

CHAPTER ONE THE SUCCESS OF NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE CAMPAIGNS

Nonviolence is fine as long as it works.

MALCOLM X

IN NOVEMBER 1975, Indonesian president Suharto ordered a full-scale invasion of East Timor, claiming that the left-leaning nationalist group that had declared independence for East Timor a month earlier, the Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin), was a communist threat to the region. Fretilin's armed wing, the Forças Armadas de Libertação Nacional de Timor-Leste (Falintil), led the early resistance to Indonesian occupation forces in the form of conventional and guerrilla warfare. Using weapons left behind by Portuguese troops,¹ Falintil forces waged armed struggle from East Timor's mountainous jungle region. But Falintil would not win the day. Despite some early successes, by 1980 Indonesia's brutal counterinsurgency campaign had decimated the armed resistance along with nearly one third of the East Timorese population.²

Yet nearly two decades later, a nonviolent resistance movement helped to successfully remove Indonesian troops from East Timor and win independence for the annexed territory. The Clandestine Front, an organization originally envisaged as a support network for the armed movement, eventually reversed roles and became the driving force behind the nonviolent, pro-independence resistance. Beginning in 1988, the Clandestine Front, which grew out of an East Timorese youth movement, developed a large decentralized network of activists, who planned and executed various nonviolent campaigns inside East Timor, in Indonesia, and internationally. These included protests timed to the visits of diplomats and dignitaries, sit-ins inside foreign embassies, and international solidarity efforts that reinforced Timorese-led nonviolent activism.

The Indonesian regime repressed this movement, following its standard approach to violent and nonviolent challengers from within. But this repression backfired. Following the deaths of more than two hundred East Timorese nonviolent protestors at the hands of Indonesian troops in Dili in November 1991, the pro-independence campaign experienced a ma-

major turning point. The massacre, which was captured on film by a British cameraman, was quickly broadcast around the world, causing international outrage and prompting the East Timorese to rethink their strategy (Kohen 1999; Martin, Varney, and Vickers 2001). Intensifying nonviolent protests and moving the resistance into Indonesia proper became major components of the new strategy.

Suharto was ousted in 1998 after an economic crisis and mass popular uprising, and Indonesia's new leader, B. J. Habibie, quickly pushed through a series of political and economic reforms designed to restore stability and international credibility to the country. There was tremendous international pressure on Habibie to resolve the East Timor issue, which had become a diplomatic embarrassment, not to mention a huge drain on Indonesia's budget. During a 1999 referendum, almost 80 percent of East Timorese voters opted for independence. Following the referendum, Indonesian-backed militias launched a scorched-earth campaign that led to mass destruction and displacement. On September 14, 2000, the UN Security Council voted unanimously to authorize an Australian-led international force for East Timor.³

The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor oversaw a two-year transition period before East Timor became the world's newest independent state in May 2002 (Martin 2000). Although a small number of Falintil guerrillas (whose targets had been strictly military) kept their weapons until the very end, it was not their violent resistance that liberated the territory from Indonesian occupation. As one Clandestine Front member explained, "The Falintil was an important symbol of resistance and their presence in the mountains helped boost morale, but nonviolent struggle ultimately allowed us to achieve victory. The whole population fought for independence, even Indonesians, and this was decisive."⁴

Similarly, in the Philippines in the late 1970s, several revolutionary guerrilla groups were steadily gaining strength. The Communist Party of the Philippines and its New People's Army (NPA) were inspired by Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideologies and pursued armed revolution to gain power. State-sponsored military attacks on the NPA dispersed the guerrilla resistance until the NPA encompassed all regions of the country. The Philippine government launched a concerted counterinsurgency effort, and the NPA was never able to achieve power.

In the early 1980s, however, members of the opposition began to pursue a different strategy. In 1985 the reformist opposition united under the banner of UNIDO (United Nationalist Democratic Organization) with Cory Aquino as its presidential candidate. In the period leading up to the elections, Aquino urged nonviolent discipline, making clear that violent attacks against opponents would not be tolerated. Church leaders, similarly, insisted on discipline, while the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections trained half a million volunteers to monitor elections.

When Marcos declared himself the winner of the 1986 elections despite the counterclaims of election monitors, Cory Aquino led a rally of 2 million Filipinos, proclaiming victory for herself and "the people." The day after Marcos's inauguration, Filipinos participated in a general strike, a boycott of the state media, a massive run on state-controlled banks, a boycott of crony businesses, and other nonviolent activities.

A dissident faction of the military signaled that it favored the opposition in this matter, encouraging the opposition to form a parallel government on February 25 with Aquino at its head. Masses of unarmed Filipino civilians, including nuns and priests, surrounded the barracks where the rebel soldiers were holed up, forming a buffer between those soldiers and those who remained loyal to Marcos. President Ronald Reagan's administration had grown weary of Marcos and signaled support for the opposition movement. That evening, U.S. military helicopters transported Marcos and his family to Hawaii, where they remained in exile. Although the Philippines has experienced a difficult transition to democracy, the nonviolent campaign successfully removed the Marcos dictatorship. Where violent insurgency had failed only a few years earlier, the People Power movement succeeded.

THE PUZZLE

The preceding narratives reflect both specific and general empirical puzzles. Specifically, we ask why nonviolent resistance has succeeded in some cases where violent resistance had failed in the same states, like the violent and nonviolent pro-independence campaigns in East Timor and regime-change campaigns in the Philippines. We can further ask why nonviolent resistance in some states fails during one period (such as the 1950s Defiance Campaign by antiapartheid activists in South Africa) and then succeeds decades later (such as the antiapartheid struggle in the early 1990s).

These two specific questions underline a more general inquiry, which is the focus of this book. We seek to explain two related phenomena: why nonviolent resistance often succeeds relative to violent resistance, and under what conditions, nonviolent resistance succeeds or fails.⁵

Indeed, debates about the strategic logic of different methods of traditional and nontraditional warfare have recently become popular among security studies scholars (Abrahms 2006; Arreguín-Toft 2005; Byman and Waxman 1999, 2000; Dashti-Gibson, Davis, and Radcliff 1997; Drury 1998; Horowitz and Reiter 2001; Lyall and Wilson 2009; Merom 2003; Pape 1996, 1997, 2005; Stoker 2007). Implicit in many of these assessments, however, is an assumption that the most forceful, effective means of waging political struggle entails the threat or use of violence. For instance, a prevailing view among political scientists is that opposition movements select terrorism and violent insurgency strategies because such means are more effective than nonviolent strategies at achieving policy goals (Abrahms 2006, 77; Pape 2005). Often violence is viewed as a last resort, or a necessary evil in light of desperate circumstances. Other scholarship focuses on the effectiveness of military power, without comparing it with alternative forms of power (Brooks 2003; Brooks and Stanley 2007; Desch 2008; Johnson and Tierney 2006).

