

## **Scaling up nonviolent action: Do scholars and activists agree?**

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### **Abstract**

*In this article, we explore the way that both activist-oriented manuals and academic scholarship on nonviolent action in social movements and civil resistance have addressed issues related to the concept of scaling up: increasing movement strength, size, and impacts. Drawing on a database of nearly 200 case studies and activist-oriented manuals, we highlight similarities and discrepancies in the emphases of both scholarly and activist-oriented materials to illustrate differing priorities among academics and practitioners in the field. Our analysis addresses possible reasons for these discrepancies and suggests directions for scholar-activist cross-fertilization.*

**Key words:** scaling up, civil resistance, social movements, activists, scholars, impact

### **Introduction**

Research on the undertakings of social movements and movement activists has long been a focus of scholars seeking to better understand the process of social change at local, national, and international scales. Despite a broad and varied literature in this field of study, however, little focus has been placed on how movements scale – that is, how they create a solid foundation that allows for increasing their size, spatial presence, and overall impact (in both intended and unintended ways). Moreover, while scholars have long studied movement endeavors through methods such as discussions with activists or examination of archival resources, few analyses exist of materials produced *by and for* movement activists, in terms of their areas of emphasis. Fewer studies still engage these materials in comparison with academic research. This article addresses these gaps by examining the concept of scaling up as it is discussed *both* in empirical case studies of nonviolent movements and within training guides and manuals written for on-the-ground movement use.

Understanding how and when movements use scaling up tactics is important for several reasons. First, under certain conditions, specific strategies may have negative consequences that can prevent social movements from obtaining their goals, while at the same time, movement events may have positive consequences beyond those explicitly intended (Dedouet 2008). Second, lack of consistency in what is meant by movement “success” makes comparative analysis challenging. As we argue below, researchers’ understanding of what characterizes “successful” movements and campaigns is subjective, yet it strongly shapes the way we conduct research and interpret results.

Our analysis highlights significant discrepancies between empirical studies and activist-oriented materials. We suggest that these discrepancies, in particular lack of scholarly focus on internally-oriented scaling components such as strategic planning and creating a shared ideology, have limited our capacity to fully comprehend why movement campaigns are successful – or not. Lack of focus in manuals on certain key issues is also problematic in terms of ensuring adequate preparation for successful movement campaigns. We suggest that greater cross-fertilization across scholarly and practitioner-oriented writings for and about movement initiatives can lead to greater understanding of movement success and how to ensure that campaigns have the positive impacts they strive for.

### **Conceptualizing scaling-up**

Nonviolent movements have long engaged in processes aimed at enlarging the size of their networks and the scope of their initiatives. Indeed, the primary approach to exploring ‘scaling’ in relation to nonviolent activism and social movements has centered around increasing the size of the movement in terms of membership or territory, or expanding partnerships and coalitions (Lackey 1973; McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001; Tarrow 2005). However, we suggest that the process of ‘scaling up’ is multi-dimensional and includes more than just aspects related to movement size. For example, the social entrepreneurship and international development literature suggest that *internal strengthening* is crucial for building a foundation that enables not only physical/territorial growth, but also allows for broadening the *impact* of work done by social movements and small scale, grassroots peacebuilding and social justice initiatives (Dees 2004; Uvin 1995). Thus, we define scaling up as: *elements contributing to the internal strength of initiatives that result in and allow for external expansion in ways that broaden both intended and unintended impacts*. In other words, scaling is a process of *increasing the potential for positive impact at a higher level or scope than it currently is*.

To address the multi-dimensional nature of scaling up, we have developed a conceptual model of scaling that includes both internally- and externally-oriented elements and that emphasizes contributions to both intended and unintended impacts of movement endeavors (see Ross et al, 2019). In this article, we use this model as a framework for analyzing peer reviewed empirical case studies of social movement endeavors and nonviolent direct action, as well as activist-oriented movement manuals, to highlight aspects of scaling up that are emphasized by researchers and those utilized by activists and practitioners of nonviolent action – both when these are similar and when they differ.

Our conceptual model is grounded in the desire to identify a framework for scaling up that is embedded in both the theoretical conceptualization of nonviolence and the experiential knowledge of its practice. To this end, it is based on an extensive review of the theoretical literature on nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience, manuals and guides written by and for movement

activists, as well as social movement scholarship and literature in the areas of international development, organization studies, and entrepreneurship. Conceptually, the model draws upon but also extends upon the concept of “scale shifts,” that is, changes in, “the number and level of coordinated actions to a different focal point, involving a new range of actors, different objects, and broadened claims” (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001: 331). In particular, we distinguish between two dimensions of scaling: what occurs internally in order to strengthen the movement (*internal strengthening*); and what happens externally in order to enlarge the movement in size or space (*external expansion*). Although some activities clearly are relevant to both of these, most fall largely on one dimension rather than both. We further distinguish between the “what” of scaling, or *tactics for scaling* that must be used as evidence of a scaled movement, and *processes of scaling*, that is, the concrete actions providing a basis for scaling. In addition, *communication for scaling*, while ostensibly a sub-component of the *processes of scaling*, is discussed separately because of its foundational nature that allows all other scaling processes to be achieved.

Within each of these dimensions are several elements, which serve as the indicators at the focus of our analysis. These elements are shown in Table 1:

**Table 1: Dimensions and Elements of Scaling Up**

	<i>Internal Strengthening</i>	<i>External expansion</i>
<i>Tactics for scaling</i>	1. Strong commitment among activists	1. Increased membership and development of partnerships and/or coalitions
	2. Strong strategic plans	2. Engagement of external third parties or international actors
	3. Diverse movement membership	3. Territorial spread
	4. Shared messages and ideology	4. Engagement with government leadership
<i>Processes of scaling</i>	1. Internal sharing of information (use of media)	1. Sharing information (use of media) externally
	2. Educational programming for activists	3. Educational programming for the broader community
	3. Engaging ideas across movements	
<i>Communication for scaling</i>	2. Strategic communication within the movement	2. Strategic communication toward the broader community
	Strategic framing	

## Methodology

In order to conduct this analysis, our research team compiled a database consisting of 128 case studies of nonviolent campaigns as well as 59 manuals written for/by movement activists. Our compilation focused on movement campaigns that explicitly referenced nonviolent action or strategic nonviolent tactics as a central component of their ideology. Moreover, in our search for empirical case studies, we limited our search to include three types of movements: those aimed at regime change (such as the collapse of the Communist regime in Eastern Europe in late 80s, the unsuccessful revolutions in Uzbekistan in 2005 and in Belarus in 2006, and the Arab Spring); those focused on eliminating discrimination against certain population groups or at producing structural changes (for instance, movements working in Apartheid South Africa, and the US Civil Rights Movement); and movements focused on the struggle for liberation from colonial rule, including nonviolent collective campaigns for national independence (African countries, India, Palestinian protests against Israeli occupation, etc.).

