



Civ Resistance 1: Dynamics of Movements

Advanced Course

While everyone's learning style is different, most participants complete this self-paced in 8-12 hours.

Find the online version of our course on the Global Campus [here](#).

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Making Peace Possible

Overview



Civil resistance takes place across the world. At a grassroots movement in Kenya, people gather in a crowd to protest human rights abuses. (Photo: Flickr/Creative Commons)

Civil Resistance and the Dynamics of Nonviolent Movements Course

The rise of nonviolent, people power movements around the world has become a defining feature of the 21st century. Organized citizen campaigns and movements using nonviolent methods are challenging formidable opponents: unaccountable governance, systemic corruption, institutionalized discrimination, environmental degradation, dictatorship, foreign military occupation, and violent extremism. Their “weapons” are not guns or bombs but rather protests, boycotts, sit-ins, civil disobedience, building of alternative institutions, and hundreds of other nonviolent tactics. Combined with the use of traditional political and legal means, these

movements have and continue to shape political, social and economic change across the globe.

Course Overview

Maria Stephan:

Hello, I'm Maria Stephan and I'm a Senior Policy Fellow here at USIP. The rise of nonviolent people power movements around the world is a defining feature of the 21st century. Organized citizens have turned to nonviolent collection action to challenge formidable foes, systemic corruption, environmental degradation, dictatorship and foreign occupation, even violent extremist groups. Their weapons are neither guns nor bombs. Rather, they have turned to satires, sit-ins, consumer boycotts, graffiti, civil disobedience, a plethora of nonviolent tactics - which together, with the use of normal political, legal, and institutional means, have allowed people to advance human rights, freedoms, and accountable governance.

Historically, nonviolent moments have been twice as successful as armed struggles, especially against opponents willing to use violence. Not only that, there is a strong link between nonviolent citizen movements and both democratic develop and civil peace.

In this course, Civil Resistance and the Dynamics of Nonviolent Movements, you will learn from a diverse set of activists, scholars, experts, and practitioners about the history and theories of civil resistance, how nonviolent movements succeed and fail, the relationship between on and offline activism, and aspects of leadership organization and communication, along with ways that outside actors can support that. If you are a policymaker, activist, a member of an NGO or CSO, from the private sector, foundation world, media, or a regional expert, or simply a private citizen with a keen interest in how organized movements are transforming conflicts through nonviolent means, I encourage you to enroll in this course and join a powerful conversation. Thank you.

Course Objectives

This course examines the theory, history, and strategy of nonviolent movements. Participants in this course will:

- Learn from a diverse set of activists, scholars, and practitioners through stories, research, and exercises.
- Transform how they analyze and think about conflict – its value, mode, and outcomes.
- Engage with a growing community of learners and experts enrolled in the course through a continuous series of live, interactive, and collaborative online events.
- Co-Create new knowledge and insights to enhance and update the course as the field evolves.

Activists, civil society leaders, scholars, regional experts, policymakers from governments and international organizations, journalists, religious figures, educators/trainers, and those with a keen interest in how ordinary people are transforming conflicts through nonviolent action are encouraged to enroll and join this powerful global conversation.

Note: This is part 1 of the 3-course series.

Duration

While everyone's learning style is different, most participants complete this five-chapter, self-paced course in 8-12 hours.

Instructors

- [Daryn Cambridge](#), Professional Development Portfolio Manager (EPIC), Training Resources Group, Inc.
- [Dr. Maria J. Stephan](#), former Director of the Program on Nonviolent Action, United States Institute of Peace
- [Althea Middleton-Detzner](#), Director, PeaceTech Labs

Guest Experts

- [Dr. Peter Ackerman](#), Founding Chair, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict (ICNC)
- [Dr. Maciej Bartkowski](#), Senior Director, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict
- [Dr. Erica Chenoweth](#), Associate Professor, Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver
- [Dr. Mary Elizabeth King](#), Professor, University for Peace
- [John Lewis](#), U.S. House of Representatives
- [Georgia Ivan Marovic](#), Organizer, Software Developer and Social Innovator
- [Erin Mazursky](#), Founder and Executive Director, Rhize
- [Hardy Merriman](#), President, International Center on Nonviolent Conflict

Introduction

Hello from Maria, Daryn, and Althea! Welcome to the Civil Resistance 1: The Dynamics of Nonviolent Movements course. We will be your instructors for this course, and we're very glad you're here.



Civil resistance movements have and continue to shape political, social and economic change across the globe. As peacebuilders, understanding the role of nonviolent movements throughout history as well as the ones that currently exist today will help us understand one of the most effective ways of mitigating conflict nonviolently. At USIP, we believe that conflict is inevitable, but it does not have to be violent. Civil resistance and nonviolent movements are powerful examples of this.

We developed this course for activists, civil society leaders, scholars, regional experts, policymakers from governments and international organizations, journalists, religious figures, educators/trainers, and those with a keen interest in how ordinary people are transforming conflicts through nonviolent action. We will hear stories and learn from a variety of practitioners and activists who will challenge us to think critically about conflict. We also look forward to hearing from you and your perspectives through discussion forums and activities!

Thanks for joining this course. I hope the stories, reflections, and lessons offered in this course will help better prepare you for future engagements. If

you have questions or need assistance at any point, please do reach out to our Global Campus directly at globalcampus@usip.org.

Let's get started!

When Nonviolent Action Succeeds



This photo shows the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. memorial in Washington, D.C. Today, MLK's nonviolent action campaign remains an aspiration for nonviolent movements across the globe. ([Photo: Gotta Be Worth It, Pexels](#))

Nonviolent action can be a powerful tool for social change and peacebuilding. An example of what can be accomplished using nonviolent strategies is the US Civil Rights movement. [Watch the video](#) to learn why civil rights leaders applied nonviolence and why it was so impactful. As Dr. King noted, nonviolent action was not just a form of social protest and mobilization but was "waging conflict constructively." Of nonviolent action, King stated: "It is the way of the strong, it is not a method of stagnant passivity....It does not seek to humiliate or defeat the opponent but, rather,

understanding and the awakening of a sense of morality....It is aimed at the evil that one is trying to remove, not at the persons involved."



INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s nonviolent action was a powerful mobilizer of change during the civil rights movement. Although some members of the Black Panthers criticized King's tactics as being passive, the success of the movement helped transform the United States, ended legal segregation, and contributed significantly to the achievement of landmark civil rights and voting rights legislation in the United States. Ultimately, the perseverance of nonviolent activists led to more civil rights for Black Americans. It also inspired many movements to come.

The late conservative newspaper columnist Charles Krauthammer wrote in The Washington Post on December 12, 2002:

Martin Luther King succeeded in taking a liberation movement that could easily have turned irredeemably divisive and deeply anti-American...and dedicated it instead to a reaffirmation of American principles. The point is not just what King and his followers did for African Americans, but what they did -- by validating America's original promise of freedom and legal equality -- for the rest of America....Perhaps even more important than the civil rights movement's ends, however, were its means. That was its other great gift to America. The civil rights movement transformed nonviolence from a notion into a norm -- an act of astonishing political creativity whose legacy has been so thoroughly assimilated into contemporary American life that today we hardly appreciate it.



Can you think of a current movement that uses the nonviolent action tactics you saw in the video?



In the United States, the Black Lives Matter movement has brought some essential questions to the surface. Some advocates for justice and minority rights contend that the Civil Rights Movement in the United States was limited in its successes and failed to bring about structural changes necessary for racial equality. One criticism, attributed to "Critical Race Theory," is that by focusing on the most egregious forms of discrimination or racism, there was no remedy for the common, everyday racism experienced by most people of color. While laws addressed the worst

aspects of racism, the structures, systems, and root causes of racism and injustice remain in place and there are few incentives for the dominant groups in society to change that. Would you agree with that contention? Or does that minimize the significant legacy of Dr. King and the Civil Rights Movement as Charles Krauthammer noted above?

When Nonviolent Action Fails



Throughout the FARC's campaign in Colombia, they used violent tactics. The absence of nonviolent action is an added challenge as Colombia transitions to a post-conflict society. (Photo: Federico Rios, New York Times)

When violent campaigns are pursued instead of using nonviolent methods, it often leads to instability, human rights abuses, and war. One example where the absence of nonviolent action resulted in decades of violence is the civil war in Colombia. [In this video](#), you will hear how the FARC used violent tactics to fight for the change they sought. This resulted in over 50 years of war and a rocky post-conflict period.



INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE

While Colombia is no longer experiencing civil war, it has had difficulty transitioning to peace. Part of the challenge is that the FARC's campaign used violent rather than nonviolent methods. This led to an all-out civil war between the FARC and the government. In November 2016, the government of Colombia and the FARC rebels signed an agreement ending five decades of guerrilla war. Despite the agreement the state has failed to address many of the inequalities in Colombia that sustained the conflict for so long. Nor has the government been able to make peace with Colombia's last major insurgency, the ELN. There remain forces within Colombia who want to sabotage the 2016 peace agreement and work to undermine attempts at rural economic reform policies. At the same time, hopes and expectations, particularly among the poor and rural populations have not been met. In the past two years, there has been widespread

resentment of growing police violence, the murders of grassroots activists, and widening economic inequality that has been greatly exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. By mid-2021, over 30 people have died in street protests over government policies and there has been a resurgence and rearmament of armed groups in some rural areas of the country. Because so many of the root causes of the war have not been fully addressed, peace in Colombia remains quite tenuous.



Many activists have argued that nonviolent struggle can serve as a model for the development of democratic institutions, noting that militarized and violent movements tend to be anti-democratic. Would you agree with that observation?

Course Agenda



The agenda lays out the structure of the course, highlighting the purpose of each chapter (Photo: [Ketut Subiyanto, Pexels](#)).

Chapter 1: The Historical and Theoretical Foundations of Civil Resistance

This chapter investigates the theories of power, peace, conflict, and obedience that lie at the foundation of nonviolent struggle. We also examine the history of nonviolent struggle and what it can teach us about its effectiveness, challenges, and common misconceptions.

Chapter 2: Analyzing and Strategizing as a Nonviolent Movement

This chapter looks at how nonviolent movements analyze their conflict landscape and think strategically once that information is gathered. We

explore a variety of analytical tools and strategic principles that have been adopted by successful nonviolent movements.

Chapter 3: The Role of Leaders and Followers

This chapter examines leadership styles, movement-building, and movement structure. We will look at the importance of recruitment, building relationships, sustaining participation, activist roles, and the third party actors.

Chapter 4: The Methods of Nonviolent Struggle

This chapter explores the range of nonviolent methods that are in a movement's arsenal. We look at how the use of methods can be mapped out and utilized to carry out the strategic plan and adapt to changing conditions on the ground.

Chapter 5: Concluding Remarks

This chapter asks you to reflect on what you've learned throughout the course and share your feedback with us. (60 minutes)

Self-Assessment

Being self-aware and being able to reflect is crucial to success and often provides a reality check. Self-reflection also encompasses a willingness to listen to others, which is a critical practice in peacebuilding. Take the time now to reflect on what you may already know about civil resistance or nonviolent movements, and identify where you need to learn more or what else you would like to know.

Pre Self-Assessment

Take a moment to reflect on your prior knowledge of the theory, history, and strategy of nonviolent movements.

1. Rate your confidence level for the following statement: I can describe the importance of nonviolence.
 - ☐ Very Unconfident
 - ☐ Unconfident
 - ☐ Somewhat Confident
 - ☐ Confident
 - ☐ Very Confident
2. Rate your confidence level for the following statement: I can define nonviolent civil resistance and how is it distinct from other forms of social and political action.
 - ☐ Very Unconfident
 - ☐ Unconfident
 - ☐ Somewhat Confident
 - ☐ Confident
 - ☐ Very Confident

3. Rate your confidence level for the following statement: I can apply the principles and tools of nonviolent action to a cause I am passionate about.

- ☐ Very Unconfident
- ☐ Unconfident
- ☐ Somewhat Confident
- ☐ Confident
- ☐ Very Confident

Now that we've talked about the importance of nonviolent action and assessed ourselves, let's move into the pillars of nonviolent action.

Historical and Theoretical Foundations

Voices from the Field

Daryn Cambridge:

Nonviolent action is a method of struggle that ordinary people have discovered and experimented with throughout history. In 1959, in a small church basement in Nashville, Tennessee, John Lewis started attending workshops on nonviolent action. He and all those who participated were introduced to the theory, history, and strategy of civil resistance. These workshops became the training grounds for what would become a generation of nonviolent activists fighting for civil rights throughout the United States.

John Lewis:

“In 1956 at the age of 16, some of my brothers and sisters and cousins went down to the public library in the little town of Troy, Alabama trying to get library cards, trying to check out some books, and we were told by the librarian that the library was for whites only, not for coloreds. When I finished high school in May 1957, I wanted to attend a little college called Troy State College, it is now known as Troy University. Submitted my application, my high school transcript—I never heard a word from the school. So I wrote a letter to Martin Luther King Jr. I didn’t tell my mother, my father, any of my sisters or brothers, any of my teachers. I told Dr. King I needed his help. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote me back, and sent me a round-trip Greyhound bus ticket and invited me to come to Montgomery to meet with him. I remember later, after I had gone off to school to Tennessee, Dr. King heard that I was there, he got back in church and suggested, when I was home from spring break, to come and see him. So I met him in March of 1958—by this time I’m 18 years old—and Martin Luther King Jr. inspired me. He became my hero.

“A young man by the name of Jim Lawson—a great advocate of the way of peace, the way of love, the way of nonviolence—started conducting these nonviolent workshops, so every Tuesday night at 6:30 PM, a group of college students from Fisk University, Tennessee State, American Baptist College, Vanderbilt University, Meharry Medical School, would go and study. We studied what Gandhi attempted to do or what he attempted to accomplish in South Africa, studied what he accomplished in India. We studied Thoreau and civil disobedience. We studied the great religions of the world. We studied what Dr. King was all about.”

John Lewis went on to be the head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and a member of the United States Congress.

Nonviolent movements have helped shape human civilization, yet the stories of this method of struggle are oftentimes hidden from our histories. Since 2004, Aisha Mershani has helped wage and document nonviolent struggle in the Palestinian Territories. Her photos have helped uncover methods of nonviolent struggle that Palestinians have used throughout the years.

Aisha Mershani: “I started with the movement as a solidarity activist and became a photographer within that time frame as someone who was photographing the resistance. I have an extensive archive of the resistance starting in the village of Budrus, which was successful in moving the route of the wall to the green line. It was an inclusive struggle. Men, women, children, international activists, Israeli activists—and it was Palestinian-led. From that moment in January 2004, since my first interaction in Budrus, I have been very committed to the cause and I continue to use my photographs as a way to educate people, specifically American audiences, because as an activists—as an American—and as somebody who has seen the struggle on the ground (which has used nonviolent tactics along the way) it’s very hidden in our media. So I have exhibited my photos in gallery spaces. I have given them to publications. I have given many talks at both universities, at conferences, at activists’ events, and I continue to share that information.”

Aisha's photos have been shown at galleries, universities, and schools around the world.

Nonviolent movements work to ensure that conflicts are not violent, but rather transformative. In both 2004 and 2013, Ukraine experienced two different, yet connected, nonviolent movements. Alina Chuperna was active and present in both the 2004 Orange Revolution and the 2013/2014 Euromaidan Protests. She and others who participated in both revolutions have begun to think anew about their struggle in order to transform the conflict in the region.

Alina Chuperna:

“Most of Ukrainians of my age and older had two major campaigns, which were well known, that's the Orange Revolution. And I was back—I think 19 at this time—and of course the latest year of the Maidan Revolution. Well, I think people understand that those are completely two different things and to be honest, I mean Orange Revolution had different reasons. It wasn't as productive, I would say, and being the young student back at this time looking back at you know, our hot hearts and how passionate we were about wearing orange, and just kind of neglecting some of the classes of this university. All the discussions and quarrel sections that were going on in this time, in the families, in the classroom, you know, one was for orange, another one was for blue so all these colors images. I think that was a little bit for the whole nation, a little bit on the surface, you know. People were not realizing that you have to—besides fighting in a peaceful way for your own rights, standing for good in democracy—you have to devote every day since you have to, you know, develop the civil society. You have to come up with an initiative, you have to provide alternatives for the government and put the government to understand this alternative. So I think that's the major shift that happened between [the] Orange Revolution and Euromaidan Revolution. Because people the first time they realized what freedom means, because when it's taken from you, especially the aggression from your neighbor, that's a very sensitive subject. You realize that you are responsible for that and that's part of your future and if you, you know, you can blame the government all you want, you can create

problems but that's probably not the most productive approach. You also have to know how to collaborate, what to suggest."

Alina went on to become a representative of the Professional Government Initiative in Ukraine, a civil society group supporting specific reforms and the inclusion of new thought leaders in government.

Nonviolent movements challenge systems of power by refusing to obey or give consent to unjust policies, laws, or practices. The 21st century has given rise to a number of nonviolent movements and campaigns in places like Tunisia, China, and Spain. Helping fuel these struggles is the discontent of those who are seeking better lives, economic opportunities, and dignity in their work. As the CEO of a major news publication, Jakub Parusinski covered stories at the intersection of business, civil society, and democracy.

Jakub Parusinski:

"Any authoritarian system is based on the instinct of obedience, and that's because people have a very clear calculus. As long as the leader is providing, as long as—and whether this is a company or a government—as long as the leader is providing and we obey, we will be safe. There is a clear tradeoff between security and freedom in that sense, and what really breaks out from this is the entrepreneurial spirit. People who are entrepreneurs, who want to build their business or want to develop their careers, are not going to settle for 'I keep my head down, and I will slowly develop my career, develop myself, have a family.' They are not satisfied with safety; they want something more. They want to break the chain of obedience and build their own company, build their own program, build their own project. And so, whenever we have these authoritarian countries, they will stamp down on entrepreneurship, and I think that if we want to look over the long-term, if we really want to make a change in all these authoritarian countries, we have to change the way the equation works. Yes, there is a tradeoff between safety and freedom, but we can make freedom more appealing."

Learning Objectives

In this chapter, we explore the underlying theories of power, conflict, obedience, and violence that inform nonviolent action as a method of struggle. We also explore how nonviolent action has been practiced throughout history, its rate of success when compared to violent struggle, and examine some of its misconceptions.

As an introduction to this chapter, this short documentary captures the voices of individuals whose work and lives reveal some key aspects of the history and theory of nonviolent action. As you watch please consider the following questions:

- How does one begin learning about nonviolent action as a method of struggle?
- How does nonviolent struggle challenge our perceptions of power?
- What does nonviolent action tell us about the necessity of conflict?

Activity

What words come to mind when you think of nonviolent action? How would you describe what nonviolent action looks like? Take a moment to reflect on these questions.

Once you're ready, grab a piece of paper and some writing tools, or use this [browser-based application](#), to design a Word Cloud. Your Word Cloud should feature words, phrases, or quotes in different sizes, colors, or shapes to describe the relationship you've been thinking about.

Here is an example of what a Word Cloud on Intercultural Communication looks like from the browser-based application linked above, but feel free to create yours using paper and writing tools:



Once you're finished, feel free to take a picture and share your word cloud in the comments below! If you crafted a word cloud in the browser-based application, take a screenshot and post that in the comments.

Defining Civil Resistance

Defining Civil Resistance

Maria Stephan:

Civil resistance, also known as nonviolent struggle, nonviolent action, and people power, is a technique of waging conflict using active nonviolent means that can be distinguished from conventional political action and from violence. So there is no single definition of this phenomenon but for this purpose I will draw principally on the works of Dr. Gene Sharp, a sociologist who famously wrote the three-volume *Politics of Nonviolent Action* in 1973, and Dr. Brian Martin, a Professor of Social Sciences at the University of Wollongong in Australia.

So, conventional action includes voting, lobbying, campaigning, working, buying and selling goods, dialogue negotiations—anything that is routine within a society. Nonviolent action, on the other hand, goes beyond routine behavior and works outside of normal institutions and often challenges conventional practices. So, think [of]: bus drivers refusing to collect fares, youth staging a sit-in in front of the parliament, consumers refusing to patronize certain businesses, setting up alternative systems of social welfare, using satire to parody certain political practices.

The boundary between conventional and nonviolent action depends really on the circumstance. Handing out leaflets in one society may be routine; doing it in another country may get you killed. Same thing with strikes, which in some places have become so routine as to be considered part of conventional politics; in other places, it's a highly risky activity.

So to summarize, nonviolent action means action. We are not talking about passivity, pacifism, or inaction. This form of behavior goes beyond routine politics and it's important to know that the opponents of nonviolent resisters often and can use violent force against the protesters.

Nonviolent action can be divided into actions against something—so think [of] strikes, boycotts—along with actions that are for something, so building underground schools, issuing a manifesto, things of that nature.

We can also distinguish between principled nonviolent action, also known as pacifism or nonviolence as a way of life, which is the rejection of violence under any circumstance, and pragmatic nonviolent action, which rejects violence for strategic or practical reasons. While sometimes the lines between these two can be blurred, for the purpose of this course we are focused on nonviolent action as a technique of struggle. As prominent pacifist and nonviolence scholar George Lakey once said, “Most people who engage in nonviolent struggle are not pacifists, and most pacifists do not engage in nonviolent struggle.”



“The true meaning of non-resistance has often been misunderstood or even distorted. It never implies that a non-violent man should bend before the violence of an aggressor.”

— Mohandas Gandhi —

Geopolitical and Historical Impact of Civil Resistance

Key Question: How has nonviolent civil resistance shaped social, political, and economic structures throughout history?

Maria Stephan:

Civil resistance and nonviolent collective action have been with us since at least ancient Greek times. One of the earliest depictions of civil disobedience is in Sophocles' play *Antigone* when Antigone, the daughter of the former King Oedipus, refused to obey the current King Creon, who wouldn't hand over her brother Polyneices for proper burial. Antigone insisted that she was following a higher law, her conscience—which is quite similar to [Henry David] Thoreau's refusal to pay taxes to the U.S. government hundreds of years later—and she later paid for that with her life. So interestingly, we've gone from individual acts of civil disobedience and defiance to collective movements that have had a profound impact on geopolitics—and, I would argue, have fundamentally altered the relationship between people and states.

Collective nonviolent action and civil resistance have been used all over the world to challenge unjust authority, real and perceived, and to advance group interest. Whether it was the Gandhi-led movement for minority rights in South Africa that began in late 1800s—and later, the mass struggle for Indian independence in the early 1900s—or the amazing and often under-reported case of the 1919 Egyptian mass resistance against British colonial rule. Then, the U.S. civil rights movement; popular uprisings against communist dictatorships in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany; the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa; the “Singing Revolutions” that brought independence to the Baltic states; and then, the so-called “Color Revolutions” in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine; and, more recently, the 2011 mass uprising against dictatorship in the Arab world. Each decade since 1900, the number of nonviolent movements has risen significantly.



Collective nonviolent action and civil resistance have been used all over the world to challenge unjust authority, real and perceived, and to advance group interest.

Why Study Civil Resistance

Why Study Civil Resistance - Research Methodology

Key Question: Why has nonviolent civil resistance been more successful than violent action?

Maria Stephan:

The origins of the book: *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. I met my friend and the co-author of the book, Dr. Erica Chenoweth, in 2006 at a workshop in Colorado. Erica, who is a political scientist and a professor at the University of Denver, was a political violence expert with a knack for numbers and quantitative research methodologies.

During this workshop, Erica heard my colleagues and I discussing the historical effectiveness of nonviolent resistance movements—the fact that this form of struggle could succeed even against really tough opponents and et cetera, et cetera. The reality was that we were talking about only a limited number of cases, maybe 12 to 15 cases maximum. And it's very hard to say anything definitive about such a small number of cases. Beyond that, until that point in 2006, there had been no serious attempt to systematically compare the efficacy of violent and nonviolent resistance movements.

The critiques of nonviolent struggles and nonviolent action were understandable. Yes, nonviolent resistance may work in certain circumstances, like relatively benign societies, environments, and democracies, but not against the most difficult opponents. Not against repressive dictatorships willing and able to use violence. There must be certain structural conditions or factors that make armed resistance a necessity to achieve victory. And violence may not always succeed, but certainly it must be more successful than nonviolent resistance historically. So these very questions are what we wanted to test.

Using a wide variety of sources, we collected data on 323 campaigns, violent and nonviolent, from 1900 to 2006. We focused on three types of what we call “maximalist” campaigns. These were campaigns against incumbent regimes, campaigns against foreign occupation, and campaigns for territorial self-determination or secession. In order to be included as a campaign in the data set, which is called the Nonviolent and Violent Conflict Outcomes or NAVCO data set, you had to have at least 1,000 observed participants. In the data set, we held constant variables including regime type, GDP, population size, ethno-sectarian divisions, and the like.

After comparing these 323 campaigns, we concluded that the nonviolent resistance campaigns achieved their maximalist goals 54% of the time compared to 26% for the armed campaigns. Not only that, the success rates of nonviolent resistance rose dramatically from 1940 to 2006. The relative effectiveness of nonviolent resistance compared to armed struggle has increased significantly over time.

Not only that, Erica Chenoweth and I were very interested in the relationship between the resistance type and the society that followed. We found that nonviolent resistance campaigns correlated very strongly with democratic consolidation and with civil peace. Less than 4% of rebel victories ushered in democracy within five years and nearly 50% relapsed into civil war within 10 years. Interesting factoid: even countries that experienced failed nonviolent campaigns achieved successful democratic transition within five years.



Historically, nonviolent movements have been twice as successful as armed movements.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Video: The Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order](#)

Denver international studies scholar Erica Chenoweth and U.S. State Department strategist Maria Stephan met by chance at a workshop a few years ago. They ended up collaborating on a book about civil resistance that earned them the 2013 University of Louisville Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order. Recently, they explained how they learned that nonviolence works better than violence to bring about change.

Terms

Nonviolent Action, Political Action, Legal Action

Key Question: What is the difference between conventional political action, legal action, and nonviolent action?

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

As we think about the terminology, the definitions, the meaning of words associated with nonviolent social movements, it's also important to distinguish between nonviolent action, political action, and legal action. Nonviolent action is often described as being extra-institutional or non-institutional. That is, nonviolent action takes place or occurs outside of the existing traditional, political, and legal structures, political institutions, and legal mechanisms that are already in place.

As well-known scholar and author Kurt Schock says: "Not all actions that are not violent or nonviolent action." But what does this mean? Voting is an example of action that is not violent but is not considered a nonviolent action. This is because it's an institutionalized method of political action. Pressing charges or going through a formal arbitration process is also a nonviolent action that is not considered a nonviolent action. That's because it's an institutionalized method of legal or judicial action, and this is not considered to typically be part of the nonviolent methods.

Some well-known methods of nonviolent action include strikes, boycotts, sit-ins, demonstrations, blockades, and nonviolent occupation. Often times, people involved in a nonviolent campaign or movement have already tried to change the status quo by using these institutionalized methods of political or legal action before resorting to the use of strategic nonviolent action.

Kurt Schock characterizes nonviolent actions as involving three key elements: the first is risk, the second is a form of a nonviolent pressure or

coercion, and the third is involving some form of contentious interactions between opposing groups.

For example, you live in a place where a multinational company's oil pipeline is running through your community, and perhaps this pipeline is leaking oil into the groundwater system. Maybe this groundwater is being so contaminated that members of your family or your community are getting sick, and so you decide that you need to do something about the situation. You may decide to first write a letter to the company to tell them, inform them about the problem, and ask them to come and fix it as soon as possible. Let's say the company doesn't respond and you decide to take another kind of action. You might decide to set up a meeting with the local political official to complain about the company's behavior and the effects that this leaking pipeline is having on the health of your family. If the political official takes your complaint but nothing changes and the oil continues to leak into your groundwater, you might have to do something else. You might decide to hire a lawyer and pursue legal action against this company.

So far, you have taken both political and legal action. You may have encountered some risk—you may have even had some contentious relations with your opponent or opponents—but you have not yet leveraged nonviolent action to bring about change. Instead what you've been doing is utilizing the existing political and legal systems—the existing structures and institutions—to try and achieve change and achieve justice.

So, let's say that this lawsuit is not decided in your favor and the contamination continues to persist. You may decide that you have no other choice but to organize the people in your community and use nonviolent action to force the company to address this issue.

Nonviolent movements may choose to use nonviolent action in tandem with traditional political and legal methods of action. In fact, some methods of nonviolent action may intentionally go against the existing political and legal structures. Some nonviolent actions intentionally subvert those systems or structures. Sometimes, nonviolent action is designed to refuse to obey

laws. This was certainly the case in the US Civil Rights Movement when students staged sit-ins at local department stores in Nashville. These sit-ins were an effort to intentionally break segregation laws in order to dramatize the injustice of segregation in the United States.



Nonviolent action involves three key elements: risk, pressure, and contentious interaction.

Naming Civil Resistance

Daryn Cambridge:

In the early 90s, a retired army officer by the name of Bob Helvey started travelling to the border of Thailand and Burma, and he started offering and facilitating these workshops on nonviolent struggle. Now, these workshops were being provided for a group of about 500 people who were part of an umbrella pro-democracy group, and some of the people in this group had actually been and were leaders of the armed resistance to Burma's military dictatorship.

Bob Helvey is using the term "nonviolent struggle" in these seminars and immediately there is a sticking point that's created, and one of the leaders of the armed resistance movement says, "I have no interest in doing the work of cowards." This is understandable. This is somebody who has spent many years of their life fighting against a brutal, violent adversary, and when he heard the word "nonviolent," he was immediately turned off. He wasn't able to hear or seriously consider the ideas that were being presented under this idea of nonviolent struggle.

So what did Bob Helvey do? Bob decided to instead start calling this political defiance. The ideas were the same, the strategic principles were the same—everything he was doing in these workshops was the same—he just didn’t call it nonviolent struggle; he called it political defiance. Soon after he made that switch, that same leader (who at the beginning had said that he didn’t want to do the “work of cowards”) was now coming up to Bob and saying: “I want you to come back, I want you to do more trainings, more seminars, so that more of my people can take and participate in these trainings.”

So the point of this story is that the word that we use to describe this method of struggle matters. Some people hear certain things when they hear the word “nonviolent.” In some cases, it’s positive for folks, in other cases, it’s not so positive. It resonates with some people; it doesn’t resonate with others. We need to be able to adapt how we talk about this method of struggle depending on the historical and the cultural context in which we are working.

What are some of the other terms that you’re probably going to come across? Well, the first is nonviolence. And nonviolence is probably the most universally heard or accepted term to describe this method of struggle, and the reason for that is because two of the most iconic nonviolent leaders in world history, Dr. Martin Luther King and Mohandas Gandhi, both used this term “nonviolence.” At the same time, they were both rooted in a deep faith tradition and so for people who share that faith tradition, that word “nonviolence” is probably going to resonate with them. And again, because the word “nonviolence” is tied to these iconic leaders, when people hear the word “nonviolence,” they immediately conjure up images of these successful nonviolent movements. But at the same time, this word being rooted in a faith tradition, if you are not a person of faith or if you are not as interested in nonviolence as an ethical or principled way of life, but more so nonviolent action as a way to struggle against an adversary, the term “nonviolence” may not resonate with you as much.

So, another term that you might use and people have used is something called direct action, and this is something that the environmental groups

and the environmental movement uses a lot. In fact, Greenpeace, which is one of the largest global environmental movements out there, refers to the work they do as peaceful direct action. And the reason that they use this term is that it distinguishes what they do as a social movement—direct action—from political action and judicial action.

Another popular, powerful term is people power. “People power” is a term that was actually coined by Filipinos during the People Power Movement that removed the Marcos dictatorship.

Another term you might hear is popular struggle. This is a term that Palestinians started to use during the first Intifada, in large part because popular committees were an integral part of this social movement, and so they adopted that use of the word popular, attached it with struggle and ergo we have popular struggle, so that’s another term.

Another term is Satyagraha, which is a term that Gandhi used and developed, so there is a deep history with that term. Loosely translated, Satyagraha means “truth force,” so you might come across that.

You might hear the term nonviolent civic mobilization. That’s a term that might resonate more with civil society groups or with individuals and organizations that are working with civil society groups.

And then another term, which you’ll see in the title of this course, is civil resistance, which a lot of people feel captures some of the elements of engaging ordinary folks in civil society in a form of resistance.

So these are some of the terms that you will hear, you will come across, and we leave it up to you to decide which term works best for you, and which term will work best for audiences, groups, and communities that you are working with around nonviolent struggle.



PRACTICAL TIP

We need to be able to adapt how we talk about nonviolent struggle depending on the culture and context in which we are working.

Guest Expert Podcast

[Mary Elizabeth King](#) discusses the importance of standardizing civil resistance terminology.

On Civil Resistance Terminology

Mary Elizabeth King:

For anyone who's working in this field, either a practitioner of nonviolent action or teaching civil resistance or an author or a writer writing about it, the terminology is a headache. Think about the word nonviolent. It doesn't even tell you what it is. It tells you what it's not. We really have a very serious problem in this field, in that the terminology is not precise and it has evolved. The 1930s was a period when the word nonviolent began to come into common use writers like Clifford Marsh Case and Richard Gregg, who were studying what was going on in the Indian subcontinent, use the word nonviolent. They heard Gandhi use that word. It first appears in the Oxford English dictionary around the 1920s. All of the other words that we're using are words that are grabbed from colloquial languages. It's more important to try to fix on words that can be broadly understood and they can be translated well. Because of the imprecision of so many of the words that we're using and because of the organic history that has generated them, the boycott was going on for centuries before the Irish Captain Boycott, who was despised by the land tenants boycotted him.

They wouldn't shoot his horses, they wouldn't do his laundry. They wouldn't clean his house. They wouldn't do anything for him. They wouldn't take his money in the shops. They wouldn't sell him bread. And so his name got appended to a technique that goes way back in history, including in the Arabian Peninsula in the 7th Century. The field, of civil resistance, is filled with stories like this, where the names get appended or something is pulled into as a word or a term. Consequently, standardizing terminology becomes much more important. Now, the term nonviolent methods are very significant because it refers to the huge variety of actions that are the core characteristic of the technique. And it is the ability of uninformed and uninitiated people, the general public to see that there is a connection between a petition, a demonstration, a vigil, a strike, a sit-in, a hunger strike. Ordinary people can see that there's a connection. That there's something that unifies all of these actions, even if they can't talk about it analytically, they can understand that there's something that brings them together. They can make that observation. The term nonviolent methods refer to this immense body, this immense repertoire of actions. And it's a good term for us to use and stick with because it's precise enough for us to communicate that it is part of a continuum of actions, each of which exerts different power and increasing power.

Poll: What term for nonviolent action do you prefer?

- ☐ Nonviolence
- ☐ People Power
- ☐ Political Defiance
- ☐ Popular Struggle
- ☐ Satyagraha
- ☐ Direct Action
- ☐ Nonviolent Civic Mobilization

☐ Civil Resistance

☐ Other

Theories of Power

Challenging Conceptions of Power

Key Question: How do our conceptions of power shape the way we view conflict?

Daryn Cambridge:

One of the first things that we want to start unpacking when talking about nonviolent struggle and nonviolent action is this idea of power. And I think our definition of power—what we imagine when we hear the word power—comes with a lot of preconceived ideas, and we want to unpack those, because, again, they are at the root of nonviolent action.

So I'm going to give you a definition and we'll start with that. A definition of power is "the capacity to accomplish purpose," and that's Aristotle's definition [that] you will find in the dictionary: the capacity to accomplish purpose. With that definition in mind, I want to paint a picture for you—a short scenario—and then I want you to think about some of the questions in the scenario.

