The Impact of Non-State Actors (NSAs) on Civic Space in Bangladesh, Palestinian Territories and Zimbabwe: How Do Resources Influence NGO Resilience?

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CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organisations and activists dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society around the world. We strive to promote marginalised voices, especially from the Global South, and have members in more than 175 countries throughout the world.

Abstract

Increasing evidence suggests that restrictions on NGO advocacy activity are on the rise. Although state restrictions have attracted some attention in academia, restrictions on NGO activity by Non-State Actors (NSAs) have received surprisingly little attention. Why is it that some NGOs can resist this pressure when others reduce activity? This research looks at NSA actions on human rights NGOs and tests whether different NGO resources drive variation in resilience outcomes. Using collective action theory, it argues that restrictions impose "costs" on the NGO resources: people, networks and finances. Drawing on field work and case evidence from Bangladesh, Palestine and Zimbabwe it will adopt a comparative approach using process tracing.

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Introduction

On the 25th April 2016, six masked men broke into a flat in downtown Dhaka, Bangladesh (Hammadi and Gani 2016). Wielding machetes, the assailants quickly located the flat's owner (CIVICUS 2017a). By the end of the evening, Xulhaz Manan lay dead on his living room floor. The perpetrators - although never found - were alleged to be members of a religious-extremist group operating in Bangladesh (PEN America 2016). Their motivation was to prevent the spread of secularism and immoral values. It later transpired that Xulhaz Manan was targeted for his work as a human rights activist. More specifically, as an activist working on LGBTI issues (Amnesty International 2017). In fact, Manan was the editor of Bangladesh's only LGBTI magazine, a publication called *Roopban*. He was also prominently involved with the only human rights group focussed on defending LGBTI rights in the country: Boys of Bangladesh (Article 19 2016).

Yet, the work of violent religious extremists in Bangladesh cannot be viewed in isolation. At the time, Bangladeshi authorities were orchestrating their own crackdown on critical voices. Between 2013 - 2016, the government of Bangladesh summoned and detained over 100 critical journalists on various fabricated charges (PEN America 2016). It was not only journalists who were harassed. In 2012, the government cancelled the registration of 6,000 NGOs (Human Rights Watch 2012). Many of the most critical human rights groups were forced to close and never reopened. The signal was clear: speak out on contentious issues and face the consequences. In this context, religious groups like the ones who murdered Manan quickly stepped up their activities. Their methods were brutal. The ensuing bloodshed left 39 bloggers, journalists, activists and academics hacked to death in towns and cities across Bangladesh (Anand and Manik 2018). Their machete attacks placed the international spotlight on the situation for Bangladeshi human rights defenders (Odhikar 2016). Yet, amidst the violence, the authorities did little to stop the bloodshed. In fact, police in Dhaka failed to submit an investigation into Manan's death on nine separate occasions (CIVICUS 2017a). The same story was repeated in many of the other investigations into the machete attacks. Despite a wide-reaching police crackdown including 11,000 arrests (Human Rights Watch 2016), many of the 39 murders remain unsolved.

In 2019 and defying the odds, Boys of Bangladesh continues to operate. In fact, it is still recognised as the oldest and only human rights network focussed on LGBTI issues in Bangladesh. Despite unimaginable hardship and loss of prominent activists like Xulhaz Manan, the group continues undeterred. How is this so?

I seek to understand this puzzle. To do so, my project is split into two parts: on the one hand, I seek to explore how and why non-state actors (NSAs), perpetrate restrictive actions against human rights NGOs. In particular, I will explore if NSAs like transnational corporations or armed extremist groups exploit state aggression on NGOs to further their own objectives. On the other, I also seek to understand how the resources of finances money and people influence NGO resilience to these threats. I argue that NGOs with high resources are the most resilient to restrictions on their activities.

To theorise this dynamic relationship between NSAs and NGOs I use Olson's (1965) theory of collective action. Collective action theory links the provision of public goods, group size and participation outcomes (Hansen, Mitchell, and Drope 2005). I view restrictions on NGO activity as costs which are imposed on NGO resources. I argue that in the context of state hostility, NSAs step-up restrictive actions against NGOs. Therefore, state restrictions are selective incentives for NSAs to impose further cumulative costs on NGOs. For NGOs, aggression from any source takes its toll. More specifically the NGO resources of finances, people and networks carry the burden of aggression from both states and NSAs. Consequently, for NGOs, restrictions raise the cost of participation in human rights activism.

Restrictions on civil society are attracting increasing attention (United Nations 2016; CIVICUS 2017b; European Parliament 2017; International Center for Non-Profit Law (ICNL) 2018). Despite this attention, it is surprising that studies investigating the role of NSAs in restricting the operation of NGOs are notably lacking. This study sits at the forefront of a new discussion in both academia and policy fora. While emerging time-series datasets in academia document[1] the scale of state restrictions imposed on civil society (Smidt, Bakke, Mitchell, and Perera 2018). Little is known about how NSAs exploit this rising tide of state aggression to choreograph their own restrictions on civil society.

[1] For example UCL's data coding state department restrictions between 1994 – 2014.

My focus throughout this project is human rights NGOs, namely those unafraid to advocate for the rights of others. I will examine the sequence of events before, during and after the imposition of restrictive actions by NSAs. More specifically, I intend to view this relationship through the prism of NGO advocacy and their ability to publicly conduct campaigns on human rights issues. To test this theory, I will collect evidence from three cases: Bangladesh, Palestine and Zimbabwe. I choose these cases as they have variation on my independent variable, types of NSA and their actions. As well as on my dependent variable, NGO resilience.

I proceed as follows. I begin by offering an overview of literature relevant to my study. I then turn my attention to research design. Finally, I conclude this paper with a discussion regarding my application of process tracing.

Civil Society and Confrontations

Civil society has attracted considerable research attention in academia (Mann 1984; Hadenius and Uggla 1996; Vakil 1997; Anheier 2002). One group in this patchwork quilt of actors has outshone all others, NGOs (Banks, Hulme, and Edwards 2015). Since the end of the cold war, the proliferation of NGOs has spawned countless theories on their role in influencing states (Frantz 1987; Putnam 1993; Vakil 1997; Coston 1998; Mann 2008). From the provision of public goods and services, to vehicles for participation, NGOs have been at the forefront of an associational revolution (Salamon 1994). While the universe of NGOs is vast, my project focusses on human rights advocacy NGOs. This critical subsection of civil society is vital in holding states to account (Sikkink 1993; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse and Sikkink 1999). By monitoring states' bad behaviour, local advocacy NGOs are essential for human rights progress (Risse and Sikkink 1999; Risse and Ropp 2013). As advocates, their role in naming and shaming has proven a potent force (Franklin 2008; Krain 2012). Information from local groups is the lifeblood of human rights progress (Ron, Ramos, and Rodgers 2005; Meernik, Aloisi, Sowell, and Nichols 2012; Smidt et al. 2018).

This research focusses on human rights NGOs. As a mobilising force, the maturity of the global human rights movement has foreshadowed the explosion of NGOs (Wong 2012). The enshrined universality of human rights enabled emerging NGOs to work within a uniform framework of shared norms and values (Jochnick 1999; Ron et al. 2005; Murdie and Peksen

2014). In fact, the foundational respect for dignity and rights of the individual has become the bedrock for a multitude of social, economic and philosophical struggles. Consequently, local human rights NGOs occupy “pride of place” in the mosaic of global activism (Ron et al. 2005). These local human rights NGOs are defined by their “anti-politics” wherein they openly criticise the state for failing to uphold human rights or prevent non-state actors from abusing the rights of others (Ron and Crow 2015). The beacon of human rights is a central organising principle. Local human rights NGOs are at the forefront of activism across the world.