In other words, our analysis focused on nationally-focused movement

campaigns (although we note that transnational processes of learning and communication are characteristic of many of these) – not included within our databases were empirical case studies focusing on issues related to nonviolent action with an explicitly intentional transnational focus (such as within the framework of the anti-globalization movement). We defined our unit of analysis as *cases* discussed within academic publications, rather than the publication itself. More specifically, cases were defined as a specific campaign or group of campaigns occurring at a specific moment in time. For example, an analysis of Palestinian resistance to the occupation during the First Intifada (1987-1991) was defined as a separate case than an empirical analysis of Palestinian resistance during the period of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada period (starting in 2000).

To create our database of cases, we systematically searched academic journals in the areas of social movement and civil resistance research (such as the *Journal of Resistance Studies*; *Research in Social Movements Conflict & Change*; *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*; *Peace & Change*; and the *Journal of Peace Research*) for empirical case studies focused on nonviolent resistance movements. We also conducted a broad search for cases using Web of Science and Google Scholar, using the following search terms: nonviolence, nonviolent resistance, nonviolent movements, nonviolent activism, nonviolent action, civil resistance, and people power. Finally, we systematically reviewed academic publications referenced in every entry in the Swarthmore Global Nonviolent Action Database. We recognize that these sources are not comprehensive or inclusive of more contemporary movement research and that this is a consequent limitation of our analysis; however, we believe that the cases reviewed reflect general patterns in academic scholarship in this field.

In addition to our analysis of empirical case studies, we also reviewed 59 manuals on strategic nonviolent action written by practitioners and activists, which were a mix of step-by-step guides to nonviolent activism and manuals focused on specific aspects of scaling movement work. Manuals were obtained directly from individuals affiliated with movements and social movement organizations, as well as via broad web searches using terms such as: nonviolent training, nonviolence manual, and resistance guide. Analysis of manuals was undertaken in order to provide a comparison with empirical research on this topic, enabling us to better assess similarities and differences in the ways researchers and practitioners conceptualize and prioritize aspects of scaling up.

The review and entry of the 128 cases and 59 manuals into our database occurred in multiple stages between January 2016 and January 2018. For each case or manual, we determined whether any of the given parameters/indicators were discussed, and how. Each time a case or manual mentioned a tactic of scaling, this was noted as a binary "yes/no," with additional descriptive information provided on how the indicator was addressed, if relevant. Initial analysis of the database revealed the need to consolidate and/or reframe certain components in order to better capture certain aspects of scaling up. Members of the research team discussed each parameter until consensus was reached about its definition and how to enter information about the parameter into the

database for each case. Our analysis in the following pages systematically explores these components of scaling as identified in our conceptual model.

### **Assumptions and limitations**

Before discussing our analysis, it is important to clarify key assumptions and goals relating to both our model and our analysis, as well as some of the limitations of our work. First, in our model, we assume that there is no hierarchy of indicators. That is, the tactics we discuss are assumed to be equally important to the scaling process. Second, our analysis is focused on movements with an ideological orientation toward nonviolent action, and as such, we do not explicitly address a *commitment to nonviolence* as an internal tactic for scaling. A commitment to nonviolence, rather, is incorporated into our broader exploration of activist commitment as an element of internal scaling.

Furthermore, our analysis is based upon an understanding of the need to identify gaps between researchers and practitioners' understandings of how movement strategies and actions impact success. However, it is important to realize that the definition of "success" for movement endeavors is not standardized for either academics or practitioners/activists, particularly with respect to empirical case studies, and differs according to the positionality of each author or set of authors. In other words, what is perceived as a successful movement or campaign by one scholar or activist, may well be viewed unsuccessful by others. Moreover, researchers' reliance on post-hoc interviews and/or secondhand accounts make defining the success of movements difficult and probably empirically futile as the perception of a movement's success shifts relative to time and place. The Civil Rights movement in the USA is a prime example of this: for a period of time, the Civil Rights movement was seen as a success, but ongoing racial physical and structural violence in the United States illustrate a lack of sustained change. Thus, in our analysis, we take a metaphorical step back to critically analyze authors' framework for retelling the *story* of scaling up from the local to the national, while remaining cognizant of their positionality and analytical approach.

Given this, our analysis does not enable us to empirically assess which dimensions of scaling up are related to movement success. Moreover, it is important to note the potential limitations of our analysis given our focus on specific kinds of movement campaigns, as well as our reliance on English-language literature and manuals (thus possibly introducing a Global North/Western bias into our analysis). In addition, we note that some of the manuals analyzed were written by and for activists in movements corresponding to the kind of transnational initiatives that we did not include in our empirical cases. This raises some questions about comparability across kinds of material examined.

Despite these limitations, we believe that our analysis can challenge scholars to expand their methods, approach, and scope of research when it comes to movement impact. In particular, our comparison of empirical case studies and

manuals in terms of how often elements of scaling are discussed as well as associated with success allows us to better highlight the gaps between what researchers define as being important and what activists actually do in strategizing and planning actions. This comparison presents a starting point for what we hope can be a fruitful collaboration between scholars and activists to better understand how movement actions shape opportunities for scaling and for movement impact.

## **Results**

Of the 128 case studies and 59 manuals we examined, a majority included some discussion of scaling up: 64% of case studies and 96% of manuals referenced at least one of the indicators of scaling up included in our conceptual model. While these were not necessarily discussed with the concept of scaling up in mind, this suggests that scaling as a concept has entered the thinking – even if not explicit – of both scholars and activists. Moreover, the difference between empirical cases and suggests that pragmatically-oriented conceptualizations of how scaling up occurs, and what researchers choose to focus on, are not entirely aligned. This theme of theory versus practice is one that we will explore throughout this analysis. Table 2 provides an overview of the analysis results.

**Table 2-Analysis of Scaling in Cases and Manuals**

Dimensions	N	%	% of cases defined as successful by authors		
	Cases (Total cases)	Manuals (Total manuals)	Cases	Manuals	
<b>Tactics for Scaling</b>					
<i>Internal Strengthening</i>					
Strong Commitment among activists	58 (128)	25 (59)	45.31%	41.67%	31.25%
Strategic Planning	35 (128)	38 (59)	27.34%	64.41%	32.01%
Diverse Movement Membership	68 (128)	20 (59)	53.12%	33.90%	57.14%
Shared Message and Ideology	11 (128)	32 (59)	8.59%	54.24%	5.19%
<i>External Strengthening</i>					
Increased Membership	61 (128)	21 (59)	47.66%	34.74%	55.54%
Territorial Spread	21 (128)	3 (59)	16.41%	5.08%	19.48%
Development of Partnerships and/or Coalitions	60 (128)	20 (59)	46.87%	33.91%	44.15%
Engagement of external third parties	77 (128)	18 (59)	39.84%	31.03%	55.19%
Engagement with Government Leadership	82 (128)	16 (59)	64.06%	27.59%	68.83%
<b>Process of Scaling</b>					
Sharing Information (through the media)	73 (128)	27 (59)	57.03%	45.76%	37.66%
Educational Programming	36 (128)	16 (59)	28.12%	27.59%	33.76%
<b>Communication for Scaling</b>					
Strategic Communication / Framing	42 (128)	57 (59)	32.42%	96.61%	29.5%



