PEACEWORKS

Promoting Peace and Democracy after Nonviolent Action Campaigns

By Jonathan Pinckney

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ABOUT THE REPORT

This report examines the dynamics of civic mobilization in political transitions initiated through major nonviolent action campaigns, with a particular focus on forms of mobilization that promote democracy and prevent breakdowns into violence. It is based on data in the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset on 72 political transitions that occurred between 1945 and 2019. The research was supported by an interagency agreement between the United States Institute of Peace and USAID's Center for Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Cover photo: Protesters celebrate in Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo on February 12, 2011, the day after the announced resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, who had led the country for 30 years. (Photo by Emilio Morenatti/AP)

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Summary

Nonviolent action has been a potent force in initiating peaceful transitions away from authoritarian regimes and promoting democratization. Yet the initial breakthrough of a nonviolent action campaign is no guarantee of a future peaceful democracy. Political transitions following nonviolent action campaigns are fraught with challenges, particularly related to the need to continue civic mobilization to shape a transition's trajectory and hold new elites accountable. Research to date has provided little systematic information on how civic mobilization evolves during these periods of political transition, or on how patterns of mobilization affect the possibility of democracy and the potential for transitional violence. This report describes and presents findings from one of the first data collection efforts aimed at filling this gap: the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset. The dataset contains detailed information on roughly 1,600 mobilization events in 72 political transitions that took place between 1945 and 2019.

Analysis of these data help answer three key questions: first, what are the general patterns and trends of mobilization in transitions following nonviolent action campaigns? Second, which forms of mobilization impact the likelihood of democracy? Third, which forms of mobilization tend to lead to violence? The report finds that mobilization by workers during a transition has positive effects on the likelihood of post-transition democracy, and that events that involve violence or that have narrow, factionalizing goals have negative effects on post-transition democracy. Confrontational public tactics like marches, protests, and sit-ins are correlated with a risk of transitional violence, though much of this risk appears to be due to the increased probability of government repression.

The report concludes with recommendations for greater engagement with organized labor, and, when possible, security sector reform to reduce the likelihood of government repression. Training activists in nonviolent discipline may also be a fruitful avenue for reducing the likelihood of transitional violence.

A demonstrator holds a portrait of President Hosni Mubarak in Tahrir Square in central Cairo on February 1, 2011. Mubarak would resign his office just ten days later. (Photo by Ben Curtis/AP)

Dynamics of Transitional Mobilization

In February 2011, the people of Egypt celebrated the ouster of longtime authoritarian president Hosni Mubarak. While Mubarak's removal had included some incidents of violence, primarily violent repression by the government, this transformational change was accomplished primarily by using the tools of nonviolent action. The largest and most prominent of these was the massive nonviolent occupation of Cairo's Tahrir Square, but protesters in Tahrir were supported by a variety of other nonviolent tactics, including a wave of labor strikes.[1] Both in Egypt and worldwide, the event was hailed as a shining example of ordinary people peacefully ending oppression without resorting to violence, and there was optimism for the future.

The findings of a growing scholarly literature support that optimistic picture.[2] When a transition is initiated through nonviolent action, it is nearly three times more likely to end in democracy than a transition initiated through other means.[3] Not only are such transitions more likely to end as democracies, they are also more likely to achieve high levels of democratic quality and to remain robust to challenges to democracy.[4] Like the many other countries whose transitions were primarily brought about through nonviolent uprisings, Egypt was primed for democracy.

Yet the political transition that followed showed that initiating a transition through nonviolent action is no guarantee of a peaceful, smooth path to democracy.

The two years after Mubarak's fall were characterized by intense power struggles, enduring authoritarian legacies, and breakdowns into violence. The transition concluded in tragedy with a military coup, the massacre of hundreds of protesters, and the return of Egypt to an authoritarian regime that was in some ways even more brutal than the one that preceded it.[5] While nonviolent action makes peace and democracy more likely, it does not make them inevitable.

How can countries navigate this uncertain road in transitions away from dictatorship? Why do some transitions that begin with the democratizing advantages of nonviolent action fail to realize that advantage? Answering these questions is all the more important in light of recent global trends in democracy. As institutions such as Freedom House or the Varieties of Democracy Project have long recognized, democratic governance is in crisis.[6] The last several years have been marked by democratic backsliding, much of it through the gradual breakdown of democracy in previously well-established democratic regimes.[7] Yet another major factor is the failure of many recent political transitions to result in new democracies.

Scholars and practitioners have long debated the factors that lead to democratization.[8] One of the key factors that has a particular impact on transitions initiated through nonviolent action is the pattern of civic mobilization that takes place during the transition period.[9] Do activists and civil society continue to protest, strike, and advocate for change? Do political forces previously united around removing a dictator fragment over competing interests? Is there a turn to transitional violence? These patterns, along with many other factors, critically shape a transition's trajectory.

This report examines the dynamics of transitional mobilization through an in-depth analysis of data from the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset. This novel data collection project maps patterns of civic mobilization in 72 political transitions initiated through nonviolent action from 1945 to 2019. It first allows us to identify the basic trends of when, where, and why such mobilization happens, who tends to mobilize, and how they mobilize. The dataset then sheds light on key aspects of the uncertain road from nonviolent action at the beginning of a transition to a new political system, democratic or authoritarian, at its end.

The analysis provides answers to three key questions. First, what are the patterns of mobilization in civil resistance transitions? Summary statistics on various aspects of the data, including the timing of mobilization and identity of actors who typically mobilize, map the previously unknown terrain of mobilization in civil resistance transitions. The answers to this first question set up analysis on a second key question: what kind of mobilization, in terms of tactics or actors, tends to most effectively carry transitions to a democratic outcome? The third and final question is on transitional violence: under what circumstances do transitions that have been initiated through nonviolent action see outbreaks of violence, and in particular does violence tend to emerge from government repression or from nongovernmental action?

Nonviolent action has been a driving force for many of the most consequential political transformations of the last several decades. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this trend was the wave of movements across Eastern Europe in the 1980s and early 1990s that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of authoritarian Communist regimes in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, and the breakup and ultimate dissolution of the Soviet Union.[10] Yet other examples abound. In sub-Saharan Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, nonviolent action played a key role in anti-colonial movements; many leaders of such movements were directly inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's earlier struggle against the British.[11] More recently, nonviolent action was a key part of both the so-called color revolutions of the early 2000s and the ouster of Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir in 2019.

Members of the African National Congress give a "thumbs up" during a demonstration in South Africa on March 29, 1961. The slogan painted on the wall refers to Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd, one of the architects of Apartheid. (Photo by AP)

As these examples illustrate, nonviolent action has a remarkable power to achieve change, even in difficult circumstances. A well-known study by political scientists Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan finds that nonviolent action campaigns seeking to significantly change political systems have succeeded roughly half the time, making them more than twice as successful as violent insurgencies.[12]

Nonviolent action campaigns that achieve such major transformations typically do so because they have mobilized large numbers of participants, often in short, concentrated campaigns.[13] A relatively small percentage of a country's total population tends to visibly participate in nonviolent action.[14] Yet many more participate in quieter, supporting roles, and the experience of simply observing friends or loved ones putting themselves at risk for the sake of achieving a major political change has long-term consequences even for those who do not actively participate in nonviolent action themselves.[15]

When movements seeking significant changes in a political system succeed, they almost by definition initiate a period of *political transition*. These are periods in which the old rules of the political game have broken down, but new rules have not yet been established or have not been in place long enough for people to be confident in their stability.[16] A moment of breakthrough is only the first step leading to a new political order. Old grievances often require resolution, for instance through transitional justice processes, and new political norms and rules must be established, for instance through national dialogues or constituent assemblies.

