

A model of securing human rights

Analogies incorporated in this model are: a boomerang, in which local activists seek partners abroad to exert external pressure on the offending state; a spiral, in which domestic resistance and repeated boomerang 'throws' build on prior successes; and a pincer, in which pressure is exerted from above and below, inside and without. This model could also be adapted to apply to non-state actors infringing rights. It is a simplified reflection of reality, of course; sometimes the spiral may come to a standstill and/or wind back to a state of increased violation. Getting a government in denial to make concessions is usually the biggest challenge in the spiral; retreat from concessions is the most likely setback. 'The spiral keeps spiraling only if transnational civil society makes it happen.'

Violating state	Local human rights activists	International partners
Repression/violation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • domestic opposition weak &/or persecuted • domestic activism too dangerous or ineffectual • seek international support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • receive information from domestic opposition • invoke international/regional human rights norms &/or mechanisms • mobilize NGOs, international organizations, sympathetic states & public • pressure the repressive state directly & lobby foreign states to add pressure • may help fund struggling domestic groups
Denial/backlash <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • denies validity of human rights • attacks credibility of claims & claimants • asserts sovereignty • may generate some domestic resentment of international interference &/or fear of instability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • domestic opposition builds • mobilize new domestic actors • may suffer renewed attacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain bilateral & multi-lateral pressure
Tactical concessions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cosmetic improvements attempt to deflect criticism • concedes validity of rights claims & engages with critics • concessions reduce the state's control over the situation & its margin of maneuver • potential for 'entrapment' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus of activity shifts to domestic activists (emboldened by their success & protected to some extent by their international links) • maintain links to transnational networks • invoke norms/mechanisms • impart & receive information • respond to state rhetoric with renewed evidence of violations & moral argument (engaging state in dialog increases likelihood of entrapment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • time to use shaming techniques & negative pressure ('sticks')
Change of policy &/or regime <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accepts the validity of human rights norms but practice inconsistent • ratifies international treaties • institutionalizes rights in domestic law • establishes complaint mechanisms • apologizes, compensates, etc. • human rights education for public officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expand into new political space • human rights enter societal discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain pressure from above & below to ensure behavior conforms to rhetoric (new regime may retreat from rights protection once its position is consolidated)
Respect for human rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved practices backed by the rule of law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rights are 'mainstreamed', internalized, 'taken for granted' • human rights culture emerges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced network activity