NON-STATE VIOLENT ACTORS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS: INFLUENCE, ADAPTATION, AND CHANGE

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RESEARCH IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, CONFLICTS AND CHANGE VOLUME 41

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Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2017

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78714-191-9 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-78714-190-2 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-78714-728-7 (Epub)

ISSN: 0163-786X (Series)

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Certificate Number 1985
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FOREWORD

It is not a well-kept secret that much of political science and international relations has long awarded the state a place of primary importance. Even diverse research questions probing a range of topics tend to land squarely on the state, broadly conceived. While this has changed considerably of late, it nonetheless remains a prominent tendency. What may be somewhat less well known, however, is the even more curious and unfortunate fact that a lot of social movement scholarship has also given the state inordinate attention in its research questions. This is often done simply by focusing disproportionately on those movements that target the state, even though social movements not only target for conflict and change many other institutions and entities, but other movements, and even organizations within their own movement.

This largely themed volume brings political scientists, IR scholars, conflict theorists, and sociologists together to refocus our research lens on non-state actors as openers and closers of political opportunities, as wagers of both destructive and constructive conflicts, and as proponents and executors of political and social change. The change non-state actors are working for is directed toward a range of institutions, and even toward each other. Throughout it all, the agency of non-state actors is the strong glue that melds these important chapters together. A well-known expert on non-state actors herself, volume editor Julie M. Mazzei's thoughtful Introduction clearly establishes the significance of this well-conceived volume. The RSMCC series, and all those who think that non-state actors matter in essential ways, are in her debt.

Patrick G. Coy
Series Editor

INTRODUCTION

In 1987 alone, armed groups killed over 500 individuals in a small region of Colombia, taking "over 10% of the [community's] population" (Kaplan, 2013, p. 353). As tragic as those deaths were, the victims were among the millions of people killed during the country's civil conflict (M.R. & The Data Team, 2015). Over the past several decades of failed peace talks, the daily lives of civilians have often been defined less by the state than by the range of non-state actors (NSAs). The FARC (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*) and the ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) were the most significant guerrilla groups that waged war against the state, demanding reforms. The AUC (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia*) united previously separate paramilitary groups (what some might call "death squads") to combat the guerrillas and activists. Drug cartels further complicated matters waging their own violent campaigns, at times allying with factions of paramilitary groups (Mazzei, 2009; Vargas & Caruso, 2014). Other organizations formed to peacefully combat the violence around them. In the region noted above, the political context shifted after 1987 when the nonviolent ATCC (*La Asociación de Trabajadores Campesinos del Carare*), organized. The ATCC began negotiating with the multiple armed groups on behalf of the community, and the number of killings dropped significantly (Kaplan, 2013, p. 353).

Colombia is perhaps an extreme example, but it illustrates two primary challenges for the study of non-state actors. First, while non-state actors may differ in important ways, they also may experience similar circumstances, emerge under similar conditions, and interact in ways that restructure a shared environment. In Colombia, non-state violent actors (NSVAs) like the left-wing FARC and right-wing AUC organized support and fought for their respective political interests. The ATCC mobilized in that same context, though engaging in a nonviolent struggle (Kaplan, 2013). As these diverse groups interacted, they redefined their shared environment and created the opportunities or obstacles for each other. Nonetheless, scholarship on non-state actors is typically segmented, with some scholars focused on social movements and others on violent groups.

Recognizing the experiences and dynamics that are shared across a range of non-state actors is likely to lead to important empirical insights. For instance, the defining characteristics of political opportunity structures, developed in social movement literature (McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996; Tarrow, 1996), have been identified as similarly central to the emergence of paramilitary groups, a type of NSVA (Mazzei, 2009). Additionally, both SMOs and NSVAs need to secure resources, and both necessarily engage other actors and network in pursuit of their own interests (Mazzei, 2009, 2016; McCarthy & Zald, 1977; see also David & Gagné, 2006–2007). If we conceptualize non-state actors broadly, we are able to hear the literatures on NSVAs and SMOs speak to each other in important ways. Taken together, the contributions to this volume give evidence of this.

Second, the Colombian experience highlights the agency and influence of non-state actors, and the crucial role they play in defining a political context perhaps competing with or even displacing the state. Understanding the emergence and actions of the NSAs here requires studying far more than the state and its behavior (or its absence), and indeed active attention to the other NSAs building the political context. The organization, longevity, and successes of non-state actors are often not dependent upon the state but upon the agency of and resources procured by the non-state actor, the alliances or rivalries across organizations (Mazzei, 2016), and the ways in which the political context shifts with actor interplay. Approaches that begin with the presumption that *non*-state actors may be central to an outcome, or "actor-based approaches" (Mishali-Ram, 2009, p. 58), recognize that the state is but one of many actors interacting to create dynamics that explain political change. Indeed, one of the contributions of this volume is the exploration of the roles played by non-state actors in defining a political context to which other actors must be responsive. De Fazio in particular highlights a lesson from Tilly (1977): effective repression is not the sole purview of the state (pp. 18, 25). Rather than questioning how non-state agents are affected by the state, the authors here encourage us to consider how they interact with and reshape their own environment in its totality.