Despite these assumptions, in recent years organized civilian populations have successfully used nonviolent resistance methods, including boycotts, strikes, protests, and organized noncooperation to exact political concessions and challenge entrenched power. To name a few, sustained and systematic nonviolent sanctions have removed autocratic regimes from power in Serbia (2000), Madagascar (2002), Georgia (2003), and Ukraine (2004–2005), after rigged elections; ended a foreign occupation in Lebanon (2005); and forced Nepal's monarch to make major constitutional concessions (2006). In the first two months of 2011, popular nonviolent uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt removed decades-old regimes from power. As this book goes to press, the prospect of people power transforming the Middle East remains strong.

In our Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) data set, we analyze 323 violent and nonviolent resistance campaigns between 1900 and 2006.⁶ Among them are over one hundred major nonviolent campaigns since 1900, whose frequency has increased over time. In addition to their growing frequency, the success rates of nonviolent campaigns have increased. How does this compare with violent insurgencies? One might as-

sume that the success rates may have increased among both nonviolent and violent insurgencies. But in our data, we find the opposite: although they persist, the success rates of violent insurgencies have declined.

The most striking finding is that between 1900 and 2006, nonviolent resistance campaigns were nearly twice as likely to achieve full or partial success as their violent counterparts. As we discuss in chapter 3, the effects of resistance type on the probability of campaign success are robust even when we take into account potential confounding factors, such as target regime type, repression, and target regime capabilities.⁷

The results begin to differ only when we consider the objectives of the resistance campaigns themselves. Among the 323 campaigns, in the case of antiregime resistance campaigns, the use of a nonviolent strategy has greatly enhanced the likelihood of success. Among campaigns with territorial objectives, like antioccupation or self-determination, nonviolent campaigns also have a slight advantage. Among the few cases of major resistance that do not fall into either category (antiapartheid campaigns, for instance), nonviolent resistance has had the monopoly on success.

The only exception is that nonviolent resistance leads to successful secession less often than violent insurgency. Although no nonviolent secession campaigns have succeeded, only four of the forty-one violent secession campaigns have done so (less than 10 percent), also an unimpressive figure. The implication is that campaigns seeking secession are highly unlikely to