I want you to imagine that Joseph Stalin and Kim Jong Il, two of the most ruthless dictators of the 20th century, are on an airplane together and they are flying to the annual summit of dictators. And the second the plane takes off, the two of them immediately get into a conflict with one another, and they start arguing about everything you could think of. They start arguing about what route the plane should take to get to the summit; they start arguing about where the plane should land once they arrive; they start arguing about who's going to be the first person to step off the plane once the door opens, and this goes on and on and on and gets more intense. They start threatening each other. "You don't do this, I'm going to do that," "If you don't do that I'm going to do this."

So they are in a deep conflict with one another. So let's think about our definition here—the capacity to accomplish purpose—and we've got these

two folks in conflict with one another. My question that I want you to think about is: who has the most power in this conflict, in this situation? Who is going to be able to actually determine the outcome of this conflict?

Think about this. Some of you might say, “Well, I think Stalin has the most power in this conflict because he is just a bigger guy. He could overpower Kim Jong Il.” Some of you may say, “Well, I think Kim Jong Il has more power in the situation because he has the most loyal army. He is able to brainwash his soldiers the most.” Some of you may say, “Well, Stalin, I think, has the most power because he’s got a larger army, so his threats carry a little more force with them.” Some of you may say, “Well, they both have nuclear weapons, so it’s kind of a draw.” We can go on and on and on. But maybe some of you are thinking about the unmentioned individual in this conflict, and that is, of course, the pilot of the aircraft.

The pilot is the individual who actually determines where the plane is going to go; the pilot is the one who actually knows how to operate an aircraft. So a lot of what’s going to determine the outcome of this conflict lies in the hands of the pilot. Now you are probably saying to yourself, “Well, Daryn, that’s an unfair question. You kind of tricked me—you only mentioned Joseph Stalin and Kim Jong Il. The way in which you even framed the conflict, you left out the pilot.” Well that’s exactly the point: that, oftentimes, when we talk about power and we talk about conflicts, we make a conscious choice—whether it’s in movies, or in our textbooks, or in the way that we study conflicts. We make a conscious choice to only mention certain kinds of individuals who have a certain title, who have a certain amount of prestige, or who have armies or weapons behind them.

Yet, there are a lot of other people who are involved in a conflict and can determine the outcome, but they are not mentioned, and these unmentioned folks have a lot of power. Nonviolent movements tap into that unmentioned or unrecognized power. So, the pilot could decide to do whatever he or she wants. She could put on a parachute and jump out of the airplane and leave Joseph Stalin and Kim Jong Il to their demise. But we have to start rethinking and unpacking our assumptions about power in order to understand what lies behind the forces of nonviolent action.



If the people do not obey, the ruler cannot rule.

– Dr. Gene Sharp –

Monolithic and Pluralistic Power

Key Question: What is the difference between monolithic and pluralistic power?

Maria Stephan:

The main theory underlying civil resistance is a theory of power that looks at the relationship between power and consent. Dr. Gene Sharp, prominent sociologist and one of the pioneers in the field of civil resistance, wrote about two different models of power: the monolithic and the pluralistic models of power.

According to the monolithic theory of power, power in any society is fixed—it's monolithic—and it tends to be concentrated at the top of the power pyramid, meaning whoever is in charge (the regime, group of elites) in any society have all the power [and] control everyone else below them. So, power flows from top to bottom, and it's fixed.

The pluralistic theory of power holds that power is not fixed in any society. It is fluid and it is dispersed throughout society. There are organizations and institutions in any society (whether they are workers collectives, the media, education, bureaucracies), so-called pillars of support, that ultimately prop

up the power holder. That power, in fact, flows from the bottom to the top and that people—ordinary people in any society—if they stop obeying and they engage in organized non-cooperation en masse, this makes it very, very difficult—and at times impossible—for the power holder to remain in control.

An important point to bear in mind is that these organizations and institutions—the so-called pillars of support—are made up people, ordinary people, whose loyalties are shifting and can shift; they are not fixed. And so, people can decide to stop obeying and their loyalties in any of these pillars will shift, and when large numbers of workers, professionals, bureaucrats, women, and different women organizations stop obeying and engage in some of the tactics that we've begun to talk about (non-cooperation, civil disobedience, and the like), this translates into significant pressure being applied against the power holder. And if that pressure is sustained and if it's dispersed throughout a society, the power holder cannot stay in power. So this is the theory of the relationship between power and consent.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Infographic: Monolithic vs Pluralistic Power](#)

This infographic is informed by Dr. Gene Sharp's work. It underlines the difference between Monolithic and Pluralistic Power.

Poll: When you were growing up, were models and examples of power presented as being more monolithic or pluralistic?

- ☐ Monolithic
- ☐ Pluralistic

Theories of Change Continued

Destructive, Exchange, and Integrative Power

Key Question: What are destructive, exchange, and integrative types of power?

Daryn Cambridge:

Elise and Kenneth Boulding are two of the most important and influential peace scholars of our time. Elise Boulding was a sociologist and she was one of the founders of the peace and conflict studies field; and her husband Kenneth Boulding was an economist, a philosopher, and a poet, and this whole field of peace economics was really started by him. They both were Quakers and so they had a deep knowledge of nonviolent action, its history, its theory, and its strategy.

Kenneth Boulding outlines for us three types of power: destructive power, exchange power, and integrative power. These are different types of power that can exist at different levels: at the personal, the organizational, and even the evolutionary [level]. So let's talk about these types of power. And first, let's begin with our broad definition of power that we get from Aristotle. That is: power is the ability to accomplish purpose, or to get what one wants.

So what are different types of this power? The first is destructive power, and that basically means the power to destroy. The way that this dynamic works is: you do what I want, or you give me what I want, or else I will destroy something that you value—your home, your livelihood, your loved ones, your freedom, your own life. So I put out a threat to use destructive force in order to get what I want. Now this is a type of power that militaries and armies and armed groups rely on. Violent dictators rely on this as well. So that's one specific type of power.

The second type of power that Kenneth Boulding lays out for us is something called exchange power, sometimes referred to as economic

power. What that means is :it's the ability to create, to build, or to provide something. So the dynamic of this is, "You do what I want, or you give what I want, and in exchange I will give you something or provide for you something that you value"—that could be a higher salary, a job, a trade deal, a new car, or a new bike. You have something that you can give to somebody else in order for them to do what you want or give them what you want. So this is a dynamic that is often times used in diplomacy for example, or even in a company or corporation, the relationship that is built between the CEO and the president and his or her employees might be built around that type of power as well, or even a family structure. You can imagine how family structure relies on exchange power or this economic power.

Now, the third type of power that Kenneth Boulding outlines for us is called integrative power, also known as the power of love or respect. The dynamic of this is: "You do what I want, or you give me what I want, because you love me and have respect for me and my ideas, and you admire my conviction." So I don't threaten you with anything to destroy anything. I actually also have nothing to give you in exchange for you doing what I want you do to do, but you do it because you have respect again for my ideas, for a shared vision. All those together create something called legitimacy, and "legitimacy" is a really important word for us when we are talking about integrative power.

So Kenneth Boulding actually said, and I quote, that "integrative power is the ultimate form of power." So why would he think this? Why should we grapple this question? Well he argues, and I think we can all understand that these other types of power (destructive power and exchange power) actually rely on and are dependent on integrative power. So let's take destructive power, for example. Destructive power and threatening with the use of some type of destructive force requires that there is some legitimacy behind that, and that's because in order to carry out a threat, you often need, let's say armies or soldiers, sometimes you need materials or resources. If the soldiers in the army don't see the person who's commanding them as being legitimate or they don't have respect for that person, all of a sudden that destructive power is lost because the person

who is threatening that use of power doesn't have legitimacy—that integrative power is not there.

The same goes for exchange power. You can offer somebody something, let's say a certain amount of money to do a job, but if the person who is offering the money is not respected or the job is not respected, we can choose not to accept that money. We can choose not to accept that trade deal; we can choose not to accept a gift from somebody. If we realize that will put us in a relationship—through that exchange—with somebody or with an organization that we don't respect, we don't admire, and we don't love. So both destructive power and exchange power are in large part dependent on integrative power. So that's the first reason why integrative power is the ultimate form of power.

The second reason is because integrative power is the most durable kind of power. It's a power of love and respect, as I said earlier. Yes, it's difficult to develop, but once you develop it, it's hard to take it away, or it's harder to take away than some of the other things that destructive and exchange power rely on. So, again, going back to destructive power, you might need arms, guns, tanks, armies, human and material resources in order for that power to actually exist, actually utilize that power. But once those human and material resources get taken away or depleted, then all of a sudden you lose the ability of that power. You are dependent on all these other things. Same with exchange power, you may not be as wealthy, you may not have as many things to offer somebody else, you may not be as successful in a company any more or as competitive. So your ability to provide something to somebody can get taken away—it's dependent on all these other variables. And yes, integrative power absolutely has these other variables, but it's much more durable because those other things aren't necessarily there.

The third reason why integrative power is the ultimate form of power is because that's actually what we as a people have the most experience with. Now, if we write our history books or we walked through the various narratives of different countries, or even if we watched movies, often times we might think that power, or the ultimate form of power, is destructive

power, because that's the way it's represented, that's the way it's told in histories. We learn about the destructive use of force in order to get what we want or a country wants. But in reality, most of human civilization—90% of what we do on this earth—is decided through integrative power. It's decided through building and creating communities, building and creating families, and singing and worshipping together. So we actually, as human beings as a people, understand integrative power the most. We may not understand a lot of those things as being power or powerful, but in fact they are because these other types (destructive and exchange) are dependent on that.

So we go back to these questions of, who has power? How do we develop power and how do we wield power? And as a nonviolent movement, when we understand these three types (destructive, exchange, and integrative) we can start asking ourselves the question: do we need to develop, or should we develop, or do we have the capacity to develop a destructive type of power? Is that the best way for us to carry out this form of resistance? Do we have the ability, the capacity, the resources to build up our exchange power? Are we ever going to have enough resources to actually build up that power with our adversary? Where are we strongest already, and where do we have the greatest capacity to build a power and influence other types of power? With nonviolent movements, ordinary regular people, civil society groups will realize we are very rich in integrative power and we need to learn how to build that and make that even stronger and how to wield that in our conflict. We don't necessarily need to rely on destructive power; we've decided to be a nonviolent movement. We don't necessarily need to rely or spend time figuring out how to build up exchange power, but what we are rich in, what we can develop, and what we are already good at is integrative power and the power of love, respect, and legitimacy of good ideas and a shared vision.



“Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in power’s disappearance.”

– Hannah Arendt –

Power Over, Power With, and Power Within

Key Question: What are power over, power with, and power within conceptions of power?

Daryn Cambridge:

Starhawk is a writer, she is an activist, and she is a trainer and she has been involved with a variety of movements around the world (the environmental movement, the women’s right movements, the alternative globalization movement). So, she has really informed the work of a lot of nonviolent movements around the world. She presents to us three different types of power, and this is in her book Truth or Dare, which I highly recommend. The three different types of power that she shares with us are power over, power with, and power within. The reason that understanding these three types of power is important is because—and this is her direct quote—“How we define our reality shapes our reality.” I think that’s a really important point: how we define our reality, shapes our reality. How we define power shapes how we exercise power, how we develop power, and who we see as having power.

First, power over is the power to control. This is the power of the jailer or the prison guard, the power of the commander of an armed forces. This is a power that we oftentimes define and then shape how we see power. So again, when we hear the word power always ask somebody, “Who has the most power?” or “Who is the most powerful person in the world?” We often think of it as who has power over a lot of people. So, power over is also a very hierarchical structure that we are looking at, where power rests at the top, and the person or group at the top of that pyramid controls a lot more people underneath it. So that’s power over.

The second type of power that Starhawk presents us with is what she calls power with. This is the power of leadership and influence among equals. That, for me, is an important word: among equals. So, yes, there are still leaders, there are people who influence decisions and help people decide what directions to go in, but it’s not power over those people. It’s power among those people as equals. This is what we see in a lot of social movements, nonviolent social movements, where it’s not a leaderless movement, but it’s a leader-full movement. There are various points during a struggle, during a campaign, where one person might be viewed and perceived as the leader amongst equals, but at a different stage and a different campaign requires a different skill set or different approach, another person or another element of that group is seen as the leader or leaders in that situation. So this is the idea of power with, power with a group of people, power as leader among equals.

The third type of power that Starhawk presents us with is power within, and that is the power that we inherently have as human beings. The best way to describe this—and again I’m borrowing this from her directly—is the power that we see in a young child when she is first trying to crawl, or the power of a young child when he takes his first step, or we learn how to ride a bike, or we learn how to dance. These are things that we’re not being forced to do; it’s just something that innately we realize we have to do this, and we find something within ourselves to be able to accomplish that purpose or be able to do something. We all have that, and we see that throughout our entire lives, not just as little children, but also when we’re in, let’s say, deep spiritual practice for example. Or, when we are singing, or listening to

music, or reading something that inspires us. We all know that experience inside where we say, “I have this energy and I have this power that I have within me. Because of this experience, I’m now starting to realize and recognize.”

So quickly to review, power over you might see it as this very hierarchical vertical structure of how power is exercised and where it rests. Power with is a much more horizontal and flattened structure of power. Then power within is more of a center power, something that we have within ourselves. Nonviolent movements definitely rely on and recognize the power with type and the power within type, and using those two together, have been able to achieve unbelievable and amazing things against entities and adversaries that see power as being power over.



“How we define our reality, shapes our reality.”

– Starhawk –

Obedience

Why Do People Obey?

Key Question: What are the main reasons people are obedient?

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

Nonviolent theorist Gene Sharp says that obedience is at the heart of political power. When we refuse to obey, when we refuse to follow the wishes, the directions, demands, or expectations of an individual or a system of injustice, we are exerting a form of power. And this is why obedience is such an important factor to consider when understanding and organizing nonviolent campaigns and movements. If people do not obey, then the ruler can't rule or the system of injustice cannot continue to prevail.

Through acts of commission—that is, by doing the things that we are not supposed to do—so, for example, by conducting a sit-in on a busy highway during rush hour traffic, we are disobeying the norms of society and disrupting the status quo. It's through acts of omission—that is, by not doing something that we are supposed to do—for example, by not showing up to work today or by not buying from the corner store, I'm withdrawing my obedience and consent from the system and also altering the status quo.

How can nonviolent social movements leverage people's patterns of obedience and disobedience as a form of power to achieve a purpose?

The first reason that people obey is out of habit. Our habits dictate our actions in powerful ways to the point that we don't even think about what we're doing. We have all been conditioned to obey certain people in our lives—for example, our parents or our grandparents, our teachers, police officers. We obey the laws, the rules, and the norms of our society, and most of the time we don't even question it.

The second reason that people obey is out of self-interest. The material, physical, social, psychological rewards, and benefits of obeying will often drive people's decisions. In fact, a movement's adversary might explicitly incentivize or reward people for their support and obedience. And so, it's important for movements to understand the motivations and interests of people in society in order to better understand what would motivate them to act.

The third reason that people obey is due to a fear of sanctions or punishment. Violating the law or other rules or norms can have negative consequences. People are going to be less likely and less willing to participate in a nonviolent action or campaign if they believe that they may suffer consequences or punishment for that action.

The fourth reason that people obey is because of what Sharp calls "the zone of indifference." This is when people don't really feel strongly about an issue or maybe they feel apathetic about it.

The fifth reason that people obey is out of a lack of confidence. If you've been living under oppression for years, you lack confidence that any action has a possibility of creating change. You may have tried things but after seeing further wrongdoings, seeing further injustices, you've lost your confidence, and so you choose not to do anything differently. You choose not to act.

Another reason that people obey is because they believe that there is a moral obligation to obey. We have a moral obligation to the broader society to follow the rules and norms of that society. Despite all of the wrongdoings that somebody may have done—if they are a leader in our community or a person of status and respect in our society—we may feel a moral obligation to obey them at all costs.

Helplessness and hopelessness is another reason that people choose to obey. A nonviolent struggle can take a very long time before it succeeds. You may win small victories along the way, but over the long run, people might develop a sense of hopelessness.

Another reason that people obey is because the majority of people are doing it. There are times when we bear witness to something we feel is wrong, but we don't do anything or say anything. This can be because everybody else around us is ignoring the issue. They think "Because everybody else is doing it, so should I."

Poll: What is the primary trigger of your obedience?

- ☐ Habit
- ☐ Fear of sanctions
- ☐ Moral obligation
- ☐ Self-interest
- ☐ Psychological identification with ruler/authority figure
- ☐ Indifference
- ☐ Absence of self-confidence



In her training video, Althea laid out the seven main reasons people obey an authority figure. Think about your own experiences when interacting with authority figures – work, family, school, etc. – and reflect on why you obey. This will obviously depend on the context, however, what is the one reason that you feel triggers your obedience the most?

Music of Nonviolent Resistance

Kiosk (Iran) – Mamnooe

“YouTube, Twitter and Facebook are forbidden, / ...mixed-gender kindergartens are forbidden, / ...assisting earthquake victims is forbidden, / ...the satellite dish is forbidden, / ...bearing a resemblance to the president is forbidden.’

“In the song [Mamnooe](#) (“[It’s Forbidden](#)”), the Iranian band Kiosk delineates the broad array of actions and items – seemingly innocuous, at-times comical, and yet all-too-serious – that are regulated by the Iranian state. Music itself is no exception. As Iranian politics and culture have undergone enormous changes in the past decades, so music has evolved in tandem, manipulated and censored by the state while also functioning as a medium for resistance by the Iranian people.” [Read more on FreedomBeat.org](#).

Violence

Direct, Structural, and Cultural Violence – Part I

Daryn Cambridge:

The teaching and study of civil resistance can be found in many different academic disciplines. You can find courses and research on nonviolent movements in the fields of political science, sociology, international relations, history, theology, even psychology. The one field however that you will most likely find nonviolent action is in the field of peace and conflict studies. In it, it wrestles with a lot of the main concepts that define this field.

Three main concepts that inform a lot of the work in the field of peace and conflict studies are the concepts of direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. Now, these concepts come from thinkers like Martin Luther King Jr. and Johan Galtung, who is considered by many to be the father of peace research. Before diving into these three concepts, let us first define violence. Violence, broadly defined is, “the use of power to destroy.” To destroy can mean a lot of different things: to injure, to kill, to harm, to suppress. But it’s important that all of this is in order to prevent the realization of someone or something’s potential. It’s a key point here: to prevent the realization of someone or something’s potential.

So I want you to imagine a bird, and a bird at its full potential can spread her wings and she can fly. That’s what birds are supposed to do. Now, there are multiple forms of violence that I can use to destroy this bird and to prevent it from flying.

First, I can engage in a form of direct violence. Direct violence is a form of violence that can be experienced and observed as physical or verbal, and its effects are often times immediately seen or felt. So I could physically clip this bird’s wings and that would certainly prevent her from being able to fly, and this would be a form of direct violence. Now when people hear or use the word violence, they often are talking about direct violence. So armed

combat, war, murder, rape, sexual assault, torture, fist fights—these are all physical forms of direct violence. Harassment, insults, degrading comments—these are all verbal forms of direct violence. In short, direct violence is visible and has the direct effect of destroying someone or something and preventing the realization of its potential.

Let's go back to our poor little bird. I can also engage in a form of structural violence. Structural violence is a form of violence that is not always visible and its effects are not as immediate in the same way as with direct violence; but it still destroys, it still harms, it still injures and suppresses, and it still prevents the realization of someone or something's potential. So I can put this poor little bird in a cage. Then after a couple of months, she's going to get too weak or she's going to forget how to use her wings, rendering her flightless. Now I did nothing physical like clipping her wings to destroy this bird's potential, instead I created a structure in which the bird was forced to exist and that produced the same outcome. The bird is not flying. Now structural violence is felt and experienced as systems, as policies, as institutions that reinforce and perpetuate forces of injustice, discrimination, and oppression, all of which destroy, harm, injure someone or something's potential.

Back to our bird, I can also engage in a form of cultural violence. Cultural violence is a form of violence that perpetuates and encourages a set of values and beliefs that violence is the ultimate form of power, and a necessary part of life. We experience cultural violence from our earliest years as a child, and we are surrounded by it on a daily basis from books, movies, our schooling, our traditions, our customs, et cetera. So going back to our bird, the culture of which I am a part could be writing books about how birds should not be allowed to fly. My community can celebrate the clipping of wings and those who clip wings. My family can instill in me the belief that all birds must be born into cages.



“A violent structure leaves marks not only on the human body but also on the mind and the spirit.”

— Johan Galtung —

Direct, Structural, and Cultural Violence – Part II

Daryn Cambridge:

So these three forms of violence, they are all inter-connected. Cultural violence lays the seed bed for structural violence. To create systems and institutions that enforce discrimination, intolerance, and injustice, there must be some cultural elements that are used justify those institutions and those systems.

Structural violence bears the poisonous fruit of direct violence. Often times, structurally violent systems—be they governments, communities, families, companies—they must be enforced, oftentimes, and maintained through the use of direct forms of violence. In addition, the oppressed who live in structurally violent systems may look to or turn to direct forms of violence as a way to change or dismantle the system that is hurting them.

So how does nonviolence and civil resistance fit into this conversation? First, successful nonviolent movements make a conscious and strategic choice not to engage in direct forms of violence. These movements practice what's referred to as nonviolent discipline, and this discipline is strengthened through training and experimentation on how to fight and resist without engaging in or relying on direct forms of violence.

Second, successful nonviolent movements try to organize and structure themselves in nonviolent ways. Meaning they develop systems and policies that are inclusive, that encourage participation amongst diverse people, and these structures support the realization of everyone's potential. In this sense, nonviolent movements—in their struggle at the micro-level—are creating and practicing the very systems they want to see practiced at the macro-level if they were to be successful. They adhere to this Gandhian principle that quote: “We must be the change that we wish to see in the world.”

Third, successful nonviolent movements leave us with cultural imprints—stories, lessons, songs, skills, traditions—that build and create a nonviolent culture, one that sees nonviolence, or as Gandhi called it Satyagraha—or soul force—as the ultimate form of power. So one conversation we can now have and are now having in the field of peace and conflict studies, thanks to civil resistance movements, is one of direct nonviolence, structural nonviolence, and cultural nonviolence. What do these forms of nonviolence look like? Who has practiced these forms of nonviolence in the past? Who is practicing these forms of nonviolence now? How are these forms of nonviolence practiced differently by different cultures around the world? And how can we practice these forms of nonviolence more effectively in the future? These are fundamental questions worth exploring.

Peace

Positive Peace vs. Negative Peace

Daryn Cambridge:

Two big ideas—main ideas—in the field of peace and conflict studies are that of negative peace and positive peace. Sometimes people refer to these as hot peace and cold peace, or stable peace and unstable peace. But let's just talk about them and share a little bit about how nonviolent action fits within these two concepts.

Negative peace is merely the absence of violence, particularly direct physical violence. So the idea is: we have peace if people are not engaged directly in violence with one another. Positive peace, on the other hand, is the presence of, and the creation of, institutions and systems that support tolerance, coexistence, and understanding amongst people. Negative peace is not a bad thing, it's just called "negative peace" because it's the negation of something else, whereas positive peace is called "positive" because it's the creation, or addition, or support of something else.

So, here is why it's important to talk about negative peace versus positive peace. Depending on how we think about peace, is going to determine how we approach peacebuilding or bringing about a peaceful resolution to a conflict. If we take a negative peace approach, let's say, for example, to violence and crime in the streets and we say, "We are going to bring about peace and we are going to end the gun violence that is happening in our neighborhood." A negative peace approach would be: "Well, let's build more jails and build more jail cells, so that we can lock these dangerous offenders and put them in jail." If we take the dangerous people off the street and we put them in jail, then we have peace.

Another negative peace approach example would be: you have two groups and they have been fighting with one another. They are engaged in an armed conflict, and then, out of that, there has been some type of ceasefire

agreement that the parties have developed and designed, and then you send in peacekeeping forces that help enforce that ceasefire agreement and they keep the warring parties at bay. So they are not shooting at each other anymore; there is no more of that, so we have peace, some would argue. Now there are many, many examples that we can think of when it comes to this, and I would argue that oftentimes when we are talking about peace, or reading about peace, or learning about it on the news, a lot of the approaches to peace are negative approaches to peace. We have stopped the direct violence that people are committing against one another and so peace is there.

One thing we have to realize is that direct violence that the negative peace approaches are trying to address, those are born out of something, and we learn this from our conceptions of direct violence versus structural violence. There are certain things in societies, and in communities, in families, that actually breed, or encourage, or make more likely that people will engage in direct violence. Unless we can approach or tackle these structural forms of violence, we will continue to see more direct forms of violence taking place.

I can put more people in jail, I can take them off the street and put them in jail, but does that mean that the conditions that lead people to pick up a gun and rob people, or engage in some other type of economic trade that may be illegal and dangerous, has that problem been addressed? Because once I put these people in jail, aren't more people going to continue to just take on that form of violence? Once those peacekeepers leave and they are no longer enforcing a ceasefire agreement, has anything changed in the communication between these two parties? Or how they talk about each other on either side of the conflict? If none of that is changed, a year may go by and then they are going to be right back fighting each other. And so this is why we start thinking about positive peace and positive approaches to peace.

Now where does civil resistance and nonviolent action fit into this conversation? The first is that nonviolent movements emerge often because people are facing direct forms of violence. Being part of a

nonviolent movement does not mean that you are not going to experience direct forms of violence. What it does mean is that you have made a conscience and strategic choice for you yourself not to engage in direct violence, but you may be a victim, or a recipient of violence. So the direct violence is definitely there, but nonviolent movements are not just interested in ending the direct forms of violence; they are also interested in addressing the structural forms of violence. So nonviolent movements themselves, in their entire creation, in their operation, in the means through which they fight their struggle, that is a positive approach to peace. Because they are creating the systems, they are creating the relationships, they are creating the policies within their movement, so that when they succeed and they dismantle an oppressive violent system, they already have institutions, structures in place that model positive approaches to peace.

Also nonviolent movements—going this theme—they are inclusive. They thrive when diverse segments of the society are part of the struggle, and they always try and find ways for everybody to participate, be it a man, or a woman, or a child, young or old, various religious faiths, or socio-economic class. They always find some way for people to participate. No one is being marginalized or told “You can’t be part of this,” and so in that experience of that movement, the outcome is something that is positive. This goes to Gandhi’s quote, which I think perfectly sums up the strategic principles and values behind nonviolent action, which is, he takes the phrase “The end justifies the means,” which we have all probably heard, he takes that phrase and he turns it around. He says, “If the means are just, the ends will take care of themselves.” If the means are just, the ends will take care of themselves. So how we choose to wage in conflict will determine an impact, the outcome of that conflict.



“If the means are just, the ends will take care of themselves.”

— Mohandas Gandhi —

Conflict and Conflict Transformation

Tension, Conflict, and Nonviolent Struggle

This video explains how conflict is an unavoidable part of life and how nonviolent action is often about escalating conflict. It highlights Letter from Birmingham Jail excerpt stressing importance of waging nonviolent conflict to open door for negotiation.

Daryn Cambridge:

One of the most valuable takeaways from the field of peace and conflict studies is our understanding of and appreciation for conflict broadly. So, conflict is present when one or more individuals or groups have mutually incompatible goals, or the means to which they try to achieve those goals are mutually incompatible. That's when you have a conflict. Now, I think oftentimes people hear the word "conflict" and they automatically think of negative things or bad things, and so people tend to want to avoid conflict or think that it's something that they don't want to experience. But peace and conflict studies constantly reminds us that conflict is an inevitable and unavoidable part of life. The question and the challenge is not whether we're going to experience conflict, but how we go about managing, resolving, or waging a conflict. This is where nonviolent action and civil resistance come into play, because—and this is the key point—nonviolent action is not necessarily about resolving conflict. In no way is it about denying or avoiding it. Nonviolent action is about waging a conflict.

Civil resistance is actually about escalating a conflict, and here is why: conflict is a necessary part of life, and in order for any type of social, political, or economic change to occur or take place, there has to be some type of conflict. There has to be something that is the status quo or is currently happening, and then an individual or group of individuals say, "Hey, that's not right, we want to see something different," and then you have mutually incompatible goals or you have mutually incompatible means to achieve that goal. So an image that I like to think about when talking

about the value of conflict and its purpose is, I like to think of a straight line and the even straight line is the status quo or the current system. But at some point throughout history, we can say that the status quo becomes intolerable for people. It becomes oppressive for people. And when the status quo and the current system becomes intolerable people say, "I want to do something; I want to change the status quo." And so, we engage in a conflict and all of a sudden you disrupt the straight line and you start to agitate it and you get these squiggles. That's the conflict. That's the disruption. And so, out of that disruption a new line is formed, a new plane is formed, a new status quo is created, but you have to have that conflict in order for a new status quo to occur. So nonviolent action as I said is a way to wage conflict and escalate a conflict, and one of the best arguments for the power and necessity of nonviolent action or nonviolent conflict comes from Dr. Martin Luther King.

In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," which is one of the finest, most relevant, most interesting pieces of writing on nonviolent action (which I encourage you to read if you've not read it)—in that letter which he wrote from a Birmingham jail, he makes the case to a lot of people who are his allies, who are part of his movement but are resistant to the idea of being disruptive or of escalating the conflict. And they're asking him and pleading with him, "Please don't come into our town and create this conflict. We're trying to negotiate; we're trying to resolve the conflict." And he makes the case from jail in this letter that there is a type of constructive nonviolent tension that must be created. There's a type of constructive nonviolent conflict that must be waged in order for social change to occur. So, I will let you hear from Dr. King in his own words as he reads from this letter:

"You may well ask, 'Why direct action? Why sit-ins, marches, and so-forth? Isn't negotiation a better path?' You're quite right in calling for a negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks to dramatize the issue so that it can no longer be ignored. My citing the creation of tension as part of the work of the nonviolent resister may sound rather shocking. But I must confess that I am not afraid of the word

‘tension.’ I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth. Just as Socrates felt that it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of myths and half truths to the unfettered realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal, so must we see the need for nonviolent gadflies to create the kind of tension in society that will help men rise from the dark depths of prejudice and racism to the majestic heights of understanding and brotherhood. The purpose of our direct action program is to create a situation so crisis-packed that it will inevitably open the door to negotiation. I therefore concur with you and your call for negotiation. Too long has our beloved Southland been bogged down in a tragic effort to live in monologue rather than dialogue.”



“Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such a creative tension that a community that has consistently refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.”

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. —

Civil Resistance as Conflict Transformation

George Lopez:

A question that comes up more recently with more civil resistance going on in the world is, “How does civic resistance and conflict transformation relate

to each other?” For many of us in the field, I think there is only one real answer—dynamically and continually—and here is why I would say that.

Let’s begin with looking with some reflection on conflict transformation. Many see, in the peacebuilding field, conflict transformation as a much needed successor or logical maturation of our long time focus on mediation, conflict negotiation, and peace practice through those tried and true methods. I think certainly the period of time since the early 1990s is stimulated by people like John Paul Lederach and other practitioners. We’ve recognized that long-term violence for the participants puts some heavy burdens on conflict resolution, and conflict resolution, particularly in justice conflicts, tends to solidify the power relationships of the day. You are trying to come out of 20 or 30 years of violent conflict, and negotiators sit down and say, “You get a piece of that, and you get a piece of that, we split this other this way,” and it reinforces some of the injustices and difficulties that were built in to the drivers of the violence. So, one of the things that conflict transformation does is it tries to unfreeze and uproot the forces and the power relationships that gave rise to the violence.

When many of us think about how we train or work with groups in civil society on conflict transformation, what we are trying to do is help them, at their urging, to move from simply solving a particular problem. What do we do about the terrible killings done on both sides, and reparations or transformational justice and transitional justice? We want to move from particular problem solving to improving the relationship between the parties, so that they have an ongoing longer term investment in the peace that they are building together.

Mediation and negotiation tend to be solving the immediate problem. Conflict transformation, taking its cues from people like Robert Ricigliano, really involves three dimensions of life for their contending parties: structural change, attitudinal change, and transactional and interactional change among the parties. Those three dimensions are built-in very much to the process of civic resistance. Again, like conflict transformation, civil resistance isn’t about solving one particular problem—“Let’s change this one particular policy.” It’s about putting in place a whole new power

relationship and constructive relationships among the antagonist parties—most often, let's say, between a government and its people.

I think there is also an interesting dynamic and continuity between conflict transformation and civil resistance, if we look at the big history and theory that undergirds civic resistance itself. For me, and a lot of people of my generation, I think we look at Martin Luther King's letter from the Birmingham jail in April 1963 where, in addition to responding to the charges against him that he was an outsider fomenting difficulty, et cetera, King really gave us a small treatise on why nonviolent resistance and direct action is so important for confronting injustice—in his case, obviously, the injustice of segregation.

He stepped out of, I think, the preacher role, and became the teacher, and he talked about four or five key dimensions of nonviolent direct action. The first of course was analysis and thinking about what's an issue here, and it's very, very clear in the dynamics of conflict transformation. We've got to do some conflict analysis and think about the way the power structure works.

He also talked about, let's remember, before we take to the streets to engage in direct action, we meet with the power structure and we try to negotiate this out. In his case, how do you desegregate lunch counters? How do you change where people sit on a bus? How do you change the dynamics of segregation in restrooms throughout the south? The attempt to negotiate builds right off of that initial step of negotiation and mediation that we know is the initial building blocks of conflict transformation.

But it's very clear in King's letter that injustice cannot be solved simply by negotiation, but it's got to be changed by changes in structure, in law, in attitudes, and particularly in his historical case, how blacks and whites would relate to one another. I remember an interesting aspect of King's message continually was not that the end of segregation was just going to free American blacks, but it was going to free the whites who reinforced it as well. When these kinds of approaches didn't work, then he said we result in tasks of civil resistance: nonviolent direct action. And in many

cases, he recognized that when the negotiation ended and you had to take to the streets, this in fact was a form of important conflict escalation, a creative dynamic that's part of conflict transformation where the parties really have to engage each other—rub each other raw—on the dimensions of injustice that have linked them together through a variety of different enterprises, some by historical structures, some by conscious and continual will of the party in the power.

Now, the purpose of this conflict escalation is not actually to lead to violence, but to face the power structure in King's thinking with the dilemma—ethical, practical, legal—of maintaining the sources and structures of injustice. This focus on the particular problem being with the relationship and with the rules that bolster it, that's what I think is the important convergence between civil resistance on one hand, and the process of conflict transformation as succeeding mediation and negotiation on the other. Once this dynamic is recognized, you create the conditions for fuller conflict transformation.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Infographic: Conflict Resolution vs. Conflict Transformation: A Brief Comparison](#)

This infographic provides a brief comparison of conflict resolution and conflict transformation. It was adapted from "The Little Book of Conflict Transformation" by John Paul Lederach.

Kingian Nonviolence

Kingian Nonviolence - History and Context

Key Question: How did Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. develop his approach and understanding of nonviolent action?

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

On the evening that Martin Luther King delivered his famous speech, “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” he later gathered with a close group of associates and told them about his new vision. This was a vision to both internationalize and institutionalize the teaching of nonviolence. Tragically, King never was able to realize this dream, as the next day he was assassinated outside his motel in Memphis, Tennessee. Dr. Bernard Lafayette was with Dr. King that evening and along with another important figure from the civil rights movement, Dr. David Johnson, worked on developing the Kingian nonviolence curriculum and training. This was an effort to realize King’s dream and continue the teaching and history of nonviolence.