### **Tactics for scaling – internal strengthening**

The tactics for scaling that focus on internal strengthening include a strong commitment (to the movement) among activists, strategic planning, diverse movement membership, and building a shared message and ideology. A strong commitment to the overall goal of the movement, and willingness of members to act, are key to ensuring the movement's sustainability and thus to scaling up. The SOA Handbook for Nonviolent Action (1998) states that these reinforcing mechanisms of internal strengthening or building "group culture" are,

characterized by the possibility to gain new skills, fostering of social relations, sharing of competences and decision making (that is by consensus), and an open leadership structure. Our groups and organizations need to be at the same time empowering organizations – organizations that nurture empowerment processes among their members or activists – and empowered organizations, focusing on making use of power-to to achieve their campaigning objectives (38).

Theoretical scholarship suggests that these tactics of internal strengthening are mutually reinforcing and act as a foundation for scaling up nonviolent movements (Dees 2004; Uvin 1995), even as it is important to note that movements are not monolithic and can contain diversity in culture and leadership style. These internal mechanisms support and are supported by processes of external strengthening.

### **Strengthening the commitment of movement members**

Approximately 53% of the case studies and 42% of manuals directly address strengthening the commitment of movement members. Although increasing the commitment of members is a core process for ensuring continued movement activity, there are some differences in the ways the case studies and manuals go about discussing how this does or should occur. The empirical case studies primarily highlight tactics used to strengthen the commitment of existing movement members. These include: using the politicization of high profile figures, detainees or other "martyrs" to inspire activism; the use of strategic framing and storytelling (Ackerman and Duval 2000); supporting detainees and their families as a way to define and redefine community (Greene 2005); and describing visits to nearby local or national groups as a sign of solidarity after tragic events, in order to strengthen morale (Bartley 1999).

Like the case studies, the manuals generally argue that positive interactions and relationship building between movement members during these acts of solidarity and communication serve to strengthen movements (Nepstad 2011; SOA 1998; War Resisters 2012). However, the manuals also address other approaches to internal strengthening that in the case studies take a back seat to the more aggrandized stories of martyrs, detainees, and special leadership

inspiring change. Several manuals, for instance, focus on building relationships among all movement activists through communication, dialogue, and shared experience. The War Resisters (2014) manual provides a guide for resolving internal conflicts (p. 94). Pt'Change (2005) takes this one step further and provides a workshop outline for nonviolent communication, active listening, and group dialogue for both internal and external strengthening (130-5). Boyd (1999) takes an experiential approach, suggesting games and role playing to “strengthen individual confidence” for activism outwardly, but also to create and strengthen group bonds (p.20-26). These differences suggest that academic scholarship could do more to address the concrete steps taken by movements to strengthen activist commitment *prior* to the dramatic events that inspire solidarity, so that we might better understand what grounds activists and motivates their engagement to participate in such events in the first place.

### **Strategic planning (clear vision, capacity building, and M&E)**

Strategic planning is important because it serves as an act of forward thinking, but also because it creates space for dialogue, communication, and trust building, which help movement organizations and/or coalitions build consensus around tactics to be used in specific campaigns. The actual act of planning together also builds ownership over the process of movement activity, making plans more applicable for members to implement. It empowers group members to define their own roles, makes them accountable to other members and can foster deep emotional bonds.

Strategic planning was mentioned in 28% of the cases and 65% of the manuals reviewed in our analysis. We identified three scenarios that could be used to understand the lack of case study literature on strategic planning. First, case study authors often analyze cases after events have taken place, rather than assessing strategies in real time. Second, even when researchers may be present in real time, the often-violent nature of regime change forces strategic decision makers to limit strategizing and planning to a select leadership in fear of regime infiltration (Nepstad 2001). A lack of information about movements' strategic plans may also indicate that nonviolent movements are either somewhat spontaneous in their actions, or may hit a tipping point where planning is no longer occurring under their control (Ransom and Brown 2013). In other words, individuals or small groups may begin to act on their own initiative without guidance from leaders. Discussion of strategic planning in the manuals, on the other hand, paints a different picture of its importance. The manuals suggest that creation of strategic plans rests on three pillars: a strong commitment among activists (Harvey 2004), a shared message and ideology (War Resisters International 2014; Popovic 2007), and good communication skills and dialogue (Martin 2012). The manuals argue that without these mutually reinforcing tactics, strategic planning is difficult and consensus cannot be established.

Specific components of strategic planning receive less emphasis in both the case studies and manuals. For instance, only 27% of case studies and 44% of

manuals mention the creation of a clear vision. Likewise, capacity building in nonviolent movements – which provides members with the skills necessary to perform nonviolent action and civil disobedience – is seen as an important precursor to nonviolent action and is discussed in 50% of manuals, but is only mentioned in 15% of the cases reviewed. This could indicate researchers' inability to access information about planning processes, or potentially a lack of methodological frameworks for studying these processes.

Finally, the extent of explicit discussion related to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tactics in nonviolent movements also suggests a potential lack of theoretical and methodological frameworks for doing so. Less than 7% percent of cases and only 24% of manuals reviewed mention M&E; the manuals that do discuss M&E present fairly limited approaches to doing so. For instance, War Resisters International Handbook for Nonviolent Campaigns (2009) provides a brief section on evaluating action plans (p.142). Similarly, Ransom and Brown's *The Grassroots Women's Community Justice Guide* suggests a set of questions that can be used to evaluate what went well in a particular action or what might be done better in the future. Amnesty International's (2008) *AIUSA Activist Toolkit* lists questions to use for monitoring internal dynamics while Ransom and Brown (2013) provides a rudimentary outline of traditional monitoring and evaluation techniques that focus on internal evaluation. The most comprehensive tool discussed, in Moyer (1987), is a Movement Action Plan (MAP) that "provides activists with a practical, how-to-do-it analytic tool for evaluating and organizing social movements" that includes approaches for monitoring some elements of both internal strengthening and external expansion. However, none of the manuals include guidelines for assessing the influence of issues such as strategic framing or internal consensus-building tactics on movement success. In other words: while it is certainly possible – indeed, likely – that assessment of movement activities happens in multiple ways, systematic approaches using accepted best practices for evaluation are far from prevalent. Such frameworks could be particularly helpful as a form of record keeping that could reduce the metaphorical distance between the real time actions of practitioners and the temporal restrictions facing researchers.

