Strategies of Resistance: Diversification and Diffusion

Abstract: Why do organizations choose to use nonviolence? Why do they choose specific nonviolent tactics? Existing quantitative work centers on mass nonviolent campaign, but much of the nonviolence employed in contentions politics is smaller scale nonviolent action. In this article, we explore the determinants of nonviolence with new data at the organization level in self-determination disputes from 1960 - 2005. We present a novel argument about the interdependence of strategy choices among nonviolent options. Given limitations on their capabilities, competition among organizations in a shared movement, and different resource requirements for nonviolent strategies, we show that organizations have incentives to diversify strategies rather than just copy other organizations. The empirical analysis reveals a rich picture of varied organizational strategy choice, and a complex web of interdependence among strategies.

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