Nonviolence is a methodology that provides both a practical and theoretical framework for understanding the power and practice of nonviolence. It draws upon the philosophies of Dr. Martin Luther King, the strategies and tactics of the civil rights movement, as well as the philosophies of nonviolence practitioners and theorists such as Thoreau, Gandhi, Tolstoy, and Richard Gregg, as well as many others. Although it is called “Kingian nonviolence,” it is not an attempt to put King on a pedestal, but rather to refer to him as an example for what we’re talking about when we say peace or nonviolence.

The application of nonviolence is both a strategy for social movements as well as a way of life for courageous people. Kingian nonviolence is similar to other schools of social movement in that it seeks to address the root causes of an issue rather than the symptoms of that injustice. It also sees

nonviolence as a tool for self-empowerment and, perhaps most importantly, Kingian nonviolence shares the idea that nonviolence is an active force. It is not weak or passive, but it is a skills-based strategy for achieving change.

Kingian nonviolence differs from other social movement schools of thought in that it looks at nonviolence as a means for achieving both structural and personal transformation. It also sees reconciliation and justice as the ultimate goal of the struggle. The Kingian nonviolence curriculum has been taught in schools, prisons, and community centers across the United States, and increasingly around the world. It provides ordinary people with general skills to transform their lives and the lives of others. Two cornerstones of the Kingian nonviolence curriculum are the six principles of nonviolence and the six steps of nonviolence. Where the principles are seen as the will of nonviolence, the steps are seen as both the skill and strategy of nonviolence.

Guest Expert Podcast

[Kazu Haga](#) explains how true non-violence comes when we are able to create movements that are powerful but are grounded in love.

On Love as the Foundation for Nonviolence

Kazu Haga:

When I say love, I'm talking about the Greek word Agape. In Greek, they have about five different words for love. And I think it's important that we make the distinctions because in the English language, you know, we have this one-word love that people use to reference a lot of different things. So, you know, in English, I can love my girlfriend, I can love my mother, I can love my friends. I can also love a cheeseburger or a great slice of pizza. And it's the same word, but they're very different concepts. And I think because of that when we talk about love in the context of non-violence, people oftentimes misunderstand what we're talking about as it being something weak and sentimental and emotional and not and something

devoid of power. Dr. Martin Luther King once said that that power without love is reckless and abusive and love without power is sentimental and anemic. And I think oftentimes when we think of concepts like non-violence and when we think of concepts like the love we forget that love can be an incredibly aggressive and militant force used for resistance. And not just this weak and sentimental Kumbaya type of thing that I think oftentimes even Dr. King's own legacy gets watered down to that. And so I think it's really important that we remember that true non-violence comes when we are able to create movements that are powerful but are grounded in love.

You look at a lot of what's happening today in our society, and you look at the Black Lives Matters movement. And it's an incredibly powerful movement that is grounded, you know, with the black leadership that is leading it and a power and a love for their people. And I think that's what is motivating people into the streets. I think people are incredibly angry about all the police killings every 28 hours. There's a lot of righteous indignation there that we need to continue to cultivate. But at the end of the day, I think it's important for nonviolent movements that we are constantly reminding ourselves that even with that anger, we're angry because we love the people that are being harmed by injustice. And so I think, you know, once you lose sight of that love and you start focusing solely on power, it can become a reckless and abusive force. But once you lose sight of the power, and you focus only on the love that it becomes weak and sentimental and emotional. And so I think it's always important that we remember the true power when you can combine the forces of agape love and people's power.

The Six Principles of Kingian Nonviolence

Key Question: What are the six principles of Kingian Nonviolence?

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

The six principles of Kingian nonviolence are considered to be the will of nonviolence—whereas the steps are considered to be the skill and the strategy of nonviolence—but the two cannot be separated from one

another. Adhering to the principles of nonviolence becomes a part of the strategy of the movement. These principles are best outlined in Dr. Martin Luther King's essay *A Pilgrimage to Nonviolence*. They are intended to serve as a guide for the nonviolence practitioner's behavior and are an approach to engaging in conflict. These principles are based on the universal principles and values shared by people all over the world.

The first principle of Kingian nonviolence is that nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. Nonviolence is a positive force, and it's a way of life; you can choose to live your life based on the principles of nonviolence. And nonviolence takes courage. It takes courage to stand up to injustices that we see in the world, to address difficult and controversial issues. So nonviolence becomes a method for us to channel our righteous indignation. Nonviolence is not a weak or inactive method of struggle. It is a form of resistance, and therefore it requires strength and discipline to pursue. It can be a vital force for change and reconciliation, but it requires spiritual emotional and intellectual capabilities.

The second principle of Kingian nonviolence is that the beloved community is the framework for the future. The nonviolent approach is an effort to achieve a reconciled world by lifting up the relationships of people in society to a level where justice prevails and all people are able to attain their full human potential. For Dr. King, the beloved community was not a utopian or idyllic version of the future; it was an achievable goal that could be realized if a critical mass of people were committed to the philosophy and methods of nonviolence. The beloved community is a place where love and trust triumph over fear and hatred. It's a place where true reconciliation and justice can take hold. It may not be the reality of today, but it's what we're working towards as a movement.

The third principle of Kingian nonviolence is to attack forces of evil not the people doing evil. The nonviolent approach focuses on the fundamental conditions and root causes of the conflict rather than on the individuals who are carrying out the injustice. In this sense, the nonviolent approach does not seek to humiliate or destroy one's adversary but rather seeks their friendship and understanding. In the civil rights movement for example,

people did not target the individuals who are carrying out unjust laws or enforcing segregation at public lunch counters or in the city buses. Instead, the movement focused its energy and efforts on changing the conditions of the conflict, in this case ending systemic racism through the use of nonviolent methods—nonviolent power and pressure to force the overturn of unjust laws.

The fourth principle is to accept suffering without retaliation for the sake of the cause to achieve the goal. Gandhi believed that an element of self-chosen or voluntary suffering was redemptive and could help a movement to grow both spiritually and in a humanitarian dimension. Suffering communicates a level of concern to one's friends, family, the broader community, and even to your adversary. This principle does not state that you should accept violence under just any circumstance. It acknowledges, however, that a commitment to nonviolence requires a certain amount of sacrifice and suffering. From a strategic perspective, we might say that this principle reinforces the importance of maintaining nonviolent discipline even in the face of repression and violence. It does not advocate that a movement provokes violence, but rather understands the power of suffering and the power of maintaining that nonviolent stance in the face of violence.

The fifth principle of Kingian nonviolence is to avoid internal violence of the spirit in addition to avoiding external physical violence. The emotional internal violence of our spirit is harmful to ourselves and to our society as a whole. Self-criticism, harboring hatred towards others, a sense of hopelessness; these are all harmful to our internal spirits and to our internal emotional well-being and oftentimes, this internal emotional violence can lead to physical violence. And there are many things that we can do to lift our spirits to bring about a sense of internal peace and serenity. It's crucial that nonviolence practitioners practice radical self-care in order to maintain a high level of spirit and morale during non-violent campaigns.

The sixth and final principle of Kingian nonviolence is that the universe is on the side of justice. In a famous King quote he said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." It may take a while for us to

achieve our goals but deep in the philosophy of nonviolence is the belief that truth and love are universal, and human society is oriented towards this just order of the universe. For the nonviolent practitioner, nonviolence is a new moral context in which nonviolence is both the means and the end.



"Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people."

— Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. —

Poll: Which of the six principles of Kingian nonviolence resonates with you the most?

- ☐ Principle 1 - Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people.
- ☐ Principle 2 - The beloved community is the framework for the future.
- ☐ Principle 3 - Attack forces of evil, not the people doing evil.
- ☐ Principle 4 - Accept suffering without retaliation for the sake of the cause to achieve the goal.
- ☐ Principle 5 - Avoid internal violence of the spirit in addition to avoiding external physical violence.
- ☐ Principle 6 - The universe is on the side of justice.



DISCUSSION

Share with us why you voted the way you did. What is it about this principle that resonates with you?

Nonviolence vs. Non-Violence

Nonviolence vs. Non-Violence

Key Question: What is the difference between “nonviolence” and “non-violence?”

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

We’re going to talk about the difference between nonviolence as one word and non-violence as two words. One of the things that Dr. King was really known for was taking a Hegelian, or a dialectical approach, to understanding an issue. He was known as an eclectic thinker; somebody who looked at both the thesis of an argument or position as well as the anti-thesis or the antithesis—the opposing views—of that argument. Martin Luther King was somebody who would consider multiple perspectives before arriving at a truth that incorporated various elements or kernels of truth from these varying perspectives. Applying this dialectical thinking to the terminology of social movements, Kingian nonviolence looks at the difference in meaning between nonviolence as one word and non-violence as two words.

Where violence is the thesis of an argument, non-violence becomes the antithesis of that. Non-violence, simply put, means no violence or without violence. But there are circumstances where there is no violence, but still we don’t have justice or justice does not prevail. King called this kind of nonviolence, non-violence, a negative peace. The streets may be quiet, your community maybe calm, but if injustices continue to prevail and nobody is doing anything about it, if everybody is ignoring the problem, or if there’s a growing sense of apathy, the problem doesn’t go away; it continues to grow and manifest itself in other ways, and we call this kind of scenario a negative peace—peace with suffering.

On the other hand, when we look at the word nonviolence as one word (as we're using it) in Kingian nonviolence, it means a philosophy; it's a way of life for ordinary people and approach to conflict. And although nonviolence in action can be disruptive or disturb somebody's sense of peace, this peace is actually combating what we consider to be negative peace. It's using nonviolence as an antidote or cure for violence or apathy. Nonviolence seeks to achieve a positive peace: a peace with a presence of justice. It's a peace that's achieved through just means and through the use of nonviolent action.



"A philosophy without heart and a faith without intellect are abstractions from the true life of knowledge and faith."

— George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel —

Historical Roots Part 1

Recovering Nonviolent Histories

Maciej Bartkowski:

The history of the idea for the book *Recovering Nonviolent History* goes back to President Obama's speech at Cairo University in June 2009. In that speech, Obama referred specifically to the Palestinian struggle and said that violence in the fight for the Palestinian statehood will be futile. He then brought up the successes of nonviolent resistance from the U.S. civil rights movement, to the anti-Apartheid struggle, to nonviolent democratization in Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe as the examples that Palestinians should follow. The speech, however, didn't mention the rich history of the Palestinian nonviolent resistance, and this omission was a sort of inspiration for us—those involved in the book project—to show that in fact, Palestinians have engaged in an impressive resistance, without arms, throughout the last century. As a result, we have included a chapter on the Palestinian nonviolent resistance in the book.

The critics seem to have known nothing about 10 years of magnificent nonviolent resistance that American colonists waged against the British in the years of 1766-1775. It was during that period of civil resistance when the real revolution in people's minds and hearts occurred, not during the subsequent war.

The book *Recovering Nonviolent History* aims to uncover forgotten or ignored stories of nonviolent resistance for statehood. More so than in other areas of academic inquiry, the studies of nation-building, independence struggles, and national identity formation are dominated either by violent-centered perspectives—with their focus on revolutionary wars, major geopolitical conflicts, and violent breakup of empires—or structural and elite-driven accounts that emphasize the importance of business or political elites or macro-level processes, such as urbanization, industrialization or migration in the emergence of nations and states.

What is missing in all these historical studies is the focus on people. We are missing what the late historian Howard Zinn called people's history. But *Recovering Nonviolent History* is not merely people's history, but the history of how ordinary people were able to organize themselves—often against all odds—under repressive rules of foreign powers or their domestic proxies, and they were able to wage struggle for their self-determination without resort to violence. They used a multitude of collective and individual nonviolent actions in all spheres of social, cultural, political and economic life in order to challenge foreign or colonial subjugation.

This book demonstrates that in contrast to what is commonly thought or, in fact, misunderstood about independence and self-determination struggles, violence was not necessarily a dominant or the only means to fight for one's statehood. Conflicts were also waged through nonviolent organizing and nonviolent actions such as strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, civil disobedience, noncooperation, deliberate inefficiencies, as well as creative forms of nonviolent resistance, from wearing national cloth to organizing cultural gatherings and reading poetry in local language, to build alternative institutions to sustain native economic, social, cultural, and political activities under a foreign rule.

In that sense, ordinary people lacking a formal position of power, were in fact true and genuine power holders. Their power ceased to be dormant or hidden as soon as they organized themselves and undertook resistance actions in a disciplined and planned manner.

The impact of civil resistance that this book uncovers is profound. For example, forcing foreign governments to grant struggling societies formal independence like in Ghana, Zambia, or Egypt, that this book documents, and equal political status within an empire like Hungary. More often, nonviolent resistance accelerated the gradual process of liberation from foreign domination while laying down the foundations for the emergence of nations and future states, including civic and political institutions. A number of stories included in the book predated Gandhi and the Indian independence struggle, and show that nonviolent resistance was not

limited to a specific culture, geography, society, or historical period but was in fact a universal and timeless phenomenon.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Book: Recovering Nonviolent History: Civil Resistance in Liberation Struggles](#)

Ranging from the American Revolution to Kosovo in the 1990s, from Egypt under colonial rule to present-day West Papua and Palestine, the authors of *Recovering Nonviolent History* consider several key questions: What kinds of civilian-based nonviolent strategy and tactics have been used in liberation struggles? What accounts for their successes and failures? How did nonviolent resistance influence national identities and nascent state institutions? And, why has this history been so often ignored?

Guest Expert Podcast

[Mary Elizabeth King](#) tells us about the relationship between the US Civil Rights Movement and India's struggle for independence.

On India's Influence on the US Civil Rights Movement

Mary Elizabeth King:

Many people are unaware of the fact that from 1919 to 1955, an enormous interchange took place between the black community in the United States and the Indian subcontinent. Beginning in the 1920s, people were traveling

from the African-American community to India to try to understand what they were seeing and hearing about, how they were seeing, and hearing about it. This is in the days before television. The black-owned press in the United States was reporting avidly on what was happening in the Indian subcontinent. Black Americans saw that there was a struggle underway, for example, against the caste system and the practice of untouchability in India. And they identified with that, they felt that they too lived within a caste system and that they were, in a sense, the untouchables of the United States.

So pockets of the black community and the United States of America were extremely well informed about what was happening in India beginning in the 1920s. Until the outbreak of World War Two, there were black leaders traveling to the Indian subcontinent, in most cases by steamer ship. As time went on, there might have been a few who traveled by propeller jet. They would have had to take many planes to reach India, there was no such thing as changing in Frankfurt and going on two planes that were ridiculous. You take five or six or seven or eight flights to get there. Most were traveling by steamer ship, 12,000 miles. While they were in India, they were sitting and meeting sometimes with Gandhi and at other times with people who were working with him.

I, for example, know an African-American Bishop of the United Methodist Church, Edward Carroll, who traveled in 1936 to India and met Gandhi. It was a small group of three, and as they sat with Gandhi, they asked him to come to America and help and he declined. He said, "No, you must do this for yourselves." And then he said, "But I have a question for you. Why doesn't every single black person in the United States stay home from work one day?" Now, this group of three leaders came back and they didn't organize to do that, but they became part of a swelling group within the black community of elite leaders, who were reading in their newspapers, watching through the accounts coming in the newspapers and who had been to India and so the spread of knowledge in the US black community was literal.

It was highly specific. It took a long time. It was serious. Once the Montgomery Bus Boycott began in 1955, Bayard Rustin went to Montgomery and began sitting with Martin Luther King every night, plying him with books. A tutorial took place in the parsonage every night when Martin Luther King was in Montgomery. And Bayard Rustin would interrogate him on the readings. They were reading materials that had come from India, materials that have been prepared by the fellowship of reconciliation and the war resisters league to pacifist organizations that began in Britain around the time of World War One, but also were in the United States and that are still doing training in civil resistance.

You can go around the world on a tour of the fellowship of reconciliation and war resisters league training programs. Today, where the spread of knowledge of nonviolent action civil resistance is taking place. So King began intensively studying these materials. So King had to learn civil resistance the same way that you, as a student in this course, have to learn civil resistance. He had to study it, he had to learn it. It wasn't something that he just breathes in with the air.

Common Misconceptions

Maciej Bartkowski:

There are a number of misconceptions that marginalized civil resistance in the past. I will focus here on a couple of misconceptions that, in my view, were particularly harmful:

One of them is that nonviolent resistance is not the force that is capable of bringing about any significant political change. Such change can only be brought by major peace initiatives, or violence, or war.

Another misconception is that nonviolent resistance could not be possibly effective against brutal force. Brutes understand only violence, and thus they need to face violence in order to relent.

Yet another misconception is that nonviolent resistance is about surrender, and represents either defeatist or pacifist stance. It is too conciliatory. Furthermore, it is not patriotic to opt for nonviolent resistance that might subsume armed struggle led by true patriots.

It is often implied that nonviolent resistance is itself a myth. There is no such thing like struggle or movement with nonviolent discipline that wages a conflict without arms. Conflict by default is always violent.

Finally, only structures, institutions, elites in formal power positions and external conditions determine trajectories and outcomes of political processes. Agency of ordinary people, if it exists at all, is a subject to forces beyond its control or impact. People follow, not lead.

All these misconceptions have hindered the recognition of nonviolent resistance and people power as a legitimate and effective mechanism for political change, particularly in such contentious conflicts like independence or self-determination struggles. The book *Recovering Nonviolent History*, as well as other recent studies on civil resistance, engage directly with these misconceptions. It is an intellectual fight we must all wage.



"I do not hold to nonviolence for moral reasons, but for political and practical reasons."

— Aung San Suu Kyi —

Historical Roots Part 2

Nonviolent History Case Study

Maciej Bartkowski:

The book features 15 cases of countries and identifies various nonviolent pro-independence, anti-colonial struggles and campaigns against foreign domination that are relatively unknown among the general public. It includes nonviolent resistance of the American colonists against the British in the 18th century, 19th century nonviolent struggles in Poland, Hungary, Iran, Egypt, Algeria, Cuba, and the 20th century nonviolent battles for national identity, self-realization, and political independence in Burma, Bangladesh, Ghana, Zambia, Palestine, Mozambique, Kosovo, West Papua. At least two of these struggles – Palestine and West Papua – are ongoing.

All these cases are unique in their own right when they present stories of nonviolent campaigns and organizing against, and often despite, brutal foreign adversary.

The case of the Polish independence struggle is particularly interesting because it includes so many relevant dimensions to better understand nonviolent resistance. In the 19th century Poles were living under the partitions done and maintained by three empires: Germany, Russia, and Austria. After failed armed uprisings, Poles finally came to realization that violence might not be the most cost-effective way to strengthen national fabric to fight for independence. As a result, they embarked on three different strategies of nonviolent organizing and resistance depending on the level of repression and autonomy that existed under each of the partitions.

In most repressive of the partitions—under the Russian rule—Poles organized alternative institutions and underground schooling and publishing systems. This experience was encoded in the DNA of the Polish resistance

and used with great success 100 years later against the propaganda and censorship of the Polish communist regime sustained by the Soviets.

In the Austrian partition, Poles organized cultural movements that offered patriotic education to the Polish speaking peasants, developing among them a strong national identity that had never existed before in this social class.

Finally, in the German partition, Poles embarked on what they called organic work, which was the equivalent of Gandhi's constructive program, but done 50 years before Gandhi, the Polish style. It came from the positivist philosophy where the Polish non-aristocratic intellectuals compared a nation to an organism. Any social organism needs nourishment, they were saying, in order to survive and become stronger. Through that strength, that organism was able to win its freedom. That nourishment couldn't be acquired through constant war and violent uprisings, but through economic and social development. Resistance was thus equated with the emphasis on development. Consequently, Poles embarked on a massive constructive program that saw the establishment of economic, social, and cultural cooperatives, rural associations, libraries, first Polish-owned cooperative financial institutions that, among others, offered loans to the Polish farmers with preferential interest rates. The Polish resistance in German partition had also an individual character that showed both creativity and ingenuity of the resistance. It illustrates also the importance of small acts of defiance that became symbols of resistance inspiring millions of Poles at home and abroad.

The example of this was a story of a Polish peasant, Michał Drzymała, and his civil disobedience against the German law that prevented Poles from constructing a permanent residence on purchased land in German partition. Drzymała owned the land, but according to the German law, he could not build a house on it. In order to circumvent that law, Drzymała decided to turn his caravan wagon into a home. Because the German law considered any construction that stayed in one place for more than one day a permanent residence (and thus unlawful to be owned and inhabited by a Pole), Drzymała moved his wagon a couple of centimeters each day and

claimed that his portable wagon was not covered by the existing law and did not require a residence permit because it was not a permanent construction. Drzymala went to the German courts to argue his case. The legal battles lasted years. Eventually, the whole affair became widely known in partitioned Poland and abroad. It was covered in British, French, and US newspapers, and made a mockery of the German institutionalized and legalized land discrimination against Poles. It also further inspired Polish nonviolent resistance against the German land grab.

Why Civil Resistance Works: Research Findings

Maria Stephan:

Nonviolent resistance campaigns tend to attract a much larger and more diverse participation base compared to armed struggle. In the data set, Erica Chenoweth and I found that the average nonviolent campaign attracted something like ten times the level of participation compared to armed struggles. When you have large numbers of people from diverse segments of society engaged in civil disobedience, non-cooperation, and the like, this translates into significant pressure being applied against the system or power holder.

So, why are more people able to participate in nonviolent struggle? Well, the barriers to participation for civil resistance are much lower compared to armed struggles. The physical barriers are lower. You don't need to be a young able bodied man trained in explosives to participate in civil resistance. Women, children, elderly, disabled are all able to participate in this form of struggle, which encourages the participation advantage.

The commitment barriers are lower. You can be what I refer to as a "casual rebel" and participate in nonviolent direct actions using a wide variety of tactics which we'll be discussing in the course. So you don't need to be on the run 24/7 and trained as an armed insurgent to participate in this method of struggle. The informational barriers to participation are lower, whereas armed insurgencies tend to rely a lot on clandestine underground planning

and action, nonviolent resistance movements rely much more on above ground action, which of course encourages greater participation.

The cognitive barriers to participation are much lower for civil resistance compared to armed struggle. Most people in any society are not going to be willing to use violence, or certainly to kill another person, to achieve an objective. Whereas you can engage in a forceful struggle for rights, freedoms, and the like, through civil resistance and not have to partake in violence that threatens or maims or kills another human being. The cognitive barriers are lower.

We found that the average nonviolent resistance campaign resulted in significant security force defections. A lot more security forces—whether they are army, police—defected or refused to obey orders when the resistance was nonviolent compared to when it was armed. So one of the major reasons why civil resistance has succeeded is that repression is much more likely to backfire when the resistance is nonviolent compared to when it is armed. And it's pretty evident why that would be the case. Security forces are much more likely to question orders and get uncomfortable when [faced with] the possibility that their cousins or imams or accountants are engaged in the crowd or are engaging in protest. Whereas, the use of violence against security forces will force them into the corner and they will be much more willing to obey orders.

Not only that, violence tends to legitimize a violent state response, and state responses using violence tend to be very disproportionate. So nonviolent resistance is much more likely to result in backfire, which increases support for the nonviolent resistance and decreases it for the state or other power holder.

Not only that, repression can be unsustainable when the resistance is nonviolent. This is particularly the case when nonviolent resisters use what we refer to as methods of dispersion—methods that involve people engaged in acts of noncooperation that are spread out. So think consumer boycotts during the anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa, or stay at homes, or go-slows, or banging pots and pans. Even state authorities that

want to use violence to suppress a nonviolent resistance movement are unable to, and the more people who are participating from the different segments of society the harder it is to repress.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Video: The Success of Nonviolent Resistance](#)

Between 1900-2006, campaigns of nonviolent civil resistance were twice as successful as violent campaigns. In this video, Dr. Erica Chenoweth discusses her research on the impressive historical record of civil resistance in the 20th century and unpacks the “3.5% rule”—the notion that no government can withstand a challenge of 3.5% of its population without either accommodating the movement or (in extreme cases) disintegrating.

Analyzing and Strategizing as a Nonviolent Movement

Voices from the Field: Chapter 2

Daryn Cambridge:

Historically, nonviolent movements have been twice as successful as their violent movements.

What accounts for this success rate is that nonviolent movements have a strategic advantage when it comes to garnering the active involvement of everyday people.

In their book *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, Drs. Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan looked at the impact that these levels of participation have on a movement's adversary.

Dr. Erica Chenoweth:

“So, basically that the power of participation activates all kinds of other points of leverage for any type of popular movement, the first of which, of course, is credibly demonstrating that the costs of the status quo are unsustainable. What happens is the political effect of this is that the opponent regime has a lot of people working in the security forces, in civilian agencies, they have economic elites, business elites, educational elites, and state media that are propping up the regime. The more they start to question whether this is actually sustainable, the more people that are participating and demonstrating that change is just over the horizon, the more the people that are in those various pillars of the regime's apparatus start to question whether it's in their longer-term interests to continue supporting the regime. What we found in our book was that in fact, security forces defecting from the opponent regime make a campaign something like 60% more likely to succeed. And it turns out that nonviolent campaigns

that are very large in size and very diverse in size are much more likely to provoke or elicit those defections among security forces.”

Analyzing and identifying the pillars of support that prop up a movement’s adversary has been a key element in shaping the strategy of successful nonviolent campaigns.

Nonviolent movements also seek to understand the suffering, challenges, and needs of ordinary people in order to build unity around a common vision for tomorrow.

Since 2007, Gerardo Gonzalez has been training and mobilizing activists throughout Venezuela, listening to affected communities, and calling for greater democracy and human rights.

Geraldo Gonzalez:

“Right now, there’s a big problem in Venezuela with food. People have to make long lines to buy food—6 to 8 hours—in small towns, in villages, even in my home city. So, now we’re targeting food lines. We’re talking with people who are in those queues for 5 or 6 hours. It’s surprising how people who agree with many of the government policies accept this tactic and engage in the conversation. And there’s a key concept that you use here that I think is useful in this case, those kinds of tactics are good for the conversion of people—when you are able to convert people who think in one way and convince them that something is wrong. So, by engaging in micro-strategic tactics of small concentration, you’re allowing more visibility, you’re allowing face-to-face interaction with people who don’t necessarily agree with you, and you are also—in an internal sense—your organization, the members of your organization feel you’re getting somewhere; they feel you’re actually doing something. Instead of protesting, you’re delivering proposals, you’re delivering another kind of message.”

The work of nonviolent movements is not always visual, dramatic, or demonstrative. The early stages of a movement involve researching the problem, focused listening, and careful planning.

These early stages ripen the conditions for nonviolent movements to take off, when widespread awareness of the problem and mass mobilization begin to emerge.

In 2011, Heba became one of hundreds of thousands of everyday Egyptians who decided to join what had been a long-running struggle to end the decades-long rule of Hosni Mubarak.

Heba:

“My family knew that while I went out of my home, I’m going to participate in it. So it was very strange, my mom asking me to swear before going out that I’m not going to participate in anything. And, I did so, but the next day the 26th, I went to the streets and I participated in the administrations. We started as 200 people and after one hour we were 5,000 people. Because when we were just walking the street, we used to say a statement in Arabic which means, ‘Our families, please join us,’ and we just asked people from their communities to join us in the streets, and most of them did so. So, activism for me is having a very good idea about something you want to do and struggle for it. And it doesn’t mean all the time you should be in the street, maybe you are in your work and you are doing a great job. This great job could be, you are raising awareness about some issues, which for me, some kind of activism.”

Learning Objectives

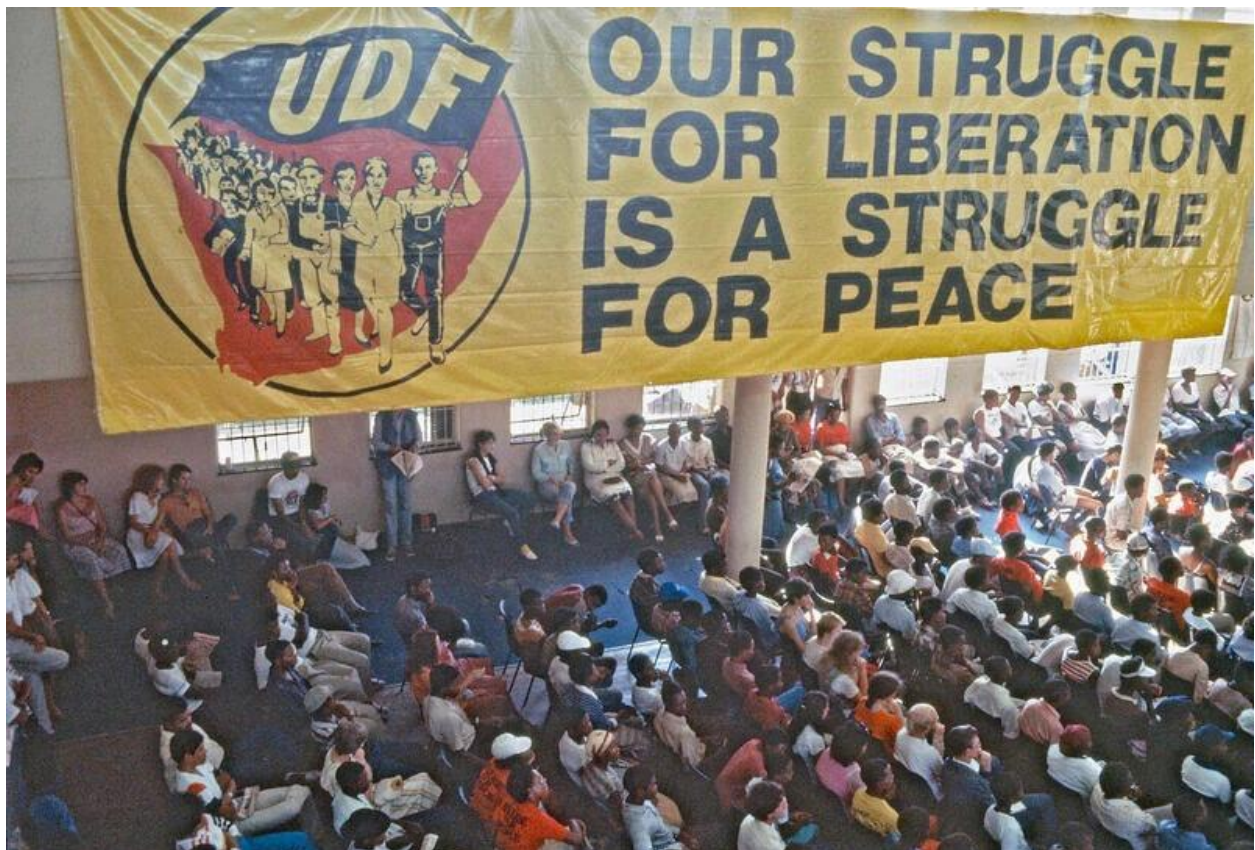
In this chapter we look at how nonviolent movements analyze their conflict landscape and think strategically once that information is gathered. We introduce a variety of analytical tools and strategic principles that have been adopted by successful nonviolent movements.

As an introduction to this chapter, this short documentary captures the voices of individuals whose work and lives reveal some key aspects of the strategic principles and planning that go into waging nonviolent struggle. As you watch please consider the following questions:

- What accounts for the success of nonviolent movements?
- How do activists and organizers model and support the principles of nonviolent action?
- How do movements develop plans and strategies for success?

Activity

Think about a conflict that you work on or are familiar with. Have any of the parties used the principles of nonviolent action? If needed, take some time to research. Then, find a photo of the nonviolent action campaign and write a caption explaining what nonviolent principles of Kingian nonviolence informed this movement.



Nonviolent action principles and methods were used throughout the struggle to end Apartheid in South Africa. Here, the United Democratic Front (UDF) in Johannesburg is having a protest meeting. ([Photo: United Nations](#))

Strategic Advantages of Civil Resistance

Strategic Effectiveness

Maria Stephan:

Nonviolent campaigns have been demonstrated to be more effective than violent ones in achieving their stated goals. Nonviolent campaigns have historically succeeded twice as often as armed struggles against the most formidable opponents, succeeding 54% of the time compared 26% for armed campaigns.

What explains the strategic effectiveness of nonviolent movements? According to research that Erica Chenoweth and I conducted for the book *Why Civil Resistance Works*, we found that the key to success is the active and observable engagement of individuals in collective action. In other words, participation.

Nonviolent campaigns have a participatory advantage over their violent counterparts. The average nonviolent campaign has about 150,000 more active participants than the average violent campaign. This is because the moral, commitment, physical, and informational barriers to participation are much lower for nonviolent campaigns. You don't need to be a young, able-bodied man trained in explosives to participate in nonviolent movements. You can have an aversion to violence and still participate in nonviolent struggles. You can be a casual rebel when you engage in nonviolent movement, given the breadth and depth of tactics available to nonviolent resistance campaigns.

Participation, however, is not merely about sheer numbers. The diversity of participants is critical to effectiveness. Nonviolent campaigns are likelier to attract a more diverse group of participants, including women, children, and the elderly, thanks to the broad spectrum of tactics and activities available (sit-ins, stay-aways, consumer boycotts, lockdowns, go-slows, the like). Diversity means that people with different backgrounds and experiences

bring their knowledge and skills to the nonviolent fight, allowing for tactical innovation and enhancing the campaign's adaptability and maneuverability. Moreover, participation of people from different age groups, genders, classes, professions, occupations, and political affiliations increases the odds of defections and loyalty shifts among a regime's or power-holder's elites as it renders more likely that friends, associates, and/or family members of regime insiders will be among the nonviolent resisters.

Along with tactical innovation and loyalty shifts, there are other mechanisms that help explain the success advantage. Nonviolent campaigns are more resilient when facing oppression and attempts at co-optation; they tend to attract more international diplomatic support; and—very importantly—they are more likely to cause the opponent's use of violence to backfire. Security forces are much more likely to disobey orders (and even, at times, to join the nonviolent movement) when they are faced with large groups of disciplined and diverse nonviolent resisters. Therefore, it is through the activation of these mechanisms that nonviolent resistance imposes costs on regimes or existing power structures, and pulls away some of their critical pillars of support.

These factors help to explain why nonviolent resistance boasts such an impressive track record.



The average nonviolent campaign has about 150,000 more active participants than the average violent campaign.

Violent vs. Nonviolent Insurrections

Peter Ackerman:

In any authoritarian regime, there's a common view of the battlefield, and if you look at the top of this picture, you'll see leadership which really can't be argued with. They feed off the population, they get all the best that's available to them; they have no reason whatsoever to basically change their approach to how they govern. Below that is the elites that basically deal with various pillars of support. Now they could be economic or bureaucratic, they could be cultural or religious, and of course, the military. And these elites or the pillars of support basically work their way into the general population as a means of our control and governance.

Let's talk about first the theory of how a violent insurrection occurs and the thought behind it.

A guerrilla force is usually defined as thousands of athletic young men armed, whose job is to basically destroy each of the pillars, the elites, and ultimately the leadership as a way of creating a change in the regime. Now the problem with that, as you will see, is that generally when the conflict begins, the [guerrilla forces are in an inferior military position relative to the security forces that are at the disposal of the leadership, and the only way to right that balance—that imbalance—is for these guerrillas to do two things: kill some of them (take them off the battlefield), or get some of them to defect.

Now, the problem with that strategy is that it's very hard to get both elements operating at once, because if the security forces are under threat for their lives, they're not likely to defect to the people who are threatening their lives. So, what the real risk of a violent insurrection is the following: they cannot develop enough internal power, the military protects the pillars of support, and the military—the security forces—then counter-attack, and the gorillas basically are destroyed (and the biggest negative beneficiary of that, the people who hurt the worst is the population who is in the middle of that conflict).