Given their role as catalysts for “anti-politics”, it comes as no surprise that national human rights groups come into conflict with states (Ausderan 2014; Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2016; Popplewell 2018). This is especially true for those exposing and mobilising around human rights abuse. The work of human rights NGOs often engenders confrontation (Forst 2016), or worse, physical danger for activists affiliated with critical NGOs. This assertion accounts for the increase in restrictions on NGOs. As NGOs shine a light on human rights abuses, some states have taken steps to derail their activities (Smidt et al. 2018). Restrictions prevent NGOs from drawing attention to states’ non-compliance with human rights obligations.

Restrictions thus, have interrupted the informational role of local human rights groups. Local advocacy is important. Local NGO advocacy, when conducted with influential transnational allies, is an even more powerful approach (Brysk 1993; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999; Cardenas 2004; della Porta and Tarrow 2005). Information from local groups drives this chain (Smidt et al. 2018). But, naming and shaming is also risky for national NGOs (Brechenmacher 2017). It drives coercion and restrictions by states wishing to silence criticism. Restrictions on local NGOs obstructs this flow of critical information to transnational networks of other human rights NGOs and multilateral institutions. States, thus, have a vested interest in restricting their critics. Stopping criticism by local NGOs preserves their international reputation (Bob 2005; Hendrix and Wong 2013), or prevents international meddling (Murdie and Peksen 2014). From documenting disrupted protests, to exposing genocides, local NGOs broker information to international groups to "shame" states globally (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse et al. 1999; Krain 2012; Ausderan 2014). Evidence from local human rights NGOs is the thread that links the local with the global.

It is not only states that restrict NGOs. An increasing body of evidence highlights that NSAs also perpetrate human rights abuses (Sikkink 1986; Paust 1992; Thomas and Beasley 1993; Jochnick 1999; Brysk 2005). Legal examinations of NSAs and human rights note the contestation between a subsection of these actors. Clapham (2006) proposes that "…corporations, mercenaries, international organisations, criminal organisations, and terrorists." (pg. 43) have the capacity to violate human rights. The acknowledgement of these actors' power moves away from the traditional focus on the state. Instead it magnifies the intersection and distribution of power outside of the state. Tilly (2007) highlights that it is vital to "examine the coalitions, rivalries, and confrontations among major political actors outside of the state." (pg. 13). The emphasis on NSAs shifts attention away from state's ability to control these actors (Mann 1984) by recognising the state's malleability to a panoply of non-state groups (Migdal 1994). It means that NSAs can co-opt elements of the state (Tilly 2007; van der Borgh and Terwindt 2014).

Intuitively, if these groups are capable of orchestrating human rights violations, one does not need to stretch the imagination too far to envisage them repressing human rights NGOs. In the same way that an NGO can impose costs on a state through advocacy, the same logic applies to NSAs (Keck and Sikkink 1998; della Porta and Tarrow 2005). Regardless of the target, it is clear that advocacy by NGOs drives this chain of events.

Advocacy

Scholars in political science have long viewed advocacy as political. NGO advocacy and mobilisation tactics can manifest in numerous ways (Swidler 1986; McEntire, Leiby, and Krain 2015), from quiet diplomacy to outright naming and shaming campaigns (Gordon 2008; Barakso 2010). NGOs have choices: cooperation or confrontation with states.

This is not a zero-sum game. Work on human rights advocacy reminds us that varying tactics are vital (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 2005). Variety in advocacy type enables small NGOs to take on powerful actors. Adaptability and innovation applies pressure through as many avenues as possible (Busby 2007; Carpenter 2007). National NGOs leverage connections and channels to influence the state (Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993; Elkins and Simmons 2005; Murdie 2014). If these domestic channels close, national groups look internationally (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Bob 2010). Thus, the characteristics of the state inadvertently influence NGO

advocacy strategy (Bloodgood 2010). States receptive to NGO activity may welcome cooperation from civil society. Others, sensitive to criticism, may close spaces for critical advocacy. A confrontational approach by states may force a confrontational response from NGOs (Coston 1998).

Some approaches highlight that states are not always the target of advocacy (Brysk 1996; McCarthy, Mcadam, and Zald 1996; Tarrow 2005). Instead, an NGO may seek to mobilise the general population in the hope of spurring them into action (Tilly 1978; Frantz 1987; Wapner 1995). Be it through boycott or protest, their aim is to inspire others to join the struggle (Granovetter 1978; Lichbach 1987). These perspectives view public cooperation as essential in building support towards policy change. Audience is thus a key factor in influencing NGO advocacy tactics. Some contemporary studies point to political context or geographic location (Stroup 2012; Stroup and Murdie 2012). These echo sentiments about the characteristics of the state in influencing NGO behaviour. As such, they overlook resources as a key determinant of advocacy. Indeed, they diverge from long-standing literatures that argue resources influence civic actions (Tilly, Tilly, and Tilly 1975; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tilly 1978).

How then do restrictions on NGO activity fit into this puzzle? Only a handful of studies document this phenomenon (i.e. Beswick 2010 in Rwanda; Dupuy et al. 2016 in Ethiopia; Wood 2016 in Kenya). Despite identifying different experiences, these studies' conclusions are comparable. Coercive state restrictions were found to be a method of silencing dissent or preventing criticism from NGOs. Rather than being linear, restrictions were imposed in waves (Carothers and Brechenmacher 2014). States altered the scale and severity of restrictions on dissident organisations and activists. Their targeted approach illuminated the boundaries of dissent. Restrictions drew a line in the sand for vocal NGOs: speak out and face the consequences. This approach silenced vocal critics and discouraged other would-be dissenters. States closed space for NGO advocacy. Restrictions, thus, are a way of controlling confrontational and critical NGOs.

It is logical to suggest that these restrictions influence NGO behaviour. The most in-depth academic study of NGO responses documents events in four countries, Guatemala, Honduras, the Philippines and Indonesia (van der Borgh and Terwindt 2014). This study finds that when faced with pressure, NGOs have two choices. Proactive strategies which reclaim space for

operation or defensive measures which ensure survival (van der Borgh and Terwindt 2012). This means two options, dig-in and fight or retreat and survive. A more recent study expands this study of NGO responses to repression. Looking at Russia, Egypt and Ethiopia, Brechenmacher (2017) offers an expanded typology of NGO responses. Her approach moves away from van der Borgh and Terwindt's (2012) binary interpretation of NGO responses. Instead, she evidences the dynamism and innovation in both NGO and state adaptation. NGOs adapt, innovate and push the boundaries of dissent when faced with restrictions. They campaign when they can, but also make tactical concessions where necessary. States also adapt and innovate. They impose restrictions in waves of increasing severity to stamp out dissent. Agitation and confrontation between NGOs and states is unending.

This finding is not necessarily new. Contentious politics theorises this cyclical relationship between agitator and state (McCarthy et al. 1996; Mcadam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). This relationship is dynamic, interactive and iterative (Snyder and Tilly 1972; Tilly 1994). Social change demands constant tactical innovation and concession (Gurr 1974; Lichbach 1987; Rasler 1996). Agitator and state are in an ever-evolving battle to outfox and outflank each other.

For agitators, tactical innovation challenges power. With limited resources, challengers innovate to offset their powerlessness (Mcadam 1983). Evolving repertoires of collective action force concession through disruption (della Porta and Tarrow 1986, 2005). Clearly, these disruptive tactics can vary in severity and danger. For the individual, tactical innovation is about costs of participation (Granovetter 1978). As restrictions on dissent increase, the cost of participation rises (Henderson 1991; Khawaja 1993; Lawrence 2017). Consequently, I view restrictions on NGOs as a tool to raise the cost of further dissent. As restrictions clampdown on challengers, tactical innovation and disruptive tactics become increasingly dangerous. For those challenging power, continuing confrontation means taking risks.