### **Diversifying movement membership**

Diversification of movement membership refers to a broadening of the cross-section of the population actively involved with movement activities. As scholars have noted, diverse membership can serve to reduce the social distance between the oppressors and oppressed (Bethke and Pinckney 2016; Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 2014; Galtung 1989). Nearly 58% of cases discuss diversification in some form; however, often it is portrayed as a hurdle instead of an asset. For instance, several authors suggest that diversifying the movement through the incorporation of elites and members of the dominant groups can make the movement open to cooptation (Buhlungu 2006; Marx and Useem 1971). This is evident in the dynamics between white allies and blacks in the US Civil Rights movement (Ackerman and Duval 2000; Fairclough 2008; Garrow 1989;

Nepsted 2011).

Manuals, 34% of which discuss diversifying membership, tend to encourage diversification and emphasize its usefulness in increasing the number and scope of movement activists, but they also highlight the risks involved. Lakey et al. (1995) note, “When resources inherent in different backgrounds and perspectives are overlooked, a team’s effectiveness suffers. As a result, the team is less likely to be able to navigate safely through the whitewater or to deal with problems that crop up during everyday paddling” (p.36). However, the authors go on to argue that diversification of the movement “is not simply a numbers game of recruiting people different from you to support your own agenda” (p. 36). As is emphasized in many of the case studies, this and other manuals note that when mismanaged, diversification can lead to cooptation.

A handful of the manuals provide tools for managing the complexity involved in the internal dynamics of diversification, mostly focusing on integrating individuals from the dominant or oppressor group into movement initiatives. *Coming to Ferguson: Building a Nonviolent Movement* (2015), published by the Deep Abiding Love Project, warns against unmonitored diversification and cooptation by white allies, stating, “[I]f you’re coming to Ferguson with the idea that you are going to engage with police, get a photograph taken, get more Twitter followers, and/or write something for national publication, you’re seeking a Movement High” (3). This warning indicates that as the number of prospective members increases during peaks in movement activity, so do the opportunities for those new members to coopt and change the goals and strategies of the movement. To prevent this, the manuals offer a wide range of tactics for handling the diversification process, such as using diversity assessments or implementing sensitivity training using intersectionality, strategic messaging, group dialogue, and the creation of movement specific identity (Jay 1972; Lakey 1987; Burrowes 1996; Hunter and Lakey 2003). These tools suggest that movement actors have a clear sense of both positive and negative aspects of diversification; for scholars, they can serve as frameworks for better understanding how this process is managed in practice.

### **The creation of a shared message or ideology**

Finally, development of a shared message or collective understanding of movement ideology is another major tactic for the internal scaling of movements. This shared understanding is created through the collective framing of the movement’s strategic vision, goals, and tactics within the group. Only about 9% of the cases reviewed discuss the intentional creation of a shared message or ideology. For example, Ackerman and Duval (2005) reference Gandhi’s creation of a shared understanding, or ideology, of nonviolence that helped scale up resistance to British Colonial India in 1946. In analysis of a more contemporary group, Hallward and Shaver (2012) address the creation of a shared sense of purpose and collective ideology among Students for Justice in Palestine activists when pressuring the University of Berkeley to divest from

Israeli companies.

While some cases discuss the importance of having a common message, they shed limited light on the internal processes and strategies that movements utilize to establish and maintain a shared message and ideology. However, according to manuals analyzed – of which 55% discuss the creation of a collective ideology – this can be done through a number of tactics, including dialogue, storytelling, facilitated group strategizing, and community events (Amnesty International 2008; Nepstad 2006; The Ruckus Society 2004; Sen 2003). Ransom and Brown (2013) encourage movement members to “visit another group to share knowledge,” and learn about each other’s local practices. They can involve visits between communities, towns and even nations” (p. 21). We speculate that the gap between cases and manuals is, again, due to the challenges of monitoring or accurately representing, post-hoc, the internal dynamics of movement activists.

### **Outcomes of scaling – external expansion**

Scholarship in the social movement and civil resistance fields highlights the importance of increasing the size and scope of movements in order to influence change (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, 2014; Principe 2016). The size and potential impact of a movement – what we refer to as external expansion – depends on the ability of movement activists to communicate, frame, and educate the broader public, including key influencers, the media, and representatives of political institutions. Yet, both the literature and the manuals warn against complexity of scaling up in numbers and scope too quickly, leaving the movement open to cooptation by other movements and infiltration of regime informants (Amnesty International 2008; Sen 2003; The Ruckus Society 2004). To reduce the negative effects of increasing movement membership, manuals suggest an array of tactics and strategies. In our conceptual model, we primarily emphasize four of these as dimensions of external expansion; increased membership and development of partnerships/coalitions, engagement with third parties and international actors, territorial spread, and engagement with government leadership.

### **Increasing membership**

Networking and building relationships with potential members – that is, individuals actively involved in some way with movement activities – is key to influencing social change. Nearly 48% of cases and 35% of manuals discuss tactics used for increasing membership. The ebb and flow of recruitment was cited in multiple cases as being dependent on external factors that change over time. For instance, Garrow (1989) recounted an “ebb and flow” to the recruitment process during the civil rights movement which fundamentally resulted in too much diversification and the eventual fragmentation of the civil rights movement (p. 80-83). Regional differences between the leadership and group interests can also cause a breakdown in communication.

Another factor in increasing membership is the ability to frame messages strategically in order to increase interest in a movement's work (we discuss framing separately, below, as a process-oriented element of scaling up). In some contexts, movements need to broaden their message in order to include a broader populace. For example, Waite's (2001) review of tactics used during the Chicago Freedom Movement for civil rights suggests that the movement attempted to capture multiple issues (rather than a single issue) in order to "attract a broad constituency" (p. 178). Certain manuals provide insight into strategically targeting movement messaging. One example is Popovic et al.'s (2007) *Canvas Core Curriculum; An Effective Guide to Nonviolent Struggle*, which provides a conceptual framework for understanding different types of community members, what their roles are, and how they hold power in society, in order to strategize and prioritize different messages. Through an exercise linked to this framework (p. 101-110), movement members and leadership can create targeted messaging to potential new membership.

On the case study side, Greene's (2005) analysis of the civil rights movement in Durham, North Carolina highlights the influence of women's spaces, particularly beauty parlors and clubs, as an avenue of recruitment and information dissemination. The analysis suggests, as does the *Canvas Core Curriculum*, that understanding the interests of potential new members can help facilitate pathways, build shared messaging, and create new norms and behaviors. Likewise, Bloch's (2014) *Training Function and Efficacy in Civil Resistance Movements* advocates a multi-level marketing strategy that "depends on the personal relationship to recruit the individual" and "penetrate sectors of society that hadn't been reached before" (p. 20). As a whole, the case studies suggest that understanding how to prioritize framing is important for scaling. However, prioritizing multiple messages also increases the complexity of movement endeavors and therefore the skills needed to control potential conflict between various groups targeted by the messaging.

