Financial factors in nonviolent revolutionary movements

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In the following I will analyse the financial influences on nonviolent revolutionary movements (NRM). Theses are movements with the explicit goal to replace the present political leadership within a state or to create a new state by splitting off from existing states(s). Included are movements whose main means are struggling without the use of arms and other lethal means. Some revolutionary movements with a mainly nonviolent strategy have occasionally used violent means, and all so called armed movements incorporate nonarmed means in their strategy.

There are no distinct classification systems that can make a clear cut between the armed and nonarmed movements. Some of the cases can easily be classified, but there are numerous cases in which a more detailed study must be done to decide where they belong. Table 1 shows the main categories. The focus is on cases that fit into the marked options in table 1. What can be stated is that no movement has been solely dependent on violent means. There are always unarmed components in their strategies, even for the most violent ones. A number of movements have changed their main strategy over time and hence will belong to different categorises depending on the time. ANC is one such case.

Table 1:

		The Opposition					
		Active use of weapons	Threats to use weapons	Nonviolent actions due to lack of weapons	Armed with promise not to use them	Proclaimed policy of not having or using violent means	Well prepared nonviolence through training
The Position (State)	Active use of weapons				X	X	X
	Threats to use weapons				X	X	X
	Armed with promise not to use them				X	X	X

The concept of Nonviolent Revolution has in the past two decades gone through a renovation and transformation. From the early 1980s and up till today the number of movements that successfully have confronted governments and parliaments and demanded change in the leadership has increased enormously. The pragmatic use of nonviolent strategies in struggles for revolutionary goals is the dominant tendency. In the same period only a handful of armed movements have achieved successes in their fight against states.

Most of the cases can be categorized into four more or less separate waves. The cases in each wave are linked together in different ways. Cooperation and inspiration are the main common factors.

Wave One: Poland, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Philippines
When Solidarity in Poland started their struggle for independent trade unions few could predict the consequences. Not only the complete change over in Poland, but the inspirations for trade unions and religious groups in other catholic countries like Bolivia, Uruguay, and Philippines had an enormous impact on the NMRs in these countries. Not to mention the next wave in Eastern Europe.

Wave two: Eastern Europe and Former Soviet Union
1989 was the year of change in Eastern Europe. The collapse of communism in Poland. The legitimacy for one-party systems in the rest of the Soviet bloc disappeared. In country after country people took to the streets and demanded change in the regimes.

Wave three: Sub-Saharan Africa
In Sub-Saharan Africa a similar wave of massive nonviolent actions removed the old regimes in country after country. The opposition in Benin had been growing for a long time and drew further inspiration from the dismantling of the Berlin Wall. With the break-up of Soviet Union in 1991 several of the francophone countries saw the possibility to follow the path from Benin. The student movement in China 1989 and the bicentennial of the French revolution gave extra energy to new movements. Nonviolent and relatively well-organised oppositions forced the former Marxist regimes to open up for more pluralistic political systems. In countries like Burkina Faso, Guinea, Senegal, Mali, and Malawi similar waves of democratisation as in Benin followed. And the most well known case, South Africa, got rid of the apartheid system after a long and mainly nonviolent struggle in 1994.

Wave four: Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon
The next wave is still going on. With the massive bombing by NATO of Serbia in 1999 the opposition against Slobodan Milosevic was weakened. But the experiences from nonviolent opposition in 1996-97 became the base for a new and better-organised opposition, aiming for the removal of Milosevic in the elections in fall 2000. Following a number of demonstrations opposing the official results of the elections close to a million people gathered in Belgrade on October 5. They filled the city, occupied the TV-house and the parliament and Milosevic resigned. The student movement Otpor was crucial in this revolution. Activists from Otpor later trained students in other countries and have worked as consultants for similar movements in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan. These three countries went through similar revolutions in the 2003-05. A similar revolution took place in Lebanon in 2005.

Even though the focus of this study is NRMs, most of the arguments and outcomes are applicable for other social and political movements as well. When it comes to financial support there are some interesting parallels to the movements struggling for liberation in Southern Africa in the sixties and onwards.