FIGURE 1.1 FREQUENCY OF NONVIOLENT AND VIOLENT CAMPAIGN END YEARS

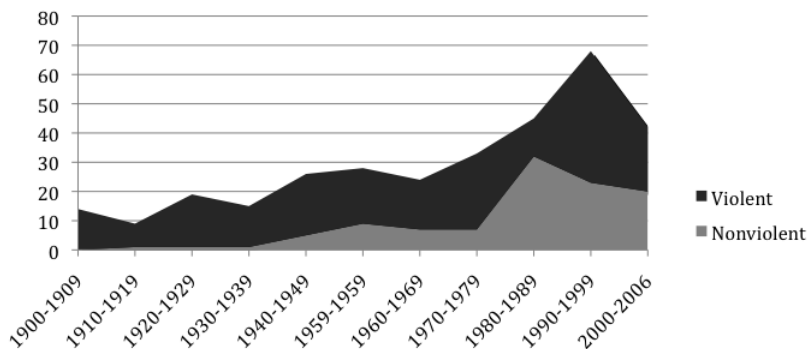


FIGURE 1.2 NUMBER OF NONVIOLENT CAMPAIGNS AND PERCENTAGE OF SUCCESSES, 1940-2006

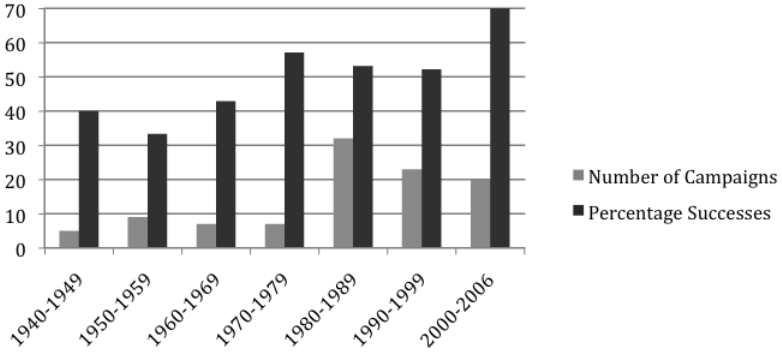


FIGURE 1.3 SUCCESS RATES BY DECADE, 1940-2006

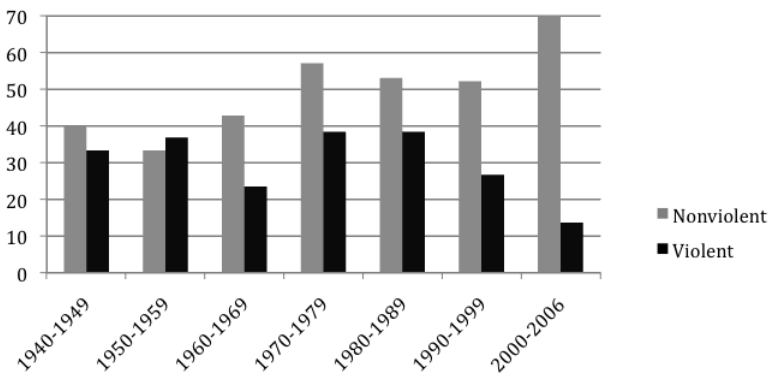


FIGURE 1.4 RATES OF SUCCESS, PARTIAL SUCCESS, AND FAILURE

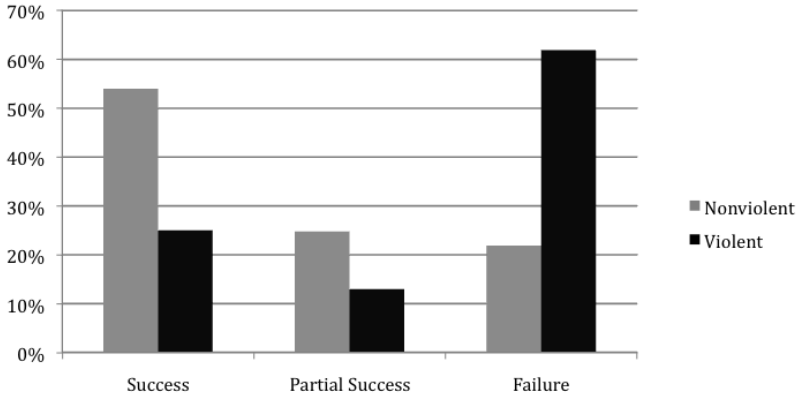
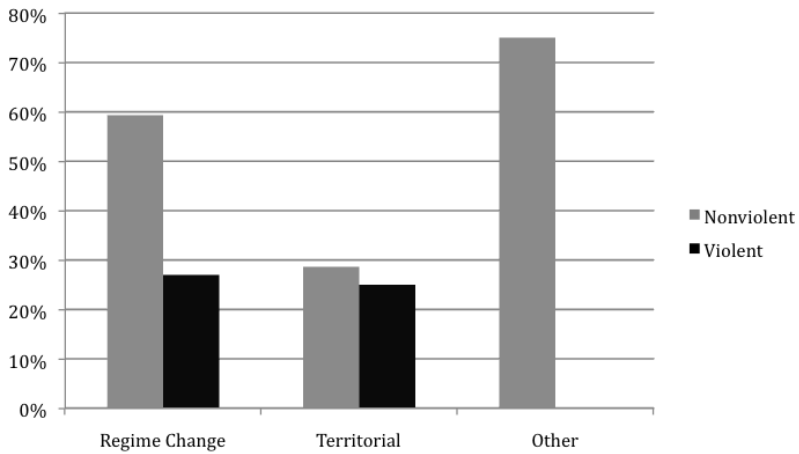


FIGURE 1.5 SUCCESS RATES BY CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE



succeed regardless of whether they employ nonviolent or violent tactics. We explore various factors that could influence these results in chapter 3. It is evident, however, that especially among campaigns seeking regime change or liberation from foreign occupation, nonviolent resistance has been strategically superior. The success of these nonviolent campaigns—especially in light of the enduring violent insurgencies occurring in many of the same countries—begs systematic exploration.

This book investigates the reasons why—in spite of conventional wisdom to the contrary—civil resistance campaigns have been so effective compared with their violent counterparts. We also consider the reasons why some nonviolent campaigns have failed to achieve their stated aims, and the reasons why violent insurgencies sometimes succeed.

THE ARGUMENT

Our central contention is that nonviolent campaigns have a participation advantage over violent insurgencies, which is an important factor in determining campaign outcomes. The moral, physical, informational, and commitment barriers to participation are much lower for nonviolent resistance than for violent insurgency. Higher levels of participation contribute to a number of mechanisms necessary for success, including enhanced resilience, higher probabilities of tactical innovation, expanded civic disruption (thereby raising the costs to the regime of maintaining the status quo), and loyalty shifts involving the opponent's erstwhile supporters, including members of the security forces. Mobilization among local supporters is a more reliable source of power than the support of external allies, which many violent campaigns must obtain to compensate for their lack of participants.

Moreover, we find that the transitions that occur in the wake of successful nonviolent resistance movements create much more durable and internally peaceful democracies than transitions provoked by violent insurgencies. On the whole, nonviolent resistance campaigns are more effective in getting results and, once they have succeeded, more likely to establish democratic regimes with a lower probability of a relapse into civil war.

Nestling our argument between literatures on asymmetrical warfare, contentious politics, and strategic nonviolent action, we explain the relative effectiveness of nonviolent resistance in the following way: nonviolent campaigns facilitate the active participation of many more people than violent campaigns, thereby broadening the base of resistance and raising the costs

to opponents of maintaining the status quo. The mass civilian participation in a nonviolent campaign is more likely to backfire in the face of repression, encourage loyalty shifts among regime supporters, and provide resistance leaders with a more diverse menu of tactical and strategic choices. To regime elites, those engaged in civil resistance are more likely to appear as credible negotiating partners than are violent insurgents, thereby increasing the chance of winning concessions.

However, we also know that resistance campaigns are not guaranteed to succeed simply because they are nonviolent. One in four nonviolent campaigns since 1900 was a total failure. In short, we argue that nonviolent campaigns fail to achieve their objectives when they are unable to overcome the challenge of participation, when they fail to recruit a robust, diverse, and broad-based membership that can erode the power base of the adversary and maintain resilience in the face of repression.

Moreover, more than one in four violent campaigns has succeeded. We briefly investigate the question of why violent campaigns sometimes succeed. Whereas the success of nonviolent campaigns tends to rely more heavily on local factors, violent insurgencies tend to succeed when they achieve external support or when they feature a central characteristic of successful nonviolent campaigns, which is mass popular support. The presence of an external sponsor combined with a weak or predatory regime adversary may enhance the credibility of violent insurgencies, which may threaten the opponent regime. The credibility gained through external support may also increase the appeal to potential recruits, thereby allowing insurgencies to mobilize more participants against the opponent. International support is, however, a double-edged sword. Foreign-state sponsors can be fickle and unreliable allies, and state sponsorship can produce a lack of discipline among insurgents and exacerbate free rider problems (Bob 2005; Byman 2005).

THE EVIDENCE

We bring to bear several different types of evidence to support our argument, including statistical evidence from the NAVCO data set and qualitative evidence from four case studies: Iran, the Palestinian Territories, Burma, and the Philippines.

It is appropriate here to briefly define the terms to which we will consistently refer in this book. First, we should distinguish violent and non-

violent tactics. As noted earlier, there are some difficulties with labeling one campaign as violent and another as nonviolent. In many cases, both nonviolent and violent campaigns exist simultaneously among competing groups. Often those who employ violence in mass movements are members of fringe groups who are acting independently, or in defiance of, the central leadership; or they are agents provocateurs used by the adversary to provoke the unarmed resistance to adopt violence (Zunes 1994). Alternatively, often some groups use both nonviolent and violent methods of resistance over the course of their existence, as with the ANC in South Africa. Characterizing a campaign as violent or nonviolent simplifies a complex constellation of resistance methods.

