conflicts using the Uppsala Armed Conflict Data (Gleditsch et al., 2002), which encompass all violent civil wars after 1945 that cause more than 25 battle-deaths in a given year. The ACD provides access to a rich set of information on the attributes of non-state actors.⁶ The overlapping period for the two data sets is 1946-2002.

We first compare the distribution of incompatibility between conflict types. The ACD distinguishes between incompatibilities over territory and government. The NAVCO data identify the stated goals of the campaign, distinguishing between campaigns seeking i) regime change, ii) significant institutional reform, iii) policy change, iv) territorial secession, v) greater autonomy, and

⁵The NAVCO data in some cases report campaigns in countries that become independent after the campaigns, for example in former Soviet Republics prior to independence. We recode these campaign locations based on the independent state in existence when they take place. We do not include campaigns in overseas colonies.

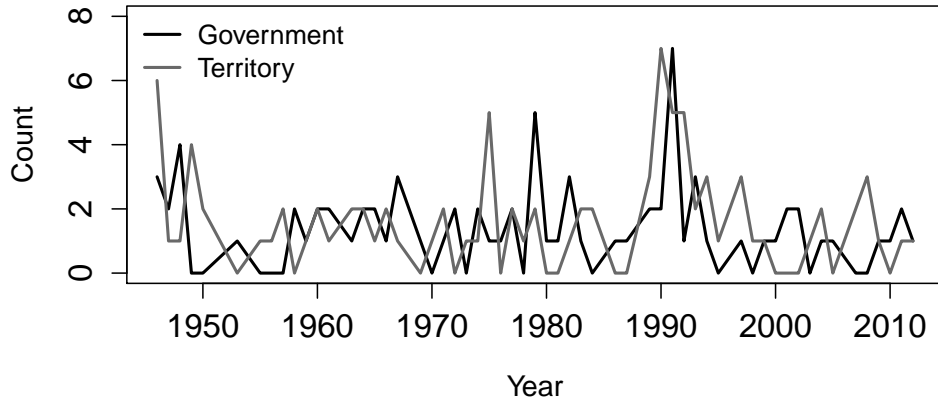
⁶Although NAVCO also includes information on violent campaigns, these are restricted to large wars causing more than 1000 battle deaths. Even though the battledeaths and participant thresholds seem similar, we believe that the perceived parallel is misleading as the number of participants in a violent campaigns exceeds the number of battle-deaths by far, and many campaigns in the ACD data with less than 1000 deaths have more than 1000 participants.

vi) anti-occupation. We consider the first three as incompatibilities over the government and the latter three territorial incompatibilities.

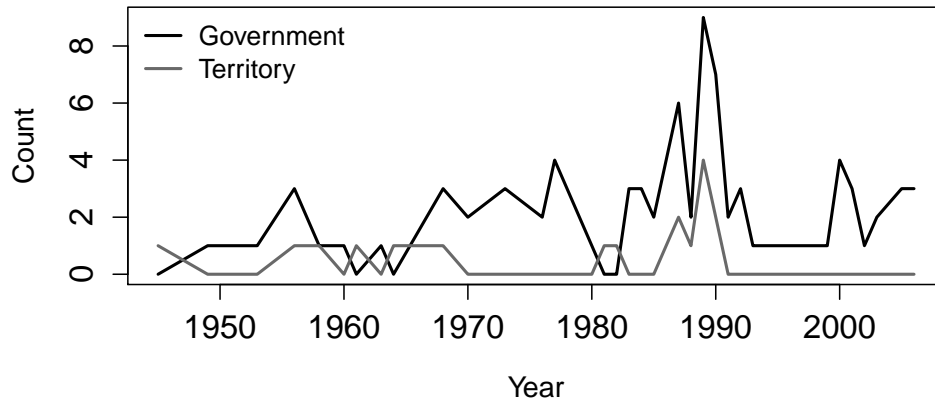
Figure 6 shows the number of new onsets by each type of incompatibility for violent conflicts (upper panel) and non-violent conflicts (lower panel) respectively. It is clear from Figure 6 that the number of territorial conflicts is much lower among the non-violent campaigns than the violent campaigns. Territorial non-violent conflicts are generally rare, and we find only 13 years with territorial non-violent campaign onsets in sovereign states. Two of these are responses to Soviet interventions (i.e., Czechoslovakia 1968 and Hungary 1956, which arguably could be considered anti-government, but are treated as responses to foreign occupation in NAVCO). Another five take place in the former Soviet Union or Yugoslavia at the end of the Cold War. Most non-violent conflict onsets involve governmental incompatibilities. Of course, a large number of violent conflicts also pertain to governmental incompatibilities, but the relative share is much lower. The share of civil wars over governmental incompatibilities declines even further if we exclude coup d'états. These are unusual among civil wars in that the non-state actors emanates from closely associated within the government, typically the military, and thus perhaps best seen as a form of violent intra-elite conflict. The dominance of governmental conflict among non-violent conflicts is consistent with our arguments above, suggesting that non-violent action primarily is chosen by resource rich actors with a strong mobilization potential, seeking to overthrow the government, and not representing ethnic groups. By contrast, violent tactics are more likely to be chosen when groups are small, call for territorial secession, and appeal to an ethnically distinct audience from the dominant group.

