2018

Rethinking Repression: Where Do We Go From Here?

Lee A. Smithey
Swarthmore College, lsmithe1@swarthmore.edu

L. R. Kurtz

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Drawing together the expertise of a global collection of social scientists and activists, we have interrogated a central dynamic of nonviolent civil resistance, the paradox of repression. Why and under what circumstances does repression against activists using nonviolent methods and tactics backfire, undermining the legitimacy of authorities and mobilizing greater participation in civil resistance? We also focus on the practical application of knowledge about repression and backfire by nonviolent activists. How can the paradox of repression be cultivated? How can activists prepare for, manage, and blunt the negative impact of repression?

Some readers may chafe at the lack of a unifying definition or theory of repression. We chose not to spend a great deal of energy on coming to a consensus among all of the volume's contributors about the parameters of "repression" (as opposed to oppression, suppression, etc.) so as to avoid cutting ourselves off from exploring fertile ground and important discoveries.

Some of our contributors define the paradox of repression as any unanticipated consequences of repression that authorities do not desire. Others complicate the concept of repression by delineating a range of repression types. We suggest in the introduction, further developed in chapter 8, that we consider repression along a continuum from overt violence, on one end, to hegemony (in which individuals self-censor)

12.1. A Continuum of Demobilization (Source: Lee A. Smithey and Lester R. Kurtz)

on the other (see Figure 12.1). In a series of quantitative and theoretical overviews, as well as case studies from around the world, we have brought together insights from scholars and experienced activists to explore this crucial topic.

Issues and Themes

We believe that our approach has helped to generate exciting new insights and identified several important subdomains and avenues for further research. In this volume, we have explored a wide range of themes and issues around the paradox of repression, notably:

- the relational conception of power,
- agents of repression and the possibility of defections,
- strategic preparation for repression and overcoming fear,
- whether activists should deliberately provoke repression,
- the importance of mobilization,
- the role of external actors,
- cultural aspects of repression and its management,
- expanding frameworks for understanding repression,
- social psychological dimensions, and
- the role of the media and the issue of framing.

The Relational Conception of Power

In this volume, we focus on conflicts that are perceived as asymmetrical while at the same time suggesting that they are more symmetrical than they seem. The paradox of repression makes more sense when we understand that power is a relational social construct that emerges from negotiated interactions between people with different statuses, knowledge, and resources in a society. We discuss this at some length

in the introductory chapter, starting with Simmel and Gandhi, and the feminist distinction between empowerment (power to) and domination (power over). In his seminal work on conflict, German sociologist Georg Simmel (1971) stresses the importance of understanding conflict as relational and interactional, an aspect of a struggle that is crucial to understanding the dynamics of repression and its backfire. Each party to a conflict is engaged in a meaningful exchange, according to Simmel, in which each responds to the actions and statements of the other, suggesting that power disparities are often not as severe as we might think.

Gandhi insisted, for example, that the British did not take India, but that the Indians gave it to them—after all, one hundred thousand soldiers could not control 350 million Indians unless the Indians cooperated with them. The apparent asymmetries of power can be profoundly affected when authority is abused or resisted. Moreover, as Arendt (1969, 1970) notes, violence does not create power; instead, it is used by people who lack power or feel it slipping away.

Furthermore, opponents in conflict are working to influence one another through planned or strategic moves, either persuading, coercing, or bargaining (Kriesberg 1982). Situations involving strategic nonviolent action are no exception. Understanding the most effective means of waging nonviolent resistance has been the subject of decades of research and is reflected in many of the chapters in this volume. However, if we are to truly understand nonviolent resistance as part of conflict, we must also understand it as an interaction of activists with authorities and even agents of repression.