Now, let's take a look at the theory behind a nonviolent insurrection or a civil resistance movement. The theory behind a civil resistance movement is that not everybody in the elites and in those pillars are equally loyal.

Some are what Natan Sharansky calls late and double thinkers, people who are not happy being in the regime, they have qualms (they could be economic, they could be personal, they could be moral, whatever they may be), but they're afraid to express themselves one-by-one because they will find if they raise their heads, they'll be chopped off one by one. So the key is to basically use the tactics of civil resistance—strikes, boycotts, mass protests—to basically help the various late and double thinkers through that act of disruption to identify that there are others like them, and to find ways to coalesce to the point where defections occur in sufficient amounts, and in key elements within the pillars that the following happens: suddenly the military and all those pillars start to separate from the leadership, defections occur, the leadership no longer has the ability to govern the way it could before in an absolute manner, and you could either have a negotiation, the leadership has to leave. And then, the link between the general population and the civil resistance is stronger, and of course the general population is not going to suffer the kind of violence that would have been under a violent insurrection.



Pillars of Support are the institutions and sections of the society which supply the existing regime (or system) with the needed sources of power to maintain and expand its power capacity.



In his training video, Peter Ackerman talks about “pillars of support” that prop up a regime or power structure. Some examples he gives of such pillars are the military, government bureaucracy, financial institutions, religious and cultural institutions, etc. Other pillars might include, the educational system, the media, police, and security forces. Think about a power structure that impacts your daily life – local or national government, the place where you work, your family, etc. Do you consider yourself to be a part of any of these kinds of pillars or others? If so, which one(s)? How does what you do as part of this pillar support or prop up the existing power structure? We ask this question because reflecting on how you see or understand your own affiliation with certain pillars of support can uncover the kinds of habits, customs, and patterns of behavior that nonviolent movements seek to alter in order to spur social, political, and economic change.

Strategic Principles

Skills vs. Conditions

Hardy Merriman:

What makes civil resistance movements effective? If we look at history, we can find a lot of different explanations. Some of the most common explanations are those that focus on structural conditions or environmental factors. There are different categories of conditions that people focus on. So for example, some analysts will look at the nature of a movement's opponent—is it a state, is it a non-state actor, is it a business?—and try to determine how that influences whether a movement can emerge, grow, develop, and so forth. Others will look at whether the movement's adversary is willing to use violent repression, how objectively powerful, how much material resources, human resources, control of information and so forth, the movement upon it has, and try to come up with explanations based on those factors.

Another set of factors looks at the population that is being oppressed. They could potentially mobilize, so people might look at education levels, income levels, internet usage, and a variety of other factors related to population.

A third set of factors relates to broader sort of socio-economic factors. So this would have to do with the political or economic history of a particular society, the economic system, the level of corruption, and so forth. And a fourth set of factors looks at international conditions, the role for example of foreign powers in influencing a conflict, the kind of geo-political neighborhood in which a conflict is taking place, whether conflict is part of a larger geo-political wave, and so forth.

Now all of these factors that focus on the structures or conditions or environment that a movement finds itself in, we can look and analyze them. But there is a whole set of other factors that are often less frequently emphasized that I would like to emphasize today, and those factors relate

to agency, skills, strategy. Basically, instead of looking at what a movement can't control in its environment, looking at what a movement can control through its skill and choices, and these factors around skill, choice, agency are incredibly powerful. We have case studies, we have quantitative research that shows that the things that a movement can control can actually help it overcome challenging structural conditions, transform them, and also exploit or take advantage of opportunities in its conflict environment. We can see things like the kind of strategies they use, the tactics they choose, how they sequence those tactics, the kinds of messages and communication they use to unify people, bring them together, communicate with international actors, neutral parties, and even their adversaries and their adversaries' supporters. We look at how movements can form coalitions and a wide variety of other things that movement in fact can control.

If we take those 20 or 30 or 40 we can probably write books analyzing each of those, but to keep it simple I want to focus on just three. We can look at movements over history and try to figure out: what are some common attributes that different successful movements have? And if we look, three I want to hit on are unity, planning, and nonviolent discipline.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Article: The Trifecta of Civil Resistance: Unity, Planning, Discipline](#)

As a counterpoint to structural and conditional factors are factors based on a movement's skills in waging conflict, i.e. what academics call "agency". Skills and agency refer to those variables over which a movement has some control: what strategy of action the movement chooses; what language it uses to mobilize people and keep them involved; how it builds

coalitions; where and how it targets its adversary; and a myriad of other decisions involved in engaging in civil resistance.

Poll: In your opinion, which element is more important for the success of a nonviolent movement?

- ☐ The skills of the actors involved (for instance, the level of discipline within the movement)
- ☐ The conditions in which the movement occurs (for instance, the type of regime in power or the level of literacy among the people)
- ☐ Both are equally important
- ☐ I am not sure

Strategic Principles: Unity and Planning

Unity

Hardy Merriman:

First I want to talk about unity. One of the biggest challenges that people who have been oppressed often face is the challenge of uniting. Frequently, those who have been doing the oppression are quite skilled at divided rule and oftentimes have deliberately aggravated divisions or created divisions between people to try to keep them from uniting. However, civil resistance movements depend on a lot of different kinds of people in order to succeed usually. They usually depend—particularly for movements that are trying to achieve major change—on bringing diverse parts of a population together. People who either wouldn't normally talk or, in fact, have not talked for a long time or not communicated for a long time because they have been divided.

One of the key aspects of building unity is listening. It sounds simple, but it's important to remember that in a nonviolent civil resistance movement, participation is voluntary. People come out and participate not because they are paid to, not because anyone demanded that they do it, but because they believe that their participation in the movement—however small, however big—their participation is contributing to something that represents them, that's going to help further what they want, what they need, and reflects what they believe in. So listening is really important. Organizers of movements will often have to listen to different groups within a society to try to figure out: What are their aspirations? What are their grievances? What are they upset about? What do they hope for? What are their values?

And sometimes what they hope for, or what they are frustrated about, are not framed necessarily in political terms. It could be framed in terms of their aspirations and what they hope for their children or very basic aspects of their day-to-day life, fundamental aspects of their day-to-day life. It's really important for organizers of a movement to listen and understand different

groups in society and how they think about, talk about, and feel about their circumstances.

So a movement brings together diverse interest, grievances, aspirations, and values, and weaves together a vision. Sometimes the vision is simply what a movement is against, and sometimes a vision represents both what a movement is for (what it wants to achieve), and what it's against.

Another aspect of building and maintaining unity is having a leadership structure within a decision-making structure that is legitimate. Because movements are voluntary, again people come out because they believe that the movement listens to and represents them. If a movement is quite large and operating, for example, even on a national basis, how does a movement make decisions when you have local groups, regional groups, national groups. How do they interact? How do they make decisions? Who decides what? It can be very challenging. Every movement has to come up with its own balance of how centralized or decentralized its decision making will be. And for some movements it might be decentralized at other some points, centralized at other points, and it might evolve and shift over the course of the conflict depending on the opportunities available to the movement, the level of oppression, and other factors. Regardless, what's critical is that movements are able to find a decision-making and leadership structure that allows them to maintain that unity, that allows them to work together continually—grow, expand, and adapt as the demands placed upon the movement change over the course of a conflict.

Planning

Hardy Merriman:

The second quality I'd like to talk to you about is planning—strategic planning. When engaged in a conflict, movements face a great many choices. Conflicts are very complex often, and it's difficult to determine what factors are most important to look at and how to make sense out of all the different opportunities, challenges, and so forth that are available and

that are facing a movement. So strategic planning offers one way, one set of tools, one framework for understanding these factors and trying to focus in on what courses of actions would be best for a movement.

The planning process often begins with a detailed analysis of the circumstances a movement faces. We talked earlier about the kinds of conditions and the conflict environments, and those are actually the exact things that a movement often will have to focus on when its planning. Looking at its opponent, for example, its adversary—where is the adversary strong? Where is it weak? A movement can ask similar questions of itself, and then a movement can look at neutral, at neutral parties (whether nationally or internationally) or involved parties and try to figure out where potential allies may be, what their interests are, how to work with them or draw their attention. So when movements do a strategic analysis of their environment, often what emerges are particular threats but also particular opportunities, challenges, and so forth that help a movement prioritize and think strategically about what it wants to do and how it wants to sequence its actions.

There is a model for thinking about this that can be helpful for some organizers and it is a triangle—very simple—that has three parts. At the top is the movement's vision, and we talked earlier about vision, often saying what a movement is against as well what a movement is for, and drawing on the values, aspirations, hopes, and grievances of a wide array of the public that a movement may hope to organize and unify.

At the next level is the campaign level. Campaigns are major phases of a conflict for intermediate objectives. And so, a campaign becomes a focal point for a lot of different tactics, which we'll get to in a second. Generally, campaigns would be chosen when a movement would decide that that campaign objective is achievable, and it know its objective is achievable based on the kind of analysis it does in the strategic planning process.

Then at the bottom level are tactics. Frequently, when we think about tactics in civil resistance, we think about protests. It is the image that comes to most people's mind and certainly an image in the media and

other for the talk about civil resistance movements. And yet, the protest is really just one of hundreds of different tactics available to a nonviolent civil resistance movement, which leads to the question: if there are a hundred of tactics available, which ones should a movement choose? How should they be sequenced? How should they be conducted? Even the protest itself could be short, could be a long drawn-out protest, could involve certain kinds of people, could happen on a certain day, could be targeted at a certain group, and so forth. So even within a tactic there are a lot of different questions about how a movement will perform that tactic, let alone looking at the broader array of tactics.

And a strategic planning process can help movements focus. When we look at this triangle and see that tactics, generally and within this model, are supposed to reinforce campaigns into media objectives, which are supposed to reinforce the vision. This is how this model functions; it's designed to concentrate strength so that a movement can push forward and achieve its objectives and its vision. That said, in practice, movements often develop planning and strategy in all kinds of ways, and not necessarily just according to this model of course. Movements will experiment, movements will engage in tactics sometimes, or before deciding campaign, or before even developing a vision. There is a lot of experimentation in real-time that movements do that contribute to a strategic planning process as well.

Strategic Principles: Nonviolent Discipline, Organizing, and Campaigning

Nonviolent Discipline

Hardy Merriman:

A movement's strategy and plans will be much more effective if they are executed and carried through in a disciplined way, and one of the greatest risks for a civil resistance movement is that it begins lapsing into violence. Why? There are several really important reasons why violence and civil resistance do not mix. First, one of the most important factors in the success of civil resistance movements is wide scale participation, and what we know is that when violence begins to be used by a movement, it can drive down participation quite significantly. When we talk about participation, we are talking about people from different walks of life—men and women, elders, young people, middle age people, young adults, and so forth, people of different social and economic classes. When violence is used it can drive down participation from many of these groups, which again has a critical effect on a movement's chance of success.

It doesn't just lower participation; violence also can increase the likelihood of violent repression being used against a movement. We see sometimes that when a movement breaks into violence, it gives the movement's adversary public justification for trying to do large amounts of oppression on all demonstrators, including nonviolent ones. We also know that when a movement lapses into violence it decreases the cost of an opponent using repression. One of powers of civil resistance movements is that they increase the likelihood that repression will backfire. That means that when repression is used against nonviolent civil resistance movements, it's more likely to create this condition we call backfire, which means to impose real cost on the adversary, on the party that's using the repression. But when a movement becomes violent, it becomes often viewed as a threat to public safety and then repression is used and backfire is much less likely to occur.

Lastly, when a movement remains nonviolent, it is much more likely to win allies and create shifts in loyalty among neutral parties and even former supporters of the opponent. People are more likely to defect when a movement remains nonviolent. When a movement engages in violence it actually increases the loyalties often of its adversary's supporters. Why is this? When a movement engages in violence, the supporters of the adversary, their perception of threat often goes up, and when their threat goes up, it can increase the unity on the other side—it can increase the unity of the adversary. As the adversary feels more threatened and the supporters of the adversary feel more threatened, they tend to come together unite to try and counter the threat.

Now, how is nonviolent discipline achieved? Different movements have different ways. Frequently, training is a very important part, where movement will make sure the core members of that movement (the most active participants at first, and then increasing the other participants) get trained and have civil resistance work, so that they understand the logic and the rationale for remaining nonviolent. They understand historical case studies, they understand the model for what they are trying to do, and they understand why violence is potentially a great threat to the movement (not necessarily violence by the opponent, but violence by the movement itself).

Another thing that movements do is they shift their tactical selection. There are plenty of very powerful tactics that a movement can engage in that don't risk violence nearly as much as say, a public protest. There are these tactics called tactics of dispersion—decentralized tactics—for example, a boycott. When lots of people choose not to buy something, it's very difficult for an adversary to know who to engage in repression. It also doesn't increase the likelihood that the movement itself will become violent because it's a decentralized tactic that many people are doing that doesn't expose them to a lot of risks.

Another aspect of building and maintaining nonviolent discipline is sort of starting to build a culture within a movement—starting to build norms within a movement of how decisions are made, and how actions are conducted, and how planning happens. Ultimately, because movements are voluntary,

there is no command and control of them; it's not they are like they are some leader who can control everyone in the movement. It's often people's peers that also can serve a really important influence in keeping people within the strategic frame of the movement, and that often means without any violence.



“We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr. –

Movement Lens, Community Organizing, and Campaigning

Erin Mazursky:

So, successful traits of a movement. First, the movement itself needs three core things that we talk about. One is movement lens, so that's everything that we've talked about in terms of a movement DNA, a grand strategy—all of these things encompass the way that you set up your leadership teams, the way that you make decisions, the ethic of nonviolence, and the vision of tomorrow that you're trying to create that goes beyond any one campaign. So that's really important, is to have a movement lens that is futuristic and helps people know what their common purpose is.

The second piece of a successful movement in terms of foundation is the ethic of community organizing. That is the ethic of enabling others to lead, which creates more resources, more skills, and more ways that you can

build and use power. So, community organizing is essential and leadership is essential to building leadership capacity, which is essential to ultimately building sustainable organizations and movements that can be dynamic and respond no matter what happens.

The third is strategy and action. So, it's strategy, but it's really campaigning. So, campaigning is the way that you enact strategy and movements, and campaigning is inherently active. So, it means that you are creating ways for people to take action, to create, to reach a goal. And so, all of those things together—a movement lens, community organizing, and campaigning and action—are sort of the core ingredients of any successful movement. And so, it's really important that movements sort of build a base of that.

Strategic Planning

Grand Strategy, Tactics, Logistics, Planning

Peter Ackerman:

Are there any conditions in which a civil resistance movement is destined to fail? One of the things we always hear is that a nonviolent resistance movement can't work in certain circumstances. Freedom House did a study to actually look at this issue, and the work of Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth also looked at this issue, and came to the conclusion similar to the one I'm about to articulate which is: contrary to what one might assume, factors such as regime type, level of economic development, literacy rate, or fictionalization of society along ethnic, linguistic, and religious lines have not had a statistically significant impact on the ability of a civic movement to achieve success through civil campaigns.

So then you have to ask the question: Okay well, if conditions aren't the key element, what are? Thomas Schelling—who is a Nobel Prize winner in economics, a game theorist—basically wrote the following in 1964 in an edited volume (edited by Adam Roberts, who was the Lead International Relations Professor at Oxford). So this is what he said then, and it applies very much today and really is the motivating element for the existence of the International Centre on Nonviolent Conflict. So here's what he says, he says, "The tyrant and his subjects are in somewhat symmetrical positions; they can deny him most of what he wants. They can, that is if they have the disciplined organization to refuse collaboration, and he could deny them just about everything they want. He can deny it by using the force at his command. They can confront him with chaos, starvation, idleness, and social breakdown, but he confronts them with the same thing. Indeed, most of what they deny him, they deny themselves."

Now we're getting to the crux of it. "It's a bargaining situation which either side, if adequately disciplined and organized, can deny most of what the other wants, and it remains to see who wins." So what he's saying is the

flip-side of what we just read before, is that the conditions are not critical; it depends on who's got the better discipline and organization. He didn't say that the violent dictator has that discipline and organization nor did he say that the civil resistance movement has that superior discipline and organization. That's a matter of choice and knowledge, and that's where we get to the issue of skills.

Just to say that skills are more important than conditions, you have to start talking about what skills are. Now of course, skills are basically expressed through decisions made in conflict. And there are lots of different ways where people divide and categorize decisions made in conflict, but I'm going to use four here, and then I'm going to refer to what the civil resister has to make in that kind of decision versus the authoritarian.

So the first is the grand strategic which is really the policy choice: what are your goals of the campaign? For a civil resister, it's very important for them to achieve unity, and for an authoritarian it's to basically co-opt elements within the civil resistance movement and basically make unity impossible. If you look at our movie on Milošević, you'll find that Milošević was a master of this, and it wasn't until everybody came together with a unified view of what needed to happen that real results occurred.

The next is tactical. Now, there's two kinds of tactics of nonviolent resistance. My mentor Gene Sharp lists 198, but they could really be divided into two kinds: tactics of commission and tactics of omission. A tactic of commission is when you're doing something the authoritarian wants you to stop doing, so that would be a protest. If you're talking about a tactic of omission, you stop doing something he wants you to continue to do, which is something like a strike or a boycott. Each has its own features, each has its own natural participants within a society countering an authoritarian. What the authoritarian wants to do in response is they want to suppress—via acts of repression and threats of terror—the formation of these tactics.

Now at the tactical level, they're supported by logistics. And so that's an issue of capacity building. So there's two kinds of capacity building. One is

offensive, meaning the ability to communicate and the ability to have mobility. One of the things that we tend to do is we look at the ability to communicate through social media, and this has been such an exciting period of time in the development of social media that we put more importance on it than I think we should because it's really just a logistical method of supporting the tactical. In some cases, social media should be replaced by more conventional methods as a way of mobilizing and communicating. But, what the authoritarian wants to do in response is that they want to destroy that capacity through basically destroying mobility, shutting down communication tracking.

Now, one of the things I skipped here, which I want to go back to, is that I want to talk about defensive logistics. You know the offensive logistics I mentioned were communications and physical mobility. The defensive ones are basically how to protect your population against the destruction of the wealth, their basic personal safety, those sorts of things.

Then the last part—which I think is the integrating element—is the strategic decision-making, and that gets to the issue of planning. One of the things that we've discovered with people we work with is that very, very few have the capacity to see what their movement will look like more than a month out or two months out. So what the civil resister wants to do is plan. And planning is another way of defining (which I'll show in a minute) is the sequencing of tactics in a way to maximize the impact on the opponent in the service of your grand strategic goals. And what an authoritarian wants is a response, they want to basically keep you in a reactive mode. What I like to tell people is that the biggest ally for the authoritarian is the confusion of the population. When they have a strategic concept, and when they have the capacity to plan, that's the most important element in determining success or failure.



The authoritarian's greatest ally is the confusion of the population.

Skills of a Civil Resister

Peter Ackerman:

What I want to do here is paint a picture for you that's a bit abstract, but I think if you stay with me you'll get what I'm talking about. So if you look at the vertical line, which is the choices you make in terms of the tactics you select to deal with your adversary, on the line that's above the dot you see tactics of disruption. In the line below the dot, you see tactics of repression. Now if you look at the end result that's to come from these tactics, right of the dot you have defections, and to the left of the dot you have obedience. So, if you think of the civil resistance in the upper right hand quadrant, this is what they'd like to have happen: they want to get the maximum defection for the least amount of disruption. Remember, Tom Schelling said that when you disrupt you don't just hurt the authoritarian you hurt yourself.

So the key here is to design tactics where the amount of defection you get is very high relative to the amount of disruption required. Now if you are now looking, and you are a civil resister dealing with the authoritarian, what you want the authoritarian to do is to have to use the maximum amount of repression for the minimum amount of obedience. So let's move on from there.

So now, if you the authoritarian dealing with the civil resistance strategy, you want just the opposite. In other words, you want maximum disruption to have the least amount of defection. And if you're on the quadrant of the authoritarian strategy, what you want is you want the authoritarian to get

the most amount of obedience for the least amount of repression. In other words, they want to rule for the threat of repression not the actual use of repression. And then you get to a point where—which is really desperately dangerous for an authoritarian—where the relationship between more repression and more obedience breaks down, and we have what we call backfire where basically as the repression goes up, the defections go up. That usually happens towards the end of a conflict.

So what you want to do, if you really want to think about a strategic plan, is you want to create a sequence of tactics. And so you see that over time, you want to basically move towards more defection rather than moving towards less obedience. And so, if you look at the bottom here, you'll say skillful acts of civil resistance is disruption beats repression; skillful acts by authoritarians is repression beats disruption.



PRACTICAL TIP

Ideally, a successful movement will achieve large numbers of defections through relatively small disruptions.

The Civil Resister Checklist

The Civil Resister Checklist

Peter Ackerman:

A man named Atul Gawande wrote a book called *The Checklist Manifesto*. That book was born from his experience in emergency rooms, where he discovered that in an emergency room, you have people who have experienced violence or accidents and they've been injured badly—their lives might be under threat, the wounds they have are very complex, and the time required to react to them is very short. And what he found was that if he took his people—and by the way, each person's problems were *sui generis*, in other words, it's very hard to basically make easy links between everybody's problems when they come into the ER room.

So what he did is he said, "Well, let's step out of the room as a group of people and come up with a checklist of things to do and not to do, and then make sure that under all circumstances we apply them." And what he discovered is when they formed the checklist, the deaths went down, the recoveries went up and it was a very good experience. And so he started to study where checklists were used in other places. And, for example, I think the last bomber that we created in World War II was at that time technologically very advanced. We took our best test pilot and he basically took it up for a test flight, and then flew into the ground and destroyed the plane and killed himself, and the question was: was it technology or was it complexity? So they created a checklist, and once they created the checklist, there were no more crashes. So it wasn't a technological fault, it was basically a decision-making fault.

And the same thing goes on in big real estate construction projects when you have many different disciplines working, and they each have a checklist so they can integrate what they want to do with what everybody else is doing.

Again as I said before, what we're dealing with is the biggest ally of the authoritarian is confusion. And you know at ICNC what we have is, we have dissidents coming to us with this combination of hope and despair. They think their situation is unique and we try to say to them, "Well maybe it is, maybe it isn't—but let's see what we can learn in other cases, talk about the generic lessons in other cases." And so, we're now working on this idea of creating a checklist. So when people say, "What should I be doing next?" instead of answering with a specific answer we answer with a set of questions. Those questions basically refer to a checklist. So here is our first take, and this is going to turn into a book that will be available to you, I think, hopefully by a year in a very small book, is the, the effort here is called *The Checklist to End Tyranny*; is what the book is being called—really a checklist for successful campaigns to civil resistance.

So we have six elements here (and by the way, we're thinking of a seventh), but right now three are related to the status of your capacity or your capacities, and the others are related to the trends of the conflict. So the first question we ask is: has the civil resistance campaign unified around goals and leaders?

The second question we ask is: does the civil resistance movement have an operating plan, usually something that they can colorably extend beyond six months.

The third question is: is the array of tactics that the civil resisters used based strictly on nonviolent discipline? And Chenoweth and Stephan (who I'm sure are going to hear from and others) the data is pretty clear: when you mix violent and nonviolent strategies, you end up getting the worst of both. And there's all sorts of good strategic reasons—not just moral reasons—to maintain nonviolent discipline.

Then the ones having to do with trends is: is the level of participation and diversity of participation growing?

The fifth one is: are you figuring out ways to diminish the impact of the opponent's repression so that it might actually lead to backfire?

And the last one is: are you identifying people who might be defectors and you're trying to get the acceleration of defection.

And the seventh, basically what I would call end game, has to do with the question: are you creating stable institutions capable of power-sharing and dispute resolution, which is the hallmark of what you need if you're going to move from the conflict to a form of governance that creates more satisfaction among the people?

One of the other things we're going to do in the book—and I'm going to stop here—is that if you look at each of these checklist elements, there is a checklist within each one of those elements. So when we put the book out, we're going to ask people in various places without necessarily attribution to them to basically create the checklist under unifying vision, under operation of planning nonviolent discipline. And I think the data collection that's going to come from that will be very useful to share back with all those who participate. So with that, I'm glad to have a chance to basically share these ideas.



PRACTICAL TIP

A successful nonviolent movement should have a realistic operating plan that could extend beyond six months.

Movement Action Plan

Bill Moyer and the MAP Model

Daryn Cambridge:

The Movement Action Plan, or MAP, is a tool created for activists and campaign organizers to help track the progress of their movement. The MAP model was developed by an American Quaker, social activist, and trainer Bill Moyer. And throughout his life, Bill Moyer had been involved in several different nonviolent movements. He was an organizer in the civil rights movement's Chicago campaign where he worked closely with Dr. Martin Luther King and James Bevel. He was active in the anti-nuclear movement in the United States that successfully halted the production of all new nuclear power plants in the country. He supported the American Indian movements and their occupation at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, and he participated in blockades of armed shipments to both Vietnam and Bangladesh. So, he was a seasoned social activist.

Based on these experiences, Moyer developed the MAP model because, as he said, "One of the chief limitations of social movements has been the lack of strategic models and methods that help activists understand, plan, conduct, and evaluate their social movements."

So, what does this model describe exactly? Well, the MAP model explains in each stage [a] step-by step-process of social movement success. And, for me, the primary value of this tool is that it recognizes that movements may experience moments that seem like failures, when in fact they should be seen and understood as a natural part of a movement's larger progress. And so, by tracking where a movement is in this progress, activists and organizers can plan more effective campaigns and actions.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[The Movement Action Plan: A Strategic Framework Describing the Eight Stages of Successful Movements](#)

The Movement Action Plan provides activists with a practical, how-to-do-it analytic tool for evaluating and organizing social movements that are focused on national and international issues, such as nuclear energy and weapons, nonintervention in Central America, civil and human rights, AIDS, democracy, and freedom, apartheid, or ecological responsibility. MAP describes eight stages through which social movements normally progress over a period of years and decades. For each state, MAP describes the role of the public, powerholders, and the movement. It provides organizers with a map of the long road of successful movements, which helps them guide their movement along the way.

Stages 1 and 2

Stage 1 of the MAP Model - Normal Times

Daryn Cambridge:

Stage one in the MAP model is called normal times. During this stage, a critical problem exists and power holders are supporting, enforcing, and perpetuating the problem. In addition, the general public is essentially unaware of the problem—or at least unaware of the critical nature of it—and they may in fact be supporting the power holders. So, in short, this is the unacceptable status quo where the problem and the unjust policies are not yet a public issue.

So, for example, let's take a look at the U.S. civil rights movements. For generations, there were racist and segregationist laws and policies that were affecting communities of color throughout the country—and that was the status quo. The general public was basically accepting the status quo, if not outright supporting it. So that would have been the kind of normal times when we look at that movement.

Stage 2 of the MAP Model - Proving the Failures of Official Institutions

Daryn Cambridge:

Stage two of the MAP model is called proving the failures of official institutions, and during this stage, opposition groups begin to emerge and they look to official channels like courts, government offices, schools, hearings, etc., to prove that the institutions don't work. Those who recognize the problem as being critical do their research; they become experts on the problem.

So, for example, the East Timorese independence movement involved the work of the National Resistance of East Timorese Students. These students had received scholarships to study in Indonesia, and in that role, they learned the laws surrounding human rights: they uncovered and exposed the human rights abuses that the Indonesian government had been and was committing against the East Timorese people. In short, they were one of many opposition groups that emerged and they worked within the official educational system of the occupying power to reveal its flaws.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Case Study: East Timor](#)

In 1989, a group of students who had received scholarships to study in Indonesia formed the National Resistance of East Timorese Students (Renetil). They had three main strategies: maintaining distance from Indonesian influences, revealing the brutality of the Suharto regime and Indonesian occupation to the outside world and preparing East Timorese professionals to be able to help build an independent East Timor. From the start, the organization was concerned with preparing for any potential chaos or power vacuums.

Stages 3 and 4

Stage 3 of the MAP Model - Ripening Conditions

Daryn Cambridge:

Stage three of the MAP model is called ripening conditions, and during this stage there is recognition of the problem that begins to grow and the general public starts to see the faces of those who have become victims or who are adversely affected by the critical problem. More groups emerged and they became more active. New alternative institutions may begin to form, and it's during this stage that around 20-30% of the public starts to actively oppose the power holders.

And so, we can look to the moment, for example, when Mohamed Bouazizi burned himself alive in Tunisia as an example, or we can think about the images of Khaled Saeed, who had been beaten to death by the Egyptian police. Exposing the public to these brutal acts ensured that the public could no longer turn a blind eye to what was a serious problem in both of these countries. So it's during this stage that people begin to protest. They began to demonstrate in public to express their discontent.



At the stage where conditions for the movement ripen, 20-30% of a population may oppose the injustice.

Stage 4 of the MAP Model - Take Off

Daryn Cambridge:

Stage four of the MAP model is the take off stage. And this stage usually involves some kind of trigger event that spawns dramatic nonviolent actions. And these widespread dramatic nonviolent actions demonstrate to the general public that current conditions violate widely-held values. The problem is then part of the social agenda: many people are talking about it.

We can again look to Egypt: we can look to events in Tahrir Square and throughout Egypt that led to the removal of Hosni Mubarak in 2011. Let's remember, Hosni Mubarak had been in power for over 30 years. We can also look to the pro-democracy movement in Chile that removed Augusto Pinochet, a brutal military dictator, from power. It was large-scale acts of civil disobedience and nonviolent actions—whether it would be workers' strike, “go slow” campaigns, banging pots and pans. These were all actions—both big and small, but all widespread—that were happening throughout the country that helped shift public opinion against Pinochet and ultimately shaped the conditions that led to the “no vote” in the plebiscite in 1988 which ended what had been nearly 17 years of military rule in that country.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Case Study: Chile](#)

The goals of this Chilean nonviolent movement were democratic elections, the resignation of the Pinochet regime, and an end to human rights abuses and economic hardship. Referring to the beginning of the campaign, union leader Rodolfo Seguel said, “we tried to broaden it to the whole country, to protest not just the economic hardship, but human rights abuses, the whole system. Someone had to dare to tell the dictator that he was a dictator, that it was a dictatorship, that we needed a change.” The Alianza Democratica stated their objective saying, “We unite in agreeing to respect and promote

certain ethical principles and values that democracy upholds, without which a free, prosperous, just, and fraternal society is not possible.”

Stages 5 and 6

Stage 5 of the MAP Model - Perception of Failure

Daryn Cambridge:

Stage five of the MAP model is referred to as the perception of failure and it's during this stage that there is a sense among those who were pushing for change, that change is not coming fast enough. Or, there is impatience that all of the goals of the movement have not yet been achieved. So there is a sense of despair or hopelessness, and actually, burn-out can be seen as well. This can often lead to dwindling participation in campaigns or events.

So, for example we can look at the Occupy movement in the United States and other places around the world. And the larger overarching goal, in part, was an overhaul of the entire financial system and capitalism as we know it. Because that wasn't achieved in the period of time in which people were occupying Wall Street and other cities around the world, some people may have felt a sense of despair that the movement wasn't successful. But in reality, much of the conversation around the 99% and the 1%—use of money, capitalism in the world system—that conversation did undergo a shift in a relatively short period of time. So, many people may have felt a sense of hopelessness and despair because the larger overarching paradigm shift did not occur in that period of time, but there were actually still many successes and changes that came out of Occupy (there is more work to be done, many who are involved in that movement would argue).

The other potential pitfall or danger in this stage of a movement is that people may abandon nonviolent actions and instead adopt violent actions as a way to achieve success, because they may have felt that it was a problem of nonviolent actions that led to the failures or perceived failures.

Stage 6 of the MAP Model: Majority Public Opinion

Daryn Cambridge:

Stage six of the MAP model is majority public opinion, and, during this stage, the majority of the public begins to oppose the policies of the power holders and the present conditions. It becomes clear how the problem affects multiple sectors of the society, and not just those directly and immediately impacted by the problem.

Now, it's important during this stage for successful movements to promote realistic alternatives in order to counter the existing policies. It's also important, during this time, during this stage, to focus on not just changing policies, but creating a paradigm shift. It's also important to recognize that it is during this stage that some of the fiercest rhetoric will come from the power-holders.

Now, there are many social movements that we can look to better understand the dynamics going on in this stage. The best example, I would say, would probably be the environmental movement that is addressing the critical problems of climate disruption. The majority of global public opinion has shifted to one of expressing a desire to change policies in order to curb climate change. Attempts to create a paradigm shift around the human relationship with the planet has started to take shape or, in many ways, [has] become more mainstream—while, at the same time, you see last-ditch efforts by power holders—whether they be politicians or heads of corporations and industries—trying to deny the real impact or dangers of climate change. Or, in some cases, they are co-opting movement language by using words like “green” or “sustainable” or “organic” in order to give the illusion that things are changing, when, in fact, they are not.

So, that's why, in this stage, successful nonviolent movements have been able to capitalize on what we refer to as re-trigger events—or, as Dr. King used to say, they are able to “dramatize injustice.” And this is oftentimes one of the main goals of participating in nonviolent direct action. It creates a situation so crisis-packed that power holders and the general public are compelled to react and engage in the problem in some way. It starts putting

the issue on the political agenda in addition to having it remain on the social agenda.



PRACTICAL TIP

In order to counter existing policies, civil resistance movements should promote realistic alternatives.

Stages 7 and 8

Stage 7 of the MAP Model - Success

Daryn Cambridge:

Stage seven in the MAP model is referred to as success and, during this stage in a movement, a large majority of the population start to embrace alternatives or they are no longer skeptical of them and they no longer fear them. As a result of this, power holders begin to shift their positions and change policies, or they are voted out of office, or they are removed from a position of power and replaced by someone or something else.

So, even though this stage is referred to as success, it can still have feelings of being unable to meet certain goals, particularly when it comes to creating a paradigm shift. So you may see lots of policies being changed as a result of new power holders coming in and out of office or being removed from power, but you may not see that paradigm shift that the movement is seeking to have.

Stage 8 of the MAP Model - Continuing the Struggle

Daryn Cambridge:

The final stage in the MAP model—stage eight—is referred to as continuing the struggle. And there are various elements [that] have come into this stage. The first is to extend the gains and solidify the gains that the movement has made up to that point. So, ensuring that the laws that you are able to change are actually enforced [or] making the laws stronger.

Another example is being able to recognize when there is a potential backlash and being able to oppose that backlash to the social changes that the movement has been able to create—[put] other mechanisms in place and strategies in place to prepare what is oftentimes an inevitable backlash to the change that has occurred.

The third thing that needs to be done—that successful movements have done—is to recognize that there are many sub-issues that have not necessarily been effectively addressed. And so, they turn to those other sub-issues where they feel they have not made those gains.

The other element is to celebrate your successes. Oftentimes, movements can get so bogged down on focusing on what they didn't achieve and their failures and what they could have done better, but it's important to actually stop and celebrate your successes. That's an important part of this stage.

And the last part of this stage is keeping an eye to the paradigm shift that the social movement is interested in supporting or bringing about. So, just because policies have changed or laws have changed or some institutions have been reformed, doesn't necessarily mean that a paradigm shift has occurred.

So, I'm going to go back to the US civil right movement to give an example of the continuation of the struggle. The civil rights movement was successful in giving people of color the right to vote, but it was soon realized—as a result of a backlash to this—that right was not being protected. So, new laws were being created, like poll taxes or literacy tests, that essentially were put in place to deny people of color the right to vote. So, the struggle continued—they had success, but the struggle continued in order to ensure that people of color could act on their right to vote.