It is difficult to evaluate participation in different types of conflict and how numbers compare to constituencies. However, it is instructive that the levels of participation for non-violent campaigns appear to far exceed the number of active fighters in violent campaigns. More specifically, the median campaign size in for the non-violent campaigns in the NAVCO data is in the level 2 category,

Figure 6: Conflicts onsets by tactic



Armed Conflicts Onset 1946-2011



Non-Violent Campaigns Onset 1946-2006

i.e., 10,000 – 99,999 participants. In contrast, the median estimate of the size of rebel troops in violent civil war is 4000, based on the Non-State Actor (NSA) data (Cunningham, Gleditsch and Salehyan, 2009). Furthermore, a very large number of civil wars involve ethnic groups, which typically tend to relatively small potential audiences or constituencies. For civil wars involving actors with a clear link to ethnic groups, we find an average population size of 9.3 % and an absolute population size of 3.1 million, based on the identification of ethnic groups to actors in conflict in Wucherpfennig et al. (2012) and the estimates of ethnic group sizes in the Ethnic Power Relations (EPR) data (Cederman, Wimmer and Min, 2010). This again is consistent with what we would expect if large groups are more likely to use non-violent direct action and the relative advantages of non-violent action relative to violence increase with mobilization.

It is also instructive that the number of ethnic groups that engage in non-violent direct action overall is very limited overall, as these are unlikely to have large mobilization potential. However, comparing the relative and absolute size of the ethnic groups involved in non-violent and violent territorial campaigns we find that groups involved in non-violent campaigns tend to be large. More specifically, the average group using non-violent direct action has a population of 14.6 million and constitutes 15 percent of the population. We note that this is about twice the size of the average excluded group in the EPR dataset, which is 7.7 percent of the population and 3.2 million total population. Ultimately, looking at ethnic group size and direct action may be a somewhat limited approach to non-violent alternatives, as many large ethnic groups are also likely to form political parties and engage in activities not recorded in our measures of non-violent activities.

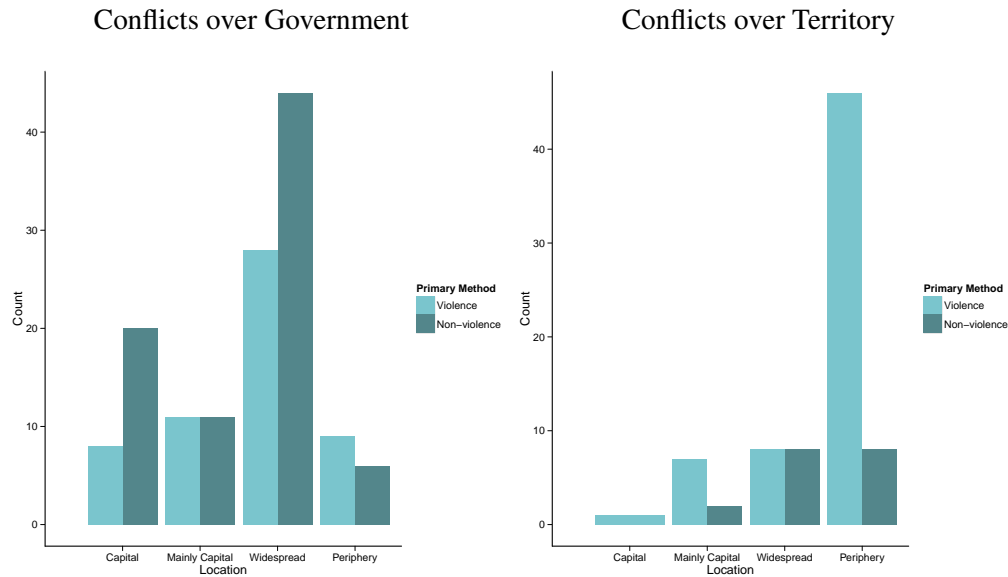
Although the notion of resources for mobilization is difficult to identify empirically, it is possible to compare suggested proxy measures such as the size of the urban population across violent and non-violent conflict. Doing so reveals that civil wars tend to take place in much less urbanized countries while instances of non-violent direct action tend to take place in countries with much larger urban populations. More specifically, we find that the median urban population in a country