Agents of Repression and Defectors

The decision-making processes among regime functionaries is crucial. Erica Chenoweth (chapter 2) shows that defections among security forces and elites are a crucial factor determining the outcome of nonviolent resistance campaigns, along with the level of movement participation (the most crucial factor) and withdrawal of support by foreign allies. In a backfire situation, when state repression increases, so does domestic condemnation of the regime; defections are more

likely, however, with more media coverage. Moreover, it is possible that extremely intense repression can have a negative indirect effect on campaign success by reducing the size of subsequent campaigns.

The growing emphasis on defections means that we need further research on nonviolent struggle from the perspective of regimes and their agents, so we have incorporated that key aspect of repression in this book, even as it admittedly poses methodological challenges because of problems with access. We seem to know much more about the strategic efforts of social movement organizations than those of corporations, states, and other large institutions and their functionaries, although there are clues to the authorities' point of view and sometimes, as with Eric Nelson's (2013) "Subversion of Social Movements by Adversarial Agents," some responses to movement challengers are discussed openly in the strategic literature.

In chapter 4, Rachel MacNair explores the psychological costs to agents of repression in terms of what she calls perpetration-induced traumatic stress (see also MacNair 2002). Indeed, she argues, "the trauma of violence is actually more severe for perpetrators than victims." This psychological consequence of engaging in repression could potentially lead to defections by security forces, one of the factors that Chenoweth (chapter 2) found contributed to successful outcomes for an insurgency.

Agents of repression strategize about repression in order to maximize its demobilization effects and minimize its negative consequences, although most of the sociological research has interrogated the movement side of conflicts rather than exploring the role of repressive elites. That is the subject of our chapter on "smart" repression (chapter 8), in which we present the impulse of authorities to counterstrategize and develop tactics and methods intended to anticipate and create dilemmas for activists, much as activists attempt to do through their strategizing. Beyer and Earl (chapter 5) discuss how authorities not only try to block access to Internet sites but sometimes repress online activities offline. Two people were arrested during the G20 public protests in Pittsburgh, for example, because of their Twitter use regarding the actions, and authorities sentenced two young men for their Facebook

posts following August 2011 riots in the United Kingdom, neither of whom had participated in the riots themselves (Bowcott, Siddique, and Sparrow 2011; Citizen Media Law Project 2010; Moynihan 2009).

In an effort to minimize backfire, authorities sometimes move away from overt violence to "less-lethal methods," intimidation, manipulation, and soft repression. The hegemonic strategies employed by political regimes are perhaps not entirely unlike the persuasive strategies developed by activists to encourage defections among police and the military, often by appeals to a common national or universal identity. Both sides try to choreograph the dance that adversaries share in movement-countermovement interactions.

One extreme case of this move away from violence was the Egyptian military's role in the Egyptian revolution of 2011, explored in chapter 9 by Dalia Ziada. Ziada notes that early on in the uprising, a triangle of actors emerged—the police, military, and protesters—and the nonviolent response of insurgents to police repression facilitated an emerging alliance with the military. Egyptian activists and military personnel engaged in mutual interaction, each trying to persuade the other. Eschewing their routine tactics of brute repression, the military first deployed "negative cooperation" by not shooting at demonstrators, eventually withdrawing their support from the Mubarak regime altogether and enabling his downfall, but eventually wresting control of the revolution away from organizers of the insurgency.

Ironically, the Egyptian military's success without violence underscores a fundamental principle of nonviolent civil resistance: power can be generated in multiple ways. As MacNair underscores, "power is not a physical property but a psychological experience" (chapter 4). Another powerful social psychological dimension of the repression dynamic is fear, the overcoming of which becomes a central aspect of strategic preparation, another prominent theme that emerged in these studies.

Preparing for Repression and Overcoming Fear

Preparation is one of the keys for a campaign to manage repression successfully and provoke its backfire against elites who try to demobilize a movement. Two of our authors who are also activists, George

Lakey (chapter 11) and Jenni Williams (chapter 6), emphasize the fear factor and the importance of strategic planning that addresses what happens before repressive events, how activists expect to respond when repression occurs, and how it is to be framed after the fact to highlight its injustice for a broader relevant audience. This work is especially important in managing fear.