It is nevertheless possible to characterize a campaign as principally nonviolent based on the primacy of nonviolent resistance methods and the nature of the participation in that form of resistance. Sharp defines nonviolent resistance as “a technique of socio-political action for applying power in a conflict without the use of violence” (1999, 567). The term *resistance* implies that the campaigns of interest are noninstitutional and generally confrontational in nature. In other words, these groups are using tactics that are outside the conventional political process (voting, interest-group organizing, or lobbying). Although institutional methods of political action often accompany nonviolent struggles, writes sociologist Kurt Schock, nonviolent action occurs outside the bounds of institutional political channels (2003, 705).⁸

Our study focuses instead on a type of political activity that deliberately or necessarily circumvents normal political channels and employs noninstitutional (and often illegal) forms of action against an opponent. Civil resistance employs social, psychological, economic, and political methods, including boycotts (social, economic, and political), strikes, protests, sit-ins, stay-aways, and other acts of civil disobedience and noncooperation to mobilize publics to oppose or support different policies, to delegitimize adversaries, and to remove or restrict adversaries' sources of power (Sharp 1973).⁹ Nonviolent resistance consists of acts of omission, acts of commission, and a combination of both (Sharp 2005).¹⁰

We characterize violent resistance as a form of political contention and a method of exerting power that, like nonviolent resistance, operates outside normal political channels. While conventional militaries use violence to advance political goals, in this book we are concerned with the use of unconventional violent strategies used by nonstate actors.¹¹ These strategies

are exhibited in three main categories of unconventional warfare: revolutions, plots (or coups d'état), and insurgencies, which differ according to the level of premeditated planning, protractedness, and means of overthrowing the existing order.¹² The weapons system available to an armed insurgent is very different from that of its nonviolent analogue. Violent tactics include bombings, shootings, kidnappings, physical sabotage such as the destruction of infrastructure, and other types of physical harm of people and property. However, the cases we examine do not include military coups, since we are primarily interested in substate actors that are not part of the state. Both violent and nonviolent campaigns seek to take power by force, though the method of applying force differs across the different resistance types.

The list of nonviolent campaigns was initially gathered from an extensive review of the literature on nonviolent conflict and social movements. Then these data were corroborated with multiple sources, including encyclopedias, case studies, and a comprehensive bibliography on nonviolent civil resistance by April Carter, Howard Clark, and Michael Randle (2006). Finally, we consulted with experts in the field, who suggested any remaining conflicts of note. The resulting list includes major campaigns that are primarily or entirely nonviolent. Campaigns where a significant amount of violence occurred are not considered nonviolent.

Violent campaign data are derived primarily from Kristian Gleditsch's (2004) updates to the Correlates of War (COW) database on intrastate wars, Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson's (2009) database of insurgencies, and Kalev Sepp's (2005) list of major counterinsurgency operations. The COW data set requires all combatant groups to be armed and to have sustained a thousand battle deaths during the course of the conflict, suggesting that the conflict is necessarily violent.

This study makes a further qualification. Nonviolent and violent campaigns are used to promote a number of different policy objectives, ranging from increasing personal liberties to obtaining greater rights or privileges for an ethnic group to demanding national independence. However, this project is concerned primarily with three specific, intense, and extreme forms of resistance: antiregime, antioccupation, and secession campaigns. These campaign types are chosen for several reasons. First, they provide a hard case for civil resistance. Antiregime, antioccupation, and self-determination campaigns are typically associated in the literature with violence, whereas civil rights and other strictly human rights movements are more commonly

associated with nonviolent methods. However, in this study we argue that nonviolent resistance can be used to achieve political objectives most commonly identified with violent insurgencies.

Success and failure are also complex outcomes, about which much has been written (Baldwin 2000). For our study, to be considered a “success” a campaign had to meet two conditions: the full achievement of its stated goals (regime change, antioccupation, or secession) within a year of the peak of activities and a discernible effect on the outcome, such that the outcome was a direct result of the campaign’s activities (Pape 1997).¹³ The second qualification is important because in some cases the desired outcome occurred mainly because of other conditions. The Greek resistance against the Nazi occupation, for example, is not coded as a full success even though the Nazis ultimately withdrew from Greece. Although effective in many respects, the Greek resistance alone cannot be credited with the ultimate outcome of the end of Nazi influence over Greece since the Nazi withdrawal was the result of the Allied victory rather than solely Greek resistance.

The term *campaign* is also somewhat contentious as a unit of analysis. Following Ackerman and Kruegler (1994, 10–11), we define a campaign as a series of observable, continual tactics in pursuit of a political objective. A campaign can last anywhere from days to years. Campaigns have discernible leadership and often have names, distinguishing them from random riots or spontaneous mass acts.¹⁴ Usually campaigns have distinguishable beginning and end points, as well as discernible events throughout the campaign. In the case of resistance campaigns, beginning and end points are difficult to determine, as are the events throughout the campaign. In some cases, information on such events is readily available (e.g., Northern Ireland from 1969 to 1999); however, in most cases, it is not. Therefore, our characterization of the beginning and end dates of campaigns is based on consensus data and multiple sources.¹⁵

Some readers may be tempted to dismiss our findings as the results of selection effects, arguing that the nonviolent campaigns that appear in our inventory are biased toward success, since it is the large, often mature campaigns that are most commonly reported. Other would-be nonviolent campaigns that are crushed in their infancy (and therefore fail) are not included in this study. This is a potential concern that is difficult to avoid.

We adopted a threefold data-collection strategy to address this concern. First, our selection of campaigns and their beginning and end dates is based

on consensus data produced by multiple sources. Second, we have established rigorous standards of inclusion for each campaign. The nonviolent campaigns were initially gathered from an extensive review of the literature on nonviolent conflict and social movements. Then these data were corroborated with multiple sources, including encyclopedias, case studies, and the bibliography by Carter, Clark, and Randle (2006).

Finally, we circulated the data set among experts in nonviolent conflict. These experts were asked to assess whether the cases were appropriately characterized as major nonviolent conflicts, whether any notable conflicts had been omitted, and whether we had properly accounted for failed movements. Where the experts suggested additional cases, the same corroboration method was used. Our confidence in the data set that emerged was reinforced by numerous discussions among scholars of both nonviolent and violent conflicts.

Nonetheless, what remains absent from the data set is a way to measure the nonstarters, the nonviolent or violent campaigns that never emerged because of any number of reasons. Despite this concern, we feel confident proceeding with our inquiry for two main reasons. First, this bias applies as much to violent campaigns as to nonviolent ones—many violent campaigns that were defeated early on are also unreported in the data. Second, this study is not concerned primarily with *why* these campaigns emerge but with *how well* they perform relative to their competitors that use different methods of resistance. We focus on the efficacy of campaigns as opposed to their origins, and we argue that we can say something about the effectiveness of nonviolent campaigns *relative to* violent campaigns. We do concede, however, that improved data collection and analysis and finding ways to overcome the selection bias inherent in much scholarship on conflict are vital next steps for the field.

WHY COMPARE NONVIOLENT AND VIOLENT RESISTANCE CAMPAIGNS?