experiencing civil war is 5.23 million, while the median urban population for cases undergoing non-violent direct action is 16.52 million, i.e., over three times larger.

Moreover, although it is challenging to evaluate differences in recruitment costs directly, we note that differences in the length of conflicts are generally consistent with our arguments. In line with our claims that violent conflicts high recruitment costs but enduring commitment while non-violent direct action has lower barriers to participation but also high fluidity between activists and civilian roles, we find that violent conflicts indeed tend to be systematically longer than non-violent direct action campaigns.

We now turn to the geographical location and base of the actors. Existing research on civil war demonstrates that most violent conflicts tend to take place in the periphery. Rebels sometimes even operate across international borders, and most conflict events in urban areas tend to be covert operations or terrorist attacks rather than conventional warfare. We provide a first examination of the spatial location of non-violent direct actions by classifying whether the NAVCO campaigns are a) limited to the capital, b) concentrated mainly in the capital, c) in the periphery only (i.e., not in the capital at all), or d) widespread throughout the entire country. In Figure 7 we compare this information for all the non-violent location for comparable information on the armed conflicts in the ACD data, based on geographical information in the conflict sites data (Hallberg, 2012). The left panel shows the distributions for conflicts over the government, while the right panel shows conflicts over territory. It is clear from Figure 7 that the modal location for where civil wars take place is the periphery only, whereas a low number of non-violent conflicts are limited to the periphery. By comparison, the modal value for non-violent conflicts is widespread through the country, and the number of violent conflicts located in or near the capital is lower than the number of non-violent conflict. This is consistent with what would expect if peripheral low resource audiences are more likely to chose violent tactics, and non-violent tactics are more likely to be chosen by urban based groups with larger resource endowments.

Figure 7: Location of tactics by type of Incompatibility



Up to this point we have evaluated our claims by looking at cases of manifest conflicts and considering variation in actor profiles across instances of violent and non-violent conflicts. Case study research on conflict has often been criticized for sampling on the dependent variable and only studying conflict cases, thus disregarding the distribution of group characteristics in non-conflict cases. We do not believe that looking at manifest conflicts only is a particular problem for evaluating our arguments about tactics, which pertain to choice when manifest conflicts exist and does not seek to account for the origin of capabilities or group mobilization. However, it is interesting in its own right to examine whether our arguments about group characteristics can help predict to the risk of onset of non-violent direct action and how this compares to what we know about predictors of civil war from existing research.

In order to study the onset of collective action we need to consider both plausible features influencing motivation as well as when motivated actually groups mobilize and engage in conflict. Identifying potential groups that may resort to various forms of action themselves and then evaluate their resources and mobilization potential is extremely difficult. The civil war literature has to some extent been able to address this issue by looking at ethnic groups, since a very large share of civil

wars involve ethnic groups seeking secession. However, this is clearly problematic for non-violent direct action, since these seem to be disproportionately unlikely to involve ethnic groups or claims for secession. Rather than trying to identify potential groups we instead assess the risk of conflict across country profiles through measures that reflect potential motivation and resources for dissent. This is similar to Buhaug, Cederman and Gleditsch (2014) who provide country level analyses of the risk of civil war, reflecting the logic of group based measures.