Signalling: The Gloves are Off

A variety of authors have focussed on studying the relationship between repression and dissent (Lichbach 1987; Henderson 1993; Moore 1998, 2000; Carey 2006, 2010). The overarching consensus highlights that dissent drives repression (Ritter and Conrad 2016). I argue that that state restrictions on NGOS starts a signalling process for NSAs.

In these literatures, repression is defined as any legal, extra-legal, violent or non-violent action which prevents participation in governance processes (Nordås and Davenport 2013; Sullivan 2016). Restrictive actions on NGOs are a form of repression. My project seeks to understand the sequence of events taking place between repressive NSA actions and NGO responses. Given this starting point, a central piece of the puzzle lies in the signalling used by states against critical NGOs. An emerging body of evidence highlights that concerns over state restrictions on NGO activity are on the rise globally (Carothers and Brechenmacher 2014; CIVICUS 2017b; International Center for Non-Profit Law (ICNL) 2018; Smidt et al. 2018). Aligning to the theory, we explain this phenomenon through the assertion that NGO dissent drives state restrictions. I view these restrictions as part of a signalling process. It is plausible to argue that not only do states restrict NGOs, NSAs also repress their critics. As such, I argue that NSAs exploit state aggression against NGOs to orchestrate their own campaigns of restriction and violence.

My study seeks to interrogate the veracity of a specific causal sequence. This can be explained as follows: NGO advocacy activity which provokes state restriction, which in turn emboldens NSAs to further restrict NGOs. This provokes an NGO response dependent on resource strength.

To explain this process, I seek a theoretical framework to help explain participation. Thus, I use collective action theory. Olson's (1965) seminal contribution in The Logic of Collective Action challenged the notion that individuals with similar interests will automatically work together for a common goal (p. 2). Olson does this by linking group size, public goods and participation outcomes (Hansen et al. 2005). Collective action theory (Olson 1965) views participation in terms of costs and benefits. Costs refer to the “burdens involved in achieving the group’s objective” (p. 2) and benefits are the result of “further[ing] the interests of group members” (p. 6). Thus, Olson interrogates the conditions under which individuals with similar interests organise to pursue a common objective.

Olson’s theory can be distilled to a basic assertion: without coercion, why absorb costs, if others can pay the price? If an individual cannot be excluded from enjoying a good, there is little incentive to voluntarily contribute anything towards achieving it in the first place. This is

collective action's central dilemma. The theory predicts, those who can, will do nothing while enjoying the benefits. Olson's (1965) terms this action free-riding (p. 76). This central assertion has cast a long shadow in academia, by inspiring a variety of authors to contest, build upon or test his theory (Granovetter 1978; Ostrom 1990; Marwell and Oliver 1993; Tarrow 1994). Yet, Olson's theory remains: those who can, will free-ride.

Crucially, collective action theory views the relationship between costs and benefits through the lens of group size. Olson starts from the assertion that smaller groups are better at working to promote common interests than large ones (p. 2). Smaller groups are able to share both the benefits of collective action, and the costs of achieving them more effectively (pp. 22:23). Individuals are incentivised by the knowledge that their share of collective goods will be high, even if they must endure costs to gain them. Olson draws on long standing social theorists to contend that small groups are also bound by kinship links (Parsons, Bales, and Shils 1953; Parsons and Bales 1955). These are groups where associations have been formalised through face to face interaction. They are likened to family. Due to these strong ties, small groups can sustain collective action if collective goods outweigh costs.

Alternatively, larger groups are prone to challenges. These are groups where individual may not know each other and are not bound by kinship links (Parsons et al. 1953; Parsons and Bales 1955). As a result, Olson (1965) identifies three distinct yet cumulative problems faced by larger groups (p. 48). These problems can be described as follows. In large groups, rational individuals acting in the interest of others will inevitably be poorly rewarded for furthering the group's interest. Why provide collective good for inactive members? Thus, the group's collective interests are hindered due to inaction. Secondly, the abundance of collective goods in larger groups is, by definition smaller. Even if a dedicated individual did decide to work in the interest of a larger group, the reward would be too small for carrying such a burden. As a result, poor distribution of collective goods drives benefits down. Finally, organising collective action in larger groups is more burdensome, so coordination becomes a cost. Organisation even among a subset of the group may, at the very least, prove challenging. In consideration of these factors, Olson argues that larger groups are less efficient than smaller groups (p. 28).

Yet, Olson (1965) offers the provision of selective goods as a counterbalance to this assertion. Selective goods sustain collective action in large groups by incentivising participation (p. 133).

These are benefits which discourage freeriding. I argue that selective benefits are essential for NGOs, as they help large civic groups navigate Olson's free-rider problem. I use this theory to posit that state restrictions on NGOs are selective incentives for NSAs in repression. These state actions signal that "the gloves are off". They encourage and incentivise participation in restrictive actions against persecuted state critics. Investigations into the use of state restrictions on NGOs highlight that when faced with aggression, NGOs quickly adapt. They shift focus to prevent further hostility, rebranding or quietly reframing activities to guard against reprisal. However, investigations into the effectiveness of these restrictions have also highlighted the dynamism of this relationship (Carothers and Brechenmacher 2014; van der Borgh and Terwindt 2014; Smidt et al. 2018). They find the effectiveness of restrictions is contingent on the severity of repression and cumulative impact of restrictions. So, restrictions are part of a dynamic game wherein NGOs and their aggressors constantly revaluate the costs and benefits of participation.

In keeping with this notion, others have expanded collective action theory, arguing that decision making is far from a static process (Snyder and Tilly 1972; Tilly 1978). In fact, individuals constantly assess and reassess the costs and benefits of participation (Granovetter 1978; Schelling 1978; Marwell and Oliver 1993). Some have looked to the tactical choices of fellow participants as well as the distribution of power among the group (Siegel 2009, 2011; Moe 2014). Yet, the same dilemma appears. Olson's theory predicts, that for large groups, even in favourable conditions, free-riding hinders collective action. The trade-off between "free-riding" or active participation is omnipotent. How then can Olson's framework explain the phenomenon at the centre of my study? How does his contribution on collective action help explore NSA actions and NGO resilience?

I start my study from the assumption that state restrictions have been unsuccessful in completely eradicating NGO activities. Rather, NGOs have endured state aggression and have been forced to rethink their activities. In this context, NSAs with converging interests step up repressive activities against NGOs. I draw from these assertions to devise my first testable hypothesis. Drawing from the above theory it is plausible to expect *NSA increase actions against critical NGOs after state restrictions (H1).*

Resources

NGOs are far from passive actors. Studies also highlight that some NGOs choose to dig-in and fight while others quickly fold under pressure (van der Borgh and Terwindt 2014; Brechenmacher 2017). How then can we explain this variation? So far, I have focused on a theorised sequence of events. I used Olson's (1965) collective action theory to argue that state restrictions create selective incentives for NSAs to increase activities against NGOs. I will now outline how these restrictions impact NGOs by assessing their resources. I argue that restrictive activities - regardless of their origin - impose costs on NGOs resources. These costs then influence an NGO's advocacy output.

The use of collective action theory to assess NGO activity is not new (Johnson and Prakash 2007; Henderson 2010; Lecy, Mitchell, and Peter Schmitz 2010). However, its use in conjunction with restrictions is. Thus, I use Olson's (1965) theory to argue that restrictions are an added cost of advancing group objectives. As NGOs face restrictions, this pressure increases the propensity of individuals to free-ride. If confrontation between state and NGO escalates after advocacy, participation becomes dangerous. This in turn encourages freeriding and collective action falters. Restrictive NSA actions against NGOs are thus a selective disincentive to continue work.