Advance training of activists allows them to reframe repression meaningfully before and after it happens, such as tapping into the resonance of cultural themes of sacrifice. They can set in place structures like affinity groups that highlight the solidarity of common action. Organizers can choreograph actions so that they enhance the positive aspects of the repressive experience and make violent repression more difficult—like people kneeling to pray as the police attack rather than running away.

George Lakey (chapter 11) emphasizes the significance of "ways that activists have found to handle fear, make meaning of pain and suffering, and support risk-taking so violent repression will not shut down their movements." One such strategy is turning fear into excitement, taking the energy that fear generates and reframing it as an opportunity to act side by side with communities of like-minded, change-oriented people.

Jenni Williams (chapter 6) describes how Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) proactively replaced a culture of fear with one of resistance in order to move people from isolation to solidarity. She relates a story of being arrested at a march for leading a protest and those with her insisting that they be arrested with her. The culture of fear melted away as the police vehicle became so full of protesters she had to squeeze in and take her place among the others police arrested. The casting off of fear by WOZA members allowed them to undertake increasingly bold actions without inciting repression.

Provocation

When the civil rights campaign to desegregate public facilities waned in Birmingham, Alabama, some leaders wanted to organize a demonstration with willing young people because the leaders anticipated that

repression of such a march would likely backfire. Others, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., at first objected to putting young people in harm's way. When they did eventually proceed with the Children's March, police attacked the teenage demonstrators with firehoses and dogs, producing widespread moral outrage (Oppenheimer 1995; Wicker 1963; Houston 2004). President Kennedy appeared on national television the following day telling the nation that it faced a "moral crisis," calling upon Congress to pass "sweeping legislation to speed school desegregation and open public facilities to every American, regardless of color" (Wicker 1963). This event was a classic case of the paradox of repression, but the question remains: is preparing strategically for repression tantamount to provoking it? The question has been a tender subject in the study of nonviolent civil resistance.

While Gandhi may not call for the provocation of opponents, he declares that nonviolence often involves taking on suffering rather than inflicting it. Whether that necessarily involves strategically provoking repression remains a matter for debate. Some feel that much of the power of nonviolent action lies in the purity of a nonviolent discipline that is easily contrasted with the brutality of open repression. In chapter 7, we argue that a fundamental goal of nonviolent resistance is to proactively heighten the contrast between the nonviolent discipline of activists and elite repression.

There may be a fuzzy line between preparing for repression to heighten backfire (knowing that it may work to a campaign's advantage) and actually provoking repression. In the 1970s, George Lakey ([1973] 2012), introduced the concept of dilemma demonstrations, in which activists develop actions that put authorities in positions where most or all their options might generate advantages for challengers (see also Sørensen and Martin 2014). This approach may include ensuring that any repression is certain to undermine authorities' legitimacy. However, Lakey warns against provoking repression because "provocation may alienate the revolutionaries from the people, brutalize the police, and even brutalize the demonstrators" ([1973] 2012, 144). Moreover, he argues that provocation is tantamount to a manipulation that risks disaffecting both the public and the rank and file of the movement.

"The organizers should never be in a position of depending on the authorities to react violently in order to make their point" (145).

Activists can be pleased when repression does not come, even if it could benefit the movement, but that does not bar them from optimizing backfire as a matter of prudence. Jenni Williams says that members of WOZA knowingly put themselves in situations that risked repression and that they took responsibility for being part of such a confrontational dynamic. Both Lakey and Williams stop short of calling for outright provocation of repression. In fact, in chapter 6, Williams describes how WOZA choreographs their marches proactively to avoid provoking repression. They stop after every city block to sit and recite their commitment to nonviolence before moving on.