## **Territorialization**

In addition to increasing the number of activists, movements can scale up in size by increasing their geographical spread, a phenomenon sometimes referred to as *territorialization* (Schock 2015). Movements with large numbers of members confined to a single geographic region have limited influence and are more open than other movements to repression from regime forces (Ackerman and Duval 2000; Arenas 2015; Høigilt 2015; Shock 2015). The process of territorialization can empower and protect marginalized groups that otherwise might remain isolated and prone to repression and manipulation by the regime. Expanding the territorial spread through increasing membership is dependent on how well a movement is able to manage the diversification process.

Despite its conceptual emphasis, only 16% cases and 5% of manuals discuss how movements expand territorially. Cases focused almost entirely on the importance of incorporating rural communities, particularly in uprisings that

originate in capital cities. As an example, Nepstad (2011) recounts the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy movement and how the lack of mobilization in rural areas made it much easier for outside soldiers to “crush the protests” in Beijing (p. 37). Similarly, Ash (2002) highlight how different trade unions from the cities teamed with farmers in the countryside to launch local strikes across the country for economic reform during Polish Solidarity Revolution in 1981 that eventually led to demands for long-term political change.

Territorial spread is important to gaining legitimacy, diversifying the movement, and recruitment of new membership, and yet both the cases and manuals fall short in problematizing and strategizing how, where, and when to expand territorially. The manuals provide limited tools for scaling territorially. Hengren’s (2004) *Path of Resistance: The Practice of Civil Resistance* suggests some strategies for the occupation of land and discourse on its expansion but does not provide any clear frameworks. Ranson and Brown (2013) discuss the importance of land tenure, housing, and owning property in creating nonviolent communities and increasing women’s rights, but do not provide any tactics for scaling. Furthermore, Helvey (2004) argues that land ownership is hierarchical and is used to institutionalize classism. The heavy focus on localized land and housing initiatives in both the cases and manuals suggests that neither empirical scholarship nor practitioner-focused literature have framed movement expansion geospatially, particularly in terms of scaling between local, national, and global levels.

### **Partnership and coalition building**

Numerous scholars (e.g. Chenoweth and Stephan 2014; Karatnycky and Ackerman 2004; Zunes 1999) suggest that engaging external parties and building partnerships across movements helps disseminate movements’ messages quickly and more efficiently by taking advantage of already formed networks and relationships. Indeed, coalition building creates opportunities for increasing a movement’s leverage and ability to persuade government actors (Finnegan and Hackley 2008). Approximately 31% of cases and 61% of manuals discuss partnerships and coalition building. Along with the emphasis on partnerships and coalitions in the conceptual literature, this suggests an awareness of the importance of this element of scaling. It is possible that the relatively low percentage of empirical case studies discussing this issue is a result of scholars’ focus on *single movement campaigns* rather than relationships *between* movements, or between movements and other actors.

The diversification process that occurs when movements seek out partnerships create a number of challenges to activists and movement leadership, particularly when the partnership is an outsider from the community. Indeed, both the empirical case studies and manuals analyzed stress the risk of movements being co-opted by third parties who have their own interests and agendas. The strong focus within empirical case studies on partnership failure and not on the tactics used to build partnerships may suggest that even when

this topic is addressed, researchers do not have a strong framework for understanding successful coalition building process. For instance, Wolff (1970) mentions multiple instances of partnerships being built between civil rights, black power, and black Africanism movements in the United States. Although he argues that these processes both strengthened and weakened the US civil rights movement, Wolff does not provide a history of these partnerships, thus limiting the potential for understanding what about them was beneficial and/or challenging for movement dynamics

Although many of the manuals analyzed point to the potential benefits of coalition- and partnership-building, several also warn of possible cooptation. Rickett's (2012) handbook for activists provides a full review of the pros and cons of partnerships and alliances that is handy when considering movement strategy (p. 51). For instance, Rickett notes that partnerships with international organizations and/or governments may result in increased suspicion and hostility from some members of the community, particularly given that outsiders often have their own agenda and priority when supporting initiatives. More critically, Miller's (2006) training manual argues that outsider intervention is often "unpredictable and hard to manage" (p. 113). This suggests that movement leadership should retain a healthy level of skepticism when approached by other organizations to partner or to build coalitions around a certain goal or initiative.

### **Engaging external parties**

A special kind of partnership occurs with third party, non-movement actors; these linkages are important for movement scaling because of their potential for bringing diverse support to the movement, as well as for the possibilities they generate for obtaining information and resources, and for putting pressure on government regimes (Dudouet 2008; Galtung 1989). The importance of third party support can be seen in the degree to which it is reflected in empirical and activist-oriented literature: this aspect of scaling is discussed in nearly half of the empirical cases (48%) as well as in 61% of manuals analyzed. Table 3 provides a breakdown of the type of actors that movements engaged with in the cases, including foreign governments, diaspora groups, local civil society and faith-based groups, transnational solidarity movements, local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international nongovernmental organizations, and state actors. As the table highlights, there seems to be a close relationship between scholars' perception of the importance of these engagements for movement success and the degree to which relationships with different kinds of actors are discussed. For instance, state actors (such as political parties) are the third-party actor most referenced within the empirical case studies analyzed; the cases where these relationships are discussed are also those that, according to scholars' perceptions, were successful most often. This re-emphasizes the seeming focus in nonviolent movement and civil resistance scholarship on exploring success rather than more holistically addressing possible areas of (unintended and intended) movement impact.



**Table 3. Engaging Third Party Breakdown**

<b>Aspect of Scaling</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>	<b>% of successful cases</b>
Foreign Governments	6 (128)	4.69%	3.89%
Diaspora Groups	3 (128)	2.34%	1.29%
Local Civil Society, Faith-based Groups, Private Sector Group	15 (128)	11.72%	14.28%
Transnational Solidarity Movements	3 (128)	2.34%	2.59%
Local NGOs	2 (128)	1.56%	2.59%
International NGOs	5 (128)	3.91%	6.49%
International Intergovernmental Organizations	4 (128)	3.12%	1.29%
State Actors	36 (128)	28.12%	27.27%
Multiple	3 (128)	2.34%	1.29%

Likewise, many manual authors agree that engaging third parties is an important aspect of scaling up, there are limited tactics presented for doing so. Direct Action’s (1989) *Pledge of Resistance Handbook* is one of the few that does: this manual discusses the importance of networking with third-party actors and promotes the use of these networks as alert systems that can help movements keep tabs on police, military, or other government actors. Several manuals also suggest a system of retreats with third party actors to build capacity, exchange ideas, and develop strategies (Pt’Chang 2005; Herngren 2004; Oxfam 2014; Ransom and Brown 2013). These tools are meant to help movement leadership engage other groups to build consensus around shared goals and to pool resources, yet we suggest that more can be done to highlight concrete approaches for building relationships with external actors.