We focus only on non-violent direct action and do not try to replicate the findings in existing research on violent civil war. Clearly, violent and non-violent direct action are not mutually exclusive, and a country could have onsets of both types in the same year. However, we examine the relationship between violent direct action and non-violent campaign onset by introducing a term for ongoing civil war on the right hand side. If there is a strong substitution effect so that the two are unlikely to occur at the same time we should see a clear negative effect of civil war on the onset of non-violent conflict campaigns.

Considering motivation and incompatibilities we assume that the motivation for non-violent dissent is similar to the features that can motivate civil war. We consider two factors that are likely to reflect potential grievances, namely the absence of democratic institutions and the presence of ethnic exclusion. We take a lack of democracy as an indicator of motives for grievances against a regime. Although the presence of democracy does not by itself mean that people do not have grievances, democracies offer more opportunities for dissent to be channelled through regular forms of political participation, and we should be less likely to see non-violent direct action. Thus, the onset of a non-violent direct action campaign over the government should be more likely when a country is a non-democracy, which we operationalize as a score of 6 or lower on the Polity scale (Jagers and Gurr, 1995).

Motivation for secession is shaped by the ethnic composition of a country and the political status of ethnic groups. In particular, we should be more likely to see calls for secession when

ethnic groups are excluded and politically marginalized. This has been shown to be the case for civil war, and we here consider how ethnic exclusion as identified in the EPR data influence the risk of a territorial non-violent campaign onset. We note that our arguments about group size suggest that we should expect a weaker relationship than for non-democracy, since most potential secessionist groups are likely to be so small that violent tactics may seek more attractive.

With regards to resources and opportunities for mobilization, we should expect to see quite different relationships than research on civil war. Research on civil war have highlighted how civil war is common in poor countries, with low human capital (see, e.g., Fearon and Laitin, 2003; Thyne, 2006), while our arguments suggest that non-violent direct action should be more likely when we have high social resources for collective action. Although it is difficult to identify potential non-state actors and their resources prior to conflict all else being equal we expect to see greater resources for non-violent direct action in more urbanized societies, where it is at least potentially feasible to mobilize large numbers in the capital and other core cities. Grievances that have an urban base are also less likely to have a comparative advantage in violent dissent, which tend to be facilitated by a more rural population and terrain that make guerrilla warfare or hiding strategies more feasible. To consider this, we use the log of urban population based on estimates provided by the UN population division. These are based on data from national sources, which do not necessarily use a common definition of what constitutes urban populations. Although possible differences in definition can create problems of comparability across countries, we feel that these data provide the best possible available information.

We consider our measure of resource needs to be considered relative to two other alternatives. Previous research on civil war has found that larger countries are more likely to see conflict. This is typically justified on the premise that incentives and opportunities for some group to engage in conflict scale with the size of a country. We thus control for population, since this could be the case for non-violent conflicts as well and total population may be closely associated with urbanization.

Chenoweth and Lewis (2013) suggest that GDP per capita has a positive effect on non-violent campaigns we need to consider whether greater wealth or extent of urbanization that determines the resources and prospects for mobilization. We believe that wealth in the absence of urbanization, diversification, and social ties is unlikely to increase resources for protest, but we acknowledge that is important to control for wealth, since urbanization and development tend to go together.

Table 1 presents the results for the onset of non-violent campaigns. As can be seen, we find strong evidence in favor of our argument about governmental incompatibilities motivating non-violent direct action, as the odds of a campaign onset are considerably higher in non-democratic countries and the coefficient is statistically significant at any conceivable level of interest. More specifically, non-democratic rule increases the odds of non-violent direct action onset by a factor of five. This stands in stark contrast to studies of violent civil conflict, where the findings for democracy as a motivation for civil war has been somewhat ambiguous (see, e.g. Gleditsch and Hegre, 2014), possibly due to the counteracting effects of opportunities for rebellion or the fact that many actors in civil war are motivated by territorial incompatibilities rather than claims over the government. Many researchers have argued that democracy is likely to have a curvilinear relationship with protest, shaped as an inverted U (see, e.g., Muller and Weede, 1990), but we find no evidence for a non-linear relationship between democracy non-violent direct action when replacing our dichotomous democracy measure with the full polity scale and its square.