One important characteristic of transitions is their patterns of civic mobilization. Public pressure during a

Mobilization around the 1974 Carnation Revolution distributed the skills and resources for collective action broadly throughout Portuguese society. An empowered civil society then used these skills and resources to continue to advocate for more democratic and inclusive politics in the years that followed.

transition—whether through the more well-known tactics of nonviolent action like protests, strikes, and boycotts, or through more formal civil society engagement—can shape the incentives of new powerholders, pushing them toward establishing a more democratic system. For instance, sustained activism by organized labor during the constitution-writing process in Brazil's transition in the 1980s helped ensure a legal and political system with robust protections for workers, including a constitutionally protected right to strike.[17] The level of such mobilization appears to be a crucial factor in whether movements will lead to democracy. Past research shows that high levels of mobilization during a transition are a robust predictor of democracy at transition's end.[18]

Much civic mobilization during transitions builds on the tactical repertoires, organizational networks, and mobilizing frames of the nonviolent action campaign that preceded them. What distinguishes this civic mobilization is context. The conditions of a political transition make both the dynamics of mobilization and its consequences different from mobilization before a transition.[19] Initiating a transition and seeing it through to a positive conclusion are very different tasks. Movements that initiate a transition typically face a singular opponent and a simple demand: change. This facilitates the emergence of broad "negative coalitions" united by little more than their opposition to the current people in power. Once a transition has been initiated, these coalitions often fragment as political or sectoral interests diverge.[20] In 2006, for example, the Second People's Movement in Nepal united mainstream political parties, human rights organizations, ethnic organizations, and Maoist rebels in a single unified campaign to oust Nepal's King Gyanendra. Yet the shared vision of a "New Nepal" that unified these disparate political forces quickly dissolved into political infighting once the king had been removed.[21]

Patterns of mobilization during transitions initiated through nonviolent action vary widely. In some cases, the widespread civic engagement and public activism entailed by a major nonviolent action campaign lead to continued nonviolent action and political mobilization during the transition. For example, in Portugal, the mobilization around the 1974 Carnation Revolution distributed the skills and resources for collective action broadly throughout Portuguese society. An empowered civil society then used these skills and resources to continue to advocate for more democratic and inclusive politics in the years that followed. The result was a country with a robust organizational life, peaceful and active civic culture, and resilient democracy enduring decades after the transition ended.[22] Yet many other cases do not follow the Portuguese pattern. Some nonviolent action campaigns are simply "moments of madness" that quickly fade from popular consciousness when their peak times are over and people return to their normal lives.[23]

Movements that succeed in bringing about a political transition may also face challenges as former leaders enter positions of power. Comfortable in their new positions of power, former movement leaders may seek to prevent any future mobilization from occurring rather than using the tools of nonviolent action for continued accountability. Zambian social movement and labor leader Frederick Chiluba, for example, espoused strong civic and democratic attitudes when in opposition but quickly moved into suppressing opposition once in power.[24]

Understanding how civic mobilization during transitions affects democracy is further complicated because not all mobilization has the same democratizing effect. In some cases, what begins as nonviolent action intended to expand democracy and bring about

a more just political order moves into narrow, partisan struggles for power that shade into unarmed or even armed violence. In Thailand, for example, a 2005–06 movement led to the ouster of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and the beginning of a multiyear political transition. The transition was characterized by high levels of civic mobilization. Yet this mobilization, far from promoting a long-term sustainable democracy, directly undermined it. The country was polarized into two warring camps that used the tools of nonviolent action to prevent the consolidation of new democratic institutions. The result was an ever-increasing heightening of political tension, culminating in a 2014 military coup that ended the back-and-forth struggle and initiated an authoritarian regime.

Despite the importance of mobilization for democratization, the reasons why mobilization continues in some cases but not in others are not fully understood. This is in part because little research has looked at a broad, global population of transitions initiated through nonviolent action to identify their general trends. Without understanding that landscape, insights are limited to particular cases, whose patterns may or may not apply more broadly.

So, nonviolent action on average has a positive democratizing effect. This democratizing effect is most likely to occur when civic mobilization continues after a major nonviolent campaign is over, shaping the actions of political actors and elites during transitions to pressure them toward democratizing change. Yet the details of what this mobilization looks like, what forms of mobilization promote democracy, and when mobilization tends to break down into violence are poorly understood because of a lack of systematic, cross-national analysis of the patterns of civic mobilization that take place in the aftermath of major nonviolent action campaigns.

Protesters rally in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on May 27, 2006. They were among thousands who gathered in the capital calling on the government to undertake constitutional reforms and fight crime and corruption. (Photo by Dean C. K. Cox/New York Times)

Analysis of Data on Civic Mobilization during Political Transitions

To better understand the impacts of transitional mobilization, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) commissioned the collection of data on instances of civic mobilization during transitions initiated through nonviolent action. The goal of the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset is to map the dynamics of mobilization over time—from the moment at the end of a nonviolent action campaign, through the uncertainty of a transition, to the point at which a new political regime (democratic, authoritarian, or otherwise) comes to power.

The data include hundreds of mobilization events, such as protests, strikes, civic initiatives, and even riots and violent clashes, that took place during 72 transitions initiated by nonviolent action between 1945 and 2019. The list was drawn from a comprehensive list of transitions initiated through nonviolent action included in the book *From Dissent to Democracy*.[25] This set of transitions includes only "successful" nonviolent action campaigns—that is to say, nonviolent campaigns that succeeded in initiating a political transition. The patterns in the data thus do not apply to cases where

nonviolent action failed to achieve at least an initial breakthrough and effect a political transition. An initial breakthrough is not enough to guarantee a democratic outcome, however: of the 72 transitions, only 37 ended as (at least) electoral democracies, and five ended as full, closed autocracies.[26]

A research team from the Foundation for Inclusion collected the data. The team's first task was to identify periods of transition, and thus to distinguish nonviolent action as a force initiating a transition from mobilization during the transition period. As defined above, political transitions are periods when old political regimes have broken down and new ones have not been established. Transitions in this dataset all begin when a nonviolent action campaign leads to a critical breakdown in the existing political regime, typically by pressuring a leader or leaders of an autocratic regime to leave power. For instance, the transition following Kyrgyzstan's 2005 Tulip Revolution began on April 4, 2005, when President Askar Akayev resigned from the presidency.

Identifying the start of a transition does not imply that all mobilization as part of the nonviolent action campaign initiating the transition came to an end. Indeed, whether or not mobilization continues, what forms it takes, and which actors participate in it are key issues to examine with this data. Identifying the start of a transition simply indicates that nonviolent action at this moment faces a new set of conditions and contextual challenges. For example, in Egypt after the 2011 revolution ousted President Hosni Mubarak, many activists continued their occupation of Tahrir Square, arguing that the revolution was incomplete as long as the military remained in control of the government. Thus, there was direct continuity in tactics between the pre-transition and transition period. But the activists continuing the sit-in faced the new challenge of convincing the broader population that Mubarak's resignation was not enough to bring about change, and of keeping their broad coalition together in the face of a transformed political environment.

In most cases, identifying the start dates of transitions was straightforward. Identifying when a transition ended was more complex. While the ideal type of political transition might have formal beginning and end dates, a plan for how it will move into a permanent new political structure, and a concluding election and transfer of power, most transitions fail to follow this ideal structure. The research team combined several sources to identify when transitions ended, including the Autocratic Regimes Data Set compiled by Barbara Geddes and colleagues and the Varieties of Democracy dataset.[27] Much more detail on this process, and the full set of coding decisions, is available in the CM-CRT codebook.[28]

Once the research team had identified transition start and end dates, they identified instances of civic mobilization during the transition period. They did so by examining a wide range of scholarly and media sources, as well as preexisting events datasets. The team then did original desk research to code dozens of attributes of those events, including the primary actor that organized it, the specific tactics used, the primary target of the action, whether it aimed to increase or decrease political inclusion, and several others.[29]

Much of the data collection was exploratory, intended to broadly map the general trends of mobilization, since there are few generally accepted relationships to test. However, a few key hypotheses from previous research informed some aspects of the data collection. One example is the insight that mobilization that broke down into violence would likely undermine democracy; with this in mind, researchers paid careful attention to the level of violence and coercion in the specific tactics used, as well as to patterns of violent government repression (since such repression tends to spark violence by those repressed).[30]

Researchers collected the data at the level of the mobilization event, a particular distinct instance of political action taking place during a political transition. Examples include a protest march calling for new elections that

takes place over an afternoon, or a sit-in calling for more representation in a constituent assembly that goes on for a month. Most events, like the protest example, take place during a single day, but a small number continue for days or weeks, like the sit-in example. Collecting data on individual events not only allows for analysis of the events themselves; by summarizing the characteristics of the events that are part of the same transition, it also allows for analysis of transitions as a whole. For instance, the analysis below examines what kinds of events tend to correlate with higher levels of democracy and the characteristics of a transition that tend to lead to a higher likelihood of outbreaks of violence in an individual event.

