

Chapter 2: Theories of Challenge and Change

Potestas in populo. / Power resides in the people.

CICERO¹

Any examination of nonviolent intervention must begin with an analysis of theories of social change. To a large extent, external social change organizations operating in a conflict draw on many of the same ideas of the nature of power as traditional social change organizations,² and therefore have a similar conception of how to effect change. Intervention forces are necessarily confronting agents of power, be they the state or state apparatus, violent nonstate actors or transnational economic régimes.

Power as solidarity

Traditional ideas of power have been rooted in coercion. Using this model, power can be materially possessed, achieved, repossessed or taken away. In political science, the principle of zero-sum power often prevails: when power increases in one area, it must necessarily decrease in another. Moreover, power is seen as intimately connected to material goods, that is, the possession of weapons, soldiers,³ money or economic influence. Thus, the control of these goods is the chief project of those who wish to attain power. Revolutionaries must stage a coup d'état;

¹ Cicero, Marcus Tullius (1970). *De Legibus*, Trans. Clinton Walker Keyes. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., p. 183.

² And with good reason: The history of mainstream social change organizations is one of external intervention, even if it occurs within the same state. In the United States of the 1950s and '60s, for instance, there was a wide range of projects established in the South by groups or individuals based in the northern states, such as the Congress of Racial Equality, the Congress for Industrial Organization and the Nashville lunch counter sit-ins organized by the Rev. James Lawson. See Morris (1984).

³ In this sense, "soldiers" is a collectivity rather than a group of individuals, thus my classification of them as a type of good rather than a number of people.

territories in rebellion must secede and then defend themselves with arms; economic competitors must amass wealth and corner the market.⁴

Most modern social movements and external intervention organizations take a significantly different view. The conception is based on the idea of empowerment; “power-with” rather than “power-over.” One sees power as an unlimited entity that can be created within groups exclusive of costs to other groups. As Starhawk puts it:

Power-with is our collective power, our ability to join together and take action, create change, and support each other. *Solidarity* might be another term for this kind of power.⁵

This understanding of power draws on Michel Foucault’s analysis of “biopower” — the regulation of the body by the state and the self-regulation of its citizens. “Power would be a fragile thing if its only function were to repress,” he writes. On the contrary, power “produces effects at the level of desire — and also at the level of knowledge. Far from preventing knowledge, power produces it.”⁶ Thus individuals, as much as the state, have the capacity to create power through their speech and actions.

This conception of power carries with it a host of implications, principally that power is something that can be enacted, rather than possessed, and that power is fundamentally relational, rather than an individual phenomenon. The implications for nonviolent intervention are broad: rather than besieging particular sites of power or creating “armies” to repossess power from individuals exercising control, these groups can help make possible local social movements

⁴ These seem to me to be the three primary areas of contention over power, and in particular those in which a social movement or nonviolent intervention would be involved: social crises in which a group of people is acting to depose or delegitimize the sitting government; political crises in which a group of people is acting to detach themselves from a locus of state control; and economic crises in which a group of people is acting to shield against or remove themselves from a national or transnational economic structure.

⁵ Starhawk (2004), 46. Emphasis is the author’s.

⁶ Foucault (1980), 59.

built on their own resources of power. Part of this construction of alternative power involves the knowledge or discourses being used in a particular society. Intervention, therefore, will by its very nature engage in social discourse. The only question is how it does so.

Johann Galtung identified three primary strategies of conflict intervention: peacekeeping, peacemaking and peacebuilding.⁷ Traditional transnational and nongovernmental organizations have focused on *peacekeeping* — United Nations forces, for instance, holding a “green line” between warring parties. This type of intervention is based on control, and thus a traditional conception of power: If only we can prevent one party from reaching the other, the conflict will be kept at bay.⁸ *Peacemaking* is often about negotiation, in particular (though not necessarily) at the level of the rulers and diplomats. The strategy with which many intervention forces could be identified is that of *peacebuilding*, training low-level citizen leaders to develop their own movements for social change.⁹ It is in this space that many of the organizations under study engage most directly. Yet, Christian Peacemaker Teams and Nonviolent Peaceforce nonetheless choose to describe their projects as peacekeeping, the latter defining their work as “civilian-based peacekeeping.”¹⁰

Relational power

Because power is not seen as a thing to be held, it becomes a relational force; that is, power cannot be exercised except in relation to others. As a result, those on whom power is exercised are part of the enactment of that power, and the agency no longer resides solely with

⁷ Galtung (1976), 282–304.