Generally, scholars have eschewed the systematic comparison of the outcomes of violent and nonviolent movements. One notable exception is William Gamson, whose seminal work (1990) on American challenge groups discovered that groups employing force and violence were more successful than groups refraining from violent tactics (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996, 14). Not only does he seem to conflate force with violence, but also his

conclusions, while perhaps pertinent to certain types of groups within the American political system, do not necessarily apply to all countries during all times.¹⁶

Hence scholarship on this question rightly investigates whether such generalizations are applicable to other places and periods. In attempting to understand the relationship between nonviolent and violent tactics and the outcomes of resistance campaigns, however, scholars have tended to focus on single case studies or small-n comparisons in what has become a rich accumulation of research and knowledge on the subject (Ackerman and DuVall 2000; Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Boudreau 2004; Schock 2005; Sharp 1973, 2005; Wehr, Burgess, and Burgess 1994; Zunes 1994; Zunes, Kurtz, and Asher 1999). What has been missing, though, are catalogs of known campaigns and systematic comparisons of the outcomes of both nonviolent and violent resistance campaigns, although this trend has begun to shift (Shaykhutdinov 2010; Stephan and Chenoweth 2008).

As one might expect, there are several good reasons why social scientists have avoided comparing the dynamics and outcomes of nonviolent and violent campaigns, including their relative effectiveness. First, the separation of campaigns into violent and nonviolent for analytical purposes is problematic. Few campaigns, historically, have been purely violent or nonviolent, and many resistance movements, particularly protracted ones, have had violent and nonviolent periods. Armed and unarmed elements often operate simultaneously in the same struggle. Still, it is possible to distinguish between different resistance types based on the actors involved (civilians or armed militants) and the methods used (nonviolent or violent).¹⁷ Scholars have identified the unique characteristics of these different forms of struggle, and we feel comfortable characterizing some resistance campaigns as primarily violent and others as primarily nonviolent. We are furthermore careful to avoid characterizing a campaign as violent merely because the regime uses violence in an attempt to suppress the protest activity.

Second, security studies scholars seem to have eschewed the study of nonviolent action because nonviolent action is not typically viewed as a form of insurgency or asymmetrical warfare (Schock 2003). Groups deliberately adopting nonviolent tactics are commonly understood as doing so for moral or principled reasons (Howes 2009). Since some key authors promoting strategic nonviolent action have also been pacifists, this characterization

has not been wholly unfounded. Nonetheless, among some security studies scholars, the idea that resistance leaders might choose nonviolent tactics as a strategic choice may be considered naive or implausible. Although the topic of civilian-based defense, a type of unconventional defense involving civilian populations defending their nations from military invasions and occupations using organized noncooperation and civil disobedience, received the attention of security and strategic studies (including the RAND Corporation) during the Cold War, interest in the subject from the security studies community has waned since the fall of the iron curtain (Sharp 1990).¹⁸ Hence the serious study of strategic nonviolent action has remained something of a pariah within security studies despite decades of scholarship on the subject.

Finally, the questions of interest in this book—whether nonviolent resistance methods are more effective than violent resistance methods and under which conditions civil resistance succeeds or fails—are by nature extremely difficult to study. It is not by accident that few authors have been able to compile large-*n* data sets on the subject despite important efforts to do so.¹⁹ The measurement of effectiveness itself is difficult to gather and defend, and the independent effects of resistance methods on the outcomes are not always easy to discern given the complexity of these contentious episodes.

Despite the challenges associated with studying this subject, we argue that the theoretical and policy implications of the research questions at hand are too important to avoid. Sidney Tarrow has argued that investigating the reasons why movements succeed and fail is one of the main foci of the entire contentious politics research program (1998). Our book demonstrates that scholars can take a reasoned look at the relative effectiveness of nonviolent and violent resistance, even if the measures of such terms are imperfect. We undertake such an exploration by examining 323 cases from 1900 to 2006 of major nonviolent and violent campaigns seeking regime change, the expulsion of foreign occupiers, or secession. This research is the first to catalog, compare, and analyze all known cases of major armed and unarmed insurrections during this period. From this data, we find support for the perspective that nonviolent resistance has been strategically superior to violent resistance during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Because the data are highly aggregated, we provide only a first look at these trends. But our findings point to a powerful relationship that scholars and policy makers should take seriously.

SCHOLARLY IMPLICATIONS

This research is situated among several distinct albeit related subfields of political science and sociology. We are explicit in conceptualizing civil resistance as a form of unconventional warfare, albeit one that employs different weapons and applies force differently. The literature on contentious politics has long explored the relationship between methods and outcomes. Recent scholarship in security studies has explored similar questions.²⁰ Others in the discipline deal with the concept of strategic effectiveness in an indirect, if somewhat peripheral, way. For instance, in his seminal work on the political economy of rebellion, Jeremy Weinstein (2007) argues that activist rebellions are more likely than opportunistic rebellions to achieve their strategic objectives. Activist rebellions, which are dependent on social support, are more likely to target opponents selectively. Opportunistic rebellions target indiscriminately, thereby undermining their public support.

Wood (2000, 2003) argues that transitions to democracy are likely when insurgents are able to successfully raise the costs to economic elites of maintaining the status quo, a process that emerges when labor unions and worker parties strike over an extended period. DeNardo's work (1985) on mass movements also demonstrates that methods and outcomes of revolutions are related, with disruption and mass mobilization being key determinants of revolutionary success. However, Weinstein (2007), Wood (2000, 2003), and DeNardo (1985) all remain agnostic as to how the methods of resistance—nonviolent or violent—could affect the outcomes of resistance campaigns.

Following those who have analyzed nonviolent campaigns through the lens of strategic theory, we are similarly interested in the relationship between strategy and outcome (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Ganz 2010; Helvey 2004; Popovic et al. 2007; Sharp 1973). Our perspective does not assume that nonviolent resistance methods can melt the hearts of repressive regimes or dictators. Instead, we argue that as with some successful violent movements, nonviolent campaigns can impose costly sanctions on their opponents, resulting in strategic gains. We join a long line of scholars concerned with the strategic effectiveness of different tactical and operational choices (Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Sharp 1973; Zunes 1994).

What is perhaps obvious is our voluntaristic approach to the study of resistance. In this book, we make the case that voluntaristic features of campaigns, notably those related to the skills of the resisters, are often better predictors of success than structural determinants. On the surface, this argu-

ment immediately puts us at odds with structural explanations of outcomes such as political opportunity approaches. Such approaches argue that movements will succeed and fail based on the opening and closing of opportunities created by the structure of the political order. As Tarrow has argued, “political opportunity structures are ‘consistent dimensions of the political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action’” (Tarrow 1998, 18). Let us briefly discuss how our perspective differs from this approach.