Before describing insights from the data, it is important to add a few points about its limitations. First, since the data are based on media and scholarly reports, they are subject to the observational biases of the journalists and scholars who originally wrote the reports. This is a particular challenge for understanding nonviolent action, as historically both journalists and scholars have downplayed the importance of nonviolence as a force for political change and focused heavily on incidents of violence.[31] Whether a protest, strike, or other movement tactic is considered peaceful or violent is also unfortunately too often bound up in the identity of the participants of the movement and the biases of the observer.[32]

Second, and more fundamentally, the data are observational, based on carefully researching and coding the patterns of events that occurred in historical cases. This means that, as with all research lacking the rigor of a randomized scientific experiment, one can observe correlations between different factors and outcomes of interest, but it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions about whether any one of these factors causes the outcomes. Social and political systems are complex, and any one event or pattern of events inevitably has multiple causes. Some of these are rooted in general trends that apply to many different cases. Others are specific to the event, based on contingent or random characteristics of its time and place. Analyzing data from the real world will never provide the same clean, definitive causal conclusions that can be drawn from scientific experiments in the laboratory. For the questions examined in this report, these limitations are inescapable. Conducting a global democratization experiment would be impossible, and deeply unethical even if possible.

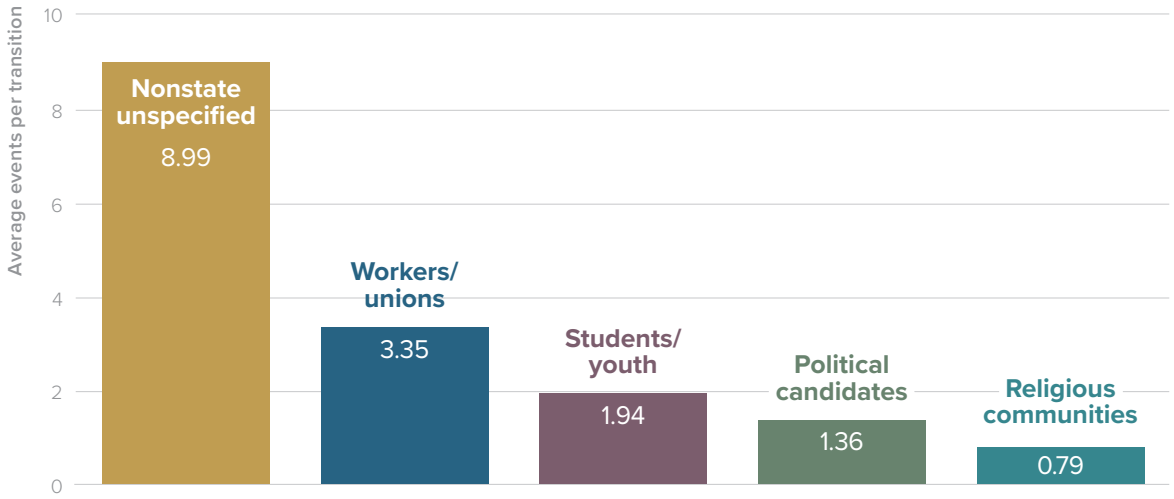
The following analysis attempts to address these limitations by drawing on multiple lines of evidence and performing statistical analysis that controls for the most plausible and commonly argued alternative explanations for democracy and the outbreak of violence. These steps can give greater confidence that the patterns observed in the data reflect genuine causes and effects, but the conclusions drawn from the data will always involve some degree of uncertainty.

PATTERNS OF TRANSITIONAL MOBILIZATION

By mapping the dynamics of typical patterns after the end of nonviolent action campaigns, the CM-CRT data can provide insights into the basic "who, what, when, where, and why" of transitional mobilization. Insights for each of these five areas are described below. These insights in turn provide important context for the subsequent analysis of the types of mobilization that promote democracy and the common causes of outbreaks of violence.

The frequency and intensity of mobilization vary significantly across the transitions included in the data. While some transitions see large numbers of events throughout, many others have few or even no events once the transition begins. The transition with the largest number of events is the 2011–13 transition in Egypt (305 events). Five transitions have no recorded events. The average number of events per transition is roughly 22. Some of this variation doubtless reflects differences in international media attention. It is more difficult to observe mobilization in transitions with less global attention. However, the variation appears to significantly exceed even what can be explained through media bias. The challenge of mobilization is real, and civic actors in different transitions have differing degrees of success in addressing it.

Figure 1: Groups most commonly engaged in transitional mobilization
For most transitional mobilization events it is difficult to identify the specific organizing group. Workers, students, political candidates, and religious communities are the most common identifiable mobilizers.



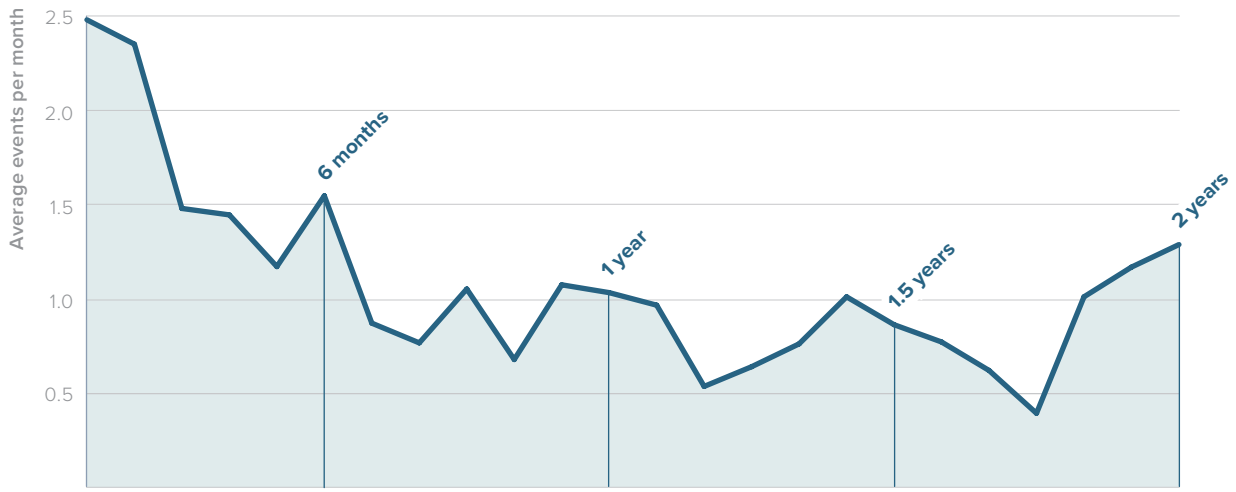
Note: Analysis by the author, based on the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset, www.usip.org/programs/civic-mobilization-civil-resistance-transitions-dataset.

Who organizes mobilization during transitions after nonviolent action? What social groups tend to dominate the mobilizational space? Figure 1 shows the five most common groups and the average number of events organized by each.[33] The most common group among organizers of mobilization events is unidentified nonstate actors. This is a broad catch-all category for all events where the identity of the organizing group was unclear. For instance, if a media source reported only that a protest was organized by "citizens" or "protesters," then it would fall into this category. The most common identifiable groups are workers and students. Political candidates are also frequent mobilizers—unsurprising considering that organizing and competing in elections are often central aspects of many transition processes. Religious groups also organize frequently during transitions, though their involvement varies significantly across cases. Missing from this list of frequent mobilizers are formal political oppositions, who only occasionally organize events.

What types of actions tend to take place, and how frequently do they occur?[34] The data show that public protests are the most common tactic, with nine protests on average per transition, or roughly twice as many occurrences as any other tactic. Strikes and nonviolent interventions such as sit-ins—that is, tactics that involve some degree of direct physical interposition—are the next most common identifiable categories. Violent combat—defined as events in which two groups of people physically harm one another—is also relatively common, with more than three violent events per transition on average. This concerning trend is addressed in more detail below.