Also, I want to talk about a paradigm shift. Schools may have been integrated, people of color may have been given the right to vote or to go into certain restaurants, or use the same bathrooms. Broad integration may have been a success, but does that mean that there has been a paradigm shift in terms of how communities and how people see people of color or African Americans in their community? And that's the long, often generational, work of creating a paradigm shift and successful social movements have always kept an eye towards that paradigm shift.



“As long as people use tactics to oppress or restrict other people from being free, there is work to be done.”

– Rosa Parks –

Conflict Analysis

What Is Conflict Analysis?

Daryn Cambridge:

Conflict analysis, as defined by USIP, is a structured inquiry into the causes and potential trajectory of a conflict so that processes of resolution can be better understood. Other terms like conflict assessment or conflict mapping may be used in other circles as well, but they basically mean the same thing.

Given this definition, a common analogy for conflict analysis is that of looking both ways before you cross the street. Looking both ways, of course, is important because you don't want to get hit by a car. So yes, it may delay the time it takes for you to get the other side of the street, but I think we would all agree that it's better to get to the other side successfully without harming yourself or anyone else, rather than trying to get there as quickly as possible (and potentially not reaching the other side at all), and harming yourself and others in the process.

This kind of structured inquiry, or looking both ways before crossing the street, is an essential skill set for anyone working to address, resolve, mitigate, or wage a conflict. Conflict situations are rife with dangers, pitfalls, variables that are in tension with one another and any of these, when [they are] not identified and not understood, can deliver a real blow to progress in building peace or waging nonviolent action.

The most simple and straightforward framework guiding a basic conflict analysis are what are referred to as the five Ws—something that any budding journalist learns when she enters the profession. These are: who, what, when, where, and why. So for example:

WHO – Who are the various actors involved in this conflict—from the elite to the grassroots levels? Who is currently an ally in your efforts? Who is currently an adversary in your efforts? Who could be a potential ally?

WHAT – What are the issues at the root of this conflict? What do people want? What do people need? What are the resources that you are bringing to the conflict? What are the resources that are already present?

WHEN – When did this conflict begin? When are opportune times to engage with and involve various parties? When does it make sense to implement different aspects of a program, project, or campaign?

WHERE – Where does this conflict manifest itself—in the streets, in homes, certain villages, certain regions? Where are the places that can bring people together? Where are places that can protect people from harm?

WHY – Why did this conflict emerge when it did? Why has this conflict raged on for this period of time? Why does it make sense for me, us, our group to engage ourselves in the conflict?

So you can see that the five Ws are a simple way to start developing a comprehensive set of questions to guide a basic conflict analysis.

It's wise to develop and explore these kinds of questions before you “cross the street” otherwise, let's say a peacebuilding program, may actually end up putting innocent people in danger. A mediation project may end up causing more trauma for the affected community. The humanitarian assistance may end up supporting and empowering an extremist group. A civil resistance campaign may turn violent and end up turning the population against the movement. In short, the desired result, of course, is to be able to achieve your program or campaign goals—to get to the other side of the street. Conflict analysis increases the likelihood that that will happen.

Guest Expert Podcasts

[Dr. Sharon Morris](#) on the common analysis gap of not drawing enough on local research partners.

Gaps in Conducting a Conflict Assessment

Sharon Morris:

I think the only gap that exists, and it's one that's been recognized for a long time in this space, you know, I can't talk to all the people I need to talk to when I go into a conflict assessment. There are people who just won't talk to me, they're, you know, they're huge. They're huge categories of actors for whom I am completely illegitimate, you know. And I think we need to recognize that that just is, and there are limits to how we can get around that. I think probably the biggest gap I've seen to date is that we're not drawing enough on local research partners. When we do our conflict assessments, some of the best information I've gotten is from small, you know, shoestring local NGOs that are doing research on this stuff. You know, I also I've been on way too many conflict assessments where I've got this, you know, super highly educated team that goes out and sits in a community and asks the community over and over again, the same questions. And these are questions that quite frankly, it's tough for community to answer, you know, and so, you know, going to the people who have spent their lives studying these issues is, again, I think a gap and so when I go out and do a conflict assessment, one of the first things I do is I'll hit local universities and I'll try and find PhD students at local universities who've studied these issues. Because they are going to have, you know, information and focus that, you know, local communities aren't always going to have this stuff. So again, we just really need to be a lot more thoughtful about how we're getting our information and who we're getting it from. Good conflict assessment does not mean trotting around at the grassroots level, asking, you know, everybody the same questions.

The Curve of Conflict Analytical Framework

[Dr. Matthew Levinger](#) describes the curve of conflict that is a useful tool for conflict analysis.

Matthew Levinger:

At the United States Institute of Peace, we have certain common principles that are shared across the various departments and programs of the Institute. And one of the bedrock principles of effective conflict management is that conflict analysis is a critical first stage in any effort to engage effectively in efforts to prevent, mitigate or rebuild after violent conflict. And in the case of nonviolent civil resistance, it is especially important that people who are potentially organizing or advising nonviolent civil resistance movements, very carefully analyze the context and the driving forces around a potential conflict because your goal as an advisor, or as the leader of a nonviolent civil resistance movement, is to affect change, in some cases, revolutionary change, without the use of violence, and ideally, without having the members of your movement be targeted for violence by an oppressive state.

To be able to do this effectively, you have to be very, very shrewd in terms of thinking about the nature of the forces that you're contending with. Let me talk initially about a schematic model that we use at USIP, which is called the curve of conflict. And this is a model that helps us think about the various stages of conflict and characteristics of those different stages. So that we can begin to orient our thinking about how best to respond, or how best to act as peacebuilders. Within those, those different stages of a conflict. The curve of conflict was written or developed by a conflict prevention specialist by the name of Michael Lund, he found that it was very useful to look at the life history of a given conflict as a kind of bell curve, or in a bell curve form. And it's important to recognize that this model is purely an idealized vision of the history, the life history of a conflict, most conflicts are not, if you drew their intensity level, they would not look like a curve, they would look more like a jagged stock market, stock price graph or something like that, because in fact, conflict will oscillate often between stages of peace and instability and war and, and back down and then recurring again.

But the basic model of the curve of conflict is that it tracks on the horizontal access time. So that the left side is the side before the outbreak of hostilities. And at the far right side of the curve of conflict is the period after hostilities have been resolved. And then on the vertical axis, we chart the

intensity of a conflict and the level of violence. So the curve of conflict on the vertical axis has four categories at the bottom is peace where there is no organized violence going on within the society. Then, at the level above there, we have a period that's or a category called instability and instability may involve some peaceful clashes, some, some scattered, violent episodes, but not systematic, widespread violence, as we see in the stage of violent conflict. So if we think of, for example, Tunisia, or Egypt, during the period of the revolutions in early 2011, there was a high level of instability. But in Tunisia, there was very little violence in Egypt, there was scattered violence. So the situation in Egypt, Virginia, into violent conflict at times, which is this third level, the level above instability.

So in the stage of violent conflict, you have an overt crisis, which has resulted in some organized violence. But it's not yet a full scale war, where two sides are actively fighting and killing each other. A war, if we're using the model of the Arab Spring, is more what we saw in, for example, Libya during this seven month campaign between the rebels and more Qaddafi's regime. So, on the left side of the curve, we see this pattern of escalation, where as time moves forward, the level of tension, the level of political conflict, and ultimately the level of violent conflict among competing factions rises. And then on the right side of the curve, we're looking at the period of de escalation. When war begins when the level of violence begins to ebb. At some point one may move from from a full scale war to a period of violent conflict. So the period after qaddafi had been defeated in Egypt, but his hometown of search was still a hotbed of resistance to the Libyan rebels. The war may have been more or less over, but there was still considerable violent conflict up until the time of qaddafi's death, capture and death. And then below violent conflict, we reached the period of we reached an event, which might be a ceasefire when there's a formal end to hostilities. And if the ceasefire holds, one moves beyond violent conflict, on to instability and so instability again, is a period where there is tension, but there's not widespread organized violence.

And when one is on the right side of the conflict curve, this tension is ideally being decreased and so and so, when one moves into the period of violent conflict and instability, in the post conflict phase, the the efforts of

international forces or of civil society activists are directed toward stabilization and post conflict reconstruction. And if this process is successful, then ultimately the society moves back into peace.

Critiques of the Conflict Curve

Daryn Cambridge:

There are several analytical tools that practitioners use and refer to. Michael Lund's Curve of Conflict Analytical Framework is an important one, and one that is widely taught and integrated into the work of conflict management professionals, international institutions and government agencies. In fact, we use it a lot here at USIP.

Even though civil resistance, peacebuilding and conflict resolution share some things in common, the curve of conflict analysis adheres to a particular conflict paradigm. And in so doing reinforces common conceptions that run counter to the ways in which civil resistance views and understands conflict.

So I will provide a few critiques of the conflict curve, which will hopefully help clarify some of the distinguishing characteristics of civil resistance as a method of struggle, and the nonviolent conflict analysis that informs that method.

The first main critique of the conflict curve that civil resistance provides is to challenge the notion that the escalation of conflict leads to violence and should be prevented. As you will notice in the diagram of the curve, as conflict escalates, it crosses the line of "violence." Civil resistance is a method of struggle that engages in conflict, but a kind of conflict that relies on civilian-based nonviolent strategies and tactics. So for civil resistance movements and the analysis that informs their actions, conflict is not violent, but rather nonviolent. So this line instead might mark when civilian-based actions shift from using conventional political and legal methods like elections, negotiations, law suits, dialogue, etc., and instead start using nonviolent direct actions like sit-ins, boycotts, mass

demonstrations, setting up alternative institutions, and the like. In other words, it is possible and desirable for a civil resistance movement to escalate the conflict, but to do so without the presence and use of direct physical violence and all-out war.

Second critique. Given that civil resistance does not view conflict as being necessarily violent, the kind of analysis that informs civil resistance is not so much interested in preventing or mitigating conflict, but rather creating conflict and creating a kind of productive tension that challenges the movement's adversary, and brings attention to the injustices and oppression against which the movement is fighting. So looking again at the conflict curve, ideas of preventative diplomacy, crisis management, and peace enforcement are not of high importance. In fact, they may actually be discouraged. If conflict is necessary for the desired change to occur, a civil resistance movement has no interest in preventing it. Just take this quote from Dr. Martin Luther King's famous Letter from a Birmingham Jail: "Non-violent direct actions seek to create such a crisis and foster such attention that a community, which has constantly refused to negotiate, is forced to confront the issue. It seeks to dramatize the issue, so that it can no longer be ignored." He goes on to say, "I have earnestly opposed violent tension, but there is a type of constructive nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth."

Last critique. Diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, etc. are all terms and roles commonly associated with government agencies, international bodies, and institutions and state actors. Civil resistance, on the other hand, is understood and practiced as a bottom-up, grassroots, civilian-based phenomenon. It challenges not only the assumption that violence is required to defeat one's opponents, it also challenges the assumption that outside actors are needed or are even beneficial in managing the trajectory of a conflict. The historical record of civil resistance demonstrates that the indigenous nature of civil resistance increases its effectiveness, and that when outside third party actors immerse themselves in a non-violent indigenous battle, it may actually harm the movement and its credibility. That's not a blanket statement, however. There are of course non-state actors and forms of diplomacy, like

Track II diplomacy and emerging ideas around public diplomacy, that are directed more at the grassroots level which can certainly be an effective way to help and support civilian-based nonviolent movements. So it is important, if a concept of diplomacy is part of one's analysis of a civil resistance, to employ a more holistic understanding of diplomacy, giving considerable attention to the more informal types of diplomacy that I just mentioned.

In conclusion, Michael Lund's Curve of Conflict is helpful, not so much because it's a useful tool for civil resistance movements to analyze their own conflicts, but rather that it provides an analytical model that, when compared and contrasted with nonviolent conflict analysis, elucidates the unique perspectives civil resistance brings to the fields of peacebuilding and conflict transformation.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Event: Civil Resistance and Peacebuilding: How They Connect](#)

On July 16, 2015 the United States Institute of Peace organized and facilitated an online discussion and panel event featuring USIP President, Nancy Lindborg, Kerri Kennedy of the American Friends Service Committee, Manal Omar, Acting Vice President of the Center for Middle East and Africa at USIP, and Maria Stephan, co-author of the book, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (Columbia University Press, 2011). The event explored such questions as: how does civic mobilization fit into the larger peacebuilding agenda? How have nonviolent campaigns and movements contributed to long-term peace and stability? What are the theoretical and practical linkages that might prevent violent conflict and advance a “just peace”?

Visioning

Six Steps of Kingian Nonviolence

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

The six steps of Kingian nonviolence are considered the skill or the strategy of nonviolence, and they're intended to be both cumulative and coterminous. That is, one step does not end when another begins.

The first step of Kingian nonviolence is information gathering. In this step, movement actors are interested in determining the facts of the situation and exploring options for change. Information gathering is a collective effort that takes advantage of all the resources a campaign has to offer in order to better understand the issues and problems of concern. Civil rights leader Dr. Bernard Lafayette often describes the entire year he spent in Selma gathering information, talking to people, understanding the social, economic, and cultural contexts before ever talking about taking any actions or designing a campaign.

The second step of Kingian nonviolence is education. That means educating people within the movement as well as potential future allies. Education raises the level of understanding about the problem or issue so that the public and your opponent understand that there are solutions that are both logical and supportable to address these issues. Education includes an element of social growth, leadership, development, and empowerment. As a movement moves from information gathering to sharing that information and educating the broader public, it will continue to gather information from the people they are speaking with. In the civil rights movement, the Selma campaign strategy included a step focused on voter registration and education—awareness raising—before moving into direct action.

The third step of Kingian nonviolence is personal commitment. Dr. Martin Luther King's leadership in the civil rights movement was based on a

serious commitment to both embracing love and nonviolence, even in the face of hardship. King knew that people's belief systems would be challenged along the way and he saw it as important that each individual conduct this type of self-examination in order to make a conscious and deliberate commitment to nonviolence. And this was not just a commitment in the short term to the actions of today or tomorrow, but it was a commitment to nonviolence in the long run. There are a multitude of roles that people can play and commitments that they can make. Some people will bring artistic abilities, logistical skills, organizing experience, strategizing skills, and all of these skills are important to making a movement successful.

The fourth step of Kingian nonviolence is negotiation. Nonviolent campaigns and movements should always be open to negotiation at any point in the process, but it's also important to recognize when negotiation is appropriate. Conflicts are often concluded around a negotiating table and thus the skill of negotiation is important for people in the movement to have. In some cases, negotiation provides an opportunity for the adversary to save face by agreeing to demands behind closed doors. But if the negotiations do not yield the movement's demands, it may be necessary for the movement to return to the use of creative nonviolent methods, including direct action, in order to achieve the desired outcome.

And that brings us to the next step of nonviolence: direct action. When education, personal commitment, negotiation have all failed to resolve the problem, more dramatic measures may be required. In fact, it is the nonviolence practitioner's responsibility to intervene in that situation and begin this constructive work. Nonviolent actions should be both direct and positive. They shouldn't be a reaction to the status quo or the persons involved in it. Direct action can manifest like a social drama. It can provide a visual picture of the problem; it can play out the realities of an unjust condition on a public stage where observers (the community at large) can see the importance of dealing with the issues. Direct action is most effective when it begins with methods of lower intensity and escalates to larger more massive demonstrations of civil disobedience.

And the final step of Kingian nonviolence is reconciliation. The ultimate goal of a nonviolent movement is a reconcilable world. This reconcilable world is where truth and mercy, peace and justice both interact and come together. It's a place where everybody can move forward together to tackle the larger issues at hand. Through reconciliation, campaign closure can occur, and both proponents and opponents can come together to share and celebrate in that victory, so that they can also start to begin the process of healing.



“No social advance rolls in on the wheels of inevitability. Every step towards the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr. –

Social Action Survey

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

The social action survey was developed by Richard and Hephzibah Hauser in their unpublished manuscript “The New Society.” The social action survey is a tool for examination. It's a tool that people can use if they want to evaluate the conditions of their life, and it's a methodological approach to looking underneath the surface of an issue.

There are two stages to a social action survey. The first is the anti-negative stage. This is the stage in which people seek to clarify the negative forces and conditions that are affecting people and issues that are being investigated. So what are the conditions within which this conflict or

problem is taking place, and what are the negative forces that are leading to or causing these conditions? The second is the constructive stage, in which people seek to use positive forces to create new conditions. One must clearly identify the problem and the negative forces behind it before considering potential courses of actions and positive forces to address the issue.

The purpose of the social action survey is threefold. The first is to carry out a process that initiates and eventually produces social action. In this sense, the social action survey is not an intellectual exercise; it's called a social action survey because it deals with the social action necessary to address those problems.

It's also important to recognize that the social action needed to address these problems may not happen immediately; it may have to wait until the climate is more favorable and the society has been sufficiently trained and organized to engage in social action. In this sense, the very purpose of the social action survey might be to change the social climate and prepare people for social action.

The third purpose of the social action survey is to engage in an analytical process. This analysis is based on responses to the key questions in the survey. These are the key questions to ask when carrying out a social action survey.

One: what are the facts of the situation? The facts will be important to have, but they won't be the only emphasis of the survey.

Two: what are the emotional factors surrounding the issue; what do people feel about the issue; what is at the heart of their concerns? It's important for movements to think about the emotional reactions and factors that handle the situation as well as the practical needs. So it's important for movements to think about both the emotional and practical factors at hand in the situation, and to imagine the courses of action that can address both.

This brings us to the third question in the social action survey: what do people think could be done to address the issue; what are people's ideas for action; whether anti-negative or positive?

The fourth question is: who else needs to be involved; where is collaboration possible; what types of leaders already exist in the community and could be leaned on?

The fifth question is: is there a more serious problem that needs attention? Is the current focus on a problem at the surface, when in fact there's a deeper problem at hand? The social action survey aims to deeply understand and address people's problems at the root causes of their conflicts as opposed to addressing the problems at the surface where they sometimes manifest.

The final question in the social action survey is: are you willing to get involved to help? Are you willing to make a commitment and to take action to address the issues at hand?

So how does a movement carry out a social action survey? The social action research methodology can take on a number of forms. It can be done in one-on-one or group interviews, group dialogues, brain trusts through dramatization, or by simple observation. The social action survey is a part of the first step of Kingian nonviolence, which is information gathering.

The social action survey is an opportunity for active allies of the movement to listen to people in their society, learn about the problems they face and the root causes of those struggles. It's an opportunity for them to strategize about potential courses of action and build relationships with people across social divides.

Theories of Change

Theories of Change

This video talks about what a theory of change is and how movements can develop a TOC to build a strategy that uses power. It uses the Montgomery Bus Boycott to walk through process of creating a TOC.

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

So what's a theory of change? A theory of change is a hypothesis; it's a position. It's an explanation for how you think change will occur in your community or your society. The phrase "theory of change" was popularized in the 1990s by people who were working in the field of program theory and program evaluation. These people were working with communities or working on community-based initiatives, and they found that it was often challenging for people to express how they thought that the change that they wanted to see would actually really occur.

For example, in brainstorming how a community might address aggressive police tactics, somebody might say, "Well, we should hold a protest." And if you said, "And how is that protest going to address the issue of aggressive policing in your community?" they might say, "Well, it's going to raise awareness about the issue, and therefore more people will know that it's a problem." But when pressed to articulate just exactly how that protest was going to lead to the desired end-result, which was more community-based policing strategies, it was very difficult to do.

And so what they found was that without a clear theory of change, it would be difficult for your group to know whether or not the steps or actions you are planning will in fact lead to the change that you desire.

A theory of change can be described as a set of assumptions or the action logic—that is, the well thought-out and research understanding and logic behind how the steps or actions that we have planned to take will get us from where we are today to our long term goals and desired outcomes.

In the social movements, the theory of change concept has been adopted by the community organizing tradition and it's incorporated into the work of Marshall Ganz. Marshall Ganz is a Senior Lecturer at Harvard University. He dropped out of college to participate in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the US civil rights movement, and later went on to work closely with Cesar Chavez and the farm workers in California. In their organizing training, there is a strong emphasis on what it means to build leadership. Marshall Ganz defines leadership as enabling other to achieve a purpose in the face of uncertainty. They do so by sharing stories, building relationships, building a narrative that brings together the individual stories and why the need for action is now. It also involves building a movement's structure. For the community organizing field, these are all components of what it means to build power.

Developing a theory of change is really about building a strategy that uses that power. Ganz defines strategy as turning the resources that you have into the power that you need in order to get the change that you want. Now by resources we can think about all kinds of resources, not simply material or financial resources. There are the human resources that the people in the movement bring, there are the skills and knowledge that they have as well as the legitimacy and authority and the ability to administer sanctions. And so, by turning these resources that the movement has into the power that the movement needs to create the change that it wants to see, we have to ask ourselves: how can people collaborate and use their power with, their people's power, to generate the power and employ that power to achieve the goal. So by answering this question, you are starting the process of developing a theory of change.

There are a set of strategic questions that help to develop one's theory of change. The first is: what change do we want? What is the problem that we see? In the case of the Montgomery Bus Boycott during the civil rights movement in the United States, the problem was segregation and segregated buses.

The next question is: who has the resources to create that change? Oftentimes, we are trapped in the mindset that power is monolithic, that

people at the top have the power and the resources to create change. And so, it's important to remind ourselves that the people involved in the organizing and in the movement have the resources and have the power to create that change.

The next question to ask is: what do they want? Both, what does the movement want and what does your adversary want. In the case of Montgomery, the adversary was really the system of segregation, but it manifested itself in places where that segregation was being carried out—in this case the bus companies. So what did the bus companies want? They wanted people to ride their buses; they didn't want a disruption or disturbance interfering with their business. They wanted a regular and reliable customer base that their business could rely on.

So the next question is: what do they have that we want, and what do we have that they want? This question enables movements to think about what leverage they do have considering the power and resources they have amassed as a collective movement.

And finally, what is our theory of change?

Now once you've spent time thinking through, studying, researching, and answering these questions, the next step is to create a theory of change statement or an organizing statement. A statement might go something like: "If my people do X, then the result will be Y because of A B and C." In the case of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the theory of change may have been something along the lines of: "If black Americans boycott the segregated bus system by not riding the bus, the result will be a loss of profits for the bus companies, and a financial burden so high that they will want to change their policy of segregation, because they care more about maintaining a profitable bus company than they do about enforcing an unjust law."



PRACTICAL TIP

Use this format to write your theory of change: “If my people do Y, then the result will be Z, because of X.”

Mechanisms of Change

Maria Stephan:

How does change happen over the course of nonviolent campaigns and movements? Gene Sharp referred to the processes by which change is achieved in successful cases of nonviolent struggle as “mechanisms of change.” The four mechanisms are: conversion, accommodation, nonviolent coercion, and disintegration. Sharp’s approach is helpful to nonviolent strategists because by understanding these four mechanisms of change, it is possible to better choose and assess a movement or campaign’s action strategies and tactics.

Conversion, the first method of change, occurs when there is a change of viewpoint by the opponents against whom nonviolent action has been waged. They come to believe it is the right thing to do to accept the demands of the nonviolent group, which they accept as legitimate. A converted opponent may even get credit for the change advocated by the nonviolent movement. When people talk about winning hearts and minds, this is the mechanism of change they are referring to. However, it is typically not the most significant mechanism of change in nonviolent struggles, particularly when there are many powerful actors invested in an unjust status quo.

Accommodation is the second mechanism of change in nonviolent action, in which the opponents resolve while they still have a choice to agree to a

compromise, and they grant certain demands of the nonviolent resisters. Accommodation does not mean that the opponents have changed their views nor have they been nonviolently coerced. Still, they have come around to deciding that a compromised settlement is most in their interest and desirable.

The opponent's choice is usually a reflection of the fact that the nonviolent movement is gaining strength and building up a winning track record of small victories. An opponent will likely choose accommodation if that choice will help to improve its public image, and if it not being asked to give up something that is fundamental to its continued rule—for example, the release of political prisoners during the visits of foreign diplomats, for a campaign or movement however, it could be an important interim demand in victory resulting from specific nonviolent actions. Often, the demand for free and fair elections, for example, can set in motion the process of accommodation.

Nonviolent coercion is the third mechanism of change in which demands are achieved against the will of the opponent or power-holder because effective control of the situation has been taken away from them by widespread non-cooperation and defiance. However, the opponents still remain in their official positions and the system has not yet disintegrated. Coercion is a risky preposition. If coercion is attempted prematurely, it may fail, and thus undermine the credibility of the nonviolent movement. For example, there have been a number of cases in history where nonviolent movements have attempted mass mobilizations, rallies, strikes, and boycotts in an attempt to coerce their opponents to make changes. But they were not successful because they did not build sufficient capacity, strength, and organizational know-how beforehand; they didn't make strategic preparations for the next steps after their opponents were coerced; and/or they didn't consider the counter-moves made by the opponent. Furthermore, once your movement attempts coercion, it's very hard to turn back. Your opponents will often feel highly threatened by your movement even if you have failed to coerce them, and they will likely take strong measures against your movement, thus the importance of planning

and preparation before attempting to coerce and, of course, a proper assessment of risk versus reward.

Disintegration is the fourth mechanism of change in nonviolent action in which the opponents are not simply coerced, but their system or government is disintegrated and falls apart as a result of mass civil disobedience and defiance. The sources of power are fundamentally restricted or severed by non-cooperation to such an extent that the opponent system or government simply dissolves. Disintegration, as you might imagine, can be very difficult to manage, because it is hard to know what different pillars of support will do when the opponent suddenly falls. For this reason, one could say that a coerced transition, on the other hand, is likely to be more stable and orderly than a disintegrated one. Members of your opponent's previous pillars of support often also feel more comfortable with coerced transitions because they have a sense of where they will be in the new system and that they will be in the new system. In either case, whether your opponent is coerced or if its entire system is disintegrated, your movement must have a plan ready for how to transfer to a post-conflict state. A collapsed opponent must be replaced by something new, something better, or else the old will return. This shows the importance of making advanced plans before victory has been achieved for how your movement will handle transition and the transfer of power after you have achieved victory.

Movements may use different mechanisms of change with different groups. For example, they may aim to convert or accommodate groups or individuals that are more likely to agree with them. But they may attempt to coerce or disintegrate the power of groups or individuals that are very unlikely to agree with them and are close to the inner elite in the inner core. Conversion may be more appropriate for ordinary foot soldiers or conscripts. Accommodation, perhaps, may make sense for middle ranking officers, and coercion for members of an inner circle who are most benefiting from a status quo and are least likely to support the movement.



PRACTICAL TIP

A nonviolent movement should have a plan ready for how to transfer to a post-conflict state.

Tools of Conflict Analysis

SWOT

Maria Stephan:

Sun Tzu, the great Chinese strategist from the 6th century BC, wrote in the Art of War: “It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you can win 100 battles without a single loss. If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you may win or may lose. If you know neither yourself nor your enemy you will always endanger yourself.” Nonviolent campaigns and movements can often times fail or at least not maximize success if they do not take the time to regularly conduct assessments of their performance, along with that of their opponents, whether the opponents consist of state or non-state actors.

Developed by corporate executives in the 1960s, the SWOT analysis can be used by businesses, non-profit organizations, militaries, and nonviolent movements to evaluate progress and identify both openings and stumbling blocks to success. SWOT analysis is a useful technique for understanding a movement’s strengths and weaknesses and for identifying both the opportunities open to it and the threats it faces.

What makes SWOT particularly powerful and useful is that with some effort, it can help a movement uncover opportunities that it is well placed to exploit. And, by understanding the weaknesses of your campaign or movement, you can manage and eliminate threats that would otherwise catch the movement surprised and unprepared. More than this, by looking at yourself and your competitors (and in the context of nonviolent movements this could either be a state or non-state opponent, or even an armed faction in the opposition) using the SWOT framework, you can start to craft a strategy that helps you distinguish your movement from that of your competitors, so that you can attract greater and more diverse participation in the campaign or movement. It is important to note that the strengths and weaknesses are often internal to your campaign or

movement, while opportunities and threats generally relate to external factors.

So let's talk about strengths. What advantages does your campaign or movement have? What do you do better than anyone else in your society? What do people in your society see as your strengths? Which factors, including various tactics, organization, and communication strategies are helping to expand the size and scope of participation? What is your campaign or movement galvanizing proposition to the rest of society or vision of tomorrow that would make people want to join?

Now let's talk about weaknesses. What could your movement improve? What should you avoid? What are people in your society and in the opponent's camp likely to see as weaknesses? What factors lose you to lose the active participation of ordinary people? Again, it's very important to consider this from an internal and an external basis. Do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you don't see? Are your competitors—again, whether state or non-state actors or a violent radical flank—doing any better than you are (meaning the movement or campaign)? It's important to be realistic and to face any unpleasant realities and truths early on so as to deal with them as soon as possible.

Opportunities. What good opportunities can you identify for your campaign or movement? What interesting trends on the horizon are you aware of? Useful opportunities can come from such things as changes in technology and/or access to capacity-building opportunities, changes in your opponent's policies, attitudes, and behaviors, including evidence of defections or loyalty shifts in key pillars of support, changes in social patterns, evidence of growing acceptance of nonviolence activism, et cetera. Or, an opportunity could be a local national or international trigger event, like a major success of people power elsewhere, the death or injury of respected members of the society, and/or news leaks of corrupt regime activities. A useful approach when looking at opportunities is to look at your campaign or movement's strengths and ask whether these open up any opportunities. Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself

whether your campaign or movement could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

Finally, threats. What obstacles does your campaign or movement face? What are your competitors (state, non-state, radical flank) doing? Is changing technology and/or regime manipulation of it threatening your position? Have the forms of government or power-holder repression changed or gotten worse? Are key leaders of your movement being targeted or removed from the nonviolent battlefield? Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your movement?

By analyzing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, both at the beginning of a campaign or movement and then repeatedly thereafter, nonviolent resisters can uncover information and insights that can both improve their strategic performance and help them weather inevitable challenges and repression.



“It is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you can win a hundred battles without a single loss...If you know neither yourself nor your enemy, you will always endanger yourself.”

– Sun Tzu –

Pillars of Support

Maria Stephan:

The ultimate source of power in any society—open, closed, or in between—is the people. People provide the labor, skills and knowledge, purchasing power, and belief systems that keep societies and governments running. Power is most often expressed in organizations and institutions. We call those organizations and institutions of the society which supply existing regimes or power holders with the needed sources of power to maintain and expand their control, the pillars of support. Pillars of support are called that because they support the existing power structure. Identifying and studying them is a key part of the strategic analysis for nonviolent movements.

Examples of pillars of support include the police, prison system, and the military forces which supply sanctions, religious and cultural institutions which supply authority or legitimacy, labor groups, business, and investment collectives which supply economic resources. Then there are the ruling institutions such as the judiciary and the electoral commission, the bureaucracy, the educational system, state-controlled media, the business community, and other organizations. Note that we would not refer to the economy or religion as a pillar of support. Rather, we are talking about organized groups that carry out specific social functions.

At the beginning of a nonviolent campaign or movement, it is likely that many of these organizations provide support to the opponent or existing power structure. If these organizations and institutions begin to withdraw their support from the opponent—and some may even start actively supporting a movement—this can fundamentally shift the power balance. Nonviolent movements succeed by finding ways to influence the behaviors of the people within various pillars of support. They do so by either eroding their loyalty to the opponent or existing power structure, or by persuading them to deny their skills and knowledge, material resources, and time to the opponent or power structure.

In order to influence the behavior of various pillars of support, it is important to understand the difference between pulling the members of that pillar towards your movement versus pushing them away from the movement—so pull versus push. Let us take the example of the army as a

key pillar of support. In order to erode the loyalty of the soldiers of the army, successful nonviolent movements in the past have generally done so by either fraternizing with them, appealing to their sense of patriotism, and assuring them that a society run by the opposition will be better for them and their families than the current government or power structure is. These tactics can help pull the soldiers' loyalties away from the center of the pillar and towards the opposition.

In contrast, movements that have threatened soldiers in the streets and thrown stones or Molotov cocktails, or used other forms of violence against them, tend to push them closer towards the center of the pillar. This is why some oppressive governments or other actors sometimes try to provoke violent actions by the opposition: because they know that this will push their soldiers and other security forces and other elements of society closer to them and make the soldiers more likely to obey orders. In cases where governments are not the primary opponent to the movement, where it may be a non-state actor like a corporation engaging in unjust mining practices or a violent extremist group like ISIS or Boko Haram, there may be different organizations and institutions that are allowing these actors to gain and maintain control. At the end of the day the pillars of support analysis are still relevant, but the organizations and institutions that support these non-state actors may differ.



Nonviolent movements succeed by influencing the behaviors of the people within pillars of support.

Case Study: The Civil Rights Movement

US Civil Rights Movement

Confined within the walls of a South African jail, the young lawyer from India found no reason to complain.

Some say that jail is a palace. Others look upon it as a beautiful garden. Some others hold that through the jail gates, we shall pass from our present bondage, to freedom.

The year was 1907. The young lawyer from India was Mohandas Gandhi. Gandhi led his fellow Indians in a nonviolent struggle against racial oppression for eight years. They marched into forbidden territory. They burned their registration papers. They expected to be arrested—and they were not disappointed. Gandhi said: Nonviolent refusal to cooperate with injustice is the way to defeat it.” J.C. Smuts, the interior minister, tells Gandhi: “You reduce me to helplessness. How can we lay hands on you without looking like villains?” He became known for his ability to mobilize people, and his increasingly simple way of life. He gave his nonviolent weapon a name: “Satyagraha”—holding to truth. In every decade and on every continent, underdogs have taken up Gandhi’s strategies to fight for their rights and freedom.

Bernard Lafayette: “Nonviolence means fighting back. But you’re fighting back with other weapons.”

The power that Gandhi discovered changed the twentieth century.

Sixty years after Gandhi’s struggle in South Africa, his ideas found new followers in the American South. Students at Fisk University, a leading black institution, can ignore segregation on campus. But when they venture downtown, many are shocked by the southern system.

Diane Nash: “I grew up on the south side of Chicago... and although I had experienced segregation there, it was not the overt kind where there were signs on water fountains and on restrooms. It was humiliating.”

John Seigenthaler: “Well, Nashville was a totally segregated city. It was as segregated as Johannesburg at the height of apartheid. It was a city of two races. There was virtually no contact between the white community and the black community. In schools, in neighborhoods, in jobs, in church, Nashville was a totally and completely segregated city and for the most part totally satisfied and happy with that.”

Students at American Baptist College, in eastern Nashville, know that segregation is being challenged, that some are working against the violent repression—even lynchings—that enforce it. They want to join the struggle.

John Lewis: “We were being taught one thing in the schools about the Declaration of Independence, about the Bill of Rights, about the Constitution. And then in the real world, we were living something else.”

James Lawson, a Methodist minister from Ohio, soon gives Nashville’s students a chance to take part. The soft-spoken Lawson is 30 and has spent three years teaching in India, where he studied the work of Mohandas Gandhi. In a small church near the Fisk campus, Lawson has started a series of evening workshops on nonviolent action.

“Now tonight, we have a most important business to try to accomplish...”

Jim Lawson’s manner is cool. His objective is breathtaking: to eliminate segregation. His classes attract Nashville’s brightest students.

“A good friend of mine in Alabama here last April was taken out by the KKK and beaten on a tree, tied to a tree, beaten by chains, and whatnot.”

Diane Nash: "I thought nonviolence would not work, but I stayed with the workshops for one reason—and that is because they were the only game in town. That was the only group even trying to do anything to combat segregation that I knew about."