Mobilization's Significance

The mobilization of many participants enhances both the paradox of repression and chances of a movement's success (see Chenoweth and Stefan 2011). Successful repression management requires mobilizing participants, bystanders, and even potential defectors from the forces of repression. Erica Chenoweth (chapter 2) found that the level of participation was a prime factor in determining the success of a movement and also in shaping backfire against repression. We speculate that wider participation means greater exposure to repression and thus a greater likelihood that those in victims' networks, and perhaps the broader public, would become outraged. Larger actions are also more likely to attract the domestic media attention that Chenoweth says is important, and are more likely to be diverse and thus include populations, such as women and children, that raise the potential cost of repression.

Moreover, when backfire occurs, it mobilizes more people to participate and to defect, as Doron Shultziner (chapter 3) notes was the case in the killing of a schoolboy in Soweto and the arrest of Rosa Parks in Montgomery. Such events radically change the political climate, transforming people within the movement and the broader society, inspiring people to act.

Jenni Williams approaches mobilization from the ground level of a movement organizer. In chapter 6, she relates how WOZA mobilized

women to speak out, forging "a movement that opened up a new center lane in a highly polarized society." Their main strategy broke stereotypes about women as well as the hold of patriarchy on society, empowering women to build a culture of resistance that replaced the existing culture of fear and creating a climate in which mobilization could occur. Then, in a kind of reversal in the emerging cycle of repression and backfire, the women took advantage of their successful mobilization, forcing police to beg a large crowd of twenty arrested protesters and 180 of their supporters to leave the police station they had occupied—in a sense, "unarresting" them and capitulating to the growing power of WOZA.

External Factors

Although the civil resistance literature understandably focuses on the agency of nonviolent actionists, the role of external actors remains significant. The audience for insurgent actions is often not geographically present; indeed, the key actors in the paradox of repression are often in another part of the country or even the globe. Chenoweth's data reveals starkly the importance of regime allies and international media coverage of repressive events, which often erodes international support for a repressive regime. She finds that, once a regime ally withdraws support, the chances for success among the largest campaigns doubles; and when this is combined with "security force loyalty shifts and elite defections, . . . the chance of success rockets up to about 45 percent for the smallest campaigns and 85 percent for the largest" (chapter 2).

Doron Shultziner also identifies significant external factors in the creation of transformative events. Instances of repression and backfire can cascade into large-scale, system-shaking occurrences on the international stage that are not of the movement's making, causing transnational ripple effects. Backfire often occurs at other times and in other spaces than the repressive events themselves. Tunisia's rapid revolution, which was launched with a provocative act of self-immolation dramatizing injustice, inspired Egypt's, as Dalia Ziada notes (chapter 9), just as the massacre at Tiananmen Square in June 1989 shaped the

trajectory of uprisings in Poland and Germany, as we point out in our introductory chapter.

In short, agency is enhanced by an understanding of "political opportunity structures," the configuration of factors constraining and favoring movement development. The campaigns most likely to take advantage of backfire may be those who recognize transformative moments of repression and how to strike the anvil when the fire is hot.

Managing Repression in the Cultural Domain

The paradox of repression is as much about culture as it is about politics, and it is often the more culturally creative strategies and tactics that shape political action rather than the other way around. Doron Shultziner's contribution to our understanding of backfire is, in large part, his understanding of repressive events as transformative because they resonate with a cultural context, disrupting and shaping it, and changing people and institutions in the process. As in anthropologist Victor Turner's (1967) concept of liminality, these iconic cultural moments turn the social world upside down. Such moments are often generated during rituals like the Mardi Gras parade during which the princess of spring dethrones old man winter. In the paradox of repression, the regime, whose legitimacy is usually taken for granted, suddenly becomes a monster slaying innocents and against which right-thinking bystanding publics should rebel.

Brian Martin, in his foreword to this volume, suggests that activists counter each one of the methods authorities use to reduce outrage in order to reshape the frame that the public uses to interpret repressive events: "exposing the action, validating the target, interpreting the events as an injustice, mobilizing support (and avoiding official channels), and resisting intimidation and rewards."