In our study, a political opportunity approach might suggest that nonviolent campaigns succeed so often because the regime is undergoing a transition, signaling to the opposition that the time is right to go on the offensive. McAdam argues that “most contemporary theories of revolution start from much the same premise, arguing that revolutions owe less to the efforts of insurgents than to the work of systemic crises which render the existing regime weak and vulnerable to challenge from virtually any quarter” (1996a, 24).²¹

What we have found, however, is that the political opportunity approach fails to explain why some movements succeed in the direst of political circumstances where chances of success seem grim, whereas other campaigns fail in political circumstances that might seem more favorable. Such explanatory deficiencies leave us wondering how the actions of the groups themselves shape the outcomes of their campaigns.

For instance, a common misperception about nonviolent resistance is that it can succeed only against liberal, democratic regimes espousing universalistic values like respect for human rights. Besides the implicit and false assumption that democracies do not commit mass human rights abuses, the empirical record does not support this argument. As Kurt Schock writes, the historical record actually points to the opposite conclusion:

In fact, nonviolent action has been effective in brutally repressive contexts, and it has been ineffective in open democratic polities. Repression, of course, constrains the ability of challengers to organize, communicate, mobilize, and engage in collective action, and magnifies the risk of participation in collective action. Nevertheless, repression is only one of many factors that influence the trajectories of campaigns of nonviolent action, not the sole determinant of their trajectories. (Schock 2003, 706)

The claim that nonviolent resistance could never work against genocidal foes like Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin is the classic straw man put forward to demonstrate the inherent limitations of this form of struggle. While it is possible that nonviolent resistance could not be used effectively once genocide has broken out in full force (or that it is inherently inferior to armed struggle in such circumstances), this claim is not backed by any strong empirical evidence (Summy 1994). Collective nonviolent struggle was not used with any strategic forethought during World War II, nor was it ever contemplated as an overall strategy for resisting the Nazis. Violent resistance, which some groups attempted for ending Nazi occupation, was also an abject failure.

However, scholars have found that certain forms of collective nonviolent resistance were, in fact, occasionally successful in resisting Hitler's occupation policies. The case of the Danish population's resistance to German occupation is an example of partially effective civil resistance in an extremely difficult environment (Ackerman and DuVall 2000).²² The famous case of the Rosenstraße protests, when German women of Aryan descent stood for a week outside a detention center on the Rosenstraße in Berlin demanding the release of their Jewish husbands, who were on the verge of being deported to concentration camps, is a further example of limited gains against a genocidal regime brought about by civil resistance. The German women, whose numbers increased as the protests continued and they attracted more attention, were sufficiently disruptive with their sustained nonviolent protests that the Nazi officials eventually released their Jewish husbands (Mazower 2008; Semelin 1993; Stoltzfus 1996). Of course, the civil resistance to Nazi occupation occurred in the context of an Allied military campaign against the Axis powers, which was ultimately decisive in defeating Hitler.

Regardless, the notion that nonviolent action can be successful only if the adversary does not use violent repression is neither theoretically nor historically substantiated. In fact, we show how, under certain circumstances, regime violence can backfire and lead to the strengthening of the nonviolent challenge group.

A competing approach, resource mobilization theory, suggests that campaigns succeed when resources converge around given preferences, allowing for mobilization to occur regardless of political opportunities. A resource mobilization approach would suggest that "the dynamics of a movement depend in important ways on its resources and organization," with a focus on entrepreneurs "whose success is determined by the availability of resources"

(Weinstein 2007, 47). However, this perspective does not account for the ways in which the actions of the opponent may account for the success or failure of campaigns when they deploy their own resources to either counter or outmaneuver the challenge group.

Instead of attempting to fit our explanation within one of the two prevailing approaches, we instead view our approach as an interactive one that draws on a contentious politics approach. Such a perspective can be justified by the fact that the structure of the political environment will necessarily shape and constrain the perceptions of resistance leaders, whereas the actions of resistance movements will often have distinguishable and independent effects on the structure of the system. This approach follows from a number of recent works in social movement studies and security studies (Arreguín-Toft 2005; Schock 2005; Weinstein 2007; Wood 2000, 2003).

Civil Resistance Research in Context

Readers familiar with the literature on civil resistance may wonder how our work differs from the canonical literature in this field. The seminal works on nonviolent resistance by Gene Sharp, Robert Helvey, Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, Ackerman and Jack DuVall, Stephen Zunes, Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash, Kurt Schock, Mary E. King, and others have all advanced our understanding of strategic nonviolent action in important ways.

Sharp's three-volume opus, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, established the theoretical foundation for nonviolent action. It reads as a handbook of nonviolent resistance, explaining the theory of power and the different methods of nonviolent action and the ways that nonviolent action can affect the adversary (conversion, persuasion, accommodation, and coercion). Sharp's work is seminal; it provides a unified theory on the strategic mechanisms through which civil resistance can work.

Robert Helvey builds on much of Sharp's original foundation in his work on how to act strategically during the prosecution of a nonviolent conflict (2004). He identifies similarities between civil resistance and military strategy, providing a handbook of sorts for how to identify campaign goals, develop strategic plans, and operational problems movements face during a campaign.

Our book is distinct in several ways. First, although Sharp's and Helvey's volumes provide a theoretical gold mine, they do not attempt to test their assertions empirically. Our book is the first attempt to comprehensively test

many of the ideas Sharp and Helvey have developed. Second, Sharp's and Helvey's comparisons with violent resistance are implicit; they simply present nonviolent resistance as an effective strategy in asymmetrical conflict. In our study, we explicitly compare nonviolent and violent resistance to test the hypothesis that nonviolent resistance is indeed a more effective strategy.

In Ackerman and Kruegler's *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict*, the authors develop a framework informed by strategic theory for analyzing the outcomes of nonviolent resistance campaigns. The book features multiple case studies of successful and failed nonviolent action, from which the authors generalize twelve principles of successful nonviolent action. Although the book is highly analytical, the case studies are inductive in nature: their purpose is to find patterns about why nonviolent campaigns succeed rather than to test hypotheses.

Ackerman and DuVall's book *A Force More Powerful* has been perhaps the most widely read book on nonviolent action. The book is empirical, featuring descriptive accounts of nonviolent campaigns ranging from Russia to South Africa. One of the most accessible books on nonviolent conflict, it was adapted into an Emmy-nominated documentary series. Recently the authors have sponsored the development of a video game named after the book, the purpose of which is to train scholars and activists in the tactics and strategy of nonviolent resistance. The book is not intended to be an analytical exploration of why nonviolent resistance succeeds compared with violent resistance, nor does it attempt to control for other factors that might predict the success or failure of movements. Our study expands the universe of cases, explicitly compares nonviolent and violent resistance, tests theoretical hypotheses concerning the mechanisms that lead to success, and controls for other factors that might account for different outcomes. We do, however, focus far less on the dynamics of violent unconventional warfare, such as guerrilla warfare and violent insurgency.