⁸ This approach relies as much on a traditional conception of *space* as of *power* — the peacekeepers, after all, must occupy a particular location, strategically between the parties in conflict, in order to be effective — a fact I address in Chapter 3.

⁹ Many intervention forces are nonetheless broader; Christian Peacemaker Teams and the International Solidarity Movement often interpose themselves between parties in conflict, and Nonviolent Peaceforce argues that the three strategies must be “applied at the same time.” See Schweitzer (2001a), 27, and Chapter 6.

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the elites at the “top,” but with those at the “bottom” as well. This is not meant to diminish situations of oppression or cast blame on the oppressed. But it is to suggest that “the people” have a particular kind of agency apart from the rulers; the relationship only “works” if they consent.

This offers intervention organizations a significant opening: rather than simply attempting to overthrow the sitting government, or even complying with the state in order to provide relief services,¹¹ they can act in solidarity with indigenous movements, creating alternative sources of power in the process. Without raising a fist, those traditionally seen as “weak” can delegitimize the power of their opponent, thus eroding the power itself. Intervention organizations can play a significant role in this process.

Such a belief in delegitimization draws substantially on the Enlightenment belief in the social contract, that which is “instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,” in the US Constitution’s words. Thus these organizations are challenging and creating power while confronting state actors on their own terms. According to Gene Sharp:

If the subjects deny the ruler’s right to rule and to command, they are withdrawing the general agreement, or group consent, which makes possible the existing government. This loss of authority sets in motion the disintegration of the ruler’s power. That power is reduced to the degree that he [*sic*] is denied authority. Where the loss is extreme, the existence of that particular government is threatened.¹²

Thus Saul Alinsky’s tactical maxim, “power is not only what you have but what the enemy thinks you have.”¹³ Many intervention groups focus their efforts on encouraging the disintegration of

¹¹ The policy of the International Committee of the Red Cross, for example, is not to report human rights violations except in the most egregious circumstances so as to preserve their humanitarian access to victims that otherwise could be sequestered away by the régime in power.

¹² Sharp (1973a), 12.

¹³ Alinsky (1971), 127. While some of Alinsky’s theories remain relevant, in general I see his analysis of organizing as gendered to the detriment of female participants and (as I discuss in Chapter 4) antithetical to the women-centered model of affinity groups. See Susan Stall and Randy Stoecker (1998). “Community

the rule of the oppressor and the building up of alternative sites of power. As a result, said one Argentine involved in the autonomy movement, “The concept of taking power is an archaic one, and not something we want. We are going back to the neighborhoods.”¹⁴

Power in collectivity

The result of a focus on legitimacy is that it privileges social *movements* as agents — collective action as the most potent form of power. Framing it in these terms, intervention forces seem particularly able to act in solidarity; rather than working through a traditional electoral system (which could compromise their principles) or with a single local organization (which could compromise their legitimacy), they can focus on developing and supporting an entire movement of social change. Most significantly for the purposes of intervention, movements do not by definition depend on large numbers of individuals to be effective. Because the objective is the removal of legitimacy, an entity not constrained by the zero-sum ultimatum, organizations working in solidarity can help to enable an indigenous vision of society apart from and in opposition to existing rulers. Hannah Arendt describes this phenomenon by saying that “power springs up whenever people get together and act in concert, but it derives its legitimacy from the initial getting together rather than from any action that then may follow.”¹⁵ While this might at first appear to be a handicap, it actually allows the people involved to create their own alternative history and identity. It also, in Arendt’s view, necessarily rules out violence, because of the way in which the legitimacy is challenged, removed and reconstructed.

Organizing or Organizing Community? Gender and the Crafts of Empowerment,” *Gender and Society* 12(6), pp. 729–756.

¹⁴ Quoted in Sitrin (2004).

¹⁵ Arendt (1969), 151. I should note that for Arendt, political action is explicitly confined to public, impartial discourse operating under a set of agreed-upon guidelines. Nonetheless, her analysis of the origins of social power is compelling.