Olson's theory is applicable on two levels. Firstly, collaboration between NGOs is a hallmark of the sector (Wapner 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Hadden and Jasny 2017). Especially if confronting the state, there is strength in numbers. Be it to leverage networks, to gather information or to share resources. NGOs working in coalition increase their visibility and attract further participation. It is thus possible to expect that restrictions would alter alliance behaviour. If restrictions target an NGO, it raises the cost of collaboration between NGOs. Other NGOs may be reluctant to absorb these costs leading to less collective action. An NGO facing aggression may find itself quickly alone in a hostile world.

Collective action theory is also applicable on an individual level. Globally, many key players in the human rights NGO movement use membership as a resource. Membership-based human rights groups have come to dominate the global NGO landscape (i.e. Amnesty International, CIVICUS; International Freedom of Expression Exchange; International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association & Association for Women's Rights in Development). These

global memberships are an intimidating asset. Bigger memberships mean more money, greater legitimacy and political clout. Locally the same logic applies. National NGOs with members make groups accountable to constituents (Anheier 2002; Wapner 2002). Numbers mean strength, especially when advocating on sensitive issues. Strength means it is harder to silence voices in speaking numbers (Walker 1983). As stakeholders, members use decision making structures to influence decision making (Hansen 1985; Schneider 2007). Given this, my focus on an NGO's provision of selective goods is important. Given their role as a counterbalance to the problem of free-riding, members constrain NGOs to keep providing selective benefits (Olson 1965). Restrictions are selective disincentives to stop contentious activities. As such, there is a tension. Theory would suggest that incentives to members would factor highly in NGO decision making (Hirschman 1970), even if those advocacy decisions come with costs. This is especially true when faced with escalating state restrictions. These groups have an incentive to dig in and fight. Thus, I argue that NGOs with a strong and vibrant membership are more resilient to state coercion.

People are a key attribute for NGOs, but it is also clear that an NGO cannot run solely with the support of people. To theorise the other resources available to NGOs, I look to literature on resource mobilisation. Resource mobilisation has attracted considerable attention in academia (Tilly et al. 1975; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Tilly 1978; McCarthy et al. 1996). From this strand of literature, I derive two other key resources for NGO operation: networks and finances. I will now outline the resources of networks and finances.

Networks are the lifeblood of social existence and an NGO's organisational relationships are vital, especially when assessing advocacy decisions (Ron et al. 2005; McIlwaine 2007; van der Borgh and Terwindt 2014; Hadden and Jasny 2017). NGOs influence other NGOs. Thus, NGOs are in simultaneous competition and cooperation with each other (Wapner 1995; Bob 2005, 2010; Barakso 2010). They copy, learn, adapt and reinforce their peers' strategies. This is even more applicable to local NGOs. National alliances are an important asset for local human rights groups (van der Borgh and Terwindt 2012; Brechenmacher 2017). Current policy perspectives stress the need for coalition building among groups under pressure (Stephan 2017). Conventional wisdom is simple. As confrontation escalates, it is best to stick together (Granovetter 1978; Lichbach 1987). Working in coalition can help leverage further resources, or allows them to share financial, legal or other expertise to adhere to new restrictions (van

der Borgh and Terwindt 2014). Campaigning together can also reach new and untapped parts of society. These untapped communities can then add to a broad support for policy objectives. I will measure an NGO's membership of national, regional and international alliances.

But it's not all positive. Studies exploring transnational collaboration underscore the poor attention spans of international actors (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Bob 2001, 2010). Local actors are in constant competition to mobilise their powerful global allies (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse et al. 1999). Connections to transnational allies may also indicate disloyalty to sensitive states. This may both catalyse and impede collective action. NGOs pull together to protect each other, yet face further restrictions as critical advocacy increases (van der Borgh and Terwindt 2014; Popplewell 2018). The flipside to this approach is reputation. Reputation is a key factor in determining NGO network collaboration (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Price 2003). Thus, an NGO with a poor reputation may lack these protective networks. It may find itself vulnerable to state aggression. While NGOs may have duplicitous relationships with each other, when faced with pressure, networks are important. Networks are thus a vital resource to increase NGO resilience.

Although useful, this approach fails to capture how formalised civil society organisations work. Groups like NGOs need money. These professionalised entities need financial resources to operate. McCarthy and Zald's (1977) economically focussed approach to resource mobilisation is useful. This approach views a movement's finances as integral to success. Money matters. It enables NGOs to provide public goods and selective benefits to members (Bebbington 2005). The expansion of donor-dependent NGOs has raised concern over legitimacy (Bob 2001). Scholars have questioned if money divorces NGOs from constituents (Cornwall and Nyamu-Musembi 2004; Kindornay, Ron, and Carpenter 2012; Ron and Crow 2015). Studies looking at this issue paint a confusing picture. NGOs receiving money see both an increase and decrease in trust from constituents (Ron and Crow 2015; Wilson 2016). The key variable is the donor.

Resource "dependency" has become a dirty word in the NGO world (Pfeffer and Salancik 1978). Donors are far from passive actors. As such, fears of so-called "brief-case" NGOs epitomise this trend (Fowler 1992). These are NGOs who pursue a narrow set of objectives determined by a donor (Gordon 2008; Banks et al. 2015). They lack connections to members

to guide their work. As a result, they carry out the whims of the donor rather than the needs of an aggrieved population (Fowler 2000; Hearn 2007; Prakash and Gugerty 2010). Given this assertion, these NGOs are easily smeared by aggressive states (Beswick 2010; Dupuy, Ron, and Prakash 2015; Laufer 2017). States can dismiss their work as proxy agents of international puppet masters. This is particularly damaging for advocacy groups who expose violations perpetrated by states. It negates the credibility of their documentary evidence (Howell, Ishkanian, Obadare, Seckinelgin, and Glasius 2008; Brechenmacher 2017). Given these debates, I will measure the level of financial support and diversity of donors. While this resource carries risks, money is still vital. Advocacy NGOs need money to work.

I draw from the resource mobilisation literature to theorise resources. I sort these resources into three distinct categories: people, finances and networks. I describe these resources in table 1.

Table 1: NGO resources

People	**Finances**	**Networks**
A CSO's human resource matters. From its staff, to its members, to its constituents. People give a CSO legitimacy and enable it to operate.	Finances enable formalised groups to operate. From running projects to employing staff, finances enable groups to function on a day to day basis.	Domestic and international connections to other CSOs enables the transfer of solidarity, information and expertise between groups; an organisation's reputation is also a key resource influencing resilience.

I argue that these three resources increase NGO resilience. People, finances and networks help advocacy NGOs to operate. Following Olson's (1965) theory, I argue that while small groups may be more efficient, costs weigh more heavily on participants. There are less people to share the costs of restrictions. As restrictions increase, staff, members and supporters in small groups feel the burden. Free-riding among these constituents may increase. The same applies to NGOs with low national and international connections to other NGOs. Therefore, when faced with sequential restrictions, there are fewer organisations to share the costs of continued advocacy. There are fewer protective networks to call upon. Groups with low finances may feel the brunt of restrictions more quickly than richer colleagues. Their lack of

financial reserves may prevent them from leveraging further resources. As a vital resource for formalised advocacy groups, the depletion of finances may quickly cause advocacy output to fall. In consideration of this, I argue that high resources enhance NGO resilience when faced with restrictions. If advocacy falls, so do selective incentives to members. The theory would thus expect this to encourage free-riding. Thus, I use Olson's (1965) theory to argue that groups with low resources are the most vulnerable. The costs of restrictions stall collective action faster. I expect that: *when faced with restrictions, NGOs with high resources are least likely to disband (H2).*

To this point, I have stated that my dependent variable is NGO resilience. At this juncture, the concept of resilience needs grounding in literature. Resilience is a notoriously muddy concept (Cutter 2016). Measuring resilience has proven difficult, complex and inconclusive (Adger 2000; Magis 2010; Lin and Polsky 2015). Viewed as a hallmark of existence, resilience implies the ability to manage threats and challenges (Robinson and Carson 2015). Resilience in my project is about resistance through advocacy. It is an NGO's capacity to continue advocacy rather than reducing activity. As rational actors, NGOs will only take risks if the chances of a pay-off are high.