Mass nonviolent action campaigns are often initiated by diffuse, nonhierarchical groups and can come about relatively spontaneously. Organized groups tend to appear on the scene later, responding to mobilization rather than initiating it.[35] Does this pattern continue in transitions? Getting detailed data on the spontaneity of mobilization events and organizational structure of the groups that initiated them was difficult. For roughly half the events, there was insufficient information to determine these event characteristics. Yet for the events where information was available, transitional mobilization appeared to be carefully planned in most cases, and mainly carried out by unitary actors with recognized sources of leadership or authority. Examples include the

Figure 2: Trend in monthly events in transitions after nonviolent action campaigns
Mobilization in most transitions peaks at the beginning of the transition and steeply declines thereafter.



Note: Analysis by the author, based on the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset, www.usip.org/programs/civic-mobilization-civil-resistance-transitions-dataset.

Congress of South African Trade Unions, which organized several events during the South African transition in the 1990s, or the Dominican Students Federation, which organized demonstrations during the Dominican Republic's transition in the 1960s.[36]

These patterns indicate that when mobilization continues through a transition, it is typically not the major, overwhelming mass action of the campaign leading up to the transition, but the more sustained, workaday action of organized contentious groups. This pattern points to the importance of directing the energy of a mass nonviolent action campaign into organized channels if mobilization is to continue to be a force for accountability through the transition period.

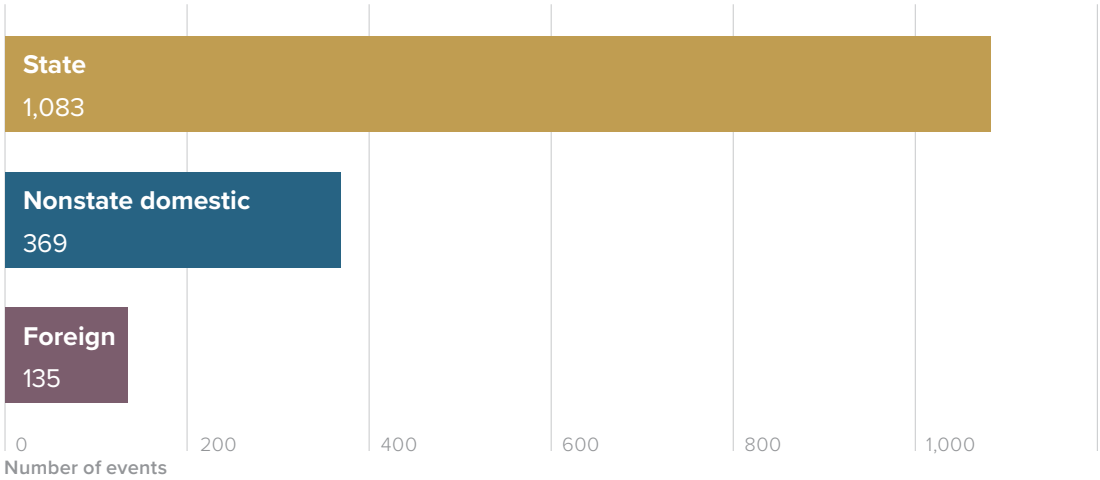
When does mobilization occur? Most transitions following successful nonviolent action campaigns last around two years (55 out of 72), though the longest transition in the data, Haiti's transition following the flight of Jean-Claude Duvalier in 1986, lasted for nearly 10. While there is significant variation across cases, mobilization tends to peak at the beginning of the transition period, with 2.5 events on average in the first month of the transition and a steady decline thereafter, as shown in figure 2. Much of the transitional mobilization may thus be building on the momentum of the nonviolent action campaign that initiated the transition.[37]

Where does mobilization take place? Most events in the dataset were limited to a particular city or location within that city. Only 20 percent of events in the dataset took place in more than one city. Of the 80 percent of events limited to a single city, the large majority took place in capital cities.[38]

Why does mobilization occur? The reasons for mobilization across transitions are diverse and defy easy categorization. However, the data allow us to draw some general conclusions about which groups are most commonly targeted by civic mobilization during transitions, and whether that mobilization aims at expanding or contracting the democratic "winning coalition." Figure 3 splits the data based on whether the target of the mobilization event was a state actor, a nonstate domestic actor, or a foreign actor.[39] The overwhelming majority of events target the state, though a large number also target foreign actors.

Figure 3: Targets of transitional mobilization

Most transitional mobilization events target the state, attempting to change government policies or personnel. Relatively few events target foreign actors.



Note: Analysis by the author, based on the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset, www.usip.org/programs/civic-mobilization-civil-resistance-transitions-dataset.

Concerningly, more mobilization events sought to contract the democratic winning coalition than sought to expand it.[40] However, due to the difficulty of identifying event goals, it was not possible to collect data on this subject for many of the events (roughly 1,200 out of 1,600 events). If the whole distribution of the data were known, the pattern might be significantly different. However, even if all the events for which this variable is missing did not have antidemocratic goals, that still means that just over 10 percent of the total events aimed explicitly at rolling back democratic gains or otherwise limiting inclusion in the state power. For instance, Sudan's 2021 coup was in part prompted by sit-ins by pro-military demonstrators demanding that the military assume power.[41] Clearly such mobilization would be unlikely to encourage democracy.

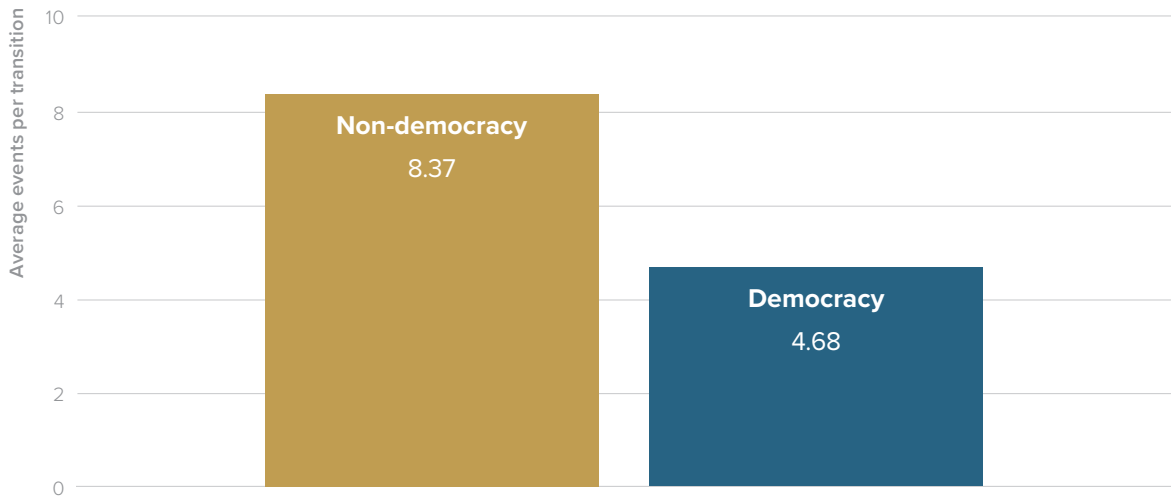
IMPACT OF MOBILIZATION TYPES ON DEMOCRATIZATION

With the information on the patterns of mobilization in civil resistance transitions described above, the analysis can turn to the second key question the data are intended to address: what types of mobilization impact the likelihood and level of democracy at the end of the political transition? This analysis uses both a continuous measure of democracy, the "polyarchy" score from the Varieties of Democracy Project, and the "regimes of the world" data, also from Varieties of Democracy.[42] This approach allows analysis of what forms of mobilization tend to increase the likelihood of achieving at least a minimal level of democracy, and of what forms tend to promote increases in democratic quality.

More is not necessarily better when it comes to transitional mobilization and democracy. By itself, the raw number of mobilization events taking place during a transition appears to have little relationship with future levels of democracy. A statistical model that controls for a few of the most relevant factors shows no significant relationship between the total number of events of civic mobilization and democracy after the end of a political transition.[43] This result reinforces findings from earlier research that mobilization on its own can have both negative and positive effects on future democracy. It thus necessitates a more fine-grained look at the types of mobilization that take place during transitions after nonviolent action campaigns.[44]

Figure 4: Maximalist events and end-of-transition regime type

Maximalist mobilization, which is characterized by violence and narrow factional political goals, significantly reduces the chances for democracy.