We also find a positive coefficient for the presence of ethnic exclusion, indicating that the risk of non-violent direct action also increases when there are excluded ethnic groups. We have argued that ethnic exclusion above all should affect territorial claims, and since ethnic groups tend to be small these are more likely to be violent than non-violent. The first thing to note is that the effect of ethnic exclusion is considerably smaller than that of a country being a non-democracy. More specifically, the odds of non-violent direct action onset increase by a factor of about 1.77 with ethnic exclusion, or only about 1/3 of the positive effect of a country being a non-democracy.

Still, our results indicate that ethnic exclusion clearly can lead to both violent rebellion as well as non-violent direct action. The second thing to keep in mind here is that large ethnic groups with more resources can have an advantage in non-violent direct action. Although calls for secession by ethnic groups using non-violent tactics may be rare, ethnic groups that are large are more likely to target the government itself (see, e.g., Wimmer, Cederman and Min, 2009). As we have previously shown, the group size for countries with excluded groups and campaigns suggest that these tend to have large excluded populations. Moreover, excluded ethnic groups that are individually small may be more likely to form potentially large coalitions calling for non-sectarian reform. Thus, the results are consistent with what we would see if large excluded ethnic groups are more likely to use non-violent dissent or if multiple ethnic groups are more likely to join coalitions using non-violent direct action.

Table 1: Onset of non-violent direct action

	Estimate	Std. Error	z value	Pr(> z)
(Intercept)	-8.326**	1.831	-4.546	<0.001
Ongoing civil war	-0.269	0.295	-0.912	0.362
Non-Democracy	1.568**	0.364	4.311	0.000
Exclusion	0.572**	0.254	2.253	0.024
Ln Population	-0.171	0.293	-0.581	0.561
Ln GDP per capita	-0.151	0.164	-0.916	0.360
Log urban population	0.609**	0.286	2.134	0.033
Time without NDA	-0.012	0.031	-0.386	0.699
Time ²	<0.001	0.001	0.286	0.775
Time ³	<0.001	0.000	-0.199	0.842
N = 8530				
Log likelihood = 420.29 (df=10)				
LR χ^2 = 84.35 (df=9)				

Turning to resources we also find support for our argument that a larger urban population with higher capacity for collective action in cities appear to make non-violent direct action campaigns much more likely, as the coefficient is both positive and statistically significant. More precisely, the results indicate that the odds of a non-violent direct action onset is more than 5 times higher for the

most urbanized country in our sample than the least urbanized. We also note that total population and GDP per capita have the wrong (i.e., negative sign, indicating that non-violent direct action campaigns become less likely), although neither are close to statistical significance. This means on the one hand that there is no evidence for urban population simply reflecting the effects of larger and wealthier countries. We furthermore note that these results look very different from existing research on civil war, which suggests that civil wars are more likely in large countries and poor countries. By contrast, we find no general effect of population size for non-violent direct action, consistent with our argument about the role of resources for mobilization and the predominantly urban basis for non-violent direct action.