Poorly resourced NGOs lack the capability to continue resisting. As a result, restrictions may quickly reduce their output. At the other end of the scale, NGOs with high resources are most resilient. Equipped with the tools, their advocacy output may naturally be higher. Given this, they are able to withstand restrictions and absorb the costs. Thus, they maintain or increase advocacy when facing aggression. They can take the risk. High resources enable them to continue being vulnerable, yet confident.

Restrictive Actions

Restrictions are neither linear nor static. They also can vary in target, severity and threat. Given the lack of work looking at restrictions on civil society, there is no theory which I can draw on. As a result, I look to the target of restrictions. In doing this, I separate restrictions which target organisations from those which target individuals. As such, I separate physical integrity violations (della Porta and Tarrow 1986, 2005) from bureaucratic restrictions. Individual restrictions inflict damage on people. From arrest, to torture or even death, they place activists in harm's way. These are different from bureaucratic restrictions, which target

NGOs as organisations. Bureaucratic restrictions impede an NGO's operational structure. While problematic for advocacy output, they may leave activists unharmed. I offer indicative examples of both organisational and individual restrictions in table 2.

Table 2: Organisational and Individual Restrictions

Action Targeting Organisations	**Action Targeting Individuals**
• Increased competition for funding from GONGOs • Legal challenges over NGO activity or bureaucratic restriction i.e. the revocation or suspension of existing licenses as a result of NSA activity • Co-optation of civic actors/vocal CSO staff by NSA • Project sanction by NSA i.e. SLAPP • Internet/ communication restriction /censorship • Office raid/destruction/NGO equipment confiscated • Threats and smears/public vilification of organisation • Criminal defamation of organisation • NSA's surveillance of organisation	• Personal harassment/intimidation (including family of activists) • Travel ban/restriction of access • Threats and smears/public vilification/incitement to hatred or violence • Criminal defamation • Surveillance • Illegal detention of activists/abduction/kidnapping • Torture and ill-treatment • Violent physical attack on activist • Killing/death of activist • Sexual and other gender-based assault /harassment

This distinction in restriction type is important. My research will capture the variation in types and targets of restrictions on NGO activity. Thus, I will aim to investigate which type of restriction is most effective.

To this point, the attributes of non-state groups have been largely overlooked. It is clear that we aim to evaluate a variety of different actors under the umbrella of NSA (Sikkink 1986; Jochnick 1999; Clapham 2006). A key contribution of this study will be to document and highlight the types of NSAs that come into conflict with NGOs as well as their repertoire of actions. Drawing from the existing literature, I identify several types of NSA who are likely to impose restrictions on NGOs. I outline these in table 3.

Table 3: Indicative NSAs

Type of NSA	**Definition**	**Examples**
(Transnational) Corporation	A profit driven entity, which may operate in multiple countries	Garment manufacturer/ Agribusiness / Internet service provider
Supranational Organisation	An organisation that exists in multiple countries which includes international governance or quasi-governance organisations.	The UN / The IMF / International Peacekeepers
Criminal Network	A fluid structure which uses illicit or illegal strategies achieve profit or political ends.	The mafia / drug smuggling cartel
Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups (local or foreign)	Violent extremist groups that advocate, engage in, or otherwise support ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic or political objectives. Violent extremist groups can also engage in terrorist activities but not necessarily always.	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Al-Qaida and Boko Haram
Armed Faction/Paramilitary	An armed political opposition group or militia which may or may not be affiliated with political parties/state security apparatus.	Free Syrian Army; paramilitary groups; mercenaries, private security companies (Blackwater)
Political Party/Group	A political organisation that subscribes to a certain ideology and seeks to attain political power through representation in government.	Awami League / Zanu-PF / The Labour Party
Government Controlled/Supported NGOs (GONGOs)	State affiliated civil society groups or groups created/supported by security apparatus to undermine credible CSOs.	GONGOs affiliated with political parties or governments
Multinational (civil society)	Groups operating independently in the space between the market and the state.	NGOs / INGOs / Faith Based Groups / Trade Unions

Yet, it impossible to theorise how these groups operate without assessing the role of the state. The state's monopoly on coercion and repression is vital in understanding the types of groups which are able to operate within its borders. To do this, the key variable is state capacity (Englehart 2009). The level to which NSAs can execute these repressive campaigns is

largely contingent on the power of the state to police and control these groups (Tilly 1978; Skocpol 1985; Mann 2008).

The inclusion of additional repressive actors does not mean that the state responsibilities can be forgotten. Rather, as the duty bearer of human rights, the state finds itself simultaneously occupying two positions (Donnelly 2013). On the one hand, it is the principal threat to human rights. On the other, it is the protector of human rights within its territory. The state thus both protects and endangers. Given this dual role, scholars have highlighted that if states fail to enforce human rights standards, NSAs can exploit state inaction to further their own interests through illicit actions (Fearon and Laitin 2003; Englehart 2009). If the state fails to police and uphold human rights, NSAs can increase repressive activities with little fear of consequence or reprisal (Migdal 1988).

It is intuitive to suggest that states who are unable to police their borders or control their agents are more likely to witness human rights abuses. Therefore, weak states create conditions where a NSAs can conduct illicit activities (Jochnick 1999; Englehart 2009). This is because the state lacks the capacity to control and prosecute powerful actors who break the law (Clapham 2006). This manifests in a variety of ways. For example, a weak judiciary prone to corruption may open the door to powerful corporate interests, which repress worker rights. Others highlight that weak state infrastructural capacity can encourage the formation of armed non-state actor groups (Fearon and Laitin 2003). The synopsis of this literature is simple: if the state lacks power others will step in to fill the void.

This is not always the case. An independent judiciary, strong respect for the rule of law or even independent media tie states' hands (Powell and Staton 2009; Conrad and Moore 2010). These institutions make the state's use of its own repressive capacity challenging. This is especially true if a state is sensitive to both domestic and international shaming campaigns, which have the potential to bring a state into disrepute. Independent domestic institutions highlighting the state's bad behaviour can inflict costs on a government. Which evokes a more sinister explanation to explain NSA activity. State and NSA collusion. The use of principal agent theory has been used to explain human rights abuses (Mitchell 2004). These approaches examine the role of the state in utilising agents to carry out their dirty work. The principal - in this case the state - may instruct an NSA to commit crimes on its behalf. This in turn leads to

two explanations which explain human rights abuse. On the one hand, states may use human rights violations as a policy. In this scenario, they may encourage their agents to carry out violations while simultaneously denying culpability. This may take the form of "artificial information asymmetry" whereby the state overlooks what their agent is doing (Mitchell 2004). Instead, it holds its nose and looks the other way, safe in the knowledge their proxy is carrying out their will, no matter how violent. The other, is that a state loses control of its agent. The principal-agent argument would term this agency loss (Ross 1973; Moe 1984). Conflicting incentives or information asymmetry may lead an agent to perpetrate abuses beyond the scope of work initially envisioned by the agent. Collusion between states and NSAs is clearly a plausible explanation into explaining repression against NGOs. A state may be keen to outsource violence to silence its critics. Therefore, my focus on the sequence of events will be important in understanding the level of collusion between state repression and NSA actions. To align with the theory, NSAs may impose harsher, more brutal restrictions (individual restrictions) after the state has imposed bureaucratic restrictions (organisational restrictions). I seek to understand where in the sequence of events the costs of advocacy became too high for NGOs to bear.

