

## **Detecting and Analyzing Small Social Movements in Repressive Countries: Contemporary Human Rights Activism in Liberia and Kenya**

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Field research in both Kenya and Liberia shows that the people who engaged in resistance to advance human rights and democracy came from different parts of civil society; their actions, tactics, goals, etc. were very much a social movement. But the usual signposts suggested by the social movement literature -- of organization, mass demonstrations, unity, numbers, and political opportunity -- were not there in the forms typically seen in democratic, developed countries. In-depth interviews with activists, however, detected an informal, dynamic resistance movement which quantitative studies would not discover. Detecting small social movements in repressive settings requires interpretive, qualitative research methods. The findings are based on a total of approximately six months of extensive interviews by the author in Kenya in 2002 and Liberia in 2006 with human rights and democracy activists, plus archival materials. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2008 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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