Legitimacy, when challenged, bases itself on an appeal to the past, while justification relates to an end that lies in the future. Violence can be justifiable, but it never will be legitimate.¹⁶

Not only does this understanding of power provide intervention forces with a framework for creating a new locus of change, it circumscribes their activity within a space of nonviolence. “To speak of nonviolent power is actually redundant,” Arendt writes, because although “violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it.”¹⁷

Subaltern communities — those subordinated to a dominant identity and discourse — have, moreover, particular power in the way they relate to dominant groups and dominant discourses. Public performance and deference despite growing dissidence can preserve their safety while movements grow quietly underground. At strategic moments these hidden discourses can be publicly manifested, challenging the hegemonic system.¹⁸ Third-party activists may be able to support this communal power without needing to seize traditional power. “Transfers of power to revolutionary organizations will gain their legitimacy from mass acceptance and participation,” Lakey writes. “If the people accept them, they are legitimate.”¹⁹

For those involved in nonviolent intervention, this understanding of power also allows them to move beyond the worn debate over “reform or revolution.” In his introduction to an anthology of recent global justice movements, David Solnit describes their focus on “the practice of letting the means determine the ends” as transcending this divide. “Unless the community or world we want is built into and reflected by the struggle to achieve it, movements will always be disappointed in their efforts,” he writes. As the twentieth century has shown, both reform and

¹⁶ Arendt (1969), 151.

¹⁷ Arendt (1969), 151.

¹⁸ See Scott (1990), especially Chapter 8.

¹⁹ Lakey (1987), 148.

revolution can lead to a “legacy of disaster and betrayal.”²⁰ More useful for the purposes of intervention is to interrogate the “direction” a particular concession to powerholders might lead. Does it release pressure and legitimate an oppressive system, as many traditional forms of intervention have done? Or does it, rather, offer individuals a demonstration “about their collective power to make change ... therefore [bringing] us closer to systemic change?”²¹

It is important to see how a reconceptualization of power, drawn from a general social movement theory, has framed both the practices and beliefs of intervention forces. This is not to say that acting in solidarity with indigenous groups is an ideologically neutral assertion. It draws upon a vague but important sense of authority, a political will that I address in the next chapter. For interventionists, however, the belief is that similar work across borders to preserve justice and peace is assumed to be legitimate.

The right of citizens to work together over borders for the same objectives, and often in spite of their governments who do not want them to do so, is something rarely questioned by the activists themselves, and which may be one of the fundamental principles of international true democracy.²²

The theory, at least, is that rather than forming a new, centralized source of power into which indigenous movements must buy, intervention organizations ideally act in solidarity with indigenous movements to create an entirely new network of social change. Whether or not they are successful depends in large part upon their strategies of intervention.

²⁰ Solnit (2004), *xiv*.

²¹ Reinsborough (2004), 196.

²² Schweitzer (2001a), 40.

The theory of intervention

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, there is a fairly robust collection of theories on the development and tactics of movements for social change. The field of nonviolence theory is nowhere near as vast as that of war or state-based political theory, but it does offer those groups engaging in nonviolent intervention a wide range of conceptual frameworks in which to operate.

The most significant development of modern nonviolence theory is that of solidarity rather than supplementation. Whereas some earlier theories allowed and even foregrounded the work of outside groups to build the movement,²³ nonviolent intervention theories privilege the work of local groups. “All external parties can do is to support people in the search for peace,” the Nonviolent Peaceforce study states. “Only those who have the conflict are ultimately able to solve it.”²⁴ Christian Peacemaker Teams, the International Solidarity Movement and Peace Brigades International all subscribe to similar principles. Nonetheless, these organizations draw substantially on theories of social movements, using them as a way to develop realistic goals and sound operating procedures.

Mobilization, political opportunity and repertoires

The formulation which would at first appear to be most directly related to nonviolent intervention has come to be known as resource mobilization theory. Based on the utility — and, in many cases, the necessity — of third-party intervention, this concept of social movements premises success on adequately turning out support among wealthy or politically-connected sympathizers outside of the direct area of conflict. A break from earlier theories that centered on “loose ideologies” of shared grievances, the resource mobilization approach posits that successful

²³ Alinsky (1971), for instance.