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As described in the previous section, most mobilization during transitions after nonviolent action is peaceful and aims toward expanding the scope of political competition. However, some transitions see significant numbers of violent events, or events where organizers seek to reduce political competition or seize control of the political system for their particular political faction. For example, the data include protests during Nepal's 1990 transition attempting to prevent the formation of a monarchist political party, and the occupation of a television station by supporters of Burkinabe opposition leader Saran Sérémé in an attempt to unilaterally declare her interim president. Events with either of these characteristics (violence or goals that narrow the scope of political competition) are typically described in the literature as "maximalist," and prior research indicates that high levels of maximalism during transitions have a major negative impact on democratization.[45]

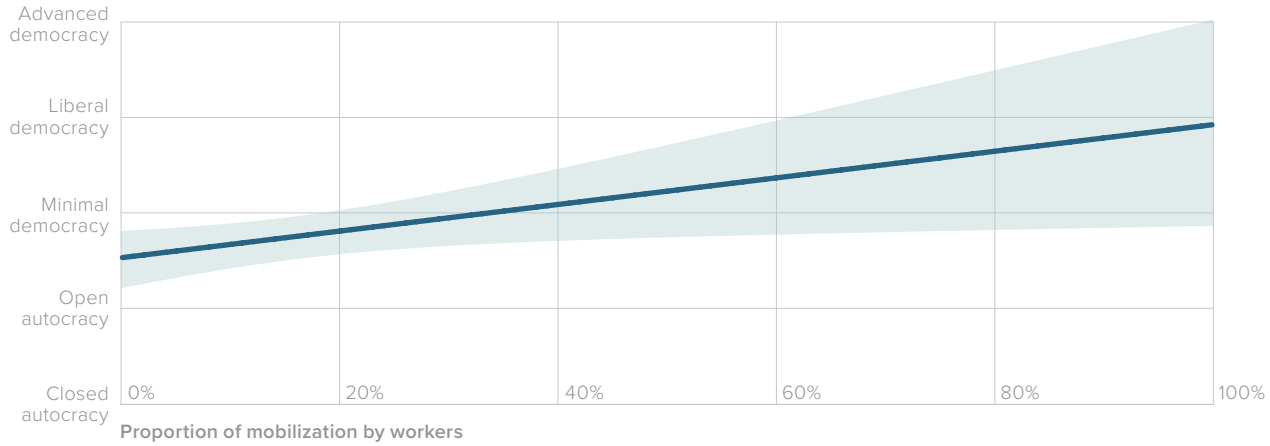
Importantly, in many of these cases the organizers of the events do not describe their actions as antidemocratic per se. They may even claim that violence or reductions in political competition are necessary to protect a democratic transition. Such claims are common and often characterize both campaigns leading up to transitions and civic mobilization and contention during transition periods. A refusal to negotiate may be a necessary step during some campaigns' struggles to bring about change. The same may be true of a demand that particular political factions (such as the ruling political party of an authoritarian regime) be excluded from the political system. The question here is how such demands, particularly when wedded with political violence, affect the political system during the distinct phase of a political transition.

The data support prior research suggesting a major negative impact on democracy from maximalism. Maximalist events are much more common in transitions that end in authoritarian regimes. As figure 4 shows, they are nearly twice as common on average in such regimes compared to those that end in democracy.

Statistical modeling confirms the negative correlation between maximalism and democratization. Controlling for the most common relevant factors, maximalist events significantly reduce both the likelihood and quality of post-transition democracy.[46] It is also important that once maximalist events are removed from the sample, the number of mobilization events during a

Figure 5: Effect of mobilization by workers on post-transition democracy

Mobilization during transitions by organized labor has a strong, statistically significant positive effect on future levels of democracy.



Note: Analysis by the author, based on the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset, www.usip.org/programs/civic-mobilization-civil-resistance-transitions-dataset. The black line in the figure shows predicted polyarchy scores from a linear regression model with control variables held at the mean. The gray band is a 95 percent confidence interval. The descriptive vertical axis labels are at polyarchy scores ranging from 0.2 to 1, and are provided for ease of interpretation.

transition becomes a statistically significant predictor of higher quality of democracy, though not of the probability of reaching at least a minimal level of democracy. In other words, civic mobilization during a transition appears to be a democratizing force, as shown in prior research, as long as it avoids factionalizing goals or violent tactics.

Whose mobilization has the strongest impact on democratic progress? As mentioned previously, many different groups engage in mobilization during transitions, as the opening of the political space frequently provides an opportunity for numerous grievances that have previously been suppressed to rise to the fore.[47] The most common of these groups are workers and youth. Prior research has indicated that the participation of labor unions and religious groups in nonviolent action has particularly strong democratizing effects.[48] The argument is that such organizations bring sustainable mobilization infrastructures to nonviolent action that can then continue to be called upon during transitions to hold new leaders accountable. Thus, mobilization by such actors during transitions might be expected to have democratizing effects.

The results in the data are mixed. Mobilization by workers appears to have a moderate positive effect on post-transition democracy.[49] As the proportion of events in a transition organized by workers and unions increases, the post-transition level of democracy similarly increases. Figure 5 shows this effect. When there is little or no mobilization by workers, even relatively favorable conditions lead to only minimal levels of democracy. When a large proportion of transitional mobilization is by workers, the transition tends to end in higher-quality liberal democracies.

However, mobilization by religious actors has the opposite effect, negatively impacting the level of democracy at the end of a transition. Why might this be the case? While workers only rarely engage in maximalist events (such events make up 6.5 percent of events carried out by workers), religious actors tend to do so more frequently; nearly half of their events (43.8 percent) either involve violence or aim to limit the democratic coalition. Thus, the conclusion is not that mobilization by religious actors is bad per se for post-transition democracy, but that religious actors appear much more prone to the kinds of maximalist mobilization that in turn have a negative effect on democracy.

Table 1: Violent events by actor in transitional mobilization data

Group type	Total number of violent events	Proportion of violent events
Nonstate armed actors	22	75.9%
Military	14	38.9%
Police	12	38.7%
Religious communities	19	29.7%
Students or youth	33	20.6%
Nonstate unspecified	153	20.1%
Political factions or candidates	22	19.0%
Workers or unions	14	5.1%

Note: Tabulation by the author, based on the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset, www.usip.org/programs/civic-mobilization-civil-resistance-transitions-dataset. The variable underlying these data is a six-level categorical variable providing a top-level categorization of an event ("communicate," "demonstrate," "contribute," "exchange," "coerce," and "force.") All the specific actions included in the "force" category involve some degree of physical violence. The columns show the count of how many events by that actor fell into the "force" category, as well as what proportion of the actor's total events were "force" events. Group types with fewer than 10 instances of violence have been excluded.

THE ORIGINS OF TRANSITIONAL VIOLENCE

The third major area of examination for the CM-CRT dataset is the origins of transitional violence. As shown in the discussion of maximalism in the previous section and confirmed in prior research, violence during the transition is one of the key factors that undermines progress toward democracy. When transitional mobilization breaks down into violent clashes, the rise of a new authoritarian regime becomes more likely. As scholars of nonviolent action have long argued, violence tends to undermine the broad, diverse support necessary for movements to achieve positive change.[50] One powerful example comes from the 2011–13 transition in Egypt, where rigorous evidence indicates that as protests became increasingly violent and disruptive, they undermined support for democracy.[51] The data make it possible to examine the origins of transitional violence and identify the actors who most frequently engage in violence, the types of events that tend to precipitate breakdowns of nonviolent action into violence, and the relationship between government repression and violence in the streets.

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The actors who most commonly engage in violence show several expected relationships, and a few surprises. Table 1 summarizes these insights, showing for all actor categories with at least 10 violent events both the total number of violent events and the proportion of events that were violent. Unsurprisingly, nonstate armed actors are the group with the highest proportion of violent events, followed by the military and police. The group with by far the largest absolute number of violent events is unspecified nonstate actors, but this result appears to stem from the fact that these actors are well represented in the data. Roughly 20 percent of events by unspecified nonstate actors are violent. More concerning is the association of religious actors and students or youth with violent events.

Also concerning are the tactics that most significantly predict outbreaks in violence. To identify patterns of events that tend to lead to violence, the research team ran a statistical model of the likelihood of a violent event in one month based on the number of events in each tactic category in the previous month.[52] Most tactic categories have no predicted effect on the likelihood of a violent event. For instance, a boycott or strike in one month has no effect on the likelihood of a violent event in the next month. However, three tactics that are at the core of nonviolent action—marches, demonstrations, and sit-ins—all have statistically significant effects on increasing the likelihood of violence in the following month. When no protests take place in a transition month, the likelihood of violence in the following month is roughly 6 percent. Adding just a single public demonstration raises the predicted likelihood of a violent event to nearly 11 percent.