In chapter 10, Chaiwat Satha-Anand describes a "nonviolent explosion" of creative nonviolent actions across Thailand as a response to repressive violence. Nonviolent resistance became possible because of "how the political space left from repression interacted with alternative leadership from within the movement and a history of nonviolent

resistance in Thai society." Culturally savvy leaders took advantage of a violent turn in the otherwise nonviolent Red Shirts movement, and the ensuing brutal repression caused the Red Shirts movement to collapse in May 2010. Protest leader Sombat Boonngamanong cried for days after the violent repression and channeled that energy into Facebook posts. Then, a new nonviolent resistance called Red Sunday challenged the emergency law prohibiting political gatherings; protesters tied red ribbons at the site of the demonstration that had been brutally repressed by the military. Rather than high-risk public demonstrations, the Red Sunday group held aerobic dances and used humor and cultural symbols to help people overcome the fear that the regime had promoted. Much of the struggle in Thailand was thus waged in the cultural and psychological arena.

Similarly, George Lakey (chapter 11) emphasizes the importance of the stories a movement's activists tell to themselves to make meaning out of the suffering they receive at the hands of those in power, often by refashioning ancient themes of suffering, martyrdom, and spiritual transformation in their cultural traditions.

Establishing meaning also figures prominently in our analysis of how a movement choreographs its acts of resistance, and the cultural contexts in which activists operate are always important, as we discuss in chapter 7. Insurgents thus generate frame resonance between movement goals and widely held cultural values to mobilize both potential participants in a movement and possible defectors from the power structure. Thus, Williams (in chapter 6) reflects on how WOZA participants transformed the authority of a traditional cultural role—that of the mother—into a vehicle for protest as they courageously scolded Robert Mugabe and the political elites for their unacceptable behavior as exploitative leaders of the country. In chapter 7, we apply the fundamental importance of framing and meaning-making to repression management and argue that the way activists "set the table" (culturally, through their tactical decisions) establishes crucial precedents for the interpretation of repression in their favor. The symbols resistors use and the narratives on which they draw prestructure the range of possible interpretations of moments of repression and enhance the

perceptual contrast between the bullying tactics of opponents and the nonviolent discipline of activists.

Expanding Frameworks for Understanding Repression

Despite decades of theorizing and research into nonviolent civil resistance, the study of what has been called political jiu-jitsu (Sharp 1973), moral jiu-jitsu (Gregg 1938), backlash (Francisco 1995, 1996), or backfire (Martin 2007, 2012) remains relatively underdeveloped. As Beyer and Earl point out in chapter 5, there is a tendency to lump all forms of repression into one category, perhaps because methodologically it is easier to study spectacular and overt forms of physical repression that attract media coverage and generate moral outrage. However, as research progresses, we are bound to refine our study of nonviolent resistance, nonviolent organizations and movements, and the regimes and corporations that they challenge. This volume begins to outline the diverse types of movement and regime goals and actions that inevitably interact to generate various movement outcomes, including the paradox of repression.

Beyer and Earl take us into the burgeoning world of online activism that has a different set of ground rules (physics even) that govern the strategic interaction of opponents. They systematically enumerate different types of online resistance, such as denial of service attacks (often leading to arrests), networking, and information sharing. Likewise, they present alternative forms of repression most likely to be deployed against online activist strategies.

Observing a continuum of repression strategies that authorities employ to demobilize nonviolent movements, as we do in the introduction, enhances our conceptualization of repression by offering a higher resolution view of the concept (Figure 12.1), and Erica Chenoweth calls us to think more carefully about how the intentions of repressive actors may be difficult to discern as scholars try to reconstruct retrospective accounts of repression. Moreover, Dalia Ziada alerts us to the potential for multiple targets of repression. Simple dyadic models of regimes and dissenters may exclude repression against defectors and various resistance flanks.