²⁴ Howard, Schweitzer and Stieren (2001), 171.

social movements may be hampered or overwhelmed entirely by a societal infrastructure not conducive to social change at the time.²⁵ Rather than spending time mobilizing those who are most directly affected by a particular grievance, resource mobilization aims at external support, “conscience constituents,” who provide significant amounts of financial and political capital.²⁶ Yet as Vincent Boudreau demonstrates, this assumes a viability of daily life in which being a “bystander” is a plausible alternative — not so in conditions of extreme oppression.²⁷ The approach also sees a correlation between the “resources available” to a social movement and the number of “social movement organizations” competing for those resources, as well as the likelihood of eventual success in redressing grievances within that which is circumscribed by societal constraints.²⁸

An important element of this theory is that resource-rich allies to the local movements are more likely to sway their communities in supporting the struggle than members of the local movements themselves. Paraphrasing Galtung, Patrick Glenn Coy explains that for the nonviolent movement in Sri Lanka, this Western representation can help engender aid.

The less social distance there is between the challengers who bear the costs of repression and the authors of repressive policies, the better chance there is that the policy makers may be either converted or coerced into changing their behaviors and/or policies. ... It is no doubt easier, according to Galtung’s theory, to get American politicians and citizens concerned and responsive

²⁵ Tilly (1978), ch. 4.

²⁶ Tilly (1978, p. 75) writes, “Common sense says that the rich mobilize conservatively, in defense of their threatened interests, while the poor mobilize radically, in search of what they lack. Common sense is wrong. It is true that the rich never lash out to smash the status quo, while the poor sometimes do. But the rich are constantly mobilizing to take advantage of new opportunities to maximize their interests. The poor can rarely afford to.”

²⁷ Boudreau (1996), 178. Also see Piven and Cloward (1979).

²⁸ McCarthy and Zald (1977).

when the rights of an American citizen are abrogated by the Sri Lankan government than it is when a Sri Lankan is involved.²⁹

This aspect of resource-mobilization carries with it an important element of race — and, in some cases, racism — that will be explored more fully in the next chapter. For indigenous movements with which third-party interventionists are likely to work, moreover, the goal may be less about pressuring leaders to adopt new policies and more about becoming leaders themselves.³⁰ Movements in the Global South will not have the same relationship to powerholders as those in the Global North.

A second theory upon which nonviolent intervention draws heavily is that of the political process model. Doug McAdam identifies three factors “believed to be crucial in the generation of social insurgency.” They are the “level of organization within the aggrieved population,” the “prospects for successful insurgency within that same population,” and in a larger scope, “the political alignment of groups within the larger political environment.”³¹ The contribution of the political process model to nonviolent intervention theory rests in the idea that social movements can be strategized. As McAdam puts it, “a social movement is held to be above all else a *political* rather than a psychological phenomenon.”³² The most important aspect of this theory for our purposes is that of “cognitive liberation.” Both classical and resource mobilization theorists, McAdam writes, have ignored the “crucial attribution process” in which individuals’ subjective meanings mediate between opportunity and action.³³ For nonviolent intervention, and in particular for intervention based around education and training, this attribution process may be

²⁹ Coy (1997).

³⁰ Boudreau (1996), 176.

³¹ McAdam (1982), 40.

³² McAdam (1982), 36. Emphasis is the author’s.

³³ McAdam (1982), 48.

their main focus. In theory and practice, some nonviolent intervention organizations thus concentrate on convincing local populations of their own power to resist oppression. For them, it is often described as part of *conscientização* — the first stage in revolutionary social movement development, involving the perception of social, political and economic contradictions and the action against this oppression.³⁴ Unlike resource mobilization, this requires a focus on cultural work as well as strategy and action planning.

In many ways, third-party intervention is structured as a type of mobilization for international support. Local organizations or movements request a third-party intervention team (and nearly all such teams require an invitation before they will act) by presenting the opportunity for effective intervention. Because third-party intervention organizations are small and have limited funding and staff, local organizations may have to spend a significant amount of time formulating their case.

Indeed, as Clifford Bob suggests, movements may alter their own trajectories in order to attract aid.³⁵ In the case of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional of Mexico, which initially staged a traditional military uprising, a “swarming” of Mexican and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) around issues of indigenous rights and civil society altered their approach. A hierarchical leadership of Mexican intellectuals was pressured by the NGOs to respond more directly to local Mayan and other tribal concerns rather than to attempt a Marxist revolution; thereafter the EZLN embraced the “network activism” and autonomy put forth by the NGOs.³⁶ Ultimately the Zapatistas won a significant measure of autonomy from the Mexican government and played a role in destabilizing the Mexican ruling party in the 2000

³⁴ See Freire (2000) and Lakey (1987).