I will do this by looking at restrictions. I argue that restrictions on NGO activities impose costs. I hone this theory by arguing that these costs are imposed on the variables of finances, networks and people. I split the types of restrictions that an NSA can impose on an NGO into two categories: organisational and individual restrictions. My project will measure and test the causal implications or costs on these variables. I contend that an NGO's advocacy choices are influenced by its ability to absorb these costs. As restrictions increase in severity and number, NGO resources endure costs. Different restrictions impose costs of varying severity. Even well-resourced NGOs have their limits. I argue that costs explain why some restrictions are likely to be more effective than others. However, due to the lack of work in this area, little is known about the effectiveness of these different restrictions. I seek to investigate this phenomenon. As such, I formulate two contrasting hypotheses. Firstly, *restrictions that increase selective disincentives of members and staff to participate are the most effective in reducing NGO shaming activities (H3a).* Secondly*, restrictions that reduce organisational capacity are the most effective in reducing NGO shaming activities (H3b).*

Research Design

In this section, I outline my research design. I begin by outlining my dependent variable and independent variables. I then focus on my case selection strategy, potential data sources and plans for my fieldwork. Finally, I conclude this section with a discussion regarding my application of process tracing.

Dependent and Independent Variables

The dependent variable for my project is NGO resilience. I assess NGO resilience by measuring an NGO's advocacy output. I will assess advocacy output by the number of public human rights advocacy communications released by the organisation. In practice, this may take the form of press releases, communiques or reports produced by the NGO. To test NGO resilience, I will measure if advocacy outputs decrease, remain the same or increase when faced with state restrictions. Thus, I will measure how advocacy output changes in response to restrictions by states.

Types of NSA and their various restrictive activities are my independent variables. I seek to understand how these external threats effect NGO resilience. I do this by theorising that restrictions impose varying costs on NGO resources. Drawing from my theory section, I split restrictions into two categories: organisational and individual. I propose to use process tracing to understand if variation in restriction type influences NGO advocacy output.

Case Selection Strategy

My study will adopt a comparative case study approach using structured-focused comparison (Bennett and George 2004) and process tracing (Bennett and Checkel 2014). Structured-focused comparison approaches cases with clear research goals and a well-defined theoretical focus. This technique is most suitable for my project, as it generates standardised data. This standardisation makes comparison between cases simple and permits both cross-case and within case analysis (Bennett and George 2004; Gerring 2007, 2011). This will be vital in understanding what drives variation in outcome for my dependent variable. As a result, my research questions and theory will not change between cases. A case study research design is most applicable as it enables the intense study of a case to draw inference on other cases (Gerring 2007). My aim is to understand what role resources play in influencing NGO

resilience. As such, I will choose cases based on variation both on my independent and dependent variables. Thus, I will study cases with which have seen varying restrictions and where NGOs have both increased and decreased advocacy output. My aim, through case research is to study what role resources played in driving variation on my dependent variable.

As a comparative project, identifying cases is key to test my argument (Bennett and George 2004). It is important to acknowledge political climate and the ethics of my research in 2019. In some countries, conducting research is challenging and risks endangering activists. My research will investigate a unique subsection of people unafraid to confront power. As result, a cautious approach to research design is most fitting. My study aims to enhance knowledge on human rights groups without endangering them. I use knowledge gained through CIVICUS'[2] network to guide my research. My connections to a global network of human rights NGOs helps with access to activists. But these connections come with responsibility. Safe access to member NGOs drives my cases selection strategy. I use this knowledge to gauge the feasibility of research in my candidate countries.

In selecting my case studies, I hold regime type constant, by investigating semi-authoritarian or hybrid regimes. I do this as these are contexts where both states and NSAs are able to conduct campaigns against independent civil society. In doing this, I discount highly democratic states. In these states, physical integrity violations may be rare, or absent altogether. Given this lack of variation in restriction type, I discount them. Using the same logic, autocratic states are also unhelpful. In many of these states, the operation of independent NGOs is impossible. The formation of human rights NGOs is frequently tightly regulated, leading to a situation where almost no formalised independent groups exist. Given this, I am also forced to discount these states.

I adopt a layered approach to my case selection strategy. To do this, I choose variation on my dependent and independent variables. Firstly, I choose variation on my dependent variable. I will study cases where NGOs have both increased advocacy activity (resisted) and decreased advocacy activity (desisted) after experiencing state pressure. This variation will explore if resource disparities played a role in driving outcome variation. Secondly, I argue that different

[2] CIVICUS is a global alliance of civil society organisations, headquartered in Johannesburg South Africa. In 2019, the CIVICUS alliance has organisational members in over 180 countries in the world.

restrictions, impose different costs. As a result, types of NSA actions another case selection criterion. I propose to study cases where there is variation on my independent variable: the type of NSA. A review of literature has found little systematic evidence examining the types of NSAs who restrict NGO activities as well as their motivations. Given this, a typology of NSAs and as well as their repertoire of actions will be a key contribution to this study.

To identify cases, I look to new data assessing the conditions for civil society. The CIVICUS Monitor emerges as a strong candidate. As a dynamic online portal, the CIVICUS Monitor (CIVICUS 2018b) rates civic space in every country in the world. CIVICUS views civic space as the respect in law and practice of three freedoms (CIVICUS 2018c). The freedoms of association, assembly and expression. Unfortunately, there is currently no dataset assessing the role of NSAs in restricting NGOs. The CIVICUS Monitor is primarily focused on capturing the state as the main aggressor against civil society. Despite this variation, it still offers important context into the types of restrictions that states are using against civil society. Aligning to the theory, it is plausible to expect that non-state groups have exploited this aggression. As such, I start my case selection with data from the CIVICUS Monitor which rates civic space in five categories: Open, Narrowed, Obstructed, Repressed and Closed (CIVICUS 2018a). These ratings capture the spectrum of conditions. From Open where NGOs work as equal to government, to Closed where no independent NGOs exist.

I am interested in countries where civil society has come under pressure from states. But this is offset with limited space where independent NGOs do exist and operate cautiously. Consequently, I choose countries currently rated with "Repressed" civic space. CIVICUS (2018a) clarifies this rating:

"Civic space is significantly constrained. Active individuals and civil society members who criticise power holders risk surveillance, harassment, intimidation, imprisonment, injury and death. Although some civil society organisations exist, their advocacy work is regularly impeded and they face threats of de-registration and closure by the authorities. People who organise or take part in peaceful protests are likely to be targeted by the authorities through the use of excessive force, including the use of live ammunition, and risk mass arrests and detention. The media typically reflects the position of the state, and any independent voices

are routinely targeted through raids, physical attacks or protracted legal harassment. Websites and social media platforms are blocked and internet activism is heavily monitored."

In 2019, CIVICUS rates 36 countries in the world with "Repressed" civic space. Aligning to the theory, this research will test the assertion that NSAs have exploited state restrictions. Given this, the countries rated in the CIVICUS Monitor's repressed category are a strong fit to conduct this research. Given that there is no database detailing the types of restrictions that NSAs use against civil society, I am forced to refine my case selection by surveying other datasets exploring state restrictions on civil society.