Social Psychological Dimensions

Rachel MacNair's observation that power "is a psychological experience" (chapter 4) strikes us as a patently true but underestimated aspect of nonviolent strategic action. Like MacNair, Doron Shultziner focuses on transformative repressive events as psychological phenomena; chapter 3 hinges heavily on the mass perception that "'politics as usual' is suspended" and "the creation of new spaces and mass meetings inject new meaning, perspective, and points of reference to citizens' lives."

Fear emerges as one of the most fundamental psychological dynamics at play in nonviolent civil resistance. Gandhi wrote extensively about the importance of overcoming fear, arguing, "we cannot have too much bravery, too much self-sacrifice . . . I want . . . the greater bravery of the meek, the gentle and the nonviolent, the bravery that will mount the gallows without injuring, or harbouring any thought of injury to a single soul" (1967, see chapter 12 in "The Gospel of Fearlessness"). Gene Sharp (1973) has established overcoming fear as a fundamental principle of effective nonviolent resistance, noting that people obey authorities for a variety of reasons ranging from habit to fear, all of which can be helpfully studied through psychological lenses. Sharp points out that repression is not actually the generator of obedience, but the fear that repression creates. No regime can repress all of its people. It is the *threat* of repression that people fear, dissuading them from challenging injustices. Thus, overcoming fear is largely about altering perceptions. George Lakey explains how storytelling becomes a collective and therapeutic way of shifting perceptions of fear and managing repression. Similarly, Jenni Williams also relays the slow but intentional empowerment of women in Zimbabwe as a form of fear management.

In trying to expand frameworks for understanding repression, we must also strive to understand conflict from the perspective of agents of repression, as MacNair does in her chapter on how perpetration induced traumatic stress syndrome likely impacts many agents of repression and the likelihood that they may modify their repression, disobey orders, or even defect.

Framing and the Media

Because of the reciprocal nature of conflict, insurgent challenges and elite responses evolve into framing contests, with each party trying to mobilize support and resonate with significant themes within shared culture. These framing contests are profoundly shaped by the media, especially beyond a local level, where people do not experience them firsthand. How the media portrays their respective frames shapes the public's discourse about the issues at stake, a fact of which the various parties involved are usually quite aware. The media effect is embellished by the fact that repressive events are often the most newsworthy.

Chenoweth's (chapter 2) study of 323 campaigns for dramatic change, such as bringing down dictators or driving out occupations, concludes that the most significant processes leading to campaign success historically are "campaign size, loyalty shifts among regime functionaries, and the removal of support for the regime by an erstwhile ally." "For repression to backfire in any meaningful sense," she argues, "participation is crucial." One vital factor in mobilizing participation, especially on a broader geographical scale, is international media coverage, which raises awareness and pressures regime allies to withdraw support of the target regime.

Media coverage is not enough, however (surprisingly, domestic media coverage had no significant effect in Chenoweth's study); and we know from the extensive social movement literature that framing issues is one of the core tasks of social movements. We argue in chapter 7 that the framing contest between elites and movements must result in a shift in control of political discourse from elites to movement coalitions and that repressive events are critical sites of framing contention. Repression management to enhance backfire requires that insurgents' frames resonate with existing cultural norms and dispositions and that the careful choreography of strategic nonviolent action in the face of repression can go a long way toward ensuring that repression is more likely to backfire by boldly dramatizing the dissonance between authorities' repression and the nonviolence of disciplined activists.

Future Research

A number of the issues emerging in this volume have been inadequately studied or conceptualized and could be fruitfully explored. First, it would be helpful to have more focused case studies of nonviolent resistance under repression, on the one hand, and more big-picture explorations, either with quantitative data sets or conceptualizations, on the other. Case studies like those in this volume on Zimbabwe, the US civil rights movement, and the South African antiapartheid struggle, as well as movements for change in Thailand, Egypt, and online, provide in-depth insights into the actual processes set into motion by repressive events and movement responses to them. We need more on-the-ground case studies that focus specifically on repression to develop a better comparative historical basis for understanding which aspects of backfire are more general and which are more situation-specific.