"He started praying, 'Father, forgive these men.'"

Jim Lawson has been encouraged to come south by Martin Luther King Jr., who says the civil rights movement needs leaders who understand nonviolent strategy and tactics.

"Then they started protesting, 'You can't pray that prayer,' they said. Then others said, 'Yes, but, a man who is going to die has a right to pray any way he wants to pray.' And this immediately started a division among them.

James Lawson: "We took the whole group through a holistic view of non-violence, its history, its roots in the Bible, its roots in Christian thought, the methods of non-violence. We told the stories of non-violence, and I stressed the Gandhian idea of our being engaged in an experiment.

"It may have much more meaning to the attacker if, as he strikes you on the cheek, you're looking him in the eyes."

Bernard Lafayette: "Unfortunately, the concept of nonviolence for many people is that you get hit on one cheek, you turn the other cheek, you don't do anything. But nonviolence means fighting back. But you're fighting back with another purpose and with other weapons. Number one, your fight is to win that person over...and that is a fight. That's a struggle, that's much more challenging than fisticuffs."

"Jim, if I were being beaten, what is it that I would be able to do?"

James Lawson: "We said we were going to desegregate downtown Nashville, and our first step was going to desegregate lunch counters and restaurants. That of course was the first Gandhian step; that was the first

step of nonviolence, to research and examine and focus on an issue—choose a target, choose an issue.”

Months before going to the lunch rooms, Lawson begins preparing them.

“A bunch of niggers! Well, look at these eight balls all lined up! Hi there, jungle bunny....He’s so dark he’s making the whole place dark.”

He wants them to have experienced both physical and verbal attacks, and to learn how to resist the impulse to run or fight back.

“Eenie Meenie Miney Moe, catch a nigger by the toe...”

“Now, let’s see what we’ve learned from this as to how we might act nonviolently. What are the basic problems here?”

James Lawson: “You cannot go on a demonstration with 25 people doing whatever they want to do. They have to have a common discipline. And that’s—that a key word for me, that the difficulty with nonviolent people and efforts, is that they don’t recognize the necessity of fierce discipline, and training, and strategizing, and planning, and recruiting, and doing the kinds of things you do to have a movement. That can’t happen spontaneously. It has to be done systematically.”

They stage their first sit-in on a Saturday, when they are sure to be noticed.

Diane Nash: “We spent many, many hours, anticipating some of the opposition. And we knew that that’s one of the things that they would say, we don’t want to sit next to dirty people while we have lunch. And so one of the ways we combated that was by having a dress code.”

John Lewis: “We had been told there was a possibility of being arrested. But we went to the lunch counter; we took our seats. We sat, and we sat, in a very orderly, peaceful fashion.”

They are not surprised when they are refused service.

“I said, ‘I’m sorry, our management does not allow us to serve niggers in here.’”

Store managers quickly close the dining areas, but the students remain until closing time, reading and doing homework. There is no violence, and no one is arrested. The sit-ins make page ten of the Sunday paper. City editor John Seigenthaler remembers the reaction.

John Seigenthaler: “The reaction initially was sort of shock and maybe even some humor. ‘I mean, who do they think they are? What do they think they’re doing?’ We knew it was a news story, but didn’t really know how to cover it.”

Local businesses take a predictable position. They’ll close down before they’ll serve black customers. A week later, the students are back. They provoke curiosity and verbal abuse—but no arrests. Whites still think the sit-ins are a passing fad, hardly a threat to the status quo. On the third Saturday, they are ready to target a total of six stores.

“Let each person now get himself or herself a partner that they will stick with. Now, we don’t want a white person with a negro of the opposite sex. Because we don’t want to fight that battle.”

Bernard Lafayette: “We were told in advance, that day, that they were going to allow the hoodlums to beat us up, and then the policemen would arrest us, so we needed to be prepared to get beaten and arrested. So that was a condition under which we went down.”

James Lawson: “We tried to be certain that our strongest and best leaders were leading each group that went in. We also had fairly disciplined groups go into each of the places that we decided to sit in on that Saturday. We decided we would have a second group ready for each store. Initially, that morning, we had some 600 people ready to be arrested, in fact.”

By now they are well-prepared for contingencies. Each group includes a leader—and observers, who will phone reports back to the church. Observers are carrying telephone numbers for ambulance services, and a pocketful of telephone change. As they enter the stores, the second and third waves of demonstrators stay out of sight, ready to move in when the first group is arrested. As predicted, the police hang back for the first fifteen minutes.

“I went in and asked each and every one of them separately to leave. They didn’t leave, so I instructed the men to place them under arrest. We placed them under arrest. When we cleared the stools, some more colored boys and girls, and white boys and girls got on the seats.”

Diane Nash: “It really surprised the police. They thought they had lowered the boom. And when they turned around and looked and saw a lunch counter once again full of Negro students—you could just see that they kind of looked at each other out of the corners of their eyes as though, ‘Do you see this? What will we do now?’ And there was still another group ready to take their places.”

John Lewis: “We felt so proud and so happy that the things that we had been taught in these workshops, the things that we had learned, the role-playing, the social drama that we had gone through, it was now—we had to live it. And in a sense, I think we felt convinced in ourselves, that we had passed the test.”

You’re in jail. Man, what’s my mother going to say when she hears about that?

Bernard Lafayette: “We had a philosophy—which was the power of nonviolence—and that kind of power we felt was more forceful than all of their police force, all of their lawmakers, and all of their dogs or billy clubs or jails, and that our capacity and willingness to suffer outweighed any power they had.”

Mass arrests are a victory for the students. Reporters realize they are covering a story of national significance.

John Seigenthaler: “I mean it was like being a war correspondent in your own home town. The only thing you knew was the war was on, that the weapon of nonviolence was winning over violence and that this was a historic moment, however it came out. I think there was a sense of history there that we all understood.”

At police headquarters on Monday morning, the students are still behind bars. On principle, they have refused bail. In just 48 hours, their small student movement has inspired thousands. Now the city’s black community has joined in their struggle, organizing, raising money, recruiting lawyers. Alexander Looby is among Nashville’s most prominent black lawyers, and he has organized local lawyers to defend the arrested students. As they come before a judge, their arrests—like Ghandi’s—have dramatized their grievances.

John Lewis: “In the African-American community, there was a great sense of righteous indignation. People couldn’t believe that these young, well-dressed, innocent college students had been arrested and put in jail. They didn’t like it. And the city—African-American population was mobilized in such a fashion, and the movement spread through the city of Nashville like wildfire.”

As the crowds wait to see what the city will do, the mayor speaks to reporters.

“Any one violating the law will be arrested. This must be so.”

By emphasizing law and order, the mayor takes sides with the store owners. In fact, the arrested students have broken no law—and none of the white attackers has been arrested.

James Lawson: “The city and police were ill-prepared for a mass civil disobedience effort. They had anticipated that once the violence took place and the arrests began, our movement would dissipate, would be chased away because that’s the purpose, after all, of doing the violence, that’s the purpose of doing the arresting. It’s hopeful that then whatever this is will vanish and that’s the end of it. That didn’t happen.”

A week later, nothing has changed. As the students return to the lunch counters, the city has only one answer: more arrests. On trial for disorderly conduct, they face a choice: a \$50 fine, or thirty days in the county workhouse. Refusing to pay fines to support a system which oppresses them, they opt for the workhouse.

James Lawson: “We had overloaded the jail. They didn’t have enough food, or supplies, or stuff like that. A lot of people had to work overtime, and so, it was a burden on the system. But that’s what we intended.”

Now in the national spotlight, the movement is deluged with new recruits. Jim Lawson’s workshops expand to meet the demand. Nashville’s churches provide meeting space, telephones, mimeograph machines. Now they must get the message out—far beyond Nashville.

Bernard Lafayette: “We were not simply addressing our immediate opponents. What we were doing was addressing the larger audience, the nation, the world. Because the strategy in nonviolence is that you educate a large number of constituents and win them on your side. In fact even though we as African-Americans were a minority, no change could take place unless you had the sympathy of the majority, if not the active participation.”

The students know that sympathy by itself may not be enough. Taking advantage of the outrage their arrests have provoked, they escalate the conflict. Sit-ins continue, but a new tactic is added: a boycott of the downtown shopping district. Picketers ask customers not to patronize stores whose lunch counters are segregated. The students have created a

momentum, now embraced by the larger community, as black clergy urge their congregations to stay away from the downtown shopping district altogether.

James Lawson: "It allowed for the whole community to be participants in the movement. Because that's one of the things that we, in the nonviolent world always teach, namely, that in the nonviolent movement everyone can be a participant. Children can participate, women can participate, men can participate. Young people, old people. Everyone can do the work."

As the boycott takes hold, the sit-ins and arrests continue. The conflict becomes a seemingly permanent fact of life in the downtown shopping district. Picketing and boycotting provoke a racist backlash. But the counter-demonstrations backfire. Frightened white people begin avoiding the downtown area—unwittingly joining the boycott. A Fisk University economist calculates that some downtown stores have lost up to forty percent of their business. As Easter approaches, the usual surge of spring buying never happens. Among blacks, the boycott is estimated at ninety-eight percent.

Will Campbell: "That was a powerful message sent to the white community, that, you know, it's one thing to deal with these students on a Saturday-to-Saturday basis, and lock them up, and let them get bailed out, and we'll try them and sentence them to fifty dollar fines, and that sort of thing. But it was another thing when you go down there and there's nobody on the street."

At Easter, the counters are still segregated, but the sit-ins have put civil rights on the national agenda as never before.

"For the past several months, a new strategy to end racial segregation has been spreading through the South."

On Easter Sunday, NBC's Meet The Press looks at nonviolent resistance. The moderator suggests that boycotts might be better than sit-ins and arrests.

"Dr. King, wouldn't you be on stronger ground, though, if you refused to buy at those stores, and if you called upon the white people of the country to follow you because of both your moral and your legal right not to buy?" "I think Mr. Spivak, sometimes it is necessary to dramatize an issue because many people are not aware of what is happening. And I think the sit-ins serve to dramatize the indignities and injustices and the dissatisfaction of the Negro with the whole system of segregation."

Diane Nash: "We had a meeting planned for 6am. I was in the dormitory getting dressed. And I heard this big boom. I soon learned that Attorney Z. Alexander Looby's home had been bombed."

James Lawson: "It, of course, was the effort of the enemy to scare us off. Violence has a very simple dynamic. I make you suffer more than I suffer. I make you suffer until you cry uncle. And you surrender. That's—that's what a war is. It's violence. The difference with nonviolence is we don't want to beat the opponent up. We don't think that does any good."

Looby and his wife are uninjured. But as Lawson has taught his students, violence can backfire. The bombing has shocked the city, and given the students a strategic opportunity. They send a telegram to the mayor, demanding a meeting—and they organize a silent march, from the campus to city hall. They begin with 1500 marchers. Along the way, their number doubles. Mayor Ben West is waiting for them. West gets into an argument with a black minister, but then Diane Nash steps forward with some very direct questions.

"I asked the mayor, 'First of all, Mayor West, do you feel that it's wrong to discriminate against a person solely on the basis of his race or color?'" "I tried as best I could to answer it frankly and honestly. That I could not agree

that it was morally right for someone to sell them merchandise and refuse them service, and I had to answer it just exactly that way.”

Nash goes on to ask the mayor whether he feels the lunch counters should be desegregated. He answers....”yes.”

John Seigenthaler: “It was the first major change in the attitudes of the city. Nashville began to desegregate its public institutions and its department stores that day. It took three, four years before theaters, restaurants, all public conveyances were desegregated. But, with Ben West’s declaration, “No, it’s not right,” the process of change began.”

The downtown retailers now tell the students privately: they want to desegregate. The students devise a plan.

James Lawson: “We suggested to them, which was a great relief to them, that there would be no announcement that the demonstrations had ended. There would be no announcements that black people were being served. No announcements, no press, no police.”

John Lewis: “Over a two-weeks period, there would be a, what they call a ‘trial basis,’ where couples would go to a certain restaurant and eat, and there would be white observers, or there would be whites sitting nearby. It was all planned, and it worked very very well, without any incident.”

A movement that began in the basement of a small church in September has desegregated the downtown lunch rooms by spring. They go on to desegregate other restaurants and public facilities—showing how to remove business support for segregation by making it costly and controversial. It’s a weapon that will prove decisive as the civil rights movement gains momentum.

Bernard Lafayette: “We realized that we had the resources, both the spiritual resources as well as the psychological skills, to make a difference in other places as well. We understood how to organize the community. We

understood how to conduct a demonstration. We understood how to negotiate. We understand how to deal with the media. We were warriors in that sense. We had been prepared. This was like a nonviolent academy, equivalent to West Point.”

For the rest of the decade, they carry what they’ve learned, farther south and across the country. Reflecting on what they had achieved, one of Nashville’s students wrote: “You cannot wait for someone else to do it. You cannot wait for the government to do it. You must make it happen, through your own efforts and action and vision.”

The Role of Leaders and Followers

Voices from the Field: Chapter 3

Daryn Cambridge:

People are the power behind nonviolent movements—not guns, bombs, or tanks—but people. Recruiting individuals and groups into a nonviolent struggle and finding ways for them to contribute is just one of the many roles movement leaders play. For over 30 years, Björn Kunter has put himself at the center of nonviolent movements throughout Europe. As a leading activist, he has come to recognize what it takes to mobilize individuals into action.

Björn Kunter:

“The thing about activism is that people tend to see these guys running down the street holding up posters or whatever, and they cannot connect to this. What I think, activism has a lot to do with growing into it. So there are people who just got approached somehow and they sign a petition. For me, it was one of the most interesting things to go out on the street and have people signing petitions—not because I thought that the petition would now be ‘if we just write a letter to the government they will give us what we want’—but it’s a way to get people involved. You meet people at the doorsteps, you have them sign, you get them to think about it and to take a stand, and then you maybe make a meeting and there’s a person coming to it, and you say, ‘Okay, I’ve seen their face before, when they went to sign something.’ And then they go to the meeting and you get them to talk afterwards, and they start doing just very little things or maybe they organize a vigil or a stand, an informational stand, and I know that for a lot of these people this is a huge thing to get up to the public and say, ‘Okay, this is my opinion.’”

As people grow into a movement, leaders offer supporters and allies opportunities to become more involved, invested, and active. In 2000,

Prakash Kafle helped lead the Kamaiya movement in Nepal, which brought an end to the legal practice of forced and bonded labor in that country. The success of this movement and others like it rely on empowering more and more individuals to take on leadership roles and to communicate the movement's message for change.

Prakash Kafle:

“In this 2000 movement—the Kamaiya movement—I realized that was an injustice, because those were poor bonded laborers, they were not getting money, they were not getting standard wage or minimum wage set aside by the government. So I realized that this is an injustice, and this is not rational, and so we have to fight for this. And, at that time, I was also working on implementing some of the projects with them, like I managed a project that supported their children—the bonded laborers’ children—for schooling, for education. But we realized that these are structural injustices, and we provided them education, they studied and we also noticed that one day, it’s futile—they again become the bonded laborers. So there’s a structural sort of thing that we cannot do as individuals, that we cannot do as projects. So we realized that these are the injustices, these are inequalities of the citizens, we realized these things and I jumped into the movement. And another really important thing that we did in this movement, was communicating—communicating the plan, communicating the [IB], communicating where to gather or what to do by mobilizing very active front-line leaders. And the next thing is that one of the practical things that we used as activists in this 2000 Kamaiya movement was to hold regular meetings with different destabilizers. And that was basically a true nonviolent peaceful movement, notifying police and the administration ‘Look, this is our movement, we are fighting for these people, we are going to do this, this, and this—please help us. Please do not stop us. This is our right, we are doing the rallying, we will be doing sit-ins.’ So these are the types of tactics we used.”

As movements begin to grow, as more leaders are developed, and more people are mobilized, the momentum of change becomes palpable. In 2004, at the age of 16, Polina Beliakova experienced this momentum of

change first hand and was compelled to participate in Ukraine's Orange Revolution.

Polina Beliakova:

“At some point, when a movement takes more space in media and more space in your city, you just can't stay at home, it's a thing. I remember my emotion, I was really young, but I understood that staying at home, it's much more difficult than being on the square. Even though the situation was uncertain and I didn't know what to expect, when you come to and see all those people who are standing for the same reasons, you feel affiliated, you feel that you belong to this. And, you feel power, power of which you don't need money, you don't need relatives, you don't need anyone. You have a power because you are a human being and you can be better, and after that, you have to be better. And interviewing people who participated in Euromaidan, I ask them exactly the same question because I knew that some of them came to the square at four o'clock in the morning when riot police were suppressing the movement, and I'd ask them: 'Excuse me, but you are tiny girls and involved in artistic movement, so why did you come when riot police were dispersing the protest?' And they told me, 'We just couldn't watch the online stream. It was so terrifying, we were so scared, so we decided to be there with our people and not at home watching this online.'”

Learning Objectives

As an introduction to this chapter, this short documentary features activists and organizers sharing their stories around leadership, mobilization, and participation in nonviolent movements. As you watch, please consider the following questions:

- What role do leaders play in nonviolent movements?
- How and why do people join movements?
- How do leaders and followers rely on one another?

Movement Formation

Campaign vs. Movement

Erin Mazursky:

A campaign is a series of actions that are brought together by a common narrative and one tangible goal. So, [for example], you are passing a policy or a law; you are electing a new leader; you are unseating another leader. A movement has a bit more of a long-term gain. You are looking at something like equality and defining what that means. So, [for example], equal rights—in terms of equal protection under the law, equal recognition within your society and your culture—but it's a little bit longer term and not defined by any one win. And so, whereas a campaign is brought together by a series of actions and smaller tangible wins, a movements is made up of a bunch of campaigns.

The other thing is important about a movement is that it's not just about policy change or legal change. I think we oftentimes look at those changes as the mark of a successful movement, but when you really look at what led to those policy changes of those legal changes, you had to create a culture change where the public's mind actually shifted towards the issue that you are working on. You are experiencing behavioral changes—people's language and relationship to each other actually change. And you are looking at a complete change in the mechanism in which society interacts around that specific issue. So, [for example], the way you communicate, the way that your transportation is set up, the way that a health system is set up. So those systems themselves change the overall system in which the injustice was allowed to exist.

“Winning” from a campaign perspective is a tangible win, where you can point to it and say “Yes, it was this, and today, it's that.” A movement [win] is a bit broader that encompasses policy, culture behavior and systems. That's what makes movements so effective: they are keeping closed

spaces open by practicing democracy, even when democracy isn't present procedurally.

In simple terms, [the difference between changing the rules and changing the game is] basically the difference between putting a new roof on a house or completely resetting the foundation. Changing the rules of the game is putting a new roof on the house and completely changing the game itself is creating a new foundation. And, this relates to society as a whole because when you look at the injustices that activists around the world are fighting against, what they are really fighting against isn't just to change one rule or one policy or to adapt—you are actually looking for systematic change in a way that makes that systematically makes the injustice that's currently happening impossible to continue to exist. So, that's really what you are working towards as an activist.

The “end game” of a movement is twofold. One is, obviously, you start a grand strategic objective—what you're ultimately trying to achieve. So, in the Indian independence movement, [the objective] was independence and democracy; in the anti-apartheid movement, [the objective was the] end of apartheid. But beyond that, beyond those wins, what you're actually trying to create, as we talked about, are more democratic societies. And so, even if you're operating within a dictatorship, you are creating the cohesion and the fabric of democracy by creating relationships and commitment and that [commitment] can continue to grow. So, even if you accomplish victory in your movement, people now know how to create change, how to activate, how to have a voice, and how to relate to one another within a community.

So, at the end of the day, the end game of a movement is obviously victory, but the means to an end which is actually an end in and of itself: creating more cohesive active communities that can continue to push for change even after that large goal has been accomplished.



A campaign is a series of actions united through a common narrative and one tangible goal. A movement is often conducted over the long-term and may require a number of campaigns to achieve a larger goal.

Poll: In your opinion, does the structure of a nonviolent movement influence its chances of success?

- ☐ Yes. I feel that a decentralized movement structure - with no clear leader or leadership - has the best chances of success.
- ☐ Yes. I feel that a centralized movement structure - with a clear leader or leadership - has the best chances of success.
- ☐ No. I feel that the structure of a movement has little or no impact on the chances of its success.
- ☐ I am not sure

Does a Movement's Structure Influence Its Success?

Erica Chenoweth:

Most of the research on movement's structure and organization has been done in the field of violent insurgency, where the conventional wisdom is that decentralized movements tend to be more resilient to repression and tend to be more nimble and dynamic and flexible when it comes to their tactics.

Now, my sense is that this insight has been imported by lots of people into the field of nonviolent action as a way that nonviolent movements themselves can also remain resilient to repression, be more tactically

nimble, and more creative in a sense. I'm not so sure that that is a generalizable fact. In NAVCO 2.0, we actually have a variable that identifies whether a movement has a more centralized leadership structure or whether it's a more decentralized leadership structure. When we do very simple correlations between that variable and whether a campaign succeeded or not, we actually find that the more centralized or hierarchical movements had tended to be more successful in the long term.

My guess about why that's the case for nonviolent campaigns is that nonviolent campaigns need to maintain a level of discipline that is extremely difficult to maintain, especially as the movement grows in size, because what happens is that even if that movement is driven mostly by high risk individuals of the outset—who know the strategic importance of nonviolent discipline—over time, the more people that join the campaign, the less likely it is that they will all share the commitment to and the understanding of this strategic dynamics of nonviolent action. If a campaign has some kind of centralized leadership structure—where they can get the word out, they can organize trainings, and they can get these volunteers on the same page—they're much less likely to devolve into these movement dynamics that we often see, where early joiners kind of know the vision and later joiners come and disunity results, and there are people using violent fights and other things.

If the movement is decentralized, you're usually going to see the latter. But, if the movement is centralized, then you have a better chance of seeing a movement that is able to discipline the members in ways that allow them to maintain that unity. So this is my hypothesis. It's kind of untested and it's a simple correlation at this point, but my sense is that if you look around the world at a lot of decentralized movements today, you see them having these problems, whereas the more centralized ones—like it or not—are able to sort of overcome a lot of those collective action difficulties.

Now, I don't think that power needs to be concentrated in a single person. I'm not a subscriber to the belief that movements need a single charismatic leader in order to succeed, but I do think that movements need leadership in order to succeed. And if that's in the form of a consensus-based kind of

coalition of leaders or if it's part of a counsel or whatever it is, the more vision and strategic direction that can be shared widely across participants, the more likely that campaign is to stay the course.



“...To strive for a structureless group is as useful, and as deceptive, as to aim at an ‘objective’ news story, ‘value-free’ social science, or a ‘free’ economy.”

– Jo Freeman –

Movement Formation Part 2

Leadership Structure and Commitment Curve

Erin Mazursky:

Different movements set up their leadership structures really differently. Some are more centralized; some are decentralized, but most movements tend to have some structures in common. One is that there's usually a core group of leaders helping to determine strategy on some leadership or forum. Beyond those core leaders, there are key leaders—people who are mostly involved, but may not be involved in all of the day-to-day. And then there's active allies—people who take action, who are recruited, who are really in the movement. And then, there are people who are allies [that] may take action sometimes, may just support your cause theoretically, but only really like things on Facebook.

Really, the differentiation between all of these different layers, no matter how you set them up, is commitment. Commitment tends to increase over time. You usually have to start with a really committed core group of people who understand each other, who are developing strategy, but over time, you're trying to bring more and more people into the movement through meaningful action. And so, a commitment curve helps to develop the low-barrier actions—things that people can do without a lot of time and commitment and things that people can do with a little bit of time and commitment. The idea is that different people are going to enter your movement in different ways. So some people may just come to an event for the first time and learn about what you're doing. Some people may read an article online and hear about what you're doing.

So, as movement leaders and organizers, what we want to do is create as many on-ramps into the movement as possible—in terms of different time commitments and different levels of commitment. So, someone may want to donate a lot of money—which is kind of a high level of commitment, but it's a low level of time.

So, you want to think about time and commitment in terms of your ladder of engagement. And we call it sort of a ladder or an engagement curve, because it's really about pushing people up the ladder to become more and more committed. The idea is that 90% of the people that you bring into the movement are really going to just take low-time, low-commitment actions, but it's really important that they're there, because nine percent of the people that you then recruit are actually going to become more committed over time and take slightly higher actions—maybe they'll make videos for you or create content.

And then there's the top one percent—and that's the people who are leading, who are the committed core, who are hosting events, who are coordinating things. The idea is that the more people you have in the 90%, obviously, the more people you're going to have in the nine percent, and the more people you're going to have in the one percent. So that's really how you're continuously building more and more leaders by recognizing that commitment is going to vary amongst your movement which is why you need more than just a few ways to engage with what you're doing.



PRACTICAL TIP

Movement leaders should create as many “on-ramps” into the movement as possible, in terms of time and commitment.

Movement Formation

Maciej Bartkowski:

In 2008, Eleanor Marchant and Arch Puddington wrote a study, “Enabling Environments For Civic Movements and The Dynamics of Democratic Transitions” that was published by Freedom House. They looked at the

emergence of nonviolent movements in 37 countries since 1970 and determined that factors such as regime type, level of economic development, as well as ethnic and religious polarization, played no role in the formation and eventual success of nonviolent resistance. A confirmation of this data can be also found in a more recent study by Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan in the book *Why Civil Resistance Works*, where the authors found no correlation between the emergence and success of nonviolent movements and external conditions.

These studies suggest that instead of looking at structures, conditions, and external environments to account for movements' emergence, one needs to consider the skills and agency of ordinary people to understand better why and how civil resistance movements form. In my own analysis of the movement formation, I identify three phases that constitute the rise of mass-based nonviolent rebellion: rejection phase, defiance phase, and resistance phase.

The emergence of a movement usually starts from the rejection of the status quo that, in the minds of the oppressed, becomes neither permanent nor legitimate. Rejection is not necessarily an equivalent of an engagement in an action that would challenge openly and direct the existing oppressive structures. The rejection is a subtle form of rebellion that would usually begin in the minds of the selected few, but spread eventually among many people. It's during that time that people begin realizing that they are not only passive victims of an injustice, but it might be because of their own actions or inactions that this injustice exists in the first place. Consequently, the realization that people themselves are part of the problem moves them closer to another psychological milestone: if we are part of the problem, part of the existing injustice, perhaps we can be part of the solution to eliminate that injustice. For that to happen, however, we have to come together and organize.

Rejection of the status quo would often occur as a result of various seemingly apolitical and not directly threatening to the regime actions. This could be, for example, a delivery of economic, social, health or sanitation services, or general education and politicization that might be happening in

more intimate places like homes or churches but also university campuses, reading rooms, sport clubs, or other informal social networks. As a result, people gain greater awareness about the nature of injustice, greater sensitivity and ability to identify, describe and discuss them. They begin building extended networks of informal contacts, often through relatively independent civic or economic institutions that might look innocently apolitical.

Eventually, these seemingly apolitical activities can constitute proto-political actions. The welfare associations established by the indigenous activists in colonial Zambia at the beginning of the 20th century didn't challenge the British colonial authorities, but were nevertheless gradually politicizing black Africans, raising their political awareness about the discriminatory policies of the white Europeans, and facilitated building grassroots civic institutions that helped groom new indigenous political activists. These activists later organized ordinary Zambians in mass-based noncooperation campaigns and other direct actions against the British colonial rule, ultimately weakening and defeating it.

After the rejection comes defiance. It's represented by individual or collective resort to the use of indirect, small, and everyday acts of defiance. These acts are not devised to bring down the oppressive system, but they gradually hollow it out of its remaining legitimacy, make the dissent more visible, common, and even fashionable. These actions of defiance embolden others to voice their criticism and join defiant groups. Defiance can be represented by individual or group refusal to participate in national holidays that the regime wants people to celebrate, or wearing easily identifiable symbols of the informal opposition, or playing banned music, reciting forbidden poetry, reading and passing on banned literature, or organizing street theater or satirical sketches with anti-regime overtones.

Open defiance remains limited in terms of a number of participants and still has little or no organizational infrastructure. It relies on indirect type of nonviolent action, often symbolic and infused with a cultural meaning recognized and identified by the indigenous community. In contrast to the rejection phase, a defiance phase has sharper political edges of the

growing opposition and clearer political messages. Scattered defiant groups are often inspired and led by a small group of early dissidents who would set up ground rules for carrying out the defiance. These dissidents would identify parameters for waging struggle nonviolently, including a justification, why violence against or a dialogue with the authoritarian regime don't work and why nonviolent actions are most effective in forcing the authorities to relent. The leading dissidents would also define ultimate goals of the struggle, often prior to the emergence of a fully-fledged civil resistance movement. They would, for example, state that the long-term goal of their defiance is free and pluralistic society with accountable and electable government. They could then make an explicit link between these objectives and nonviolent means that are required to achieve them.

Both rejection and defiance phases usually are part of a protracted, often intergenerational, long struggle. An could be the Palestinian nonviolent resistance against the British in the 19th century and against the Jewish settlers and Israeli state in the 20th and 21st centuries or the Polish nonviolent resistance of the second half of the 19th century—both cases are described in my edited book *Recovering Nonviolent History*. Palestinian and Polish resistance began from the rejection of the status quo—for example, colonization in the Palestinian case and partitions in the Polish case—and turned into nonviolent defiance through numerous smaller acts of disobedience and noncooperation that often followed failed violent uprisings and were carried out under severe denationalization, deculturalization and punitive social and economic policies of the powerful foreign occupiers.

With the growing awareness, boldness, and spread of the solidarity networks across various segments of the society, the rejection and defiance are consequently augmented by more open and direct forms of nonviolent confrontation: a mass-based, civilian resistance. This is illustrated in the form of widespread demonstrations, protests and collective withdrawal of cooperation, including boycotts, strikes, sit-ins, occupations that are strategically sequences and spread out.

The resistance phase of nonviolent movement is usually more intensive and more confrontational than the earlier phases of rejection and defiance. It also involves masses of people in an open nonviolent contention that often facilitates gradual or mass and sudden defections of bureaucrats and members of the security forces from the ruling system. A sophisticated support network of parallel organizations sustains the resistance. The resistance often crisscrosses ethnic, religious and socio-economic classes, promoting mutual-aid assistance to oppressed and solidarity among different social groups. A quiet rejection and limited dissent now becomes a fully-fledged political resistance movement with millions mobilized and engaged in waging both indirect and direct forms of nonviolent actions. Resistance is, in a way, a culmination of the struggle and has thus a shorter time frame, months, weeks or even days—in contrast to the rejection and defiance that might take decades or centuries.

The progression from rejection to defiance to resistance may not necessarily be linear. These different phases of movement emergence might overlap or be even interjected by violence, or some phases might take longer to mature than others, and regression is also possible. Still, there is a certain logic behind the rise of a genuinely mass-based nonviolent movement that is ultimately successful. Such movement is seldom spontaneous and is more organized than not, growing out of a psychological liberation illustrated by the rejection of the status quo, moving toward more politicized but still limited in size and organization forms of defiance, ending on a mass-based, densely-networked resistance of a significant part of the society.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Book: Small Acts of Resistance: How Courage, Tenacity, and Ingenuity Can Change the World](#)

Big changes often start with acts that looked pointless at the time: small acts of resistance, bold acts of defiance, subtle acts of subversion, even witty acts of disobedience. *Small Acts of Resistance* celebrates the inspiring ingenuity and awe-inspiring courage of the human spirit and pays tribute to those who have been standing up to say “no”. Telling the stories of more than eighty acts of resistance, spanning the world and the 20th and 21st centuries, this book pays homage to the groups and individuals that treat the impossible as the possibility that just hasn’t happened yet.

Leadership Principles

What Does It Mean to be a Movement Leader?

Erin Mazursky:

When we think of successful movements, I think we often think of the leaders who lead them. Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Aung San Suu Kyi: these are all leaders that are kind of the figureheads of a lot of different movements. But the truth is that successful movements are made up of a lot of leaders. In fact, all successful movements have been able to cultivate hundreds and hundreds—if not thousands—of leaders throughout their movement to lead in various ways.

So, what are we really talking about if we're not just talking about someone who's born to lead? We're talking about someone who is egoless: someone who leaves their ego at the door, who's not concerned about being the main figurehead of the movement, who is really worried about bringing people together.

We're also talking about someone who is resourceful: someone who sees resources in places that most people don't see. Movements oftentimes operate with very few funds and yet manage to succeed because people are using resources really effectively. They're using people skills; they're looking at businesses; they're asking people for space to use. It all comes from looking at the resources all around you and recognizing that you have more than the eye usually perceives.

The third thing is that leaders lead by example. So it's not the "Do what I say, not what I do" [approach]. It's that leaders embody exactly what they want everyone else in the movement to do in a lot of ways.

So, let's talk about the definition of leadership. This comes from the scholar Marshall Ganz, and I think that this is the perfect embodiment of the way that movements are successful and perpetuate over time. So, the definition of leadership, when it comes to movement building, is this: that leadership

is about taking responsibility to enable others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty. And this is, if you learn nothing else, this is one of the most important concepts I think anyone can learn about successful movement building. Within it, it means that leadership is not just a skill that you're born with, but it's a practice. It's something that you get better and better at and that many, many different people can work at.

So, there's four different elements to this definition, and let's just take it step by step. The first step is taking responsibility. You're already taking responsibility by watching this video, most likely. You recognize that injustice exists in the world and that you want to do something about it. You're taking responsibility for your role in the world, for being a part of a society where injustices exist. And, as a leader, you're helping other people take that responsibility as well, helping other people see the injustices that they may not see all around them—or even people who see the injustices but don't necessarily see the solutions. So, taking responsibility is a really key part. And, oftentimes it's easy to just pretend like the problem doesn't exist or pretend like you don't have any responsibility or can't do anything about it. But leadership is about taking that responsibility—even when you see things that you don't like or agree with about your community or your society.

The second big thing—and this cannot be emphasized enough—is about enabling others. The ethic of leadership is about bringing people together. It's about enabling other people to see their own agency, to see in their own ability to lead in the movements that you are a part of. And so, this is how movements get bigger and bigger. It's that so many people are enabled to take action. And so, as a leader, you're creating those pathways for people to be able to work with you, act with you. The ethic of enabling and bringing people together is so important.

The third piece of this is achieving purpose. As a leader, oftentimes, we have to create the purpose that we're fighting for. It's not always clear which injustice we're fighting or the problem isn't clearly defined within a society. So, as a leader, you're helping to clearly define the problem that you're working to solve. Achieving purpose is also about creating unity

within your group. So if everyone cares about something or just bettering the society, there's no clear purpose to that. You want to get specific; you want to say, "We're working for women's equality," or, "We're working for the right to our land," or, "We're working to end climate change." These are all things that you have to define and create a purpose around and a personal connection for the people around you, because a lot of people don't necessarily see themselves as part of the solution.

The fourth piece of the definition of leadership is: "in the face of uncertainty." When you're leading a movement or you're part of a movement, it's not certain whether you're going to win or not. The uncertainty is sort of inherent to the work that you're doing. If it were [certain] or guaranteed, then most people would do it. And so, part of being a leader is having the moral courage to stand up and say [that] things can be different. But that takes a lot of uncertainty and a lot of time when you're not sure that you're going to win—or that you're putting a lot of risk on the line and you're asking other people to do the same. And so uncertainty is key to any kind of movement, because it may take years or even decades to accomplish what you set out to do.



"Leadership is enabling others to achieve a purpose in the face of uncertainty."