In two sections, this volume analyzes the dynamics relevant to understanding the roles and evolution of non-state actors in a range of settings. The first section explores the interplay between non-state actors, as well as between NSAs and the state, focusing particularly on the ways in which these actors navigate survival in repressive or conflict-ridden environments. The second broadens our attention to the dynamics of social movements and change more generally, looking at nonviolent contexts. Looking across

the chapters, it becomes clear that making sense of political change broadly requires understanding the emergence and operation of non-state actors, how they sustain themselves even in the face of often seemingly insurmountable obstacles, and how they interact with and influence other non-state actors.

SECTION I. NON-STATE ACTORS: INFLUENCE AND ADAPTATION IN CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS

In the chapter "Hostile Countermobilization and Political Violence: Loyalist Contention and Radicalization in Northern Ireland, 1968–1969," Gianluca De Fazio explores the often more complex, constitutive relationship between multiple non-state actors. This study of mobilized dissent and countermobilization in Northern Ireland leading up to The Troubles uncovers the accumulative nature of non-state actor decision-making. De Fazio finds that "[h]ostile counter mobilization … instigated an object shift among civil rights activists, promoting the adoption of violent tactics. … As the conflict with direct opponents acquired increased saliency among civil rights and loyalist protesters, they started to engage in tactical codependency" (p. 25). This chapter shows that actions and responses of non-state and state actors alike can significantly reshape the environment in which subsequent decisions are made, allies aligned, violence escalated or deescalated, and opportunities maximized or lost. Here, the non-state actors adapted their behavior in response to one another, escalating confrontation and setting the stage for The Troubles (p. 25).

Cem Emrence and Aysegul Aydin take the complexity and nuance of these interactions even further in the chapter "Killing the Movement: How Islam Became a Rival of Ethnic Movement in Turkey, 1991–2002," demonstrating how communities may react when non-state actors attempt to manipulate a political environment through violence. Here, the authors focus specifically on how popular support for one political actor, the Kurdish political party, shifts over time as countermobilizing groups use violence against the party. In this chapter, we are reminded that while dissent and counterdissent organizations are often central to defining a political context, they do so embedded within masses of individuals whose perceptions and loyalties are often shaped by the conflict around them, and who may in turn influence the environment. In the case of Turkey, these individuals vote, creating a conduit between the conflict and state institutions. The question for Emrence and Aydin is whether the

countermobilization violence deters public support for its target or strengthens it. They find "[T]hese effects are conditional on initial movement strength" (p. 33). That is, the relationship of the movement with those masses of individuals matters, even before the counterviolence begins.

In many instances, non-state violent actors move well beyond targeting opponents in their efforts to dominant an environment. In Iraq, some insurgent groups, at times, used violence against entire communities rather than targeting political parties or activists. Stephen C. Poulson contributes the chapter "Patterns of Violence Directed against Civilians in Small Ethnic Enclaves during War in Iraq (2003–2009)," looking specifically at why some non-state actors use certain types of violence against certain communities and not others. Using data spanning six years, Poulson finds that indiscriminate violence was utilized more against ethnically more homogenous communities, though there was variance in one case. Importantly, as with the other studies here, Poulson suggests that there is an interactive dynamic between insurgent and environment. "Perhaps even the small differences in the relationship between groups can cause insurgents to shift their focus from security-related concerns and cause them to act differently toward different communities" (p. 100). That is, actors respond to what they perceive to be other actors and their interests, and strategies shift accordingly. Even where targets were not responding to or interacting with non-state actors, their relational status seems to have mattered.

As has been highlighted by much of the literature on violent non-state actors and insurgents in particular, resources also matter. Matthew Costello brings this element into the volume in the chapter "Oil Ownership and Domestic Terrorism" with research on a scant-studied topic: the role of natural resources not in civil war, but in domestic terrorism. In examining the structure of oil ownership within a country is related to the occurrence of terrorist attacks, Costello finds that "oil is not a curse, although oil rents in the hands of the state can lead to adverse outcomes, such as domestic terrorism" (p. 109). Importantly, however, Costello finds that other variables are relevant. Importantly, however, Costello finds that other variables are relevant. These findings add nuance to our understanding of the role of resources, indicating that the constellation of resource ownership matters, as do the policies that directly affect the lives of everyday citizens. The fact that state terror begets domestic terror in particular lends further credence to the notion that studying conflict with an explanatory eye towards dynamics and relationships rather than on one (or one type of) actor is likely to be worthwhile.

While Costello's work contributes in a significant way by turning an explanatory lens to domestic terror attacks specifically, state repression elicits

a range of non-state political action. Evidence from social movements in Iran indicates that in fact non-state actors evolve and adapt, but do not necessarily lose agency as repressive regimes shift to close opportunity structures. Eliot Assoudeh and Debra J. Salazar find that in fact under such circumstances a social movement organization may decentralize, but this does not inherently bring disintegration. In the chapter "Movement Structure in an Authoritarian Regime: A Network Analysis of the Women's and Student Movements in Iran," the authors analyze the Iranian student and women's movements over time, finding that while actors respond to shifts in and pressures by the political environment, the fact "that organizations are not centralized with a clear chain of command does not mean that they are disorganized" (p. 138). Instead, they find patterns emerging in both movements where increasing repression elicited shifts in the movements. The study contributes to our understanding of not only the ways in which organizations may structure themselves, but also the ways in which they interact, restructuring themselves and thereby redefining the environment while responding to the evolution of other actors. Assoudeh and Salazar provide evidence that non-state actors may look different and organize in different ways within different contexts, but these actors often nonetheless create their own means of continuity despite repression and opposition.