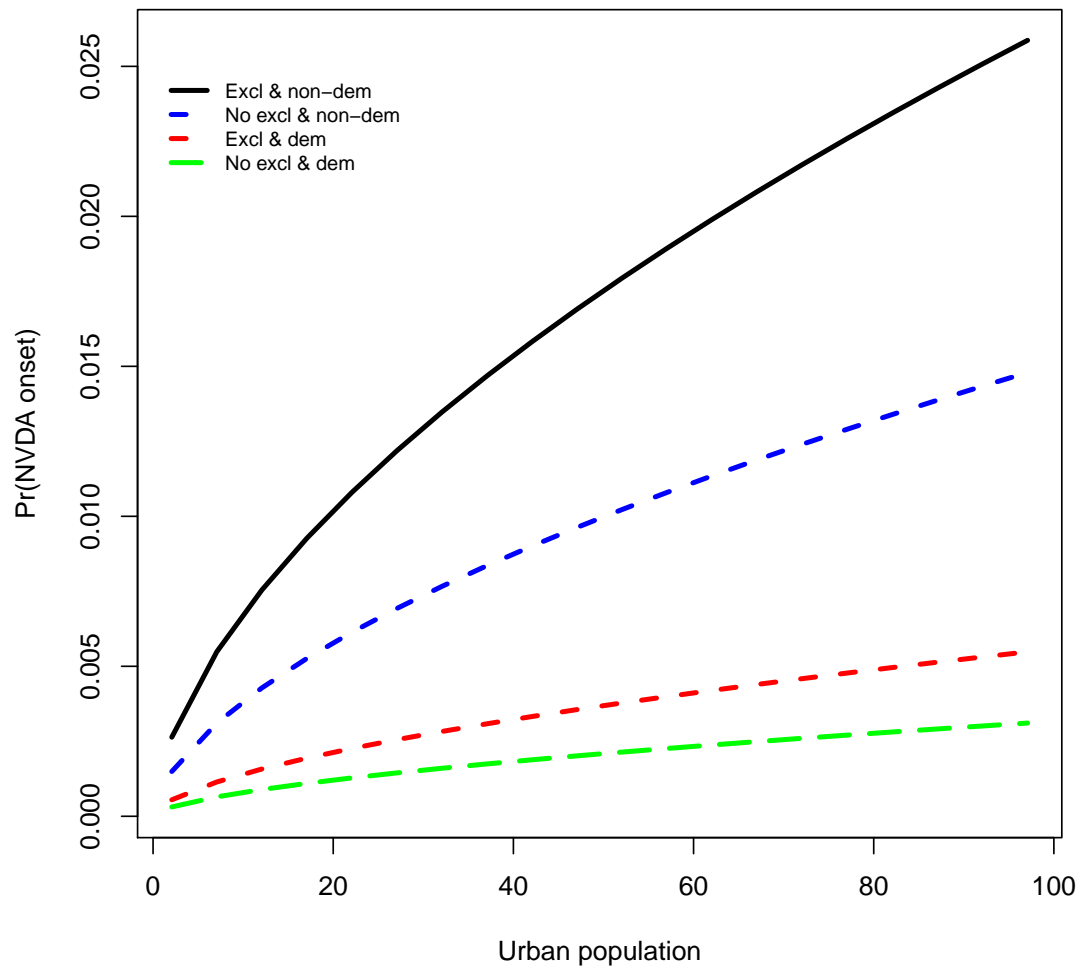
The term for ongoing civil war in our model is negative, although relatively small. This could be seen as consistent with a weak negative substitution effect where a violent conflict makes non-violent direct action less likely. However, we stress that the coefficient estimate is not statistically significant. Restricting this to ongoing civil wars of the government and disregarding all secessionist wars increases the size of coefficient, but does not make the coefficient significant. Thus, we conclude that there is little evidence of a clear relationship between an ongoing civil war and the risk of a campaign onset. Finally, we note that our controls for time since previous non-violent direct action campaign are not significant, suggesting that there is little evidence that time since previous non-violent direct action has any consistent effect on the outbreak of new campaigns. This is very different from existing research on civil war, where we know that there is a high risk of conflict recurrence especially in the aftermath of recent violence.

Since logit coefficients indicate the effects of covariates on the log odds of conflict they do not directly inform us about the actual marginal impact of a feature since this will depend on all the factors influencing the baseline odds. One way to consider this is to compare the predicted probabilities of a non-violent direct onset for a profile with all the variables at the median with scenarios at different values of the right hand side covariates. In Figure 8 we show how the actual

predicted probabilities for a non-violent campaign onset vary for a median observation profile by differences in the urban population share as a measure of resources for different motivation scenarios. As can be seen, exclusion and non-democracy increase the predicted likelihood of campaigns, but have only limited influence unless a country has resources that facilitate urban and national mobilization. For the scenario with both non-democracy and exclusion, the likelihood of an onset of a non-violent campaign for an observation with the median profile is over 10 times higher under maximum than minimum urbanization. However, in the absence of motivation, urbanization by itself does not increase the likelihood of a campaign, as demonstrated by the fact that the highest point of the dashed green line at the high end of urbanization remains below the value for the exclusion and non-democracy scenario at minimum urbanization. Thus, we conclude that there is clear evidence that certain country profiles show systematically higher risks of non-violent direct action onset based on plausible motivation and resources for dissident mobilization. We note that these findings look only at differences in “structural factors” and ignore any role for events or opportunity structures as well as possible diffusion effects between countries.