-Marshall Ganz –

Courageous Leadership

Arthur Romano:

Challenging injustice and bringing about larger social change often requires courageous leadership. Now when you think about nonviolent movements and courageous leadership what's the first thing that comes to mind? Perhaps you envision Gandhi walking with thousands of other courageous people to the sea to harvest salt in defiance of British colonial rule—or Aung San Suu Kyi under house arrest for decades persistent in her calls for democratic change and refusing to cave into the military junta—or maybe you think about Dr. Martin Luther King on the steps of the Lincoln memorial, every word seemingly perfectly chosen as he made a call for an end to legal segregation in America and challenged his country to do the difficult work of dismantling white supremacy.

The first point I want to make about courageous leadership is that courageous people are not born courageous. They become courageous, and that change is often an incremental process. So, let's take Gandhi for example. His biographers note that he was an ordinary child. What does this mean in this case? It means that he was scared of the dark, scared of snakes, and used to run home on his lunch break for fear of being made fun of or bullied. This from the same person that some decades later challenged the British empire, and through active resistance worked with thousands of other people to end colonial rule in India. Imagine that had you asked Gandhi or Dr. Martin Luther King or Aung San Suu Kyi to try to think about what they could accomplish in their lifetimes when they were younger, they would have found it difficult to imagine what they were able to do. And part of the reason they were able to accomplish so much is because they did so in a larger movement with others.

This brings me to my second point. Courageous action can be taught, and successful movements most often require broad participation, which means engaging more than a narrow elite of people to be in leadership positions. What we learn from movements around the world is that nonviolence education and training supports people in engaging in strategic action.

Even in the face of great risk, the practical skills needed to engage in community building work, organizing, protest actions, are taught and they are most often taught outside of the spaces of schools and universities. Instead what we find in movements is that community education takes place often in people's living rooms or in organizations' basements as they provide spaces for people to learn about the movements, its goals, the tactics and strategies to achieve those goals.

But there's something else that happens in these spaces as well, beyond learning the technical skills of civil resistance and leadership. People come to understand that they're not alone, that they're grappling with some of the same concerns, issues and hopes that others are. One of the most common mistakes in analyzing social movement leadership is the understanding that leadership is a quality of individuals in isolation. In fact, it is larger movements and that context of support and training and development and growth that make it possible for people in many cases to be able to stand up to an unjust system, to face the risks of possible imprisonment or even death, and to work together to implement the changes that they're seeking.

In a broad movement, courageous leadership is supported by developing relationships with people across lines of difference in a common struggle for change. Now, this doesn't mean that there are not disagreements in movements. In fact, that's guaranteed, but courageous action—and, for that matter, movement success—is made more likely by building solidarity in the face of risk.

So, what are some of the key qualities of courageous leadership? Well, it often takes a willingness to experiment and to be adaptive. So, courageous leaders don't always know what the next step is going to be, but they have a sense of their principles and strategies that have been used and have worked in the past, and they apply those to often emerging and changing new context.

Courageous leadership often involves taking risks. For many people, the first thing they think of with courageous leadership in terms of nonviolent

social movements are the physical risks: the risk of being imprisoned, the risk of possible death, the risk of being beaten at the hands of a repressive state. In the context of civil resistance, these risks are real and cannot be taken lightly. In fact, the ability to distinguish between careless actions that risk physical harm and those that are worth taking to achieve a goal is a critical component of nonviolent leadership. On the other hand, there are additional risks which are often overlooked. The risk of exclusion, humiliation or alienation with your peers, your family, or in your larger social context. This can often also mean crossing established social behavior, and that social behavior is not only enforced by the state or the military but it's also reinforced through the behavior of everyday people.

On the other hand, people may be socially separated or segregated in a society, and those that reach out across lines of difference they run the risk of being excluded or considered a traitor for reaching out to others. This element of nonviolent social movements—building relationships across lines of difference—takes courage. Take the example of Leymah Gbowee and the Women's Peace Movement in Liberia. There they worked to bring communities, both of Christian and Muslim women, together and pushed for Charles Taylor to be removed from power. Involving people that have been largely excluded from the political sphere and working together with communities that have been separated for decades can create an important shift in power and a tipping point for nonviolent movements.

What limits courageous action? Well, there are numerous factors and it depends on the context. Oftentimes a person, especially living in a repressive context where they fear the authorities or are the persistent witness of violence, can have a sense that they can't make a difference—that the injustice they're experiencing has been happening for a very, very long time. A sense of powerlessness in the face of a system that commands so much authority and power in their lives.

Another persistent problem that people may face in nonviolent movements is a fear of rejection or exclusion with family, friends or community members. By addressing a set of issues or standing up for freedom, they may then be putting others at risk or risk the relationships that are closest

to them. Additionally, the bystander effect often limits people's choice to take courageous action, a sense on the part of people that others may be acting or choose to act and they themselves choose not to take action.

Finally, a fear of authority is a powerful inhibitor to create just leadership and action. The pressure of authority to obey destructive orders that conflict with a person's moral principles can be pervasive. And the power of authority to pressure individuals to commit acts which they would not carry out on their own initiative can push people away from movements and from taking creative action.

So, there's a paradox to courageous leadership. On the one hand, courageous leadership requires that we be fairly certain of what will happen or at least grounded in the kinds of principles, strategies and tactics that can work in a struggle for justice.

To act courageously, then, requires then we be able to adapt and to change, and so this forms part of the paradox of courageous leadership, especially in nonviolent social movements. Oftentimes, as a leader, we are putting forward a certain sense of the future, a powerful idea of what can be or of the tactics and strategies that need to be used, and on the other hand we often have doubts and must adapt and change.

Guest Experts Podcast

[Dr. Arthur Romano](#), [Kazu Haga](#), [Elavie Ndura](#) and [Nadine Bloch](#) discuss nonviolence knowledge and tools.

Nonviolence Knowledge and Tools that can be Taught

Kazu Haga:

You know, every young person, every child is already very familiar with conflict, right. Conflict is something that we all experience and I think part of what we teach in our training is the idea that conflict is not a bad thing. Conflict itself is completely neutral, and we often associate conflict with

things like yelling and arguing and fighting, but those things aren't conflicts, they are things that happen when you mismanage a conflict. And so a lot of the training that we do is, including with young people, is about identifying conflict and really understanding the nature of it. And learning to respond to it in ways that instead of ending and yelling and arguing ends in a lesson learned or a strengthened relationship, and a lot of that happens through role plays.

A lot of that happens by analyzing the conflicts that they've been through just in their lives that day. And also just trying to figure out just trying to have real conversations about the larger social conflicts that they're dealing with everyday, whether it's violence in the community or violence from the state and the police department, and just figuring out effective ways to deal with those on a larger structural level.

Arthur, what do you think are some of the specific knowledge skills of non-violence?

Arthur Romano:

I think, you know, there's a few different levels that come to mind right away. There are skills, and because we talked about the theatre piece or the role plays and I know that Nadin does a lot of this work too where we can, in an interpersonal level or on a community level, have create situations of real conflict that are happening in the community and have opportunities to try to intervene and try to shift that dynamic. So there we take stories that are happening right now. So, you know, the old stories, the listener said, you know, the old stories could ... can sometimes be boring, and we can work with the stories right now to think about how in that same situation, we might respond differently.

Augusto Boal who created this body of work, theater of the oppressed called that kind of work and listeners will find a lot on Augusto Boal online. That way of responding rehearsal for life where we are rehearsing different ways of interacting when there's really difficult situations. In the kingy and non-violence, there's six principles of non-violence. So principles are not exactly like skills, but they're a kind of a mental skill in how we orient

ourselves and how we think about something. So like that, the example of that principle I mentioned before, non-violence is a way of life for courageous people. The principle doesn't tell you what to do, and similarly, even when you're doing role plays, and you're experimenting there's, you know, the response is always going to be dependent on what's going on in the moment.

So a lot of this is the practice piece so you can feel it in your body so you can practice, coordinate and work with others like when you're doing direct action training, and also is this piece around the analysis. So in other words, we couldn't have just like a non-violence robot that had these formulas and algorithms of these skills, and could just ... we could just feed it into a situation and it would just automatically know how to respond. That analysis and how where we ... and how we see creative possibility is going to be really important. So just one piece and maybe this is me as an academic in defense of the boring old stories. Those stories then provide some of the foundations that should, I think, they become boring when we don't ask the question, "Well, what does that have to do with today?"

So if we think about Gandhi's spinning wheel. Gandhi wasn't doing ... asking people across India to spin their own clothing because he thought it was cool and hip to wear organic threads and it would get him credibility in his community or he'd save a few bucks. Gandhi said it was the sound of a million spinning wheels that would send ... it would be either sweet music of a million spinning wheels that would send the British home. He knew that if people were doing it at the village level across India that it would break the back of the British industrial grip on that form of production.

And so I think the way we make that story, not boring, is returned to ourselves today at a time where, you know, we're facing a huge ecological crisis or we're facing degradation of entire groups of people. And we ask, what is the spinning wheel for today? What's the thing that a million people or 10 million people can do right out of their home that if they do it in unison, will have the political power to make people listen or to alter the political landscape? I think that's how we keep it from being boring if we

have to ask the question when we tell the story. Well, what can we learn about that for today?

Kazu Haga:

Spinning wheel, I like that. Nadine what about you, the specific knowledge and skills that you have found kind of integral in the training that you've conducted and facilitated?

Nadine Bloch:

So, like I work in somewhat traditional settings and non-traditional settings with youth as young as third grade, which in the United States that's eight years old, all the way up to people who are 80, still young at heart. And I work locally with a group called the Young Activist club and just a moment about them. There are a group of kids that came together who wanted to do something about climate, but wanted to make it relevant to their own life, as Arthur said. So the work that they decided to do is about getting rid of polystyrene, toxic Styrofoam trays in their schools, because not only was it bad for the climate, it was bad for their health.

And I would report that they've had success banning the Styrofoam trays at Takoma park, and we just banned it in Montgomery County and those of you in the District of Columbia know we banned it in the district and New York also banned it very recently. And of course, the West Coast is ahead of us, but all that is to say that they respond really specifically to making it like anyone really, you know, what's in it for me? How does it relate to my real life? There are specific tools around getting a group to function better that are particularly useful generating group agreements within the group that you work with, from the group ... of the group and for the group, doing exercises that help them understand themselves, self-knowledge, you know, and how that affects the group's functioning.

As was mentioned, it's an art not a science, but stories of where things work effectively. Storytelling is, if you're a good storyteller, it is extraordinarily effective for people and getting the kids to tell their own stories, and share stories about other youth is really effective. I personally

do love interactive things. I very rarely have people sitting down in the situations where I find myself facilitating. So, updated role plays like short, at half a line exercises or stop action role plays where you run things for a very brief amount of time because, in reality, the youth today have really short attention span even shorter attention spans than we had.

When I ... when I was in youth I knew because of the devices, and if you can harness the devices and some of this work, do online games, utilize social media in posting things or transmitting information, rather than excluding it from the work that we do. It actually broadens the impact in the young circles that we work in. So I'll stop there.

Kazu Haga:

And what about you? What do you consider to be some of the key knowledge and skills of non-violence?

Elavie Ndura:

Well, this is particularly in the African Burundian context where for the past several years that we've been trying to work with youth. I noticed that one of the most important pieces of knowledge they need and lack often is the knowledge of alternatives to violence. When youth and when people don't have any knowledge of alternatives for addressing issues in their communities, there is nothing they can do. So, and this is a serious thing, because we cannot assume that they ... everybody knows where instead of taking a machete, which may cause this, you know, additional problems, maybe I can do this. They don't ... they need to know alternatives.

Skills that I also have realized we need to work on more it's actually simple collaboration, working together to achieve the same goal. And we know that even here in the United States we are often challenged by our tendency to look up for more individual visibility, and so forth. So accepting and really investing themselves and ourselves to work together in the pursuit of a common goal nonviolently. Another skill that I think is critical is what I call discipline of the mind and of the body. Now I think that the challenge is where to communicate. Communication we cannot emphasize

that enough. We cannot be ... and the youth we work with and the people we work with cannot really be effective and nonviolent people without strong communication skills.

And finally, critical reflection, and this is something that has almost complicated my work in Burundi, when I realized, oh my goodness, they cannot reflect. So they can't link, they can't question, you know, why and what if in through asking this what if and how come the people who can actually create these alternatives.

Leadership Principles Part 2

Conflict Styles, Leadership, and Nonviolent Movements

Daryn Cambridge:

Nonviolent social movements involve a constant journey of navigating and engaging in conflict at various levels. At the intrapersonal level, these are conflicts you have within yourself. At the interpersonal level, these are conflicts that exist between two or more people. They exist at the intrastate level—these are conflicts taking place within the political boundaries of a country. And they exist at the interstate level—conflicts taking place between two or more countries.

Given this reality, it's important for those who are participating in and, in particular, those who are leading nonviolent movements to be aware of different conflict styles. These are ways in which we consciously or subconsciously choose to engage in conflict at these various levels. The conflict style that we express in times of tension, when we are negotiating, or in times of crisis will impact how those conflicts unfold.

The best way to outline and understand different conflict styles is by using a simple graph. On the Y axis, we measure the importance one places on the outcome of the conflict. On the X axis, we measure the importance one places on the relationship of the parties in conflict. The five conflict styles that we'll look at can all be placed somewhere on this graph. It's also important to recognize that no one conflict style is necessarily better than the other. They all have their pros and cons or upsides and downsides, depending on the context and circumstance. So, let's take a look at them one at a time.

The first conflict style we'll look at is competing. As you can see on the graph, someone who engages in competing, places maximum importance on getting what they want as the outcome of the conflict and places little to no importance on the kind of relationship that is created as a result of the

conflict. They want to win at whatever cost, even if it means harming the relationship they have with the other party or parties.

When looking at this style in relation to nonviolent social movements, an upside of this style is it supports a strategy where the mechanism of change is disintegration. So, the movement, in this case, has decided that the change they seek will come about when their adversary completely disintegrates. The movement wants to remove this person, this entity, or this institution from power altogether. With this operating strategy, they have no interest in preserving the relationship because the party with which they would have the relationship with won't even be in the picture once the change has occurred. A downside is that it can be really risky, and some would argue not in the spirit of reconciliation, because it places little to no importance on the relationship. And then, what that can create is the hatreds and animosities that can continue to fester and may emerge again in the future.

The second conflict style we'll look at is avoiding. As you can see on the graph, someone who engages in avoiding places little importance on both the outcome and the relationship.

Why would someone—or a movement—express an avoiding conflict style? An upside to this style is that it can be a wise strategy if a movement does not yet know what it wants the outcome to be. So, they choose not to engage in a conflict until they know exactly what their interests and positions are. They may also see no purpose in creating or preserving a better relationship with the other party, whether it be because they have little to no respect for the other party and choose not to engage based on that sentiment, or they may just not know enough about the other party to decide whether or not it is wise or realistic to try and establish a relationship with that party. There may also be personal and internal work that people need to go through in order to engage with an adversary. That might be working through trauma, or building up confidence, or conducting more information gathering, etc. They may need to do all these things before they choose to engage. All this can make avoiding an appropriate and strategic conflict style.

A downside to avoiding might be that it can be perceived as doing nothing and being unresponsive. This can project weakness, perhaps, or it could dissuade people from joining and participating in a movement that they feel is not actually addressing the conflict.

The third conflict style is accommodating. Looking at the graph you will see that someone who engages in accommodating places high importance on the relationship and less importance on the outcome. In other words, they are willing to sacrifice greatly what they want as the outcome in order to preserve a relationship with the other person or party in the conflict.

So, what's an upside to this style? An upside to this conflict style, in the context of a movement, is that leaders of a campaign may realize that they do not have the capacity or enough leverage to actually get what they want. So, instead of trying to compete in a conflict or a contest which they know is going to be a losing one, they instead decide to accommodate—to suspend most of their demands and plans and instead focus on the relationship. This might be something like agreeing to call off a demonstration or a general strike knowing that suspending such activities might be perceived by the other party as overture to resolution—or, at the very least, it will temporarily reduce tensions.

A downside is, certainly, that accommodating may initially sound like accepting defeat or giving up, but it's useful to view this more along the lines of knowing when and how to pick your battles. A movement involves several campaigns and, if one of those campaigns doesn't seem like it's leading towards success, it may make strategic sense to accommodate in order to stay relevant, protected, or operational.

The fourth conflict style is compromising. Looking at the graph, you can see that those who engage in compromising try to find a balance between the outcome and the relationship. They are willing to sacrifice some of what they want if the other party is willing to do the same. So, neither party in the conflict fully get what they want, but the compromise ensures that they can still have a working relationship.

An upside of this style, in the context of social movements, is that it can be used when parties in conflict recognize that they will need to work together as things continue to change. Neither party clearly has the upper hand and both control important variables in the equation. South Africa and the anti-apartheid struggle is a useful example of compromise.

Nelson Mandela believed that forming a working, post-apartheid government would require maintaining some kind of working relationship with many leaders with whom he had been in conflict for decades. Several rounds of negotiation involves compromise from both sides. The downside is, of course, that it didn't make everyone happy, by any means—particularly those who wanted to see all remnants and supporters of the apartheid regime denied any sort of power in the new government and brought to justice for the crimes that had committed. They did not get what they wanted. However, many would argue, the compromises that Mandela and others made ensured that a new government could form and function without devolving back into intense conflict, be it violent or nonviolent.

The fifth conflict style is problem-solving. Looking at the graph, you can see that someone engaged in problem-solving places maximum importance on both the outcome and the relationship. This conflict style is commonly associated with the “win-win” negotiation principle—the idea that a conflict need not be a zero-sum game, where one party loses and the other wins. It also need not be a lose-lose scenario, where both parties compromise to a point where neither side feels satisfied with the outcome. Instead, a problem-solving style fosters an approach to conflict where the parties are able to identify the common, shared problem they face, and they engage in collaborative work to solve it together. A joint solution is created that all parties feel address their interests and needs.

The upside to this style is clear: there is buy-in to the solution, and no one feels like the conflict ended negatively for them. However, a downside is that a problem-solving style can take a lot of time. It may require building trust and goodwill between the parties, and there simply may not be that kind of time—particularly when political, social, and economic winds can

change direction unexpectedly and the parties need to respond and adapt in a timely manner.

So, in conclusion, being aware of these different conflict styles empowers movement leaders and activists to be more conscious and intentional in how they are engaging in conflict at various levels. It also allows them to analyze and reflect on whether or not that style is the most useful or strategic given the situations they face.



Conflict Styles Assessment: Knowing the five main conflict styles can help you understand the choices you have for managing conflict. And knowing your own conflict style can help you identify how you might want to approach conflict differently. [Take the Conflict Styles Assessment.](#)

Poll: With which conflict style do you most identify?

- ☐ Competing. I tend to place maximum importance on getting what I want as the outcome of the conflict.
- ☐ Avoiding. I tend to place little importance on both the outcome and the relationship.
- ☐ Accommodating. I tend to place high importance on the relationship and less importance on the outcome.
- ☐ Compromising. I try to find a balance between the outcome and the relationship.
- ☐ Problem-solving. I tend to place maximum importance on both the outcome and the relationship.

Listening Styles, Leadership, and Nonviolent Movements

Daryn Cambridge:

Much emphasis has been placed on listening when we talk about movement building. The skill of listening is crucial in gathering information, conducting a conflict analysis, building coalitions and unity, and mobilizing people to participate in the struggle.

Engaging in a conflict, whether it be resolving one or waging one nonviolently, involves not only having the vocabulary and the skills to effectively communicate one's emotions, needs, and interests, it also requires that someone is listening to those words and interpreting them in accurate ways. Communication, especially when it comes to conflict resolution and movement building is a two-way street that involves both speaking and listening.

Educational systems certainly spend a lot of time teaching learners how to speak – how to stand at a podium or walk around the stage, how to pronounce your words and pace your sentences, how to move your hands and body when making certain points, how to deliver a convincing argument or rebut counterarguments and win a debate – all of which are important skills in many facets of life. However, how much time is actually spent teaching learners how to listen? It's sometimes assumed that listening is a skill that everyone possesses and just consciously, naturally develops, but this could not be further from the truth.

Just as there are methods and techniques to make us more effective speakers, so too exist methods and techniques that make us more effective listeners. And when we are concerned with conflict-affected communities, staying in tune with the emotions, feelings, needs and interests of those with whom we are working and creating a nonviolent vision for tomorrow, listening skills are paramount.

So, I'm going to outline for you 7 different listening styles.

Encouraging. Encouraging is a listening style that is used to convey interest and to keep people talking. It involves using non-committal words and a positive tone of voice. So I'm going to do a little acting for you, this is what this listening style might look and sound like. Someone shares something with me and I say: "I see." Or they say something and I'll respond with: "Uh, huh" or "Mmm." All of these things encourage people to keep talking and sharing.

This listening style is good to use when you're recruiting folks to join or participate in a campaign. It's also good to use when conducting initial brainstorming session, creating ideas for vision statement or campaigns or tactical choices. This style communicates to people that you want to hear what they are saying and you're not at this point trying to debate them or judge them.

Eliciting. Eliciting is a listening style that is used to gather relevant information, encourage others to reveal their needs and interests, and to establish a climate of open communication. It involves asking open-ended, not leading but open-ended questions, because you want to hear what they actually want to say, not what you wish they would say. This means that it's important not to agree or disagree with what the person is saying, because that can actually start leading them in their responses. Just like with encouraging, you want to use non-committal words with a positive tone of voice. You also want to express positive tone with your body language like nodding.

So this style of listening might look and sound like this: "What's important about that for you?" or "Tell me more about that," or "What does that mean to you?"

This listening style is good to use when conducting a conflict analysis and when gathering information from communities who are affected by the conflict.

Restating. Restating is a listening style that is used to let others know that you are listening to them carefully and that you are trying to understand what they are saying. You also use this style to verify that what you're

hearing is actually what the other person wants heard. So this involves paraphrasing the other person's points, it involves avoiding value judgments or inserting your own opinion into the paraphrasing, and it also involves asking for confirmation.

What this style of listening might look like or sound like is: "What I'm hearing you say is that this strategy is going to alienate some of our potential allies, is that correct?" Or it might sound like: "Would it be correct to say that you want this campaign to have more cultural and artistic dimensions to it? " Or it might sound like: "To make sure I understand you correctly, are you saying that students at the local university are prepared to risk arrest if they are called upon to do so?"

This is important to use during heightened states of emotion in a conflict. Nothing escalates a conflict faster when folks, who are experiencing high states of emotion, sense that no one is listening to them. So in a movement context, oftentimes internal divisions can form due to fatigue, anxiety, fear, and during those moments restating can be critical in de-escalating.

Clarifying. Clarifying is a listening style used to understand ambiguous or unclear statements and to then test interpretations.

This style involves ensuring that you let the person complete their thoughts and that you avoid frequent interruptions. It also involves asking focused but open-ended questions and then probing for fuller answers and explanations.

So this style might look and sound like this: "I'm not sure I'm following, can you tell me more about that meeting you had with the city council?" Or it might sound like: "Could you say that again? I want to make sure I understand the main issues you have with the budget."

This style is useful when a movement is negotiating with another party, be it their adversary or a potential members of the coalition. When big decisions are being made that will affect plans, strategies, goals, communication, etc. its really important to make sure that everyone is clear on what's being shared, promised or agreed to.

Empathizing. Empathizing is a listening style used to understand events from another person's perspective and to show another person that you understand their point of view and comprehend their feelings. This style involves recognizing another person's experience as being valid without necessarily agreeing with what that person has concluded from their experience. This means giving acknowledgment rather than agreement.

So this style might look and sound like this: "It sounds like you feel frustrated when your co-facilitator uses that kind of language in the workshop." Or it might sound like this: "From what I'm hearing, you sound relieved that the meeting got canceled." Or it might sound like: "That must have been really frightening for you."

This listening style is critical for individuals working and organizing in conflict-affected communities. When we're seeking to build trust, unity, and commitment to a cause, the value of acknowledging the experiences that people go through and the value of, as leadership expert Dr. Stephen Covey has said, "seeking to understand before being understood," these are all crucial elements. Empathy is essential for healing, reconciliation, resilience, and the ability to exercise what Civil Rights leader Diane Nash referred to as "agapic energy," or the power of love for our brothers and sisters in humanity.

Summarizing. Summarizing is a listening style that pulls important ideas and information together and establishes a basis for further discussion. This style involves reviewing issues that have been raised, highlighting the most important matters, and then setting aside extraneous information.

So this might look and sound like this: "Here's what I have gathered. In order to prepare for tomorrow's action we need to do the following: establish a starting point, secure water at various locations on the route, handout code of conduct sheets, and inform local businesses." Or it might sound like this: "It seems like the key issues on the table for tomorrow's discussion are wages for workers at the plant, safety standards, and discriminatory practices."

Summarizing is a crucial skill when multiple parties, be they individuals or institutions, need help moving a conversation or set of discussions along. So this style can be critical in negotiations, but also in disputes that are internal to a movement where various factions are struggling to work past their differences and settle on a way to move the conversation forward.

Reframing. Reframing is a listening style that refocuses a discussion from past events to future goals, and it redirects negative or adversarial statements into more productive channels. This involves building on the ideas that are shared by others in the discussion, emphasizing common ground, and using neutral or positive language as opposed to accusatory language.

So this might look and sound like this: “Since we both value transparency, would it be helpful if we made a commitment to post our meeting notes on the website?” Or it might sound like: “What would you like to see in the future that would make things different or better?”

Someone who can effectively reframe is a real gift to a movement, because movements can oftentimes get stuck focusing on the past, focusing on the wrongs that have been committed, and then framing their entire struggle in what they don’t want and what they’re against. All of this is important, however at the same time movements also need to focus on the future. They need to focus on what they do want and what they are for. Reframing can help bring about the latter when it’s needed most.

In conclusion, listening is a skill that is oftentimes touted as being crucial and important for movements, but we are rarely trained to develop those skills, to understand the various dimensions and styles of listening, and then rarely given the opportunity to practice them. Being aware of and practicing these various styles will make you a better leader, a better friend, and a better organizer.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Infographic: Active Listening Techniques](#)

This infographic highlights the various active listening techniques.

Followership

Courageous Followership

Maya Soetoro-Ng:

Courageous followership assumes that at any given moment in any given circumstance, not everyone can act as a leader, even if they have leadership qualities. Some people are labeled and seen and view themselves as followers. Courageous followership is something that argues that leaders and followers both have a lot of power and both are both tremendously important.

Indeed, the power differential between the two is not great. A courageous follower isn't simply someone who does the leader's bidding. A courageous follower is someone who takes the leader's vision and voice and translates that to the other followers—keeps the other followers motivated. Yes, they are supporters of the leader, but they also challenge the leader to be consistent, to be true, to be brave. When they see the leader engaging in behavior that is destructive or violent, they challenge the leader to improve, to change, to see things differently. The courageous follower is someone who activates a sense of moral courage and who takes on a lot of responsibility for the longevity of a movement.

The first follower is the one who lends the leader a sense of authority, and who helps to take the leader's movements and motions and makes sense of them for the rest of the crowd. These first followers or courageous followers are people who keep things simple and understandable in many ways and remove the mission and the methods away from a non-charismatic leader to protect the mission and the methods, to ensure that they belong to everyone as opposed to starting and ending with the leader.

I think social movements can encourage a sense of courageous followership by really giving power to its participants and giving

opportunities for the participants in this movement to practice the exercise of that power productively. So, giving them opportunities for voice, giving them opportunities for creative and collective problem-solving, giving them the skills of negotiation and facilitation and mediation, giving them the tools of nonviolent communication which often requires careful listening to be cultivated. And, in all of those ways, then, the followers are equipped to re-engage the ideas in the movement at various turns when things get stale or when people become entrenched in conflict within the movement. They will have a sense of voice and courage to use their voices when perhaps the movement stalls or where people are floundering, are not certain what direction to take their actions.

The idea is that the followers—sometimes more than the leader—will see a wider array of possibilities and will be communicating with numerous others and will therefore be able to problem-solve with greater breadth and imagination. They will, I think, if we are smart as leaders, we will delegate effectively and ensure that we have a number of courageous followers who can not only support us and challenge us but can really think about taking original visions leaders to the next level; and what is required, and who might I gather to build momentum in a movement. These are questions that I would want to ask of my courageous followers, and there's no way that one person has all of the answers and resources needed to build a movement of any strength.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Video: How to Start a Movement](#)

In this 2010 TED talk, musician Derek Sivers uses video footage of a man dancing alone at a concert to illuminate the importance and power of the

first follower. He argues that leadership can be over-glorified and that followership may actually be the most important part of starting a movement.

Spectrum of Allies

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

The Spectrum of Allies is a tool for organizers to better understand who our allies and opponents are and to analyze the specific allegiances of individuals and groups of people in society, vis-a-vis the issue or problem the movement seeks to address.

When we look at our struggle and the problems it seeks to address, we will need to know how various people living in and around this issue feel about the issue. Because we know that the active participation is a key to successful nonviolent movements, the Spectrum of Allies tool helps us better understand a wide range of groups in society: social groups, informal groups, and various demographic groups—such as people of different ages, gender identities, ethnicities, religious beliefs, socio-economic statuses—and people who live in different neighborhoods—urban, rural, etc.

The Spectrum of Allies tool has us look at each of these groups to determine where they lie on this Spectrum of Allies. Depending on the group's allegiances, loyalties, and level of obedience, they may actively support the movement's adversary, or they may actively support the movement—or they might be somewhere in between.

So let's take a closer look at the Spectrum of Allies tool and the categories represented within it.

On the far right, we have active, leading opponents. These are people who are actively supporting the movement's opponent. They may be contributing to or part of the problem, and they may be benefiting from it. They are willing to fight for and take action to maintain the status quo.

Closest to the active opponents, we have the passive opponents. Passive opponents are supporters of the movement's opponent in theory, but in reality, they are not willing to spend their time or energy to demonstrate this support. So, they may cheer them on from afar, but they do not change their behavior or take a lot of action to maintain the status quo—they are a little bit more neutral than the active opponents.

In the middle, we have groups of people who are neutral on the issue. They may be aware of the issue; they may acknowledge that there is a problem, but they choose not to take a side or get involved. Sometimes, we call these people “fence sitters” —people who sit on the fence and watch, but do not participate in the struggle. They are just neutral on the issue and they've chosen not to act. They may be seen as bystanders.

Moving to the left side of the spectrum, there is a group called the passive allies. Just like on the opponent's side, there is a category of people in society who support the issue the movement represents. They believe in the the movement, but they are not willing to significantly change their behavior or their lives to participate in and support the movement. The people in this group might be willing to take small actions—such as turning their lights off, taking shorter showers—but they aren't willing to participate in a major action. They are not going to become a vegetarian or join the sit-in to shut down a coal power plant.

Finally we have the movement's active allies. The active allies are the movement's core supporters. They are the people who are actively involved in supporting the movement and contributing to its goals. This doesn't mean that everyone who is an active ally is willing to take the same kinds of risks or participate in the same kinds of ways, but they are not just cheering the movement on from afar. They are actively supporting and actively involved in creating change. They are willing to take action that will bring the society closer to the movement's vision.

Now, the aim of the movement is to conduct activities and take actions that will encourage people to shift along this spectrum—to move away from supporting the opponent or opponents and towards active support of the

movement. This does not mean that the movement needs to convince its active opponents to get out and join the movement—that would probably be unrealistic and inevitably discouraging. Instead, the idea is to try and move active opponents into the passive opponents category, to move passive opponents into the neutral category.

In general, the movement wants to discredit and weaken its active opponents; create divisions and raise doubts among passive opponents. The movement wants to win over neutrals, alert them to the issue of injustice, and activate them to do something about it. On the side of its supporters, the movement wants to focus on increasing the cohesion and activity of their passive supporters, and encourage and sustain the active participation of active supporters.

These shifts along the spectrum may happen little by little, one person at a time, or one group of at a time, but these shifts have a cumulative effect over time. As individuals and groups take steps away from the opponent and towards the movement, public opinion begins to shift and we see bigger and broader changes occur.

How can nonviolent movements use the Spectrum of Allies tool? The Spectrum of Allies tool is a framework that activists and organizers can use to think through shifting power on the strategic, campaign, and tactical levels. The tool provides an understanding for how everyone in society can be a potential ally to the movement. This helps us de-emphasize the focus on traditional power holders and elites as agents of change, and re-emphasizes people's power—the importance and power of shifting ordinary people along the spectrum of allies towards the movement.

It can help us focus on winning small victories. Instead of thinking we need to get everyone in the world to support our issue, and instead of focusing on shifting the stance of a staunch opponent, we can focus on smaller, incremental changes. We can see that by getting one, small group of people to shift just one wedge closer to the movement—knowing that each individual who shifts along the spectrum has the potential to bring another few individuals with them—we can see how this incremental change has

the potential to create a domino effect, whereby small shifts along the spectrum can lead to much bigger shifts with larger groups of people.

Of course, these shifts can go in either direction, and so the Spectrum of Allies becomes a useful tool to think about strategizing, campaign building, and, specifically, tactical selection.

As a strategizing tool, the Spectrum of Allies can provide a framework to think through which pillars of support you want to focus on pulling away from your opponent and towards the movement. And, which individuals or groups within that pillar might you target first?

On the tactical level, once you have chosen a group of individuals you want to shift along the spectrum, you might ask yourself, “What nonviolent methods or actions will serve to pull these individuals away from their pillars and shift them towards the movement?” You may ask yourself, “Does the movement currently have the resources and capacity to carry out these tactics?” And you might ask yourself, “How will the movement’s tactical selection influence the target’s reaction?”

It is important to remember that the tactical repertoire available to nonviolent movements is vast. Movements may wish to engage in research and information gathering in order to better understand the attitudes and beliefs of particular individuals and groups of people, in order to determine the best method to bring them closer to the movement.

So, a note on multiple opponents: If a movement has multiple opponents, they might create a Spectrum of Allies for each of those opponents, and compare them to one another to better understand how different actors respond similarly or differently to the various opponents.



“In order for a movement to succeed, you must have the sympathy of the majority if not their active participation.”

– Dr. Bernard Lafayette –



Spectrum of Allies: [Visit Swarthmore College's Global Nonviolent Action Database](#) and choose a campaign case. Next, join the discussion forum and list 3-5 actors who were involved in that campaign.

- Were they supporters? Opponents? Unaffected actors?

Now, place these actors along the Spectrum of Allies according to where you think their allegiance was at the end of the campaign.

- Did any of the actors shift along the spectrum as a result of the campaign? If so, which actors? Why do you think those actors shifted?

Mobilization

Organizing vs. Mobilizing

Erin Mazursky:

With organizing, commitment is inherent to everything that you do. [Organizing] is about building relationships with other people to create common commitment, so that you can achieve purpose and ultimately win. So, commitment is really important and it's what really glues the movement together. With mobilizing, there really isn't commitment involved. Think about a protest: people show up, they agree with what you're doing, but then, in the end, everyone goes home. So, the practice of organizing is about building commitment amongst the people who agree with you who want to be activated.

Organizing is about leadership development. So, your goal is to enable more leaders who can enable more leaders who can enable more leaders to help really grow the movement with commitment. With mobilizing, it's a very centralized process. There are a couple of people who are organizing the rallies or the protests or the meetings. They don't really ask other people to commit.