I use the theoretical distinction between bureaucratic restrictions (organisational) and physical integrity violations (individual) to hone my list (Mitchell and McCormick 1988; Henderson 1991, 1993; Poe and Tate 1994). I refine my case selection by looking at the types of restrictions imposed on NGOs. I do this, using UCL's global dataset on restrictions.[3] This novel dataset codes restrictions on civil society from US State Department Reports. It does this between the period 1994 - 2014. While this data does not run beyond 2014, its insights are still important. It gives a clear sign of the severity of restrictions imposed on civil society. I seek to understand which restrictions are most effective at reducing NGO advocacy. Given this, I choose states with differing track records. Three contrasting candidates emerge: Bangladesh, the Palestinian Territories and Zimbabwe.

These cases present a strong starting point, as they have implemented similar restriction counts. But, crucially have used different types of restrictions. In Zimbabwe, NGOs have seen repressive physical integrity violations. Whereas in Bangladesh, the majority of restrictions have been bureaucratic. I choose variation in the type of restrictions imposed by state to interrogate *H1.* I seek to test whether NSAs exploit state aggression on NGOs, therefore it is essential to have variation on the type of aggression that states have used against NGOs. The table below highlights the contrasting types of restrictions used in both cases.

[3] Dataset spearheaded by Dr Hannah Smidt, Professor Kristin Bakke & Neil Mitchell.

Table 3: Comparison of Restrictions in Bangladesh and Zimbabwe

Country	**Restriction Count (1994 – 2014)**	**Organisational (Bureaucratic) Restrictions**	**Individual (Physical Integrity) Restrictions**
Bangladesh	125	88	37
Zimbabwe	124	52	72

It is essential to acknowledge that Palestine is not covered in UCL's dataset. However, I choose this case as well to capture variation on my other independent variable, the type of NSA. I choose Palestine, as it is currently rated as Repressed within the CIVICUS Monitor but crucially has a variety of NSAs operational within its borders (CIVICUS, Palestinian NGO Network, and Arab Network for NGO Development 2017). In particular, the operation of armed groups within the Palestinian territories suits my research focus. As a result, I choose this as the final case to test the validity of my theorised causal sequence (Beach and Pedersen 2018). This enables important variation on the type of NSA operation in my cases. It will also offer a vital insight into the repertoire of actions used by different NSAs. This aligns with a key contribution of my study, which is to document how and why different NSAs come into conflict with NGOs.

Finally, and crucially, evidence also shows that they have NGOs who resisted as well as desisted during this period (CIVICUS 2012; CIVICUS and Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum 2016; CIVICUS 2017a; Palestinian NGO Network 2018). Considering this, these cases will also enable me to test whether resource disparities between these NGOs drove variation in outcome.

NGO's

My project needs greater clarity on the NGOs it will study. From my theory, I choose units of analysis based on my dependent variable: resilience. As a result, my first layer looks at resource disparity. This means I will study NGOs with different resource strengths and weaknesses. I will then explore whether resource disparity played a role in the capacity to resist. This variation is vital. Resource disparity is key in unpacking the thrust of my argument. I posit that resource capital enhances NGO resilience when faced with state restrictions. Variation in resilience enables me to trace whether resource disparity drove this outcome.

I plan to study at least eight NGOs in each of my cases. Using CIVICUS' operating knowledge as a global alliance of NGOs, I find several indicative candidates. These all have variation on their resource capital and have reacted differently when faced with restrictions.

I will also conduct field visits to all of my cases. Given this, my method for collecting data will be primary research. With CIVICUS' reach as a global civil society alliance, I have unrestricted access to a diverse range of civil society actors, donors and multilateral institutions. This is a unique feature of my study. I plan to conduct a series of interviews with NGOs and their members. I will complement this approach with content analysis of documents. NGO press statements, government documents and news articles will generate data to test my argument. I will use these documents to unpack the costs of restrictions on NGO resources.

Data

My argument seeks to investigate the causal relationship between NSA actions and NGO resilience. To do this, I will assess the costs of restrictions on NGO resources. Costs are the mechanisms of my argument. To measure these mechanisms, I will collect, curate and analyse a variety of data (Gerring 2010). Thus, my project will use a number of data gathering techniques to generate the evidence needed to test my argument (Sartori 1970; Lijphart 1971).

My primary tool for collecting data will be semi-structured elite interviews with individuals affiliated with NGOs. I will interview NGO employees, NGO leaders and members. My application of semi-structured interviews speaks to my project's approach of theory development and testing (Aberbach and Rockman 2002; Leech 2002). The use of semi-structured interviews is most appropriate as I seek to corroborate and supplement information from other sources (Bennett and George 2004; Tansey 2007). Given their format, semi-structured interviews allow the investigation of key issues in greater depth with respondents (Davies 2001). In particular, I will ask respondents about the amount and type of advocacy they conducted before, during and NSA restrictions. I will also seek to understand the decision-making process behind advocacy choices. I am especially interested in exploring if and why NGOs decreased advocacy or shifted to safer subjects when faced with restrictions.

My use of semi-structured interviews will serve to understand if and why this process happened. I offer indicative interview questions in appendix 1.

Given my focus on individuals affiliated with NGOs, my project will use a non-probability sampling approach (Berry 2002; Goldstein 2002). This means, my findings are purposive (Kidder, Smith, and Judd 1991) and will limit the generalisability of my conclusions (Bennett and George 2004; Halperin and Heath 2012). Despite this, it is important to recognise that in practice my sampling may adopt a snowball approach as data collection begins (Tansey 2007). To draw inference from this data, I plan to use a mixed approach inductive and deductive coding approach to test my argument (Strauss 1998). Due to the lack of work in my subject area, this mixed approach is most appropriate. Throughout my study, my collection of data will test my theory (Beach and Pederson 2013). In consideration of this, an iterative approach to drawing conclusions from my data is most appropriate. This will allow me to assess and explore alternative explanations which drive my proposed causal relationship.

I plan to supplement and corroborate information gained through semi-structured interviews with content analysis of documents (Holsti 1969; Tansey 2007). These will include public communications and other documents to triangulate data gained through interviews (Collier 2011; Halperin and Heath 2012; Bennett and Checkel 2014). As such, I will refer to a variety of sources produced by NGOs, governments and media sources. I plan to code these secondary sources. Given that my unit of analysis is NGO advocacy activity, I will primarily assess the frequency and specificity of their public communications. In practice, this will take the form of press releases, AGM minutes, documentary reports and submissions to multilateral institutions. I will code content to see if tone and manner of public communications changes in response to restrictions. Content analysis also offers an opportunity to test network advocacy. I will measure if joint advocacy decreased or increased when NGOs were faced with hostility. As a result, I will focus on identifying patterns before, during and after the imposition of restrictions. CIVICUS' accreditation with the UN Economic and Social Council is also an asset. This status grants the ability to request relevant documentation from the UN Human Rights Council. This will be particularly useful to understand the role of transnational networks in assisting national NGOs.

Finally, to explore costs on NGO finances I will survey NGO financial statements. Given their reliance on donations, for accountability, NGOs often make financial records public (Wapner 2002; Kilby 2006). Analysis of these documents will assess the impact of restrictions on an NGOs' finances. In addition to this, CIVICUS also asks members to provide financial statements to maintain membership of the alliance. Particularly in sensitive contexts, these statements are often more detailed than publicly released financial information. These discrepancies can often be attributed to NGOs innovating to bypass funding bans. As a result, this additional information is a major asset in understanding how NGO finances change in response to restrictions. Similarly, as a well-known INGO, CIVICUS has strong access to the human rights donor community. As a result, I also plan to interview donors to understand how their grant-making changed in response to restrictions. Table 6 outlines all of the data sources that I will use to test my argument.