Stephen Zunes, Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash, and Kurt Schock have all contributed to the academic understanding of the conditions under which nonviolent resistance succeeds and fails. Their works share a comparative case study approach to explaining individual cases or illuminating patterns in nonviolent resistance activity (Roberts and Garton Ash 2009; Schock 2005; Zunes, Kurtz, and Asher 1999). Much of our argument is compatible with findings in Zunes's various works, although our aim is to explain broad patterns rather than individual cases. Roberts and

Garton Ash similarly attempt to explain the dynamics of nonviolent resistance in a diverse range of cases. Other authors have examined single case studies and associated phenomena in great depth (Bleiker 1993; Clark 2000; Dajani 1994; Eglitis 1993; Huxley 1990; Martin 2007; McCarthy and Sharp 1997; Miniotaite 2002; Parkman 1988, 1990; Roberts and Garton Ash 2009; Sharp 2005; Stephan 2010; Stoltzfus 1996). The goal of these contributors, however, is not always to explain campaign success or failure but rather to explore a number of social movement problems and questions related to their cases. Thus their works demonstrate some important lessons but not necessarily about why and when civil resistance works.

In *Unarmed Insurrections*, sociologist Kurt Schock compares successful and failed nonviolent, prodemocracy campaigns against nondemocratic regimes. This work comes much closer to the analytical purposes of our book. Schock compares six nonviolent campaigns in nondemocracies to identify patterns among the trajectories of these campaigns. He challenges the political opportunity approach, and argues that strategic factors can help explain the outcomes of the campaigns. Most important, Schock's work bridges the structure-agency divide and analyzes the iterative, interactive nature of political opportunities and strategic choice. Specifically, Schock argues that tactical innovation, resilience, and the shifting between methods of concentration and methods of dispersion can help to explain the divergent outcomes of different campaigns.

Vincent Boudreau also analyzes the outcomes of prodemocracy movements in Southeast Asia, using a compelling contentious politics model (2004). However, he does not focus on the relative effectiveness of nonviolent and violent action, instead exploring the interaction between different modes of repression employed by dictators in Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia and the impact of these forms of repression on the protestors. He is explicitly critical of the possibility of accurately representing these conflicts using quantitative analysis, instead arguing in favor of viewing each conflict as a complex system of its own (2004, 3).

Our findings are highly compatible with Schock's and share much in common with Boudreau's as well, notwithstanding methodological differences. But our argument about the primacy of participation in nonviolent resistance appears unique in this literature. Moreover, as with the Ackerman and Kruegler book, our study expands the universe of cases to include antioccupation and secession campaigns in addition to regime-change cam-

paigns. Our study is not limited to Southeast Asia, nor are our cases restricted to nondemocratic targets. Instead, we attempt to comprehensively examine major nonviolent and violent campaigns all across the globe, against all types of targets, from 1900 to 2006.

Readers familiar with Ivan Arreguín-Toft's argument in *How the Weak Win Wars* may see some similarities to our argument. In his book, Arreguín-Toft argues that weak powers sometimes win wars when they employ indirect strategies against stronger powers. That is, if the stronger power is employing conventional war strategies, a weaker power that uses unconventional or guerrilla war will be likely to succeed. For instance, the British conventional army succumbed to the guerrilla war waged by American colonists during the Revolutionary War (though, as mentioned earlier, the armed insurgency followed years of nonviolent civil resistance). On the other hand, a weaker power that uses conventional strategies against a stronger power relying on conventional strategies will fail. The 1991 Gulf War demonstrates that point: the militarily inferior Iraqi army was unable to successfully take on Coalition forces.

Conversely, if a stronger power employs unconventional strategies against a weaker power's conventional strategies, the weaker power will win. For instance, Hitler's air bombing of British civilian targets did not force the British into compliance. Instead, the attacks emboldened the British against the Germans (Arreguín-Toft 2001, 108). But when a stronger power employs unconventional strategies against a weak power also using unconventional strategies, the stronger power will win. The Russian government has used "barbaric" strategies against Chechen rebels, effectively crushing the Chechen insurgency.

While we do not dispute Arreguín-Toft's findings, we illuminate a new dimension in his typology, which is the use of strategic nonviolent action as an indirect strategy against a militarily superior opponent. When Arreguín-Toft describes indirect strategies for weaker powers, he refers to two types of strategies: direct defense, which he defines as "the use of armed forces to thwart an adversary's attempt to capture or destroy values such as territory, population, and strategic resources," and guerrilla warfare, defined as "the organization of a portion of society for the purpose of imposing costs on an adversary using armed forces trained to avoid direct confrontation" (2001, 103). We argue that unarmed, civil resistance can be even more effective

than direct defense or guerrilla warfare, both of which are armed strategies against militarily superior opponents.

Our results are also consistent with Max Abrahms's findings, which suggest that terrorist activities that target civilians are less effective than guerrilla warfare strategies that target policy and military personnel (2006). But our findings extend his thesis further, in that we argue that in most cases all types of violent campaigns are likely to be less effective than well-managed nonviolent campaigns.

What all these works, including ours, have in common is a call for scholars to rethink power and its sources in any given society or polity. Although it is often operationalized as a state's military and economic capacity, our findings demonstrate that power actually depends on the consent of the civilian population, consent that can be withdrawn and reassigned to more legitimate or more compelling parties.

Squaring the Circle: The Effectiveness of Violence?

Some scholars, such as Robert Pape, have developed recently theses on the efficacy of violent conflict. In particular, some argue that terrorism—especially suicide terrorism—is an effective coercive strategy, especially against democracies (2003, 2005). Jason Lyall and Isaiah Wilson have also discovered that violent insurgency is growing in effectiveness—against democracies in particular (2009). Given these authors' findings, there are some surface discrepancies with our findings. We address each of these arguments in turn.

First, Pape argues that suicide terrorism is an effective punishment strategy against democracies (2003, 2005). Suicide bombers convey both capability and resolve to soft targets in democracies, demonstrating to these countries that continued occupation will result in protracted, escalating, indiscriminate war against the country's civilian population. Such acts lead to a decline in morale in the democracy, which ultimately judges that withdrawal from the occupied territory is less costly than the occupation. In his study, five out of the eleven suicide bombing campaigns since 1980 have achieved at least partial success.