³⁵ Bob (2002), 398–401.

³⁶ Ronfeldt and Arquilla (2001). Also see Schulz (1998).

presidential election. The opposite result occurred in the case of the Ogoni autonomy movement in Nigeria. Movement leaders structured their protests and claims around a particular model of corporate environmental oppression that was palatable to NGOs. While this did garner support for the movement, it also brought on significant state repression, and split the movement from democracy activists in the rest of Nigeria, winning few concessions or measurable autonomy.³⁷ Third-party interventionists, then, should not operate under the pretense that their presence will not affect a local movement — or that intervention is necessarily in the best interests of the movement’s survival.

Sidney Tarrow added to the study of social movements by arguing for an examination of the “cycles of contention” that arose out of a discrete set of “repertoires.” That is, as political opportunity grows individuals begin to challenge social control and “even conventional interest groups are tempted by unconventional collective action.” While this diffusion of techniques may in some cases be based on structural and interpersonal relationships between activists, “it also results from rational decisions to take advantage of opportunities that have been demonstrated by other groups’ actions.”³⁸ Movement “identities,” writes James M. Jasper, “are never the result of simple choices by leaders or the rank-and-file, as though one could choose identities by fiat. They are heavily influenced by broader political contexts.”³⁹

One of the most powerful potentials for nonviolent intervention, then, is to create or expand this political “space,” offering strategies and demonstrating methods of contention that widen available opportunities. The Peace Brigades team in Guatemala, for instance, has “played

³⁷ Bob (2002), 408.

³⁸ Tarrow (1994), 24.

³⁹ Jasper (1997), 329–330.

a historically significant role in increasing the political space necessary for dissident groups to grow and flourish.”⁴⁰

The knowledge of opportunity, however, does not move across borders unaided. “Political exchange across boundaries generally involves actors from different countries with ideological affinities,” Tarrow writes, “each of whom has something to gain from the relationship.”⁴¹ Local activists initiate what some scholars have referred to as a “boomerang model,” flinging information about their own repression to external NGOs, who then respond with international pressure.⁴² But this relationship is seldom equitable; local movements may depend on NGOs for survival, while NGOs have a plethora of movements from which to choose.⁴³ Because NGOs often operate from Western, liberal democracies, the type of action they view as legitimate (lobbying and peaceful demonstrations, for instance, but not destruction of property or violence) will often influence the actions chosen by the local movement. Moreover, a focus on “repertoires” alone sometimes obscures the power relations between powerholders and the people — a half-dozen militant workers do not a strike make.⁴⁴ The Ogoni had the repertoires, and yet they could not create the power necessary to win. A new approach is necessary.

Each of these three cases — resource-mobilization, the political process model and cycles of contention — lends itself to nonviolent intervention in a particularly didactic way. Organizations see themselves as trainers, a Prometheus bringing the fire of the wisdom of the

⁴⁰ Coy (1997), 3.

⁴¹ Tarrow (1994), 187.

⁴² Keck and Sikkink (1998), 12–13.

⁴³ Bob (2002), 399.

⁴⁴ For a fuller critique, see Piven and Cloward (2000). Notably, they write, powerholders also develop “repertoires,” as can easily be seen by the success of the global justice movement at one moment in 1999 (Seattle), followed by a series of tactical losses (Washington, Québec, Miami).

ages (whether in the form of external aid or external theory) to the oppressed peoples of the world.⁴⁵ It is not hard to see how this could quickly turn into paternalism and condescension. Jack DuVall, the director of the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, one such training organization, said that the theories “are not really Western theories of nonviolence; they are theories of the entire world.”⁴⁶ Nonetheless, the risk of nonviolent training becoming an arm of neocolonialism is a potent one.

Strategic intervention

Breaking away from earlier conceptions of social struggles as irrational, psychological affairs, social movement theorists set the stage for the study of strategic nonviolent action. Rather than using nonviolence as a fundamental moral principle in the Gandhian sense, nonviolent strategists use it in particular instances to effect political or social change. This is a technique particularly suited to nonviolent intervention, yet it has not been fully developed as such.