To summarize, we have shown that the underlying motivation for non-violent conflicts seems generally similar to violent conflict. Ethnic exclusion increases the motivation to challenge the state while the absence of democracy increases the motivation to call for regime change. However, the actors and resource profiles that predict violent and non-violent direct action seem very different. The evidence is consistent with our claim that groups that have large audiences and command resources for mobilizing larger numbers in urban settings have a comparative advantage in using non-violent to take on the state, while small groups in the periphery without an urban base are unlikely to have much impact using non-violent methods and more likely to opt for violent strategies.

Figure 8: Non-violent campaign onset



Conclusion

We have argued that we need a comparative focus on the choice of strategies and focusing on how choices are rooted in actor profiles or characteristics. Previous research on non-violent conflict has focused almost exclusively on campaign outcomes, and largely neglected the fundamental issue of conflict onset. We have focused on the technology of conflict to understand the relationship between initial motivation, actor resources, and the choice of tactics. Contrary to the conventional wisdom claiming that violent rebellion will be used whenever feasible and that non-violent tactics are primarily used by weak group, we find strong evidence that non-violent tactics is particularly likely to be used by groups with capacity to mobilize larger numbers and who are more likely to alienate potential supporters. By contrast, violent rebellion is feasible for small peripheral groups unlikely to do well using non-violent conflict.

The framework developed here focusing on the technology of different conflict tactics and actor resources has demonstrated great heuristic value, and our empirical results are clearly supportive. We also recognize that limitations of our current contributions. More can be made out of studying different ranges of tactic in a bargaining frame, and in particular the state as an independent actor deserves much closer attention than we have offered here. New data collection efforts also promise to provide more information on potential actors and their choices and modes of collective action over time on a more sustained basis. Finally, we focus primarily on more structural factors related to group characteristics, but events that constitute opportunity structures for mobilization as well as possible diffusion effects between countries are also likely to be important in accounting for conflict onsets. However, we believe our results make it clear that tactic choice and non-violent direct action deserves a much more prominent role in conflict research.

Appendix

Table 2: Shifts of Predominant Method of Resistance, NAVCO 2.0

Country	Campaign	Years	Shift Year	Primary Method Shift
Algeria	Algerian Revolt/ National Liberation Front	1952-1962	1954	Non-Violent to Violent
Guyana	Anti-Burnham / Hoyte	1990-1992	1992	Non-Violent to Violent
Romania	Anti-Ceausescu rebels	1987-1989	1989	Non-Violent to Violent
Chile	Anti-Pinochet Movement	1983-1989	1984 1985	Non-Violent to Violent Violent to Non-Violent
Indonesia (Papua New Guinea)	Bougainville Revolt	1989-1998	1998	Violent to Non-Violent
Nepal	CPN-M/UPF	1996-2006	2006	Violent to Non-Violent
Cameroon	Cameroon anti-colonialist movement	1955-1960	1956	Violent to Non-Violent
Russia	Chechen separatists	1994-2006	1997 1998	Violent to Non-Violent Non-Violent to Violent
Cyprus	Ethniki Organosis Kyprios Agoniston	1954-1959	1955 1957 1958 1959	Non-Violent to Violent Violent to Non-Violent Non-Violent to Violent Violent to Non-Violent
Indonesia (East Timor)	Fretilin	1974-1978	1975	Non-Violent to Violent
Mozambique	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique	1963-1974	1964	Non-Violent to Violent
Georgia	Gamsakhurdia & Abkhazia	1989-1993	1992	Non-Violent to Violent
UK (Northern Ireland)	IRA	1968-2006	1969 1994 1996 1999	Non-Violent to Violent Violent to Non-Violent Non-Violent to Violent Violent to Non-Violent
Indonesia	Indonesian leftists / Anti Sukarno	1956-1960	1958 1959	Non-Violent to Violent Violent to Non-Violent

Table 2: Shifts of Predominant Method of Resistance, NAVCO 2.0 (Cont.)