This finding presents a significant challenge for interpretation, particularly when seeking to draw practical conclusions for activists and practitioners. Maintaining mobilization during transitions is crucial for promoting democratization. Violence during transitions undermines democratization. Yet some of the most common and widely understood tactics for maintaining mobilization also appear to put transitions at risk of breaking down into violence.

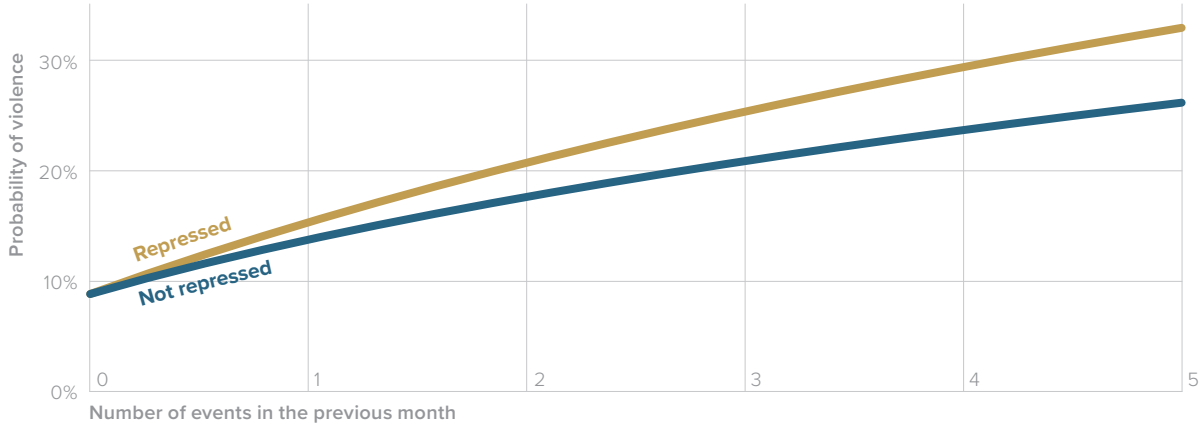
It is important to emphasize again that these data are correlational. Seeing a pattern of correlation does not necessarily imply a causal connection. It would be inaccurate to argue based on these data that marches, demonstrations, and sit-ins cause violence to occur. It would be a great misuse of the data to in turn argue that activists should eschew such tactics under any circumstances because they are likely to lead to violence. Nevertheless, the consistency of the correlation does call for deeper investigation.

Performing this deeper dive reveals one key factor that appears to be behind the association of these specific nonviolent tactics with outbreaks of violence: government repression. Concentrated, high-profile tactics like public protests and sit-ins are much more likely to be violently repressed by the government than more dispersed tactics like strikes and boycotts. Within the dataset, roughly a third of protests and sit-ins were subjected to government repression. Strikes and boycotts were repressed only around 18 percent of the time. As past research has shown, violent repression by the state is in turn likely to lead to future violence.[53]

Including repression in the statistical modeling of violence shows its pernicious impact. The model shown in figure 6 splits the number of protests, demonstrations, and sit-ins per month between those that were repressed and those that were not, and then uses those numbers to predict an outbreak of violence in the following month.[54] While both repressed and

Figure 6: Effects of repressed and non-repressed events on future violence

Concentrated, confrontational public events even when peaceful may increase the risk of transitional violence, particularly when they are violently repressed by the government.



Note: Analysis by the author, based on the Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset, www.usip.org/programs/civic-mobilization-civil-resistance-transitions-dataset. The figure shows predicted probabilities from a logistic regression model of the binary violence indicator. For each line the alternate event category and the control variable for violence in the previous month are held at zero. Multiple confidence intervals are omitted for ease of visualization.

non-repressed events increase the probability of violence in the following month, repressed events do so to a greater degree.[55]

This pattern fits with what many activists and organizers have long recognized: concentrated public tactics come with significant risks of violent repression, since they provide opponents with a visible, easy target.[56] As the literature on policing of protests tells us, confrontational tactics are more likely to lead to both security force presence and violent repression.[57] Sometimes, the risk of violence is worth taking, since concentrated tactics can be powerful motivators for nonviolent action and symbolize a people's unified opposition to systems of oppression in ways that few other things can. But leaders of nonviolent action campaigns, both in a pre-transition context and in a transition context, must be prepared for and ready to respond to the increased risk of violence. In some cases this may mean shifting from concentrated tactics to more dispersed tactics with a lower risk of repression.[58] In others, it might mean pausing a campaign until a more favorable opportunity. Or in still others it might mean investing in activist training in how to remain peaceful even in the face of violent repression.[59]

Recommendations for Maintaining Mobilization

Promoting political systems that allow for the peaceful expression of grievances is a key part of any comprehensive peacebuilding program. Nonviolent action can be a powerful force to help societies emerge from authoritarianism into new political systems that allow for the peaceful expression of grievances. However, if nonviolent action is to serve as such a force, those who employ it must overcome the challenge of maintaining peaceful mobilization through the transition period in which key decisions about political systems are being made.

The data collected for this report shed light on the avenues through which that mobilization can be maintained by mapping the "who, what, when, where, and why" of transitional mobilization and providing some initial insights into the types of mobilization that impact post-transition democracy and patterns of transitional violence. Many transitions see significant drop-offs in mobilization, a trend that undermines accountability of transitional elites and provides space for democratic backsliding. Others see factionalized struggles for narrow control of the political system, or outbreaks of violence that radicalize the political system and often lead to disillusionment with the idea of democracy.

The challenge facing activists, leaders of transitional regimes, and external supporters interested in promoting peaceful transitions to democracy is to thread the needle of mobilization without violence. The data presented here highlight the difficulty of this challenge. The most common nonviolent tactics—protests and other forms of public demonstrations—are a critical avenue for keeping citizens engaged and keeping transitional governments accountable. Yet they also increase the risk of a polarizing breakdown into violence.

How can this needle be threaded? Organized labor appears to be one of the groups best able to accomplish this task. When workers and unions mobilize, transitions tend to have less violence and end with greater democracy. Efforts by workers and unions also provide the most consistency for continued mobilization through transitions initiated through nonviolent action. Given the role of mobilization in ensuring democracy, much of the democratizing effect of nonviolent action can likely be attributed to the powerful organizing efforts of unions, such as the UGTT (General Labor Union) in Tunisia or Solidarity in Poland.

Organized labor rarely simply springs into action during a transition. Mobilization by labor during a transition is often preceded by mobilization as part of a pre-transition campaign.[60] Engagement with organized labor is thus a key area for advancing nonviolent action and ensuring its democratizing effects. The role of labor in democratization certainly varies across contexts, and one-size-fits-all intervention strategies should be avoided.[61] There is a vast difference, for instance, between independent labor unions, which genuinely speak for their members' interests, and corporatist labor unions, which are fully incorporated into state structures and function primarily as avenues for state control.[62] Yet broadly speaking, early interventions that deepen the organized labor infrastructure prior to the beginning of a transition show promise as potential strategies for encouraging democratic transitions that are peaceful.

The patterns seen in the negative impact of violence on democratic progress and the origins of violence during transitions in government repression also have important implications for our understanding of nonviolent action and political change. Authoritarian regimes frequently invoke the specter of violent disorder as the reason needed for firm state control, particularly during times of transition or uncertainty. The data provide some evidence for a risk of violence emerging from transitional mobilization. Yet most frequently, the origins of violent disorder lie squarely with the state.