Chenoweth's NAVCO data set[1] reveals a rich set of broad patterns regarding repression of particular types of campaigns (overthrowing dictators, removing occupying troops, and secessionist movements). Her new data set, NAVCO 2.0 (see Chenoweth and Lewis 2013) includes more cases and data that should give us further insights. It would be helpful to explore other large data sets in terms of repression issues and one such possibility is the *Global Nonviolent Action Database*,[2] which offers a growing selection of cases featuring the paradox of repression.

Conceptual issues in need of development and empirical investigation include the question of how the use of violence (regardless of by whom) actually undermines the legitimacy of the perpetrator among insider elites and within the broader population. Do non-state terror organizations suffer a loss of legitimacy when they use violent methods? If so, are they as great as those incurred by states and other authority structures?

1. This data set can be found at the NAVCO Data Project website (https://www.du.edu/korbel/sie/research/chenow_navco_data.html).

2. This database (nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu), housed at Swarthmore College, includes a selection of cases featuring the paradox of repression (bit.ly/pdoxrepgnad).

At the same time, we need research into the power elite side of framing contests. Most sociological studies of repression explore the social movement side of conflicts, paying less attention to the elite side, in part because of a lack of access to the latter. In our exploration of smart repression, we found some interesting research along those lines, and there is no doubt much more to be discovered.

MacNair's chapter on perpetration-induced traumatic stress suggests another crucial area, the psychological aspects of repression from the point of view of those actors attempting to demobilize a movement. Psychological costs may be associated with the use of violence that could be counted as part of the paradoxical nature of repression. Research into perpetration-induced posttraumatic stress disorder (Grossman and Siddle 2008; MacNair 2002) suggests that the relational nature of conflict can cause psychological distress among those who use violence. Future research should explore to what extent the use of violence carries psychological costs and whether and how those costs can be leveraged by others.

Both additional case studies and quantitative overviews might provide insights into the most successful tactics of repression management used by various movements for different kinds of change in particular sociocultural contexts. Indeed, one important issue often debated but inadequately researched is the relative impact of tactics on the one hand, and context, on the other, or what is sometimes called agency and structure. The nonviolence literature often emphasizes agency, while sociologists and many political scientists often see the structural constraints on action as more significant.

What are the key historical factors that have resulted in successful or failed attempts by movements to enhance the backfire effect of repressive events? It would also be helpful, as Beyer and Earl suggest in chapter 5, to learn more about the varying effects of repression on different levels, such as individuals, networks, SMOs, movements, and the public as bystanders.

Finally, a more in-depth understanding of the media's role in repression and its backfire would be an essential component of our effort to understand how the paradox of repression unfolds. Both the

mainstream and alternative media, along with social media generally, are key sites for framing contests between elites and insurgents, and we get some insight into that from the chapter by Beyer and Earl. We look forward to other scholars and activists understanding and sharing how repression backfires and movements for change become empowered.

The paradox of repression is a major aspect of the power relationships between authorities and insurgents that has not been fully researched. In this volume, we have endeavored to present the theoretical foundations of the phenomenon and to investigate the way in which activists exercise agency by preparing for and managing repression. Careful nonviolent strategy can influence the course of a conflict by raising the costs of repression, although nonviolent activists and elites both think about and prepare for repression, choreographing their actions in relation to their opponents' actions.

We have joined our contributing authors to expand the frameworks for further scholarship on this topic by conceptualizing repression and the ever-changing terrain on which movements and authorities contend, technologically, politically, and culturally. Our contributors have confirmed that repression often backfires and has profound cultural and psychological underpinnings, including the fundamental generation of fear (which nonviolent activists work to overcome), the psychological costs of repression for perpetrators, moments of transformative awakening, and the many resources that movements and elites may draw on for hegemonic or liberatory purposes. We hope that this deeply collaborative process will help to generate ever more rigorous scholarship on the topics of repression and backfire, thus broadening and deepening the use of strategic nonviolent action as an alternative to more violent forms of conflict.

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