One of the “principles of strategic nonviolent conflict” articulated by Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, for instance, is to “cultivate external assistance.” Yet the vast majority of their examples of external support rest on the abilities of states or large collectives such as organized labor — diplomatic recognition, economic sanctions or public declarations. They do not suggest that external parties could initiate or support strategic nonviolent conflict within another state.⁴⁷

Sharp theorizes that “repression against nonviolent people may attract wide attention to the struggle and strong sympathy for the suffering nonviolent group among persons not involved

⁴⁵ See DuVall (2004a).

⁴⁶ DuVall (2004b).

⁴⁷ Ackerman and Kruegler (1994), 32–33.

in the struggle in any way.”⁴⁸ Elsewhere this is known as the “paradox of repression.”⁴⁹ Using this technique, nonviolent intervention can serve both to reduce the “social space” between affected and third parties, increasing the chance of external aid, and help to engender the paradox of repression by training for and even initiating nonviolent direct action.⁵⁰ This second step — moving beyond simply alerting the world to an oppressed people’s plight — is, in Sharp’s view, critical to success.

World opinion on the side of the nonviolent group will *by itself* rarely produce a change in the opponent’s policies. Frequently a determined opponent can ignore hostile opinion until and unless it is accompanied by, or leads to, shifts in power relationships, or threatens to do so.⁵¹

Thus we return to the idea of eroding a ruler’s power by creating alternative sources of power within a movement. Yet, Sharp writes, while “third party action” has been proposed to aid social movements in supplying literature, communication and training, such efforts “are likely to have very limited effectiveness.”⁵² For him, the transposition of nonviolent strategy from an local situation to a transnational one requires more than simply a redirection of focus. “Nonviolent social intervention” is based upon “direct intrusion in social behavior patterns, social occasions and social institutions” — not merely symbolic action against sites of traditional power.⁵³

One solution might be found in the argument of Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, who argue that “people cannot defy institutions to which they have no access, and to

⁴⁸ Sharp (1973c), 658.

⁴⁹ See Smithey and Kurtz (1999).

⁵⁰ This method, however, may be becoming less effective. See Chapter 5.

⁵¹ Sharp (1973c), 662. Emphasis is the author’s.

⁵² Sharp (1973c), 662.

⁵³ Sharp (1973b), 390.

which they make no contribution.”⁵⁴ In the case of transnational organizing, then, while sympathetic groups might be able to stir up support among activists in their home country (or even political leaders, if they are so connected) they will not aid the success of a movement if they try to supplant it. For Piven and Cloward, even anti-oppression education of activists by external parties could become detrimental to the movement if it relies too heavily on organization-building rather than direct action training.⁵⁵ Organizations recruiting from oppressed peoples — often those with which interventionists work — will have obligations to their supporters more closely approaching poor people’s movements than the privileged movements of the North.⁵⁶ Often this may mean more of a commitment to direct-action principles of winning immediate concessions by demonstrating collective power than that to which Western organizations may be accustomed.⁵⁷ Training for Change, the organization most clearly involved in activist training, centers their curriculum on experiential learning, leaving specific organizational plans up to those directly involved in the movement who will be most conscious of what approach is necessary.⁵⁸

While closely aligned with resource mobilization theory, the “indigenous approach” proposed by Aldon Morris concerns itself with existing resources, local institutions with strong

⁵⁴ Piven and Cloward (1977), 23. A supporting argument for resource mobilization theory.

⁵⁵ Piven and Cloward (1977), *xxii*. “[D]uring those brief moments when lower-class groups exert some force against the state, those who call themselves leaders do not usually escalate the momentum of the people’s protests. They do not because they are preoccupied with trying to build and sustain embryonic formal organizations in the sure conviction that these organizations will enlarge and become powerful.”

⁵⁶ Boudreau (1996), 178–179.

⁵⁷ Even among Western activists, direct action is recognized as fundamentally based on gaining real improvements for people’s lives, demonstrating people’s power, and altering the very foundations of power in the process. See, for example, Bobo et al. (2001), 11–12.