**Engaging state leadership**

Nearly 65% of case studies, but only 28% of manuals, discuss engaging government leadership. Movement literature emphasizes that engaging state leadership is fundamental to regime change and to changing oppressive legal and political structures (Bartley 1999; Eik 2001; Fairclough 2008; Cockburn

2014; Maguire 2003). Nonviolent movements often rely on the government actors to gain information, advocate for the movement’s goals, and to create less violent environments for civil disobedience. Dialogue, relationship building, negotiations, and strategic messaging can help to scale up strategic nonviolent action as part of civil resistance campaigns. However, when handled improperly, engaging state leadership can be harmful and even dangerous. Table 4 shows the breakdown of state leadership by type. The majority of cases where this is discussed, approximately 25% of all cases analyzed, discuss movement engagement with local, national, and military branches of government.

**Table 4. Engaging State Leadership Breakdown**

<b>Case Studies-Engagement with Government Leadership</b>			
<b>Aspect of Scaling</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>	<b>% of successful cases</b>
National	10 (128)	7.81%	7.79%
Local	15 (128)	11.72%	9.00%
National and Local	13 (128)	10.16%	11.60%
Military	13 (128)	10.16%	10.38%
Local, National, and Military	32 (128)	25.00%	29.79%

Within the manuals where engagement with government leadership is discussed, the primary focus is on tactics that can be used to deal with the threat of violence from state structures (Kahn 1970; Lakey 1987; Litvinoff 2013). The manuals place a strong emphasis on how these interactions can occur and on tactics to help activists manage these relationships. Hengren’s (2004) manual provides tactics on how to deal with police and military violence at protests as well as suggestions for how activists should respond to arrest and interrogation. Ransom and Brown (2013), on the other hand, suggest “Local-to-Local Dialogue” that “helps grassroots groups engage local leaders and public authorities” and “helps participants negotiate with and influence local authorities (15-17). Similarly, Jay’s (1972) against the British government suggests “preemptive diplomacy,” which includes seeking allies among government officials and collecting information and support from them (p. 42-46). These areas of emphasis, along with the relative lack of emphasis on this aspect of scaling up, suggests a grassroots focus in the manuals analyzed that

perhaps places greater emphasis on getting messages across at local levels than achieving large-scale, societal change.

### **Processes of scaling**

In the last section, we discussed the *outcomes* of internal and external scaling. This section is focused on understanding how these outcomes occur, based on our conceptual model. Processes of scaling are the basis for both internal strengthening and external expansion; they are interconnected with outcomes of scaling, and are often mutually reinforcing and aid in gaining momentum for change.

### **Sharing information / use of media**

Sharing information through the media, with both current and prospective movement members, is key to collective action and social change. These messages that movements disseminate can boost morale as well as provide movements with an outlet to communicate alternative narratives (authors, under review). From posters to social media, movements utilize multiple tools at their disposal to communicate and create a shared ideology. Emphasis on this issue in empirical case studies and manuals testifies to its significance: over 57% of cases and 46% of manuals discuss how movements share information with current and/or prospective members.

Approximately 31% of cases discuss movements engaging with local news sources, while 18.75% report the use of multiple types of media at once. For example, during the Civil Rights movement, activists used local newspapers and radio to recruit new members and express the movement goals as well as the reasoning behind certain actions (Garrow 1989; Sinclair 1998). Moreover, international journalists and media helped to hold the U.S. government accountable for beating and jailing protesters by broadcasting across the globe and shaming the administration (Hallward 2012). As another example, Ackerman and Duval (2000) describe how Dutch journalists openly discussed how the German Reich was forcing them to publish specific content and control the media, which helped to boost support of the resistance and increase suspicion of the invading force during WWII. These different examples point to the potential role of multiple media outlets for helping movements consolidate their message and disseminate it widely to obtain support.

Table 5 shows the breakdown of media types discussed in the empirical case studies analyzed, as well as how often these tactics were linked with perceived success of movement endeavors.

**Table 5. Sharing Information (using Media) in Case Studies**

<b>Aspect of Scaling</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>% of Cases</b>	<b>% of successful cases</b>
Local News	40 (128)	31.25%	31.11%
International News	10 (128)	7.81%	3.8%
Social Media	2 (128)	1.56%	1.29%
Multiple	24 (128)	18.75%	15.58%

As discussed earlier, there seems to be a strong relationship between discussion of scaling elements and their perceived importance for movement success in achieving its explicit goals. This further reinforces our argument that scholarship in this area over-represents tactics that are linked to success, with less emphasis on other strategies for scaling. Also important to note here is the dearth of cases mentioning social media; the cases that do examine social media (Golker 2011; King 2013; Tufekci and Wilson 2012) only superficially explore use of this tool and do not differentiate between internal strengthening and external scaling-up. However, we suggest this is largely due to the historical nature of much of the literature examined and does not reflect a perceived lack of importance.

In contrast with the case studies, which primarily highlight the role of media in shaping movement messages, the manuals on nonviolent action and civil resistance provide strategies and tips for engaging with media outlets (Canvas 2006; Direct Action 1989; MoveOn 2012), such as Helvey’s (2004) “seven golden rules for dealing with the press.” A whole chapter in War Resisters International’s (2014) manual focuses on media outreach, engaging with different types of media, and how the media can be both helpful and harmful, stating “it can be hard to interest the media in nonviolent direct action or civil disobedience, because of course you often have to keep things secret until the last minute” (p. 134). The differences in focus suggest a possible avenue for further scholarly research to address the gap between manuals explaining how movement activists *should* engage with media and case studies emphasizing the impact of media use on movements. Specifically, further examination is needed to understand the dynamics of how movement members *are* engaging with media in order to disseminate their messages, particularly in the current context of widespread social media and lack of centralized media messaging.

### **Educational programming**

As a process, educational programming can be used both as a tool for strengthening the work of existing movement activists, and as a way of disseminating ideas externally to gain supporters and movement adherents. Moreover, as membership increases and the diversification process introduces

greater movement complexity, educational programming can help manage hierarchical inequalities with movements and facilitate adoption of alternative institutions and more equitable practices. These alternative systems foster dialogue and build relationships between diverse membership, thus further strengthening the commitment of members and scaling internally.

Moreover, 28% of cases discuss educational programming as a tactic for scaling up, while only 6% of manuals do (although, of course, we can consider the manuals themselves an example of educational programming). For instance, Barkowsky (2013) explains how members of the nonviolent revolution in Poland in 1860s provided educational programming through lectures, theatrical performances, exhibitions and other forums. Educational programming is also cited as being used in nonviolent movements across Eastern block Europe in efforts to resist Russian and German advances (Lavery 2000). Moser-Puangsuwan (2013) outlines the ways through which activists used parallel educational institutions to the government's in order to foster the collective consciousness needed to resist colonial powers. Together, these cases suggest that educational programs assist in external scaling by increasing public awareness of the problems through framing and increasing membership.