In the chapter "Protests or Parliaments: The Politics of Deinstitutionalization and the Mobilization of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel," Liora S. Norwich focuses similarly on the internal mechanisms of movements, finding that the de/institutionalization of movements is a function of variance in three factors: appropriation, internal competition, and ideological convergence. Norwich follows movements of Palestinian citizens of Israel beginning under the Israeli "control regime" of the 1960s (p. 182) through 2000. She uncovers a long-term trajectory of movement deinstitutionalization attributable to misappropriation, internal competition, and ideational divergence. The author argues that these internal mechanisms have meaning for how a movement mobilizes, even while "their combination and interaction with the political environment shape developments in a movement's infrastructure" (p. 180).

Taken together, the Assoudeh and Salazar and Norwich pieces remind us to acknowledge both the agency and the internal dynamics of NSAs as we study their evolution in conflict zones or repressive regimes. The authors of the chapter "When Does Repression Trigger Mass Protest? The 2013 Gezi Protests," meanwhile, bring us back to the ways in which the structural environment of an NSA affects its ability to seize opportunities, whether violent or nonviolent. Defne Över and Başak Taraktaş look at the ways in which state-sponsored repression of peaceful protestors in Turkey

brought both scale shift and boundary deactivation. The Gezi Protests in Turkey (2013) were met with a harsh state response. What was perceived as unjustifiable repression ultimately brought previously disparate groups of people together to protest the government response. The authors note that the perceived misuse of repression, and subsequent shared experience of expanding numbers of protestors with repression, proved a powerful mechanism for mobilization. The authors argue that the repression had a unifying effect, allowing "fragmentation [to be] broken down" (p. 230) by the regime itself. In this way, the interactive dynamic between state actors and protestors created a new context, where previously defined identity "boundaries" were "deactivated" and mobilization facilitated.

SECTION II. NON-STATE ACTORS: CHALLENGERS AND CHANGE

The second section of the volume reminds us that repression and marginalization do not require physical violence. Structural violence and exclusion happen via multiple mechanisms, some less formal but remarkably effective, as demonstrated in the chapter "Targeting Culture: Feminist Legal Activists and Critical Community Tactics" by Holly J. McCammon, Allison R. McGrath, Ashley Dixon, and Megan Robinson. Here, the authors explore the ways in which women legal students and faculty overcame marginalizing and exclusionary practices through what the authors call "critical community tactics." Introducing tactics to the "critical communities" conceptualized by Rochon (1998), McCammon, McGrath, Dixon, and Robinson argue that groups of individuals (who may or may not be part of a broader social movement organization) deploying specific oppositional tactics challenge cultural norms and become "important agents of change" (p. 249) within an institutional community.

Finally, Thomas Elliot, Jennifer Earl, and Thomas V. Maher encourage us in the chapter "Recruiting Inclusiveness: Intersectionality, Social Movements, and Youth Online" to look at how communities of activists reach beyond their inner circles and reach out to potential activists. That each individual carries with her a constellation of collective identities, each relevant not only to her perception of self but to how she is perceived by others, with varying degrees of salience (perhaps shifting over time) to her and her community, is surely relevant to mobilization efforts. Elliot, Earl, and Maher ask whether organizations identify and engage intersectionality

in their outreach efforts, looking specifically at webpages targeting a young audience. The authors find that, "[d]espite increased theoretical and substantive attention to intersectionality, … most online youth-oriented activist spaces and SMO-affiliated sites do not include discussions of intersectional identities, indicating that there is considerable room for movements to expand their approach to recruitment to be more inclusive" (p. 303).

As is made clear by this collection of studies, complex relationships between the state, non-state allies, and non-state opposition voices create and recreate socio-political environments. Opportunities for organized dissent as well as for maintaining dominance are inexorably linked to the strategies employed by a range of groups, as well as on their respective successes and failures. Non-state actors may be violent or nonviolent, regressive or progressive, and defend or challenge the status quo; but their emergence and activism alter the political environment in which other actors similarly emerge, act, thrive, or dissolve. Their respective activities define (and redefine) opportunity structures for other actors – state and non-state, violent and nonviolent alike.

In closing, I wish to extend my appreciation to several people. Patrick G. Coy, series editor of *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change*, gave me the opportunity to serve as guest editor and offered his support throughout the process. Many thanks are due to Lana Mobydeen, whose meticulous work, skill, and consistent professionalism were invaluable. The reviewers who contributed their time, expertise, and insights to the contributions also deserve recognition and thanks. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for the contributors who dedicated countless hours to their excellent research and developed the scholarship that culminated in this volume.

Julie M. Mazzei
Editor

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