⁵⁸ Hunter (2004a), 2. “[P]eople slowly realized that they were placing full responsibility on their success on ‘the leader.’ I talked about how that dynamic showed up in the Civil Rights Movement and how disempowerment keeps people blaming leadership and stuck in a cycle of dependency.”

social ties and strategies used to counter oppression.⁵⁹ This leaves open the most space for cross-border organizing; though local support is a crucial element, training and education can come from any source. “Social activists,” Morris writes, “play creative roles in organizing and developing movements; they must redirect and transform indigenous resources in such a manner that they can be used to develop and sustain social protest.”⁶⁰ Further, the indigenous approach explicitly allows for the fact that:

resources and the activities of individuals and groups outside a dominated community can assist in sustaining and shaping the outcome of indigenous movements. ... [W]hen groups and individuals outside of an indigenous movement voluntarily provide that movement with resources, they facilitate the social change efforts of the dominated community.⁶¹

Nonviolent intervention has the capability not only to aid and support existing social movements, but to help generate movements where no cohesion had previously existed, to facilitate a process of change that otherwise might not occur. Most significantly, they could help to instigate a revolutionary “communicative praxis,” not in bringing their own strategies to bear on a local situation, but in helping local movements to develop strategies in their own terms.⁶²

In this way, interventionists most closely resemble the “rebel” role of social activism. Bill Moyer identifies four types of activists within a movement for social change. The citizen, who “remind[s] the public that the source of legitimate power is the citizenry”; the change agent, formulating new solutions to societal problems in dialogue with the general public; and the reformer, who is “dependent on the power of the grassroots,” all depend on a functional

⁵⁹ Morris (1984), Chapter 11. Note that Morris disagrees with Piven and Cloward and argues that existing organizations are necessary for the success of a social movement, not barriers to it. “Formal organization is an important property of local movement centers,” he writes on p. 284.

⁶⁰ Morris (1984), 283.

⁶¹ Morris (1984), 286.

⁶² See Schulz (1998), 592.

democracy, or at least on an existing social movement.⁶³ Rebels, on the other hand, “use extra-parliamentary means ... outside of normal political channels, including nonviolent direct action and community education in the form of rallies, marches, leafleting, and petitions.”⁶⁴ While interventionists may at times support local organizations filling one of the other three roles, their primary support will be of the nonviolent “rebel” groups because of the importance of these groups in the early stages of a social movement. To Western activists used to operating in a Western political atmosphere, this may sometimes feel like a stretch. Nonetheless, intervention is most vital at the early stages of a movement, and it is at just that point that the rebel role is most important.

Until recently third-party intervention was being examined only in a superficial way. Christian Peacemaker Teams, for instance, makes few assessments of its programs’ effectiveness, and in so doing places responsibility for success not on its own members but on “representatives of local institutions and individual residents” it insists help direct its activities.⁶⁵ Interventionists are, in this respect, similar to many community organizers who exhibit reluctance toward self-reflection. Placing the primary emphasis on the process of organizing, activists fail to win any real concessions from powerholders. Psychological empowerment is important, but without strategizing about how intervention can enable particular social and political gains for local movements, Christian Peacemaker Teams and others may be engaging in a purely academic pursuit.

In exploring the ways in which nonviolent empowerment can aid movements for social change, then, I am cautious about focusing too much on “cognitive liberation” alone; a concrete

⁶³ Moyer (2001), 22–27.

⁶⁴ Moyer (2001), 24.

⁶⁵ Lyke and Bock (2000), 14.

practice must be a part of the goal as well. “The object of building social movements is to fight specific instances of injustice and create institutional changes,” Andy Cornell writes. “Processes are important, but only if they are used to create movements that have a real transformative impact.”⁶⁶ As I write in the next chapter, beliefs enmeshed in a history of political and social exceptionalism among transnational activists — that they are helping oppressed peoples who cannot help themselves — have structured the modes of intervention to the detriment of local movements. Not surprisingly, this critique is rarely perceived “among individuals who aren’t directly bearing the brunt of the forms of oppression or exploitation they are working against.”⁶⁷ Interventionists must be willing to engage in a critical examination of their own methods in the process of developing a praxis, one not only facilitating community-building but also enabling local activists to create their own forms of empowerment and democracy, that lead to concrete, material gains for that community.

⁶⁶ Cornell (2005), 2.

⁶⁷ Cornell (2005), 2.