Table 5: Data Sources to Test Argument

Data	**Source**
Interviews	NGO staff, members or constituents & donors
Public communications	Press releases, joint press releases/reports/statements, NGO reports, annual reports, AGM minutes, submissions to multilateral bodies
Financial Records	Financial reports, CIVICUS' records
Supplementary information	Media reports, documentaries and statements from INGOs, government decrees or laws

It is important to acknowledge that there may be several challenges to my data collection. Indeed, the successful application of process tracing largely rests on the quality of data used (Collier 2011; Beach and Pederson 2013). I will be constrained in a number of ways. Firstly, individuals previously affiliated with now defunct or disbanded organisations may be unwilling to engage in my research for fear of reprisal. This may result in selection bias (Guest, Bunce, and Johnson 2006). It is also important to remember, that tactics or coping strategies that

were shared between groups may be covert. This means NGOs may have broken the law to help each other without making their actions public. As a result, pinning down specific advocacy actions, or the events and decisions leading up to them may be highly challenging. While I hope to uncover these dynamics through interviews, it is important to acknowledge that activists may be cautious to reveal the full story of their actions. Secondly, the availability of public documents will limit my content analysis. If restrictions increase, it is perfectly plausible for an NGO to remove or delete public advocacy campaigns. Thus, my measurement of content i.e. the number of press releases or joint statements may be misleading. Finally, if an NGO experiences extreme pressure through individual restrictions, it may publicly stop advocacy, while continuing to broker further information to other trusted NGOs. In this scenario, the communication of information may continue, but will be difficult to attribute. I hope to overcome this by looking at themes of advocacy to uncover patterns between NGOs. Even if one NGO experiencing pressure stops producing public statements, if the theme continues, it may be possible to unpack whether the NGO was still covertly active through interviews.

Process Tracing

The primary method my project will be process tracing. As a method, this approach focuses on capturing the causal forces from "x to y" (Glennan 2002; Bunge 2004; Beach and Pederson 2013). Process tracing is a descriptive and analytical tool which investigates unfolding events over time (Bennett and Checkel 2014). It is a qualitative method that studies hypothesised causal mechanisms that "link antecedents with outcomes" (Vanhala 2017). My application of process tracing is further strengthened by my use of case studies (Bennett and George 2004). The combined use of comparative case studies and process tracing has proven a vital approach to explore within case variation (Bennett and George 2004; Vennesson 2008). In perhaps the most comprehensive explanation of its application, Bennett and Checkel (2014) describe process tracing as:

"The analysis of evidence on processes, sequences, and conjunctures of events within a case for the purposes of either developing or testing hypotheses about causal mechanisms that might causally explain the case." (p. 7).

As a methodological approach, the focus on sequence is important (Mahoney 2010; Collier 2011). Process tracing excels at empirically testing the hypothesised causality of the intervening steps between independent and dependent variables. Thus, my project will explore the steps between the imposition of restrictions and the advocacy output of NGOs. As with all social sciences, isolating the proposed causal relationship is problematic. Considering this, I focus my efforts on identifying mechanisms (Gerring 2010). Mechanisms are the cogs which drive causality from independent to dependent variables (Collier 2011). Studying them allows the observation of a causal relationship at work. As a method, process tracing not only studies if a causal relationship works as predicted, but how (Gerring 2010; Collier 2011). It does this by tracing mechanisms from cause to effect. To study the relationship between restrictions and NGO resilience, I will trace the costs of restrictions on the variables of people, money and networks. I will then measure if these costs influence NGO advocacy output to increase or decrease.

The mechanisms for my project are costs. These costs are the impact of restrictions on NGOs. I argue that different restrictions impose varying costs on NGOs' resources. In consideration of this, it is possible to derive measurable outcomes of these costs. These are causal implications (Bennett and George 2004; Beach and Pederson 2013; Bennett and Checkel 2014). Through measurement of these causal implications, I will test my argument on each of my units of analysis: NGOs. In doing this, I will be able to ascertain if disparity in resources drove variation in NGO resilience when faced with costs. I will assess resilience by measuring NGO advocacy output before, during and after costs.

Given the similarities with process tracing to a historical narrative (Bennett and George 2004), specifying a time period for my project is important. I draw from the knowledge that globally, six or more restrictions decrease NGO advocacy output (Smidt et al. 2018). I use this knowledge to offer an indicative timeframe for my application of process tracing. Using UCL's global restrictions dataset, I list the global time taken to implement restrictions in table 6. I use this data to offer an illustrative example of how long my application of process tracing is likely to be in each of my three cases. The time period for my study will also be driven by the *type* of restriction. However, in this paper table 6 serves to offer a potential timeframe for the period studied in my dissertation.

Table 6: Global Averages of Time Taken to Impose Restrictions

Average Time Taken (years)	No. of Restrictions
11.5	6
12.4	7
12.3	8
13.9	9
11.8	10
14.5	11
13.0	12

To assess causal inference, I turn to tests which assess causality. A number of authors have devised methods to evidence if a causal pathway occurs as hypothesised (Van Evera 1997; Bennett 2010; Mahoney 2010). In particular, Bennett's (2010) work emphasises the need to continually assess the relationship between evidence and hypothesis (p. 219). As a result, each of the four proposed tests grant the research to continually assess, evaluate and discount hypotheses. I will use these tests to assess my argument.

In constantly testing my hypotheses, alternative theories may emerge. Process tracing experts stress the constantly seek alternative explanations (Beach and Pederson 2013; Bennett and Checkel 2014; Jacobs 2016). Given this, I will explore other plausible answers. At the core of my project is a tension, do resources matter to NGOs under pressure or not? While theory may suggest they do, contemporary empirical evidence suggests otherwise. Thus, my net has already expanded to question my initial approach. Alternative evidence such as political context may trump resource capital.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to set out set out the theoretical argument for my project. I have hoped to give the reader an insight into my plans for fieldwork over the course of 2019. I look forward to your comments and feedback.

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Appendix 1: Interview Questions

R1: What restrictive actions do NSAs take against human rights NGOs?
Q1, 3, 5, 6
R2: How do NGO resources alter their capacity to resist NSA restrictions?
Q8, 10, 12, 13

H1: NSAs increase actions against NGOs after state restrictions
Q3, 4, 5, 7,
H2: When faced with NSA aggression NGOs reduce public shaming campaigns
Q2, 9, 10, 11
H3A: NSA restrictions that increase selective disincentives for members and staff are the most effective in reducing NGO shaming activities
Q2, 8, 9, 10, 13
H3B: NSA restrictions that reduce organisational capacity are the most effective in shaming NGO activities
Q2, 8, 9 12, 13

1. What do restrictions on your organisation's work look like in your country today?
2. How, in your view have these restrictions influenced your ability to fulfil your mandate?
3. How would you describe groups, outside of the state which your organisation has come into conflict with?
4. Are there conditions under which restrictions from non-state actors, like religious extremists, transnational corporations or government sponsored NGOs (GONGOs) have increased?
    - Did this increase in confrontation follow restrictions from any other source?
5. How would you describe non-state actor tactics against your organisation? Have these changed over the past 10 years?
6. Do these actions differ from restrictions imposed on your organisations by states?
7. How would you describe the NSAs relationship with the state/or government?
    - Is there any evidence to support your answer?
8. What in your view, are the consequences of non-state restrictions on your organisation? For your members and staff? For your ability to raise funds? For your advocacy activities with other NGOs/INGOs?
9. Which type of restriction had the biggest effect on your organisation's ability to conduct advocacy?
10. Did actions by NSAs influence public support for your group?
11. How, in your view did NSA actions increase or decrease your organisation's ability to conduct advocacy?
    - Is there any evidence to support your answer?
12. What strategies did your organisation implement to respond to actions by these groups?
13. How important was the preservation of your organisational resources in your advocacy decisions? People? Networks? Money?
14. Are there any additional sources or documentation that would help us understand any of the issues discussed today?

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