Country	Campaign	Years	Shift Year	Primary Method Shift
Algeria	Islamic Salvation Front	1992-2006	1992	Non-Violent to Violent
Yugoslavia	Kosovo Albanian	1989-1999	1997	Non-Violent to Violent
Sri Lanka	LTTE	1972-2006	1976	Non-Violent to Violent
Colombia	Liberals of 1949	1946-1953	1947	Violent to Non-Violent
Guatemala	Marxist rebels (URNG)	1961-1996	1963 1965 1996	Violent to Non-Violent Non-Violent to Violent Violent to Non-Violent
Philippines	Moro National Liberation Front	1970-1980	1976 1977	Violent to Non-Violent Non-Violent to Violent
Morocco	Moroccan Independence War	1953-1956	1956	Violent to Non-Violent
India	Naga Rebellion	1955-1975	1958 1960	Violent to Non-Violent Non-Violent to Violent
Israel (Palestinian Territories)	Palestinian Liberation	1973-2006	1987 1994	Violent to Non-Violent Non-Violent to Violent
Rwanda	Rwandan independence	1956-1961	1959	Non-Violent to Violent
El Salvador	Salvadoran Civil Conflict	1977-1991	1980	Non-Violent Violent
South Africa	South Africa First Defiance Campaign	1952-1961	1960	Non-Violent to Violent
South Africa	South Africa Second Defiance Campaign	1984-1994	1990	Violent to Non-Violent
Indonesia (East Timor)	Timorese resistance	1988-1999	1989	Violent to Non-Violent
Tunisia	Tunisian independence movement	1952-1954	1953	Non-Violent to Violent
Indonesia (West Papua)	West Papua Anti-Occupation	1964-2006	2000	Violent to Non-Violent
Morocco (Western Sahara)	Western Sahara Freedom Movement	1975-1991	1982 1984	Violent to Non-Violent Non-Violent to Violent

Table 3: Territorial Non-Violent Campaigns

Country	Campaign Name	Year	Campaign Target	Campaign Goal	Total Pop†	Group Pop†	Group Size
Czechoslovakia	Czech Anti-Soviet Occupation	1968	Soviet Occupation	Anti-Occupation	14361	8975.625	0.625
Israel	Druze Resistance	1982	Israeli Occupation of Golan	Greater Autonomy	4027	Not Avlble.	Not Avlble.
Indonesia (East Timor)	Fretilin	1974	Indonesian Occupation	Anti-Occupation	127545	6377.25	0.05
Georgia	Gamsakhurdia & Abkhazia	1989	Georgian Occupation	Territorial Secession	287630	86.289	0.0003
Hungary	Hungary Anti-Soviet Occupation	1956	Soviet Occupation	Anti-Occupation	199658	179692.2	0.9
UK (Northern Ireland)	IRA	1968	British Occupation	Anti-Occupation	55214	662.568	0.012
Yugoslavia	Kosovo Albanian	1989	Serbian rule	Greater Autonomy	23695	2132.55	0.09
Yugoslavia	Kosovo Albanian Nationalist Movmt.	1981	Yugoslav Government	Greater Autonomy	22471	2022.39	0.09
USSR (Latvia)	Latvia Pro-Democracy Movmt.	1989	Communist Regime	Territorial Secession	287630	1725.78	0.006
Nigeria	Ogoni Movement	1990	Nigerian Gov. & Corp. Exploitation	Greater Autonomy	96154	480.77	0.005
Czechoslovakia (Slovakia)	Public Against Violence	1989	Czech Communist Government	Territorial Secession	15638	4816.504	0.308
USSR (Lithuania)	Sajudis- Lithuanian Pro-Dem. Movmt.	1989	Lithuanian Regime	Territorial Secession	287630	2876.3	0.01
USSR (Estonia)	Singing Revolution	1987	Communist Regime	Greater Autonomy	282830	1414.15	0.005
Yugoslavia (Slovenia)	Slovenia Anti-Communist	1989	Communist Regime	Regime Change	23695	1895.6	0.08
Yugoslavia (Slovenia)	Slovenian Independence	1990	Yugoslav Government	Territorial Secession	23818	1905.44	0.08
China	Tibetan Uprising	1987	Chinese Occupation	Anti-Occupation	1104193	5079.288	0.0046

†Population in thousands

Source: NAVCO 2.0, group data from EPR, with values for Tibet from Hao (2000)

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