Reasons for the lack of focus on educational programming in the manuals examined are not clear to us, although we speculate that for the purposes of organizers writing these manuals, educational programming may be intertwined with other concepts and not addressed as a separate issue. In those manuals that discuss educational programming, however, the focus is primarily on internal scaling, as distinct from the external focus of discussion in the case studies. Pt'Chang's (2005) *Nonviolence Training Project: Trainers Resource Guide* is an excellent training manual for teaching and creating a shared ideology around nonviolent action through "popular education and experiential learning" (p. 29). Several manuals suggest skilled facilitation as being instrumental to educational and constructive programming (Coover, Esser, and Deacon 1978; The Ruckus Society 2003; Sen 2003; Brown 2007; Miller 2006). Coover, Esser, and Deacon (1978) take this further, suggesting the use of Freire's (1996) *critical pedagogy* to restructure education and recommending the integration of nonviolent action into the entire education system. The distinction between cases and manuals here seems to reflect an emphasis on *outcomes* in the former, whereas in the latter, processes *that can lead to scaling* are of primary focus.

### **Communication for scaling: strategic communication and framing**

Finally, as noted above, we discuss communication processes separately because of their significance as a foundation for other scaling processes. In particular, messaging and framing are both used to strengthen nonviolent movements internally and helps to facilitate external scaling up. Frames – in the form of messages that movements send, either through the media, through expressions

of their demands and ideology that are presented at protests or demonstrations, or perhaps via educational activities – can help, at an individual level, lead to the process of cognitive liberation that is perceived as central to recruiting movement activists (Nepstad 1997; Piven and Cloward 1977). Indeed, in social movement scholarship, framing is perceived as central for movements to highlight interests and challenge dominant actors (Benford and Snow 2000).

Of the literature reviewed, however, only 32% of cases discuss framing, while 96% of manuals address this topic. In both case studies and manuals, framing is discussed as a tool to increase support, recruit new members, and build larger coalitions, while others include proactive or reactive framing to more generally address public discourse. Interestingly, both also focus on the *how* of framing, with cases describing how campaigns used an array of outlets to spread movement messages, and manuals addressing concrete strategies for doing so. For instance, Harvey's (2004) manual notes, "how you word or 'frame' a goal can have a huge impact on its acceptance among the members of the group, and potential allies and adversaries. It can be useful to test the suitability of your goal using the following tool" (p. 52); the manual provides a chart for mapping different types of messaging that is focused on the intended receiver. Likewise, Popovic et al. (2007) provide an entire chapter on strategic communication and framing techniques, arguing that framing messages is important for helping people express their discontent, convey the vision and objectives of the movement, provide information and facts that the opponent is hiding, and influence public debate and perceptions of key players that support the oppressive regime by conveying information to the media and international community. On the case study side, Ackerman and Duval (2000) explain how Gandhi's Satyagraha teachings were made into a manual that was used as a symbol of change against the oppression of Great Britain; they also highlight the use of framing as a strategy for gaining movement support in Poland during unionization strikes in the 1980s. As they note, use of union imagery and masculine attributes in the frames used by the anti-communist movement allowed it to recruit new members who did not normally subscribe to liberal ideals in rural Poland.

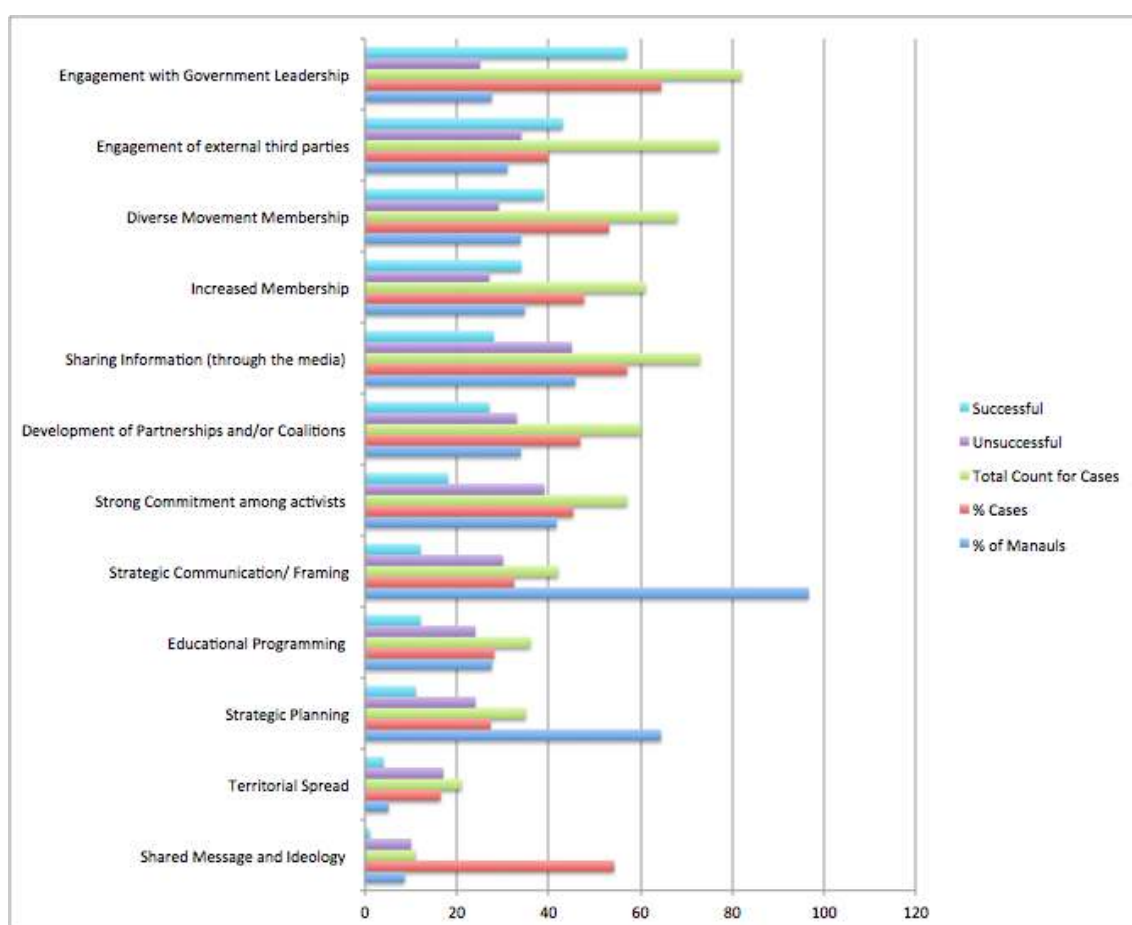
It is unclear why there is such a discrepancy between discussion of framing in empirical case studies and manuals, especially given the relatively similar emphasis on the significance and tools of framing where it is discussed. One possibility raised earlier in the manuscript is that decisions about how to frame movement messages may be made by a small cadre of movement leaders to whom researchers do not have access. Another possibility may be the focus of much empirical scholarship on actors and targets of change, rather than the more amorphous communication processes that underlie engagement in strategic action (Chabot 2012).