What can be done about this dynamic? Two areas offer significant potential for reducing violence and ensuring successful democratization. The first is the critical need for security sector reform. Political transitions are a time when many of the prior institutions of the state are open for such reform. Engagement with security forces, and specifically training them in policing norms for democratic, peaceful protests, could help reduce rates of repression and promote peaceful transitions. There is some evidence, for instance, that training by UN peacekeepers can help reduce violence and lead to more peaceful protests.[63] However, security sector reform is an area rife with many challenges. Changing deep-seated patterns that downplay nonviolent action or see it as threatening is a lengthy process that, in many cases, may not be an option during a transition.[64]

Likely avenues for preventing outbreaks of violence and ensuring a successful democratic transition include training activists in how to protect themselves from government repression and in how to maintain nonviolent discipline in the face of violent provocation. Many organizations, such as the international activist group Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies or the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, have sought to organize and support such trainings. There is a growing evidence base that such work can change attitudes about the efficacy of violence and the importance of nonviolent discipline.[65] According to research in progress by the United States Institute of Peace, training that combines a focus on nonviolent action with the tools of peacebuilding can be particularly efficacious in changing attitudes toward violence and reducing breakdowns to violence in transitions.[66]

Nonviolent action's power to bring about change—to ensure a world with greater social justice and positive peace—has been one of the most transformational forces in modern times. Yet the key lesson from this research is that, once the proud moments of breakthrough are over, the real work begins. Activists and international actors interested in promoting nonviolent action and supporting democracy must pay careful attention to the dynamics of transitions to ensure continued civic engagement and peaceful mobilization for long-term democratic change.

Notes

1. Christopher Barrie and Neil Ketchley, "Opportunity without Organization: Labor Mobilization in Egypt after the 25th January Revolution," *Mobilization* 23, no. 2 (2018): 181–202.
2. See, for example, Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Mauricio Rivera Celestino and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, "Fresh Carnations or All Thorn, No Rose? Nonviolent Campaigns and Transitions in Autocracies," *Journal of Peace Research* 50, no. 3 (2013): 385–400; and Adrian Karatnycky and Peter Ackerman, *How Freedom Is Won: From Civic Resistance to Durable Democracy* (Washington, DC: Freedom House, 2005).
3. Jonathan Pinckney, *From Dissent to Democracy: The Promise and Perils of Civil Resistance Transitions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).
4. Felix S. Bethke and Jonathan Pinckney, "Nonviolent Resistance and the Quality of Democracy," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 38, no. 5 (2021): 503–23; and Daniel Lambach et al., *Nonviolent Resistance and Democratic Consolidation* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).
5. Neil Ketchley, *Egypt in a Time of Revolution: Contentious Politics and the Arab Spring* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017); and Human Rights Watch, *All According to Plan: The Rab'a Massacre and Mass Killings of Protesters in Egypt* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2014), https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/egypt0814web_0.pdf.
6. See Freedom House's "Freedom in the World 2021: Democracy Under Siege," www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/FIW2021_World_02252021_FINAL-web-upload.pdf; and the V-Dem Institute's "Autocratization Turns Viral: Democracy Report 2021," www.v-dem.net/files/25/DR%202021.pdf.
7. Anna Lührmann and Staffan I. Lindberg, "A Third Wave of Autocratization Is Here: What Is New about It?," *Democratization* 26, no. 7 (2019): 1095–1113.
8. The democratization literature is vast. For influential reviews that capture many of the most important findings, see Barbara Geddes, "What Do We Know about Democratization after Twenty Years?," *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1 (1999): 115–44; Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, "Democratization during the Third Wave," *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (2016): 125–44; and Espen Geelmuyden Rød, Carl Henrik Knutsen, and Håvard Hegre, "The Determinants of Democracy: A Sensitivity Analysis," *Public Choice* 185, no. 1 (2020): 87–111.
9. Pinckney, *From Dissent to Democracy*.
10. For an excellent account of many of these movements, see Timothy Garton Ash, *The Magic Lantern: The Revolution of '89 Witnessed in Warsaw, Budapest, Berlin and Prague* (London: Atlantic Books, 2014).
11. Omar García-Ponce and Léonard Wantchékon, "Critical Junctures: Independence Movements and Democracy in Africa" (working paper, 2017), www.omargarciaponce.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/critical_junctures_may_2017.pdf.
12. Chenoweth and Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works*.
13. Erica Chenoweth and Margherita Belgioioso, "The Physics of Dissent and the Effects of Movement Momentum," *Nature Human Behaviour* 3, no. 10 (2019): 1088–95.
14. Erica Chenoweth, "The Future of Nonviolent Resistance," *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 3 (2020): 69–84.
15. Malte Klar and Tim Kasser, "Some Benefits of Being an Activist: Measuring Activism and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being," *Political Psychology* 30, no. 5 (2009): 755–77.
16. For a more detailed discussion of the definition and scope of political transitions as understood here, see Pinckney, *From Dissent to Democracy*, 16.
17. Javier Martínez-Lara, *Building Democracy in Brazil: The Politics of Constitutional Change, 1985–95* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996).
18. Pinckney, *From Dissent to Democracy*.
19. Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); and Pinckney, *From Dissent to Democracy*.
20. Mark R. Beissinger, "The Semblance of Democratic Revolution: Coalitions in Ukraine's Orange Revolution," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 3 (2013): 574–92.

21. Prashant Jha, *Battles of the New Republic: A Contemporary History of Nepal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
22. Tiago Fernandes, "Rethinking Pathways to Democracy: Civil Society in Portugal and Spain, 1960s–2000s," *Democratization* 22, no. 6 (2015): 1074–1104.
23. Sidney Tarrow, "Cycles of Collective Action: Between Moments of Madness and the Repertoire of Contention," *Social Science History* 17, no. 2 (1993): 281–307.
24. Jonathan Pinckney, "Close but Not Too Close: Opposition Network Strategy and Democratization in Zambia," *Social Movement Studies* (2021).
25. Pinckney, *From Dissent to Democracy*. The complete list included 83 transitions; 11 transitions were excluded because of insufficient time and resources for data collection before reaching deadlines as part of the interagency agreement funding this research. Because these data represent an incomplete census, any conclusions drawn from them must take this limitation into account. There do not appear to be systematic differences between the included and excluded cases. The excluded cases are scattered across regions and have similar levels of post-transition democracy. The missing transitions are Iran (1979–81), South Korea (1987–89), Albania (1991–92), Belarus (1991–97), Georgia (1991–95), Indonesia (1999–2000), Ukraine (2004–06), Nepal (2006–08), Pakistan (2008), Ukraine (2014), and Armenia (2018–19). Future iterations of the data may include the full set of transitions, but are not planned at this time.
26. Data on regime type are drawn from the "regimes of the world" variable in the Varieties of Democracy data (V-Dem Country-Year Dataset V11.1, Varieties of Democracy Project, 2021, https://doi.org/10.23696/vdemds21).
27. Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, "Autocratic Breakdown and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set," *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 2 (2014): 313–31; and V-Dem Country-Year Dataset V11.1.
28. See the "CM-CRT Codebook V 1.0" in the project's Harvard Dataverse online repository at https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/DBEIMF. For more on the Foundation for Inclusion, see the organization's website at www.foundationforinclusion.org.
29. Detailed descriptions of the full set of variables, including coding rules for each one, are available in the project codebook ("CM-CRT Codebook V 1.0," 21–63).
30. Will H. Moore, "Repression and Dissent: Substitution, Context, and Timing," *American Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 3 (1998): 851–73; and Jonathan Pinckney, *Making or Breaking Nonviolent Discipline* (Washington, DC: International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, 2016).
31. Joel Day, Jonathan Pinckney, and Erica Chenoweth, "Collecting Data on Nonviolent Action: Lessons Learned and Ways Forward," *Journal of Peace Research* 52, no. 1 (2015): 129–33.
32. Pearce Edwards and Daniel Arnon, "Violence on Many Sides: Framing Effects on Protest and Support for Repression," *British Journal of Political Science* 51 no. 2 (2021), 488–506; and Devorah Manekin and Tamar Mitts, "Effective for Whom? Ethnic Identity and Nonviolent Resistance," *American Political Science Review* 116, no. 1 (2021), 1–20.
33. The variable used to generate this table is a categorical measure of the primary group involved in organizing an event. The variable has 19 possible categories, including state, nonstate, and international actors. For a complete description of the coding rules of the variable, see "CM-CRT Codebook V 1.0," 25–26.
34. This variable is a categorical measure of the primary tactic employed during the event. The category coding is an expanded version of the NAVCO 3.0 verb codes. See Erica Chenoweth, Jonathan Pinckney, and Orion Lewis, "Days of Rage: Introducing the NAVCO 3.0 Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research* 55, no. 4 (2018): 524–34. The NAVCO data set is in turn based on two sources: the division of nonviolent tactics in Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973), and the CAMEO verb codes in Philip A. Schrodt et al., "The CAMEO (Conflict and Mediation Event Observations) Actor Coding Framework" (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September 1–4, 2005), http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/papers.dir/APSA.2005.pdf. For the complete list of verbs and coding rules, see "CM-CRT Codebook V 1.0," 28–31.
35. Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Wendy Pearlman, "Mobilizing from Scratch: Large-Scale Collective Action without Preexisting Organization in the Syrian Uprising," *Comparative Political Studies* 54, no. 10 (2021): 1786–1817.
36. Two ordinal variables underlie this finding, one related to the "spontaneity" of protest and one related to the "coherence" of the primary organizing actor. The spontaneity variable has three possible levels: "planned," "mix of planned and unplanned," and "spontaneous." The coherence variable also has three possible levels: "fragmented," "pluralistic," and "unitary." For more detailed description of the levels, see "CM-CRT Codebook V 1.0."
37. Beyond the two-year mark, the relatively small number of remaining transitions makes the average a less useful measure.
38. The variable underlying these claims is a three-level ordinal variable capturing "event scale" and a text description of the event location. Events are coded as taking place across multiple locations primarily when a single organization organized multiple instances of an event across different cities or towns, such as a nationwide set of street protests or a nationwide labor strike. See "CM-CRT Codebook V 1.0," 32.