Pape's argument and empirics have been widely criticized (see, for instance, Ashworth et al. 2008). Yet if we take his argument at face value, we can offer yet another criticism, which could be applied to almost all scholars

whose research tests the efficacy of different violent methods. Such scholars often assume or argue that violence is effective, but compared with what? In particular, Pape makes no attempt to compare the relative efficacy of suicide terrorism against alternative strategies. Even in some of his most prominent cases—Lebanon and the Palestinian Territories—we have seen mass, nonviolent resistance perform effectively where violent insurgencies have failed. In the Lebanese case, the 2005 Cedar Revolution involved more than a million Lebanese demonstrators forcing Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanese soil. And, as shown in chapter 5, the First Intifada moved the Palestinian self-determination movement further than the Palestine Liberation Organization's violent campaign that preceded it, or the Al-Aqsa Intifada that succeeded it.

In another example, Lyall and Wilson argue that violent insurgencies are becoming more effective against highly mechanized militaries, which prove to be unwieldy in urban settings against well-camouflaged insurgents (2009). They show that since 1975 states have succeeded in crushing insurgencies only 24 percent of the time. In their study, they determine success from the state's perspective, such that complete defeat of the insurgents is considered a success, whereas a draw or a loss to insurgents is considered a failure. When one looks more closely, however, one can see that their primary finding—that violent insurgencies have succeeded in over 75 percent of cases since 1976—is based on data in which nearly 48 percent of the cases were stalemates. Thus only 29.5 percent of their insurgencies since 1976 actually succeeded in defeating their state adversaries, a statistic that is much closer to our own. Lyall and Wilson also exclude ongoing campaigns from their findings, whereas we code such cases as failures through 2006.²³

The difference in measurement is one way that our findings diverge from Lyall and Wilson's. But perhaps the most important difference is that they do not compare the relative effectiveness of violent insurgency with nonviolent campaigns. If we analyze the success rates of nonviolent campaigns since 1976, we see a much higher rate of nonviolent campaign success (57 percent).

Thus our study represents a departure from techniques used by those arguing that violent insurgency is effective. As Baldwin argues, "Only comparative analysis of the prospective success of alternative instruments provides policy-relevant knowledge" (2000, 176). Our approach involves the relative comparison of nonviolent and violent campaigns, which sheds more light on how unsuccessful violent campaigns really are.²⁴

WIDER IMPLICATIONS

Beyond scholarly contributions, this research possesses a number of important implications for public policy. Research regarding the successes and failures of nonviolent campaigns can provide insight into the most effective ways for external actors—governmental and nongovernmental—to aid such movements. From the perspective of an outside state, providing support to nonviolent campaigns can sometimes aid the movements but also introduces a new set of dilemmas, including the free-rider problem and the potential loss of local legitimacy. This study strongly supports the view that sanctions and state support for nonviolent campaigns work best when they are coordinated with the support of local opposition groups; but they are never substitutes.

For instance, although there is no evidence that external actors can successfully initiate or sustain mass nonviolent mobilization, targeted forms of external support have been useful in some cases, like the international boycotts targeting the apartheid regime in South Africa. The existence of organized solidarity groups that maintained steady pressure on governments allied with the target regimes proved to be very helpful, suggesting that “extending the battlefield” is sometimes necessary for opposition groups to enhance their leverage over the target. Lending diplomatic support to human rights activists, independent civil society groups, and democratic opposition leaders while penalizing regimes (or threatening penalties) that target unarmed activists with violent repression may be another way that governments can improve the probability of nonviolent campaign success. Coordinated multinational efforts that used a combination of positive and negative sanctions to isolate egregious rights violators supported successful civil resistance movements in South Africa and Eastern Europe.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

The remainder of the study examines the specific mechanisms by which nonviolent campaigns succeed and fail. It does so by interchanging quantitative and qualitative analyses of nonviolent and violent campaigns in the Middle East (Iran and the Palestinian Territories) and Southeast Asia (the Philippines and Burma). Each of the four cases features periods of both violent and civil resistance against repressive regimes, but with varying degrees of success. This allows us to more closely examine the conditions under which nonviolent and violent campaigns succeed and fail, both within and across the cases.

The book proceeds as follows. First, in chapter 2, we introduce the general argument of the study and explore how this argument converges and diverges with the findings of other scholars. We argue that civil resistance campaigns are more successful than violent campaigns at overcoming barriers to participation, an important prerequisite of success.

In chapter 3, we explore the major alternative arguments—that regime features may independently affect the outcomes of the nonviolent or violent conflicts, or that the origins and outcomes of resistance campaigns are endogenous. First, we test whether opponent regime type (i.e., democracy or nondemocracy), capabilities, or use of violent repression against the challenge group reduces the likelihood of success for nonviolent resistance. We also test the effects of time, region, and campaign goal on the probability of success. We find that even when taking into account structural features, nonviolent resistance is still a more effective strategy than violent resistance.

Chapter 3 also addresses the issue of endogeneity head-on, that is, whether violent campaigns fail because they emerge in conditions in which failure is extremely likely, thus explaining their poor success rates relative to nonviolent campaigns. We find that nonviolent and violent insurgencies are likely to emerge in very similar circumstances, such that their outcomes cannot be explained exclusively on the basis of endogeneity.

In part 2, we compare nonviolent and violent resistance campaigns and their outcomes in Iran, the Palestinian Territories, the Philippines, and Burma. We explain the case selection in detail before the substantive chapters begin. Chapter 4 discusses the Iranian Revolution (1977–1979). In this case, violent campaigns failed to dislodge the Shah, whereas the nonviolent campaign succeeded. Chapter 5 explains why violent Palestinian campaigns orchestrated by an exiled leadership achieved little or no success before the First Intifada (1987–1992), whereas the mass popular uprising that originated inside the occupied territories achieved partial success through some important Israeli concessions.

Chapter 6 deals with the successful case of the People Power movement in the Philippines (1983–1986), which ousted Ferdinand Marcos from power. This mass uprising achieved what the Maoist and Muslim-led insurgencies in that country had been unable to achieve. Chapter 7 identifies a case of failed nonviolent resistance: the Burmese prodemocracy uprising of 1988. Both nonviolent and violent campaigns failed in this case, which provides a useful deviating outcome for comparison.

Part 3 explores the implications of this research across multiple dimensions. First, in chapter 8, we discuss the consequences of violent insurgency, particularly violent insurgent success. Our statistical evidence suggests that countries in which violent insurgencies exist are more likely to backslide into authoritarianism or civil war than countries where nonviolent campaigns exist, which often become more stable, democratic regimes.

Finally, the concluding chapter summarizes the key findings, highlighting how these findings make a contribution to the literature. This chapter also argues for the incorporation of nonviolent conflict into security studies inquiry and suggests ways to improve and expand upon our study. The last section identifies the policy implications derived from this research.

Although not the final word in any sense, we hope that this book challenges the conventional wisdom concerning the effectiveness of nonviolent struggle and encourages scholars and policy makers to take seriously the role that civilians play in actively prosecuting conflict without resorting to violence.