### **Using success to identify gaps in the research on scaling up**

Of the case studies analyzed, 36% are described as successful. As noted above,

there is no set definition for “success”; rather, its use to describe campaign outcomes depends entirely on the perspective of the case study author(s). While lack of a standardized definition may be problematic, it is also important for helping identify gaps in existing scholarship about civil resistance and nonviolent social change campaigns. In particular, our analysis allows us to better understand gaps between what is emphasized in manuals preparing activists for nonviolent action, and the aspects of scaling up that researchers focus upon because of a perceived relationship to success. We visualize this gap in Graph 1 below:

**Graph 1. Research Focus on Aspects of Scaling in Empirical Cases**



The graph compares the number of times each aspect of scaling up is discussed in empirical case studies cases determined by the author to be successful, with those described as unsuccessful, as well as the number of times these aspects are discussed in the manuals and case studies analyzed. By formatting the graph in descending order of number of successful cases described, we see that the general trend for discussing aspects of scaling up in empirical literature corresponds with how often those elements of scaling are linked to what are

perceived to be “successful” campaigns. This indicates that case study authors attribute similar aspects of scaling up to movement or campaign success; however, in focusing primarily on these aspects, the authors miss a more comprehensive understanding of how different dimensions of scaling can help broaden movement impact in ways that are not linked to achieving explicitly articulated goals or outcomes.

Comparing the cases studies to the manuals shows very specific gaps in existing research. According to this analysis, the manuals suggest that strategic communication and framing are particularly important, but these are not addressed much in the case study literature. Similarly, neither strategic planning nor the creation of a shared message or ideology are discussed in many of the case studies or associated with success, even as these aspects of scaling are heavily emphasized in the manuals. However, the reasons for these gaps are unclear. It is possible that the trends point to epistemological differences among scholars and practitioners – that is, differences in the way they understand nonviolent movements. As discussed earlier, it is also possible that researchers are not addressing these issues of scaling in their work due to methodological challenges, e.g., access to internal discussions about movement strategy.

## **Conclusions and recommendations**

Our hope is that this analysis opens the door to further discussion of the ways we study nonviolent action in social movement campaigns, and how this compares to the focus of practitioners and activists on the ground. Researchers often struggle to embed themselves in movements and capture internal dynamics in real time. As a result, scholarship on nonviolent activism has been largely reliant on second hand and post-hoc sources of data about movement actions, and these approaches have come to shape the methodological and substantive focus of the field – but have also limited our understanding of the dynamics that enable or mitigate success.

Our analysis sheds light on several avenues we believe warrant further exploration. First, it is clear that aspects of internal strengthening, such as strategic planning, are significantly under-researched in empirical case studies of civil resistance. We question whether successful outcomes can occur if foundational relationships and a strong, shared ideology are not already set in place through dialogue, open and free communication, and trust. The majority of empirical scholarship, however, fails to critically evaluate the process and tools used to increase dialogue and relationship building (for exceptions, see Chabot 2012; Finnegan and Hackley 2008; Wanis-St. John and Rosen 2017). This limited focus means that it is not possible to explore the ways in which internal dynamics can shape other dimensions and aspects of scaling up, and vice-versa. Yet, activist-oriented manuals suggest that these particular areas are significant and a core part of campaign planning. This demonstrates the need for further research to tease out these mutually reinforcing processes and help us understand success in more comprehensive ways..



Given the overall lack of focus in empirical case studies on aspects of scaling related to internal strengthening, we raise questions about the ability of scholars to conduct meaningful research without witnessing movement strategizing behind closed doors. Analysis of internal movement dynamics is crucial for understanding movement scaling, especially if internal strengthening is the foundation to scaling outwardly. It is true that our exploration of empirical case studies (as discussed above) is limited in scope and does not reflect the full range of movement scholarship, including more contemporary analyses. However, the reliance on post-hoc accounts is concerning, as it reflects a significant bias in how we aim to understand social movements and thus *what* we can understand of them.

We also argue for further attention in both empirical scholarship and among movement activists to certain aspects of scaling. For instance, capacity building is a broad term and comprises multiple skills. However, researchers often do not assess which skills are needed for scaling or what tactics have been used to teach members of the movement these skills. As a result, there are limited frameworks for monitoring and evaluating the work of nonviolent movements. This limitation is evident within movement manuals as well, even as the need for movement organizations and campaigns to critically assess each action is crucial. Likewise, more research is needed to understand the role of social media in scaling civil resistance and nonviolent movements. Our analysis illustrates that social media can be used both for increasing membership by engaging prospective activists, but also for communicating ideas and building capacity and relationships among existing movement members. However, the literature does not provide a conceptual framework for understanding social media or methods for researching this scaling tool. Moreover, social media use is not well defined within activist-focused manuals; when it is discussed, social media is addressed broadly, without distinguishing between its many forms. As social media use becomes an ever more significant organizing tool, the need for both scholars and activists to assess its potential benefits and disadvantages is clear.

Finally, territorialization is a topic that has been largely neglected within the scholarly literature. Many of the case studies mention issues pertaining to rural and urban outreach and how these geographies shape movement expansion, but no framework exists that might help movement activists understand which geographic areas to evaluate and target, particularly when scaling from the national to the international level. Greater attention to territorial spread by academic scholars can help activists aiming to scale their initiatives understand whether and in what ways they should approach geographic dispersal.

Beyond this, our analysis highlights a general disconnect between the focus of scholars working on issues of nonviolent action in social movements and civil resistance, and that of activists working on the ground to pursue nonviolent social change. Deeper integration across these two communities is important for understanding the dynamics of nonviolent movements and ensuring that the work of movement members is supported by best practices. Some of this might

come in the form of greater attention to systematic self-focused research among movement activists, who would likely greatly benefit from taking on an action research or participatory action research approach to enable critical reflection upon their work. We encourage practitioners and activists in the field to engage more in structured practices that enable reflection on issues such as activist commitment, systematic assessment of action impact, and clear analysis of skills needed to build movement capacity. These practices might take the form of regular (annual or semi-annual) meetings focused on systematic self-reflection, or dissemination of surveys to committed members of an organization or movement network, as a few possibilities.

Finally, we encourage scholars to engage in more real-time analysis of internal movement dynamics, and for movement activists to draw upon frameworks in the academic literature to more critically examine, and place greater attention to specific elements of, their processes of strategic planning and engagement with both third parties and government leaders. Our comparative methodological approach could also be applied to strengthen the findings from more recent analyses. Greater cross-fertilization across these groups will bring activists closer to achieving long-term, sustainable change.

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