Southern Africa

The massacres 1959-60 in Windhoek, Namibia; Sharpville, South Africa; Catete, Angola; and Mueda, Mozambique started an international process of recognition for those who struggled for independence. Sweden was among the first to give support to several of the liberation movements in Southern Africa. From the late sixties and onwards ANC in South Africa, FRELIMO in Mozambique, ZANU and ZAPU in Zimbabwe, MPLA and Angola, PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau, and SWAPO in Namibia got financial support through SIDA. In total 1740 million SEK (>US$ 24 million) from 1969-1995. Large amounts of it was given secretly to avoid reactions from the governments in respective country. This was in addition to allocations for emergencies, cultural activities, information, research and other parts of the regular bilateral assistance programmes (Sellström, 2002). This was not seen with positive eyes from USA and several European countries. The World Council of Churches (WCC) and other international organisations were among a growing number of actors who spoke out in favour of giving support to these movements. The South African Prime Minister John Vorster accused WCC of being infiltrated by Communists and providing “terrorist organisations with funds for buying arms”. Similar views were expressed during the following years by many leading Western politicians and military strategists (Sellström, 2002).

This conflict was very similar to many of the present situations where states are accusing oppositional movements for being terrorists and getting support from foreign sources.

President Putin of Russia said, according to Reuters in July 2005: "I am categorically against the foreign financing of (NGOs') political activities in Russia ... We understand that he who pays the piper calls the tune… Not a single self-respecting country will allow that, and neither shall we. ... Let us solve our internal problems ourselves." One of the new laws in Russia demands that all NGOs should re-register in order to keep their permission to be active, and a crucial question in the process of re-registration is if they get foreign financial support. This is most probably a reaction after the successful nonviolent revolutions in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine and Kirgizstan. Russia as well as Belarus was eager to criticise the NRMs in these countries for receiving financial support from foreign donors. The same was the case for those in power in the countries facing revolutionary situations. Milosevic, Shevardnadze, Yanukovych, and Akayev all labelled the opposition “terrorists” and used foreign donors as “evidence” of their unpatriotic and illegal activities.

Who are the donors?

The successes or failures of nonviolent revolutionary movements depend on many factors. These movements’ birth, development and results cannot be explained or understood from one perspective only. Such political and societal processes are both complex and context sensitive.

Financing is one variable that adds to the complexity of conflicts. Movements need money and most of them are short of funds. Offices, posters, communication, stickers, salaries, and public events are just a few of the necessary components in a successful

movement. Where to get the financial means needed is an important question from several perspectives. If they don't get the money they will not have the muscles required for achieving their goals.

In most cases those organisations, networks and movements organising large-scale nonviolent actions have received money from donors from abroad. This has in the debate been used as an argument against these movements. It is not clear in all cases if receiving money is "bad" just because the money comes from someone outside the movement itself.

When critics use foreign financial support as an argument against a movement it seems like they differentiate based both on who receives the money and who the donors are. Not only social movements, but states as well receive financial support. As shown in figure Table 2 we can imagine a number of different approaches here. The first division is between the donors and the recipients. Within the recipients I have divided states from "Civil Society". In addition to these categories we could have added "political parties not in power", "business communities", "media" and other. There is no consensus on what to include in "civil society" and some would include most of the actors who are not part of the direct power structure within the State apparatus. There are numerous examples of all of these entities receiving support from foreign donors. I will in the following mainly focus on the donors and the diversity among them.