39. The variable underlying this analysis is coded following the same categories as the actor variable. See "CM-CRT Codebook V 1.0."
40. This variable is a three-level ordinal variable meant to capture the degree to which an event was "democratically inclusive." See "CM-CRT Codebook V 1.0," 36.
41. "Sudan: Protesters Demand Military Coup as Crisis Deepens," *BBC News*, October 17, 2021, www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-58943013.
42. V-Dem Country-Year Dataset V11.1.
43. This analysis includes two statistical models: an OLS regression of the polyarchy score in the year after the end of the transition, and a logit regression of whether or not the country achieves at least an "electoral democracy" score in the "regimes of the world" measure. Both models include a relatively sparse number of control variables, following methodological best practice. See Christopher H. Achen, "Toward a New Political Methodology: Microfoundations and ART," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002): 423–50; and "Let's Put Garbage-Can Regressions and Garbage-Can Probits Where They Belong," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22, no. 4 (2005): 327–39. The models control for the polyarchy score prior to the transition, gross domestic product per capita prior to the transition, the average polyarchy score in the country's geopolitical region, and a linear time trend. All control variables other than the linear time trend are drawn from the Varieties of Democracy Project's data (V-Dem Country-Year Dataset V11.1). For more on these and other influential factors in the democratization literature, see, among many others, Rød, Knutsen, and Hegre, "Determinants of Democracy"; Jan Teorell, *Determinants of Democratization: Explaining Regime Change in the World, 1972–2006* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Michael D. Ward, "Diffusion and the International Context of Democratization," *International Organization* 60, no. 4 (2006): 911–33; and Robert J. Barro, "Determinants of Democracy," *Journal of Political Economy* 107, no. S6 (1999): S158–83.
44. Pinckney, *From Dissent to Democracy*.
45. Pinckney, *From Dissent to Democracy*.
46. Control variables in these models are the same as in the models of the total number of events during transition.
47. O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*.
48. Jonathan Pinckney, Charles Butcher, and Jessica Maves Braithwaite, "Organizations, Resistance, and Democracy: How Civil Society Organizations Impact Democratization," *International Studies Quarterly* 66, no. 1 (2022); and Sirianne Dahlum, Carl Henrik Knutsen, and Tore Wig, "Who Revolts? Empirically Revisiting the Social Origins of Democracy," *Journal of Politics* 81, no. 4 (2019): 1494–99.
49. The effect is statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level in a linear OLS model of post-transition democracy with the same set of control variables described in the models of total number of events during transition.
50. Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century* (Boston: Praeger, 1994); and Sharp, *Politics of Nonviolent Action*.
51. Neil Ketchley and Thoraya El-Rayyes, "Unpopular Protest: Mass Mobilization and Attitudes to Democracy in Post-Mubarak Egypt," *Journal of Politics* 83, no. 1 (2021): 291–305.
52. The model is a logistic regression of a binary indicator of a violent event taking place in one month during a transition, with the lagged monthly sums of all tactic categories and a binary lagged indicator of violence as predictors. A model with transition fixed effects was also run as a robustness check, with substantially identical results. To obtain predicted values, the original model was culled to include only predictors with a p value < 0.2. Coefficient size and significance are substantively identical in the original and culled models. Predicted values are derived by setting the values of all other variables in the culled model at zero and varying the predictor of interest.
53. Pinckney, *Making or Breaking Nonviolent Discipline*.
54. The model is a logistic regression of a binary indicator of a violent event, with two predictors: the logged count of protests, demonstrations, and sit-ins in the prior month that were repressed, and the count of the same three tactics that were not repressed. Variables are logged using the natural logarithm plus one to normalize the data. The model also includes a binary control variable for any violent events in the previous month. The repression variable used to inform these counts is a four-level ordinal variable, where the lowest level indicates "no repression" and the three levels above it indicate increasing degrees of repression severity. The project codebook has more details; see "CM-CRT Codebook V 1.0," p. 59). To generate the "repressed" and "not repressed" counts, any event that scored above the "no repression" level was considered to be repressed.
55. Both coefficients for logged repressed and non-repressed events are significant at $p < 0.001$.
56. Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies*, vol. 22 in Social Movements, Protest, and Contention series (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); and Robert J. Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).
57. Jennifer Earl, Sarah A. Soule, and John D. McCarthy, "Protest under Fire? Explaining the Policing of Protest," *American Sociological Review* 68, no. 4 (2003): 581–606.
58. For a discussion of this approach in the Solidarity campaign in Poland, see Jan Zielonka, "Strengths and Weaknesses of Nonviolent Action: The Polish Case," *Orbis* 30 (1986): 91–110.

59. This kind of training has been most extensively studied in the US civil rights movement. See, for example, Larry W. Isaac et al., "Social Movement Schools: Sites for Consciousness Transformation, Training, and Prefigurative Social Development," *Social Movement Studies* 19, no. 2 (2020): 160–82.
60. Pinckney, Butcher, and Braithwaite, "Organizations, Resistance, and Democracy."
61. For an excellent example of the varying impacts of the labor movement, see Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991).
62. The struggle for independent labor unions is often a key precursor of future struggles for democracy. For examples from Poland and Brazil, see Maryjane Osa, *Solidarity and Contention: Networks of Polish Oppositions*, vol. 18 in Social Movements, Protest, and Contention series (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); and Margaret E. Keck, *The Worker's Party and Democratization in Brazil* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992).
63. Margherita Belgioioso, Jessica di Salvatore, and Jonathan Pinckney, "Tangled Up in Blue: The Effect of UN Peacekeeping on Nonviolent Protests in Post–Civil War Countries," *International Studies Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2021): 1–15.
64. In particular, changing protest policing is likely to be difficult when protesters come from historically marginalized groups. See Christian Davenport, Sarah A. Soule, and David A. Armstrong, "Protesting While Black? The Differential Policing of American Activism, 1960 to 1990," *American Sociological Review* 76, no. 1 (2011): 152–78; and Manekin and Mitts, "Effective for Whom?"
65. Jeffrey D. Pugh, "A Catalyst for Action: Training and Education as Networking Platforms for Peace Projects," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 15, no. 1 (2020): 127–32.
66. Preliminary results from a cross-national randomized controlled trial of training based on USIP's Synergizing Nonviolent Action and Peacebuilding action guide (www.usip.org/programs/synergizing-nonviolent-action-and-peacebuilding) are available upon request.

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Nonviolent action has been a potent force in initiating peaceful transitions away from authoritarian regimes and promoting democratization. Yet the initial breakthrough of a nonviolent action campaign is no guarantee of a future peaceful democracy. This report describes and presents findings based on an analysis of USIP's Civic Mobilization in Civil Resistance Transitions (CM-CRT) dataset—which includes detailed information on roughly 1,600 mobilization events in 72 political transitions that took place between 1945 and 2019—to answer three key questions: What are the general patterns and trends of mobilization in transitions following nonviolent action campaigns? Which forms of mobilization impact the likelihood of democracy? And which forms of mobilization tend to lead to violence?

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