Another aspect of organizing is that it builds capacity. The more leaders you have, the more capacity you have to do more things. So organizing is more about building a capacity for more people to be able to take action, for your movement to be able to grow, and ultimately for you to be able to win. Mobilizing can lead to leadership development, but it isn't inherent in the action of mobilizing itself. So, organizing helps build capacity which means it builds community—leaders upon leaders who are all committed to each other ultimately turns into a community of people who are working with you to achieve your common purpose in the face of uncertainty. With mobilizing: again, there may not be a commitment, there may not be a community. It is people who know that there are other people who agree with them, but there isn't necessarily a community at the end of the day.

And finally, organizing strategically. You know why you are doing any action at any given point. So you are creating a strategy for why people should come together. So, in the end, mobilizing is really a strategy of organizing. There are moments when protests and rallies and big meetings are really important to your movement, but it's not the only strategy. In fact, oftentimes, what you don't see behind closed doors is organizers coming together to discuss strategy, to discuss next steps and deciding which action should be taken at what time. So, organizing is really about creating strategic action for a lot of different people to be able to take. With mobilizing, it's much more one-off. Again, mobilizing is a really important strategy, but what we're really going for with movement building is the practice of organizing.



Organizers use strategy to help people turn what they have (resources) into what they need (power) to get to what they want (goal).

How Can a Movement Increase Participation?

Erica Chenoweth:

All movements are obviously concerned with the question of how to go from small-scale resistance or every day forms of resistance to a mass movement. And I think, in a sense, the entire field of sociology has in some way developed a research program trying to understand what makes a small group of activated people turn into a large social movement, especially a revolutionary social movement. The field has not yet discovered a single cause of this, clearly. But I really appreciate the work of Doug McAdam who makes the argument that there's some combination of

opportunities that become open for people to actively push for change in the system, and those opportunities don't have to be structural: they can be political moments, where it appears that there's a large degree of fervor and interest and a decline in apathy and a decline in satisfaction with the status quo.

At the same time, there are resources. That means there's the ability of entrepreneurs or first movers to mobilize significant numbers of people through the work that they've done at the grassroots. This suggests that grassroots organization, capacity building, and coming up with networks that can be mobilized—the key moments are absolutely vital to that process of going from a few people to many millions of people.

And then the third thing is what he calls cognitive liberations. Cognitive liberation is the process by which people generally recognize that the moment is now, that change is possible, that I have to be part of the change, and that there's no going back for me. When people achieve that threshold of cognitive liberation, it seems like these are moments where the interaction of opportunity, resources, and the mental process that's occurring in people can produce those sudden, spectacular upheavals that we see around the world. My sense is that that makes the most intuitive sense to me. In terms of the implications for movements, I think the key take away is that they have to always be ready, right, to mobilize people when those key moments come to pass.

Timing might be everything, it turns out. Just a really kind of trivial example of this is from my own research: when I was a junior scholar, I really wanted to publish an [opinion editorial] in the New York Times. It was just one of those personal, professional goals that I wanted to someday achieve. And I would write all these op-eds and send them to the New York Times and they were never interested, and they always got rejected. And then what happened is the Arab Spring happened. And, not only did I write an op-ed for the New York Times, but they asked me to write it. And so what this suggests is the timing is really everything. And I'm not sure that societies can be pushed into—from above or below—this process of mass mobilization, but I think that the timing can be written when these types of

processes interact with one another and that's when movements want to be ready.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Article: Give Peaceful Resistance a Chance](#)

In her 2011 New York Times op-ed, Give Peaceful Resistance a Chance, Dr. Erica Chenoweth looked at events ongoing at the time in the Middle East and North Africa and argued that the movements that remain nonviolent have a much greater likelihood of succeeding and leading to a functioning democracy.

Mobilization Part 2

Coalition Building

Maria Stephan:

We've discussed how important numbers and the diversity of participation are to successful nonviolent movements. Human resources—or the people who dedicate their time, talent, and skills—are critical to movements. The more people you have, the greater the authority and legitimacy of the movement, and the more mass actions you can launch, and, of course, the greater the diversity of tactics that can be used by movement members.

In many movements there is usually a core group of leaders—typically eight to 12 individuals. Then, one ring out in the concentric circle, you have key allies: those are individuals and organizations that provide important forms of support. Then, further out in the concentric circle, [there are] general supporters and volunteers. The goal for movement leaders is to expand the circle outward, increasing the scope and diversity of participation.

So, how do nonviolent movements go about expanding the size and diversity of their base? They do this by continually recruiting new members to either become engaged in actions or to contribute skills behind the scenes. They reach out to those who may support the movement but can't be directly involved. And, they train new members in key skills including strategic analysis, organizing, communications, on- and offline security, and managing external relations. People join movements for different reasons, either because they are deeply committed to the cause, whether it's democracy, LGBT rights, or environmental justice because they derive a sense of meaning, identity, and belonging when they join a group of people fighting for a cause, or because they see direct benefits to their lives in the event of societal change.

Movement leaders have to understand these different motivations, articulate a vision that appeals to different groups of people with different needs and desires, and involve these different groups in developing a “movement DNA,” or set of shared principles and aims. The Serbian Otpor movement, for example, devised a master list of all the people who signed in for various meetings or activities. They divided the list into four sections: Activists, or those who regularly attended meetings; volunteers, those who performed tasks but did not regularly come to meetings; supporters, those who would show up for rallies or events; and future supporters, those who may become supporters, volunteers, or activists in the future. Everyone in those four categories was key to the Otpor movement because they brought skills, contacts, and social networks into the movement.

Keeping people engaged and interested in a movement is often done by devising campaigns and actions that can involve the active participation of members of key pillars of support, whether they are students, bureaucrats, taxi drivers, businesspeople, hip-hop artists, or members of the police. Movement leaders should recognize that people have varying risk levels and not everyone will want or be able to participate in protests or other confrontational actions.

The Egyptian April 6th movement, which was a youth-led movement that formed in 2008 and played an important role in the nonviolent ouster of Hosni Mubarak in 2011, recognized that they needed to expand the base of their nonviolent activism, and that allying with workers, who had socio-economic grievances, was an important way to both show solidarity with a key group in Egyptian society and to bring workers’ skills and mobilization power into the movement. So, on March 23rd, 2008, the April

6th movement launched a Facebook page in support of a planned textile workers strike in the city of El-Mahalla El-Kubra to protest low wages and high food prices. The group invited about 300 people to join its Facebook page; within a day it had 3,000 members, and within a few weeks that number rose to 70,000. On April 6th, thousands of workers protests. Egyptian security police struck back, killing four and arresting 400. Although it would take another almost three years for the movement to

remove Mubarak, this active partnership between the youth and workers provided to be highly consequential.

In South Africa, the United Democratic Front or UDF was one of the most important anti-apartheid organizations of the 1980s. The non-racial coalition of about 400 civic, church, student, workers', and other organizations which were active at the national, regional, and local levels was formed in 1983 to fight against institutionalized racism. The Reverend Allan Boesak, a prominent anti-apartheid activist, in a somewhat impromptu fashion, called for a "United Front" of "churches, civic associations, trade unions, student organizations, and sports bodies" during a meeting in Transvaal in 1983. The call was met with widespread support.

The UDF established regional branches, which formed coalitions with local organizations. The regional branches then came together to form a national assembly. Representatives of the different branches met and rallied around the slogan, "UDF Unites, Apartheid Divides" in order to attract massive participation. By 1985, the UDF had about three million members and some 700 affiliates, including prominent figures like Desmond Tutu. The trade unions proved to be the main muscle of the UDF, which worked closely with the African National Congress but was independent of the party and never engaged in armed struggle.

The UDF rallied around a strategy known as "ungovernability"—a strategy based on making the lands ungovernable to the apartheid regime. The UDF and its affiliates promoted rent boycotts, school protests, worker stay-aways, and a boycott of the Parliamentary system. Smaller organizations linked to the UDF targeted more specific targets for their protests. And national goals like the End Conscription Campaign (ECC), for example, was set up to oppose compulsory military conscription of white males into the South African Defense Forces. The UDF was also responsible for the drafting of the Freedom Charter, which set out the principles for a free, democratic South Africa and made specific reference to the inclusion of whites in the newly democratic country. The broad, participatory nature of the UDF, its decentralized organization, and its

unifying message helps to explain, in large part, the success of the anti-apartheid struggle.



“The first job of a government is to maintain justice (not order).”

– Rev. Allan Boesak –

Movement Sustainability

Nadine Bloch:

So, when we are talking about movement sustainability, there are a few things to talk about, of course, within this whole spectrum. One of the things is to think about the work that we do as a full spectrum—that people come into this work as people that have whole lives beyond what they do within the movement. And they have needs and desires that they want from the work that they do within the social change construct.

If you look at what Gandhi said about different kinds of action, he identifies both constructive and obstructive kinds of actions. So, there is a lot of power that we get from acting out of our anger and saying “no” to things—obstructing the wrongs that we see out there. There is also a necessity, at the same time, to build up the alternative future that we want—to build and do this constructive work.

And I would argue, too, that there is a third piece that may be considered part of the constructive work—but it’s really critical particularly in this day and age—of healing and of a whole-of-person approach to sustainability of

the work that we do. This involves making sure that there is shared leadership; making sure that our movements are, in fact, what we call “leaderful”—that there is not just a cult of personality, that one person gets burnt out and no one’s left. It includes capacity building then for everyone who is involved—teaching everyone how to do facilitate, teaching everyone how to do media work, or, at least, those people who want to and spreading the work around. It also involves mentoring and bringing people up consciously within your ranks, before the other folks get burnt out, and as a way of sharing and building local capacity or capacity along the whole breadth of the movement.

This piece of healing also means that we acknowledge that our system is a violent and broken system that we are working in, and that we ourselves have sustained problems or harm from the system—whether it’s capitalism, racism, white supremacy, white privilege—we ourselves as white people, black people, brown people have to acknowledge that we need to deal with these issues in order to become whole and work towards the constructive future, the change that we want to see. And this is very important that we find in the movements today, where the crushing of movements is very strong and the world that we come out of is very much damaged and difficult to work in.

And we also need to make sure that we take into account “downtime” and basic needs and things like: providing lunch [or] places for people to relax when you are meeting or at conferences. So, this kind of minuscule level of providing basic needs—all the way to taking care of people when, perhaps, they are in jail or incarcerated for long periods of time is also part of the work that we do as far as movement sustainability goes.



“Let’s treat each other as if we plan to work side by side in struggle for many, many years to come. Because the task before us will demand nothing less.”

– Naomi Klein –

Bill Moyer's Four Roles of Activists

Bill Moyer's Four Roles of Activists

Daryn Cambridge:

Bill Moyer shares with us what he refers to as the four roles of activists in social movements. Now Bill Moyer, for those of you who may not know: he was an activist, he was a trainer, and an author, and he has been involved in several nonviolent social movements throughout the 20th century. He was active in the US civil rights movement, the antinuclear power movement, the anti-war movement, and many others. And so his work and his experience in these capacities led him to write the book called *Doing Democracy: The Map Model for Organizing Social Movements*.

Now, “MAP”—M-A-P—stands for Movement Action Plan, and it’s an effective framework for social movements to consider because what it does is it maps out what has been a somewhat common trajectory of successful social movements. Hence, it can help budding social movements plan better. It can help them understand what are the natural ebbs and flows of progress and social change as it relates to social movements.

So, [Moyer] also lays out in this book *Doing Democracy* the four roles of activists. These four roles of activists in social movements are the citizen, the rebel, the change agent, and the reformer. In the book, Moyer writes: “Activists need to become aware of the role they and their organizations are playing in the larger social movement.” It’s important because all four roles need to be played in order for a movement to bring about successful social change.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Book: Doing Democracy: The MAP Model for Organizing Social Movements](#)

Doing Democracy provides both a theory and working model for understanding and analyzing social movements, ensuring that they are successful in the long term. Beginning with an overview of social movement theory and the MAP (Movement Action Plan) model, Doing Democracy outlines the eight stages of social movements, the four roles of activists, and case studies from the civil rights, anti-nuclear energy, Central America, gay/lesbian, women's health, and globalization movements.

Activist Roles Part 1

The Citizen

Daryn Cambridge:

The citizen role in social activism is a role that says “yes” to widely held principles and values and symbols of the larger society. So, in this role, the citizen activist advocates for and demonstrates a widely held vision of a good society. And in so doing, the citizen role builds legitimacy of the movement in the eyes of ordinary citizens. Now why is this important? Well, in order for any major transformational social change to occur, a movement must be palatable—it must be accepted by the larger public.

Now, Bernard Lafayette, he was a pivotal leader in the U.S. civil rights movement. He has said on many occasions that, “In order for a movement to succeed, you must have the sympathy of the majority, if not their active participation.” Building and establishing that kind of sympathy—that’s the role of the citizen.

Now, the citizen also enables the social movement to withstand efforts by power holders to discredit the movement. And they do this because when you are putting forward—as in the citizen role—you are putting forward words, actions, and principles like freedom and equality and justice. These are all values and principles that oftentimes power holders claim to support themselves. So it makes it very difficult for power holders to discredit a movement that is standing up for the values and principles that they themselves say they support.

So, a great example of the citizen role in social movements comes from the West African country of Mali which, in 1991, experienced its own nonviolent democratic revolution that removed the military dictatorship of General Moussa Traoré from power. Now, one of the key citizen roles in this movement was played by griots, and griots are travelling musicians, poets, and storytellers who use the oral tradition to preserve and share cultural

history. So what the griots did during this revolution is that they travelled throughout the country to rural regions of the country—and this was a key strategic point, because most of the people that lived in these rural areas were illiterate, meaning even if they had access to campaign and movement literature, they would not have been able to read it. So, they had to rely on oral communication in order to know what was going on with the revolution, and why they should support it. So, when the griots visited these communities, what they did was they emphasized a well-known story from the 1300s that tells of local chiefs who, in a symbolic act of submission, presented their spears to Emperor Sundiata. But the story gets interesting because Sundiata returns the spears to the chiefs, and lets them know that he would not be that type of emperor, but that these chiefs would be able to self-govern.

And so, by emphasizing this well-known story with Malian history, it helped frame the democratic revolution as a return to tradition: a tradition in Malian history of self-governance, a tradition where people do not have to kowtow or bend to autocratic rule. It also helped fend off the attacks by the military dictatorship that this democratic revolution was some type of imposition of Western style democracy, when, in fact, this democratic revolution was part of Malian history, tradition, values, and principles. So, the griots, in their work, were able to mobilize the support of over 75% of Mali's rural population, which played an integral role in finally removing General Moussa Traoré from power.

Lastly, the citizen role reduces the potential for violent attitude and actions to emerge within the movement. And those in this role help the movement model the kind of society that they are seeking to create, and not allow the movement to get subsumed with negativity that is aimed at the adversary, and that negativity can oftentimes spiral into violence.

Music of Nonviolent Resistance

Native Sun (UK) – Legacy

This legacy of nonviolent resistance runs through all histories and cultures across the globe and Freedom Beat's interview with Native Sun reminds us that the voices of Hip Hop can be some of the best sources to uncover that history.

Native Sun's Mohammed Yahya and Sarina Leah teach us that many of the chapters in this history have been written by the people of West Africa to which we can turn for knowledge and inspiration. One need only look at the three references Mohammed Yahya makes in this interview to artists from Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal.

In the song, Mohammed spits a verse referencing griots – travelling musicians and storytellers that live, travel, and perform throughout the African continent.

Believe me when I tell you blood / The movement is serious / Way beyond Hip Hop lies the legacy of griots. / Acapella, storytellers, far from jungle dwellas / Forgotten pioneers that never get the credit.

The Rebel

Daryn Cambridge:

The rebel role in social activism is a role that says “no” and it protests the conditions, the policies, the practices that are going against widely held societal values and principles. And so by doing this, rebels in a social movement put the issues on the social agenda through engaging in dramatic nonviolent actions. The rebels in social movements force the public to face its problem; they put it there front and center. Rebels in social movements show how institutions and official power holders are violating

public trust, creating and perpetuating the problems that impact the general public.

One of the greatest examples of the power of the rebel role in a social movement can be found in the Salt March in India in 1930. This was when Gandhi led hundreds of thousands of Indians to the sea at Dandi to bend over and make salt in order to protest the British salt tax. Now that might not sound that fascinating, but in this case Gandhi and all the other rebel activists, they were clearly saying “no” to the tax on the salt which the British had imposed on the Indian people. But, of course, this “no” was symbolic of a larger no to British occupation of India more broadly.

But why was this campaign so powerful and successful? Well, first, salt is a staple in the Indian diet and Gandhi knew that every single Indian—rich or poor, urban or rural, male or female, young or old—they would understand the injustice of a tax being put on a food staple that Indians had been making on their own without any tax for generations. So, the Salt March led to many folks being imprisoned because they broke the law. They violated a law and they refused to pay tax, but the Salt March was a severe blow to British colonial rule in India.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Film: Pray the Devil Back to Hell](#)

Pray the Devil Back to Hell chronicles the remarkable story of the Liberian women who came together to end a bloody civil war and bring peace to their shattered country. Thousands of women - ordinary mothers, grandmothers, aunts and daughters, both Christian and Muslim - came together to pray for peace and then staged a silent protest outside of the

Presidential Palace. Armed only with white T-shirts and the courage of their convictions, they demanded a resolution to the country's civil war. Their actions were a critical element in bringing about a agreement during the stalled peace talks. A story of sacrifice, unity and transcendence, Pray the Devil Back to Hell honors the strength and perseverance of the women of Liberia. Inspiring, uplifting, and most of all motivating, it is a compelling testimony of how grassroots activism can alter the history of nations.

Activist Roles Part 2

The Change Agent

Daryn Cambridge:

The change agent role in social movements is one that's critical in engaging, educating, training, and informing the larger public. So, in this capacity, the change agent, they help the movement create a participatory culture where multiple voices from the public that the movement seeks to serve, that these multiple voices are heard and that they become part of the movement dialogue. The change agent also redefines the problem to show how it affects every sector of the society. The change agent also presents positive solutions to the problems that the public faces, and it provides alternatives to the status quo. Change agents help establish and develop coalitions with like-minded organizations and other movements. Change agents also help the public demand not just political reforms, but also move towards larger social change and a paradigm shift. Now all of these things of course require a long term commitment.

So I believe that since the work of the change agent is oftentimes not as dramatic as that of the rebel, it's not as, let's say, symbolic as that of the citizen, and as I said earlier [the change agent] requires a long-term commitment, I believe that the change agent role often times can go unrecognized or can be underappreciated.

So I want to look to the environmental movement, because I think it's probably one of the best examples where we can clearly see the impact of change agents in that role. Movements and campaigns around the world to address climate change and disruption have fought a long hard battle to shift not only how we as humans talk about and understand our relationship with the environment and the climate, but also how we interact with it. We have certainly seen reforms on environmental issues such as increases in environmental protections, standards, regulations, but we are also seeing, I believe, a paradigm shift when it comes to how we commute and transport

ourselves from point A to point B, how and what we eat, how we produce and consume energy. In other words, change agents within environmental movements across the globe have effectively built coalitions with one another and they have made the environmental cause a cause that is one of personal choice, a cause that is one of national security, a cause that is one of global solidarity, and a cause that is one of justice. So they have redefined the environmental problem in all these ways and it's really impressive when you think about how much of an impact these change agents have had.

Now when I think of specific change agents, I think of individuals like American activist and writer Howard Zinn. I also think about Indian physicist Vandana Shiva. I think of Kenyan environmentalist and political leader Wangari Mathai. I think of the Bolivian labor leader Oscar Olivera. I think of the Palestinian scholar and professor Mubarak Awad, and the Chinese artist Ai Weiwei. All of these individuals have played other activist roles as well (rebels and citizens), however I see them and many others as clearly playing the change agent role in their respective movements.



“Whenever we engage in consumption or production patterns which take more than we need, we are engaging in violence.”

– Vandana Shiva –

The Reformer

Daryn Cambridge:

The reformer role in social movements is a role that works through official channels to ensure that the demands of the movement and of the public are being translated into actual policy, into laws, and practices. So, in this capacity, in this role, reformers perform parliamentary and legal actions like lobbying, crafting legislation, presenting lawsuits, et cetera. Reformers act as watchdogs to ensure that new policies and laws are enacted and enforced effectively, and reformers also fend off against any backlash that will inevitably emerge in response to social change.

Reformers are also represented in what Moyer refers to as professional opposition organizations or POOs. Now, these are different than movements in the sense that professional opposition organizations operate like an official organization. They have paid staff, they have a board of directors, they've got a president or an executive director, they've got budgets, et cetera. So thinking about this, in this sense, it's also important for the reformer's role in social activism to look for ways to nurture and support the grassroots activism work that is being done as well.

Now there are many individual reformers that we can look to as examples. One would be John Lewis, who as a young man was the head of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the U.S. civil rights movement. He has gone on to become a U.S. congressman from the state of Georgia. You can think about Nelson Mandela, who was the leader of the African National Congress. He was then in prison for over two decades, went on to become the president of South Africa. You can think about Aung San Suu Kyi, chairperson of the National League of Democracy, who for several decades has been working to reform the government and bring about greater democracy in her country of Burma.

Case Study: South Africa

Case Study: South Africa

Confined within the walls of a South African jail, the young lawyer from India found no reason to complain.

Some say that jail is a palace. Others look upon it as a beautiful garden. Some others hold that through the jail gates, we shall pass from our present bondage, to freedom.

The year was 1907. The young lawyer from India was Mohandas Gandhi. Gandhi led his fellow Indians in a nonviolent struggle against racial oppression for eight years. They marched into forbidden territory. They burned their registration papers. They expected to be arrested—and they were not disappointed. Gandhi said: Nonviolent refusal to cooperate with injustice is the way to defeat it.” J.C. Smuts, the interior minister, tells Gandhi: “You reduce me to helplessness. How can we lay hands on you without looking like villains?” He became known for his ability to mobilize people, and his increasingly simple way of life. He gave his nonviolent weapon a name: “Satyagraha”—holding to truth. In every decade and on every continent, underdogs have taken up Gandhi’s strategies to fight for their rights and freedom.

Bernard Lafayette: “Nonviolence means fighting back. But you’re fighting back with other weapons.”

The power that Gandhi discovered changed the twentieth century.

Every weekend, they bury their dead.

In the last year, news of black youth shot by police has become as common as the weather report. It’s been called an uprising. Millions of black South

Africans have intensified their struggle for equality—an end to the legalized discrimination called apartheid. Security forces have become newly aggressive in the black townships—a provocative target for angry young people. Even innocent bystanders are being caught in the deadly cycle of rising violence—and all the casualties are on one side. Appalled by the bloodshed, a new generation of township leaders is organizing, looking for more effective ways to fight back.

In Port Elizabeth, the 27 year old Mkhuseleli Jack has been a youth organizer since his teens.

Mkhuseleli Jack: “There was a frustration in the township as to what was happening. There was a serious confrontation with young people fighting with the police with their bare hands, and you know. And police shooting at them without mercy. And then we said, ‘Let us expose these policemen for what they are, let us take this fight in the townships away and bring it right to their homes.’”

Taking their struggle into white South Africa is a new idea. Some black communities around Port Elizabeth have effectively liberated their townships from apartheid rule, and they are being punished with brutal police efforts to regain control. But making the townships ungovernable has not seriously threatened the apartheid state.

Two miles away, most whites in Port Elizabeth are unaware of the strife. White-owned newspapers and state-controlled television do not report township disturbances. But a handful of whites have joined the anti-apartheid movement. One of them is Janet Cherry, a young social worker who has been an underground member of the outlawed African National Congress, [or ANC,] since college days.

Janet Cherry: “The idea was, that we’ve got to take the struggle into the white areas, not because of any racist motive, but because of that understanding that the state wasn’t in fact vulnerable unless you made an impact outside of the townships.”

Mkhuseli Jack's idea to take the struggle into the white community will require mass support. He has seen how easily the state destroys loosely-knit groups by arresting their leaders. For several years, he has worked tirelessly to create more deeply-rooted civil organizations, street by street.

The black civic movement has been growing. In 1983, the United Democratic Front, [or UDF] was created as a national umbrella for over 600 local "civics"—street committees, church groups, sports teams, women's clubs.

Mkhuseli Jack: "As this organization broadened and broadened and broadened and broadened, it became extremely difficult for the security forces to crush these people because now you have big centers of resistance within the community. And then slowly you started [to include] everybody to include in the struggle for justice. And slowly everyone saw his role."

In May 1985 several middle-aged women approached leaders of the Port Elizabeth Black Civic Organization, to suggest a boycott of white business. A consumer boycott has the potential to achieve Mkhuseli Jack's objective—to put pressure on the white community for the first time. Boycott organizers have only a few weeks to prepare. Half a million people must be persuaded to shop inside the township.

Mkhuseli Jack: "The preparation was to bring the black business people in the townships and tell them that we want them to stock the basic necessities that will be needed for this long-drawn struggle that we are going to face, and we told them to drop their prices. We went to the church leaders, we went to the schools, and we spoke to the bus drivers, the taxi drivers, told them that you can't bring those things to the township because we have a boycott there."

Weekly funerals—the only public gatherings not prohibited by the government—are their only opportunity to rally support for the boycott.

“We want a government, a government based on the will and wishes of the people.”

Two days before the boycott will begin, Mkhuseli Jack is the main speaker. “And I’m going to say, they can take us to jail. On Monday is the D-Day....Monday is the D-Day.... Monday is the D-Day....Monday is the D-Day. We won’t buy in town on Monday. We won’t buy in town on Monday. We won’t buy even a box of matches of Monday!”

It looks the same as any other morning. But by 10:00 AM, the difference is obvious. The North End, normally jammed with black shoppers, is deserted. Observers sent to monitor the boycott report one-hundred percent compliance.

Tango Lamani: “When we did our walks about the town, we saw the shops closed, and no one buying in town, then you saw that there was one-hundred percent support from people. That inspires you. That inspires you a lot.”

The boycott is the latest tactic in a 10-month uprising. But in only 5 days, it has proven the most effective weapon yet—and it is spreading elsewhere—a genuine threat to the apartheid regime.

“This state of affairs can no longer be tolerated. The government has in terms of the public security act, Act 3 of 1953, decided to proclaim a state of emergency in the following magisterial districts: Port Elizabeth, Albany, Uitenhage...”

There has not been a state of emergency since 1961. The South African army occupies the townships. Travel is restricted. Night and day curfews are imposed. Hundreds are arrested. Young males are singled out for brutality, but repression does not diminish the boycott. Security forces have

little success rounding up the leaders. Most are anonymous outside their own neighborhoods—dispersed among dozens of street committees and civics.

Mkhuseli Jack: “If they declare a State of Emergency, they were panicking because they were, we were becoming effective, they were feeling us coming, they were feeling us coming. So to us, the State of Emergency showed that extraordinary measures were to be implemented in order to keep apartheid alive. And we knew then, that we got apartheid in a crisis. And we were there, we were there to give it the push, the push, the push.”

Mike Xego: “With this power—massive power—we could do amazing wonders, because right in the first 3 weeks, shops began to close. Can you believe it? It was a freedom celebration. When we heard that one shop was closing, we just celebrated—Thank you! And then the other one, please, come! Thank you!”

Mkhuseli Jack goes into hiding to avoid arrest. Moving from house to house, he consults with the boycott committee on how to exploit their success. They add new conditions to the demands which must be met before they will lift the boycott.

Mkhuseli Jack: “We had concrete demands, and these demands dealt in those days with simple things when you look at them today—like opening of public amenities or facilities to all races, uh—taking out of the troops from the township. Making this available whatever was not available and end discrimination in the work place, et cetera. And we also had what we call long term, at the time, you know like talking about Mandela’s freedom. It was like – ‘Oh my goodness, this is something, my child, because other people will discourage us about this. No, no leave that. That’s impossible.’”

Mike Xego: “We waited until the pain went into the bones. Otherwise, what was the strike for? We waited. We took our time. Because we—we’re losing nothing, and they were losing hundreds of rands. And then the Chamber of Commerce ultimately said we have to talk to them.”

“Many of the demands we have, most of the demands in fact, we had every sympathy with...”

After meeting with Jack and the boycott leaders, the Chamber of Commerce director talks with reporters.

“There are demands which we can address directly, and those we obviously will. There are others demands which will have to be addressed by the government and we feel there that’s it our duty and responsibility...”

Janet Cherry: “The consumer boycott was making an impact on the white community, in that it opened up people’s minds to the necessity for change. And the ANC—in fact, part of the ANC—were quite convinced by this argument, which is one of dividing the ruling class if you like, or the ruling block, that you have to split off sections of it.”

Jack has been a well-known youth leader for several years. Now, his role as boycott spokesman has made him a serious threat to the regime

Colonel Lourens Du Plessis: “He was an extreme troublemaker, an activist in the true sense of the word, yes...”

Colonel Lourens du Plessis was chief of military intelligence for the Eastern Cape Province.

Colonel Lourens Du Plessis: “They’re not really committing a crime, like you said earlier, if they don’t want to buy, it’s not a crime if they don’t want to buy from people, but it’s mass action. And what do you do—you can’t shoot all these people. You can’t lock them all up. It’s very effective. Gandhi started that, ‘passive resistance.’”

Enjoying their success, the black population of Port Elizabeth maintains their solidarity. When security forces realize the boycott is not disintegrating, they decide to take action.

On the night of August the second, Mkhuseleli Jack and the boycott leaders are arrested and taken to St. Albans prison.

Tango Lamani “They picked us up at home—1:00 AM, 2:00 AM—and I remember they definitely said to us, ‘this state of emergency will ensure that the boycott won’t last three weeks. After three weeks from now, there won’t be any consumer boycott, and you leaders, you will be rotting in jail. People will go back to work, they will go back and buy in town, they will forget about you, they won’t even want to hear a thing about you.’ But, three weeks passed, two months passed, and people are carrying it on.”

Popo Molefe: “Once the government decided to throw everyone in jail and you’ll recall that there were about 30,000 people who were thrown into jails in terms of the state of emergency of 1985. Once you remove the leaders, you create even greater conditions of desperation, and you can have a situation of mayhem. And this is what, you know, the state had pushed South Africa into.”

Spontaneous outbursts by angry young people now jeopardize the movement. Among the few courageous enough to warn of the danger is a South African churchman, Bishop Desmond Tutu: “Why must we discredit our cause by using methods, which if they were used against us, we would oppose? We must, we must remember, we must remember my friends, that we have been given a wonderful cause: the cause of freedom! And you and I—you and I—must be those who will walk with heads held high. We will say, we used methods—we used methods which can stand the scrutiny, the harsh scrutiny, of history...”

By September, Port Elizabeth retailers are desperate. By keeping Mkhuseleli Jack and his comrades behind bars, the regime is preventing negotiations that could end the crippling boycott. Jack suddenly has powerful white allies.

Mkhuseli Jack: “I mean a respected businessman going, now looking for these people that have been described as hooligans and as thugs, now the businessman says these leaders got legitimate grievances. If they have committed a crime, take them in front of a court of law and try them and find them guilty or innocent. Don’t just lock them up!”

The boycott enters its 4th month. Thousands of blacks are still coming to their jobs in white-owned shops, but they buy nothing. White businessmen have been negotiating a deal: the boycott will be suspended—if the businessmen can arrange for the black leaders to be released.

Mkhuseli Jack: “We were not intending to antagonize these white people, but our idea was just to drive our point home. Nonetheless, it’s our people—let’s not destroy them. Then, we stopped the boycott at that time. And you see when you stop it, of course also it served two purposes. The pressure on our constituency to go and shop for Christmas was going to lead to some cracks within our own ranks. So we hit two birds with one stone, saved those people and also kept our unity intact for the next fight.”

The Christmas shopping season is back to normal as business-men begin serious negotiations with the boycott committee. Mkhuseli Jack and his colleagues have set a deadline. If their demands are not met by March 31st, the boycott will be reimposed. Their short term successes have given Port Elizabeth’s blacks a sense of confidence. Their leaders have been released from prison and troops have been withdrawn. But as the deadline approaches with no progress on their major political demands, they prepare a new boycott.

Unexpectedly, on March 11th, the government bans two civic leaders. One of them is Mkhuseli Jack. The banning order is a form of house arrest, which halts negotiations. “The Reagan administration’s point-man on South Africa today accused the Pretoria government of a deliberate sham. Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker told the congressional committee it was a sham for South Africa to signal its willingness to

negotiate with the black majority, while politically banning two black leaders yesterday.”

Mike Xeno: “At that point, there was a build-up of international pressure, build up, exposing that this was no more apartheid, small apartheid, it was complete fascism. Because almost every paper was banned. Every individual was banned. And if you remember at that time, you had, major corporations were running away. You know, it was embarrassing.”

Economic sanctions against South Africa are being debated in the U.S. and Europe. Most governments are resisting, saying that state-imposed sanctions would hurt ordinary people more than the government. But now, as black South Africans call on Western governments to impose punitive sanctions, an exodus begins, led by AT&T, IBM, GE, Ford, General Motors, and Coca Cola.

March 22nd. A Supreme Court justice lifts the ban on Mkhuseleli Jack, saying the government has given insufficient reasons. The victory energizes the movement, just 9 days before the new boycott is scheduled. Jack tears up his banning orders, using the celebration to cement the solidarity they will need in the weeks ahead.

“We are trusting that we are going to bring Botha down to his knees. Our buying power, our buying power is going to be the key that is going to decide the future, that is going to decide our destiny in this country! It is clear, the first of April, we know, we will not buy even a bubble gum in town!”

The boycott is on. It will continue for 9 weeks, and then—a shock. Security forces scour the black townships, arresting thousands. The government has secretly imposed a State of Emergency. The effect is Martial Law, a drastic move meant to stop disturbances on the tenth anniversary of a major township uprising. For hours, police raid the offices of black civics, trade unions, the UDF, the South African Council of Churches—arresting and confiscating documents. Peaceful protesters at the parliament

buildings are dispersed and arrested. Sixteen hours after the crackdown started, President Botha speaks in parliament. He cites intelligence reports on the imminent threat of armed revolution by the ANC and Communist party.

“These revolutionaries are controlled by a power clique which is typical of Marxist regimes and which is interested only in a violent takeover of power. It is not possible for the reasonable majority to continue the search for a peaceful and democratic solution...”

It is the second state of emergency in less than a year. The emergency will be renewed every year for 3 years, an admission that repression has become the primary function of the state. Anti-apartheid forces are driven underground but not destroyed. They have not brought the government down, but nonviolent mass action has shattered its legitimacy. The system of apartheid is no longer viable. Power has shifted to black communities and their social organizations. The end of apartheid is only a matter of time.

Janet Cherry: “Now there wasn’t a principled stand against the use of violence. And, in fact, it was widely acknowledged that the ANC was seen as conducting armed struggle. [But] it was, in fact, the activities of the UDF, in mass organization, which brought about the change in South Africa, really—it was mass organization which put pressure on the state ultimately to change. I mean, that brought about the stalemate, the impasse where the state could no longer respond.”

“The eyes of the world are presently focused on all South Africans.”

F.W. DeKlerk becomes president in late 1989, after P.W. Botha is forced to resign. DeKlerk acts quickly—unbanning political organizations and ordering the release of Nelson Mandela, who has been imprisoned for 27 years. By refusing to renounce armed struggle, Mandela has prolonged his imprisonment by years. During that time, the passivity that had once allowed apartheid to exist has been swept away by the spirit of a confident civil society.

Colonel Lourens Du Plessis: “The armed struggle came to nothing as far as I’m concerned. The people—the people brought it about. And pressure from overseas. That is what really, in the end, made it clear and people understood that we couldn’t go on any—that’s why DeKlerk had to take the actions that he took.”

In 1993, Nelson Mandela and F.W. DeKlerk share the Nobel Peace prize for negotiating a constitution that guarantees equal rights for all South