Table 2:

	Donors								
Recipients		Domestic		Diaspora	Foreign donors				Large private & "independent" donors from the country itself or foreign origin
		The movement itself	Other domestic supporters		Civil society	Development agencies	A state or private organisations close to a state		
							"Switzerland"	"USA"	
	Civil society								
	State								

The first division is between foreign and domestic donors. Within the domestic we can identify the movement itself and other supporters. The movement can collect money from their own ranks. This can be in form of "public begging", membership fee, and gifts or as a more or less voluntarily informal taxation. Other domestic sources can be rich individuals or organisations that donate money because they support the movement and their goals. The Diaspora is a group based outside, but of domestic origin and as such constitute a category separate from the others. The Diaspora for several movements provides large parts of their economic base. We have

also seen movements manage their finances via illegal trade, robbery or bribes. This is more frequent for movements with a mixture of armed and unarmed strategy.

Foreign donors can be civil society organisations that collect money in solidarity or because they share the aim of the movement. Movements in the Balkans for example received a lot of financial support in the 1990s from sister-organisations in other countries. To collect money to support sister organisations abroad is still important for many movements. Trade unions, religious communities and solidarity organisations have a long tradition for such activities.

States donate money in several ways. State run Development Agencies have a long tradition of supporting civil society organisations in other countries. The Swedish SIDA and other similar organisations give large amount in support to movements in many authoritarian and semi-democratic states worldwide. Part of that is labelled "Democracy Export" and comes in the forms of equipment, skills and cash. Even if development agencies rarely act in contradiction with the present policy of their government, direct financial support from governments is often regarded differently than what comes via development agencies. State-financed Foundations and Trusts are also major donors to groups, networks and movements abroad. Many of them run covert operations abroad and their activities will not be known until years later.

If the donation goes overt, it will normally be regarded as more politically motivated when it comes directly from a government. A donation direct from a state is in addition to a financial support also a political signal of support, recognition and acknowledgement. And it will be judged differently if the country in question is Switzerland than if it is USA. Large countries with a belligerent and active foreign policy can be regarded with more mistrust than small countries with a long tradition of neutrality.

On the international scene we will also find rich donors who act more or less independent of any government and their policy. George Soros and his foundations are example of such donors. The support given by Soros and his foundations to the Balkans, Eastern and Central Europe have been enormous the last three decades. In Georgia he supported the opposition and is today paying large amounts to the new government.

In addition there are a number of international institutions that are supporting oppositional movement and newly established states either directly or by transferring money from others. Among these are European Union, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Council of Churches, League of Arab States, Socialist International, and Commonwealth of Nations.

Each category of donor will be regarded differently by recipients as well as the power holders in the respective state. And within each category the judgement will differ based on the history of the donor, the present context and political situation in which the recipient works. Relics from the Cold War and other historical affairs are still factors in many of these conflicts.

What are the problems?
Most opposition movements around the world receive money from abroad and it is in most cases those presently in power in the states who argue against it. But there are an increasing number of cases where critiques have been raised also from civic organisations and media.

Since the revolution in Serbia 2000 we have seen a growing opposition and discussion on the effect financial support have on social movements and opposition groups. In May 2005, Chinese Premier Hu Jintao issued a report to the Communist Party Central Committee outlining policies to "crush US attempts to start a colour revolution in China". Zimbabwe adopted new policies cracking down on nongovernmental organisations, which are seen as vectors of peaceful revolutions. Eritrea in May 2005 introduced a new law sharply limiting the role of nongovernmental organisations. (Åslund and McFaul, 2006) In countries like Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan have increased the pressure on and control of NGOs. These states are among many that fear that the next nonviolent revolution can start from their own opposition.

A somewhat similar discussion took place within and about the peace movements in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. The movements in question at that time had a much more limited focus and goal; to prevent more nuclear weapons to be placed on European soil. But as a potential threat to national security these movements were followed closely by the Secret Police. Financial support from the Moscow-associated World Peace Council (WPC) was used to discredit the legitimacy of the national Peace Councils and was widely regarded as a serious weakness. In several European countries, individuals and groups with close relations to WPC and their national Peace Committees were regarded as security threats and were under surveillance by the Secret Police. This has been revealed in public investigations into the activities of the Secret Police in countries like Denmark (Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier, 2005), Sweden (Hjort and Säkerhetstjänstkommissionen, 2002) and Norway (Lund et al., 1996).

Support for oppositional movements has always been difficult and often illegal. Especially since September 11 2001 the transfer of money has been problematic. With the pretext of avoiding financial support to groups labelled as terrorists the states have created an atmosphere where all foreign support to political movements are treated with utmost care. In the "war on terrorism" the Security Council of UN passed resolution 1373 asking all members to include laws on "terrorism" into their criminal laws. A major part of the new legislations deals with financial support and international transfer of money. The definitions of "terrorist" and "terror organisation" are not very distinct and have been used by a number of states to include peaceful groups from the civil society. Human Rights organisations, peace groups, solidarity movements and NRMs are among those who have faced difficulties with state repression.

The power of the donor(s) to influence their agenda is a well-known issue. Where, how much, and how they get capital will influence their reputation. Money will always be a potential source for conflicts.

In the following I will discuss some of the economical variables that influence the outcome of such movements. One task of this article is to map different alternatives for financial support and their respective possible consequences for the recipients, donors, and the "movements" as such.

Many have argued that the money received can be used as arguments undermining the legitimacy of these movements. This discussion is not new and can be traced back to the decolonisation process in Africa. When liberation movements got financial support from foreign sources a number of international and national actors protested. One of the most frequent arguments was that it was seen as an interference into another countries internal matters; a violation of the sovereignty of the state. Several main actors labelled the liberation movements "terrorists" and that all forms of support were condemned.

Of course there is power in giving away money. There will always be a relationship of dependence when large sums are transferred. But this factor should not be exaggerated. The fact that someone receives money does not necessary result in the contributor deciding and controlling the agenda of the beneficiary completely. The relationship is more complex than just the one dominating the other. It is partly a question of the size of the sums. Large sums from one or just a few donors will create more of a dependency than many small sums from a high number of donors. In the case of Ukraine the Pora movement received $ 130 000 from foreign sources. Their total budget was about $1.56 million. In-kind contributions in the form of free publications, communications, and transportation exceeded an estimated $6.5 million. (Demes and Forbrig, 2006). The conclusion is that a little more than 8% of the cash came from foreign sources To what degree the foreign support influenced the agenda of Pora is difficult to judge, but could hardly have been a governing factor for their goals. On the other side it is to be expected that donors support only those movements for which they have sympathy. In the case of Pora the foreign money came from Canadian International Development Agency, Freedom House, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States. These funders would probably not have funded Pora if they did not sympathise with their goals and trust the movement's future judgements.

As with other sorts of development aid there are two main categories: Money to specific projects and general support to be used as the recipients decide. The first form gives the donors more control and power. The recipients will have a tendency to design their applications in such a way that they please the donors and increase their chances to receive money. This form of "control" and rule over the politics of the recipients is the responsibility of both the donors and the recipients.

Money is important but not the only factor deciding on the agenda and activities of a movement. A movement should not be judged solely based on who is funding it. But it is neither an unimportant factor.

Who need money?

A number of the NMRs we have seen in recent decades have been established relatively spontaneously and very little time has been available for planning and

preparation. Maybe the most extreme case in this respect was DDR. Few among the opposition had done any preparations for the opening of the wall and the take-over of the state. Hence there was no “need” for money for training and organising. Things happened very ad-hoc. For others, like the opposition in Serbia the planning took three years and included strategic planning, organising and training. This is obviously more expensive.

Internal conflicts due to foreign financial support

Money may expand a civil society, while at the same time dividing it and fomenting conflicts. In countries like Palestine, Cyprus and Colombia large civil societies have been built with a high degree of foreign money. Competition between civil society organisations to gain access to the sources of funding has had a negative impact on the unity and cooperation within the movement. The actual damage such conflicts can do to a movement is still to be investigated.

Conclusion

The importance of financial support varies much from case to case. It is a complex relationship between donor and recipient. No NMR is completely in the hands of donors and not all NMRs have been dependent on foreign financial support. Even in those cases where foreign financial support has been crucial, it has not been sufficient for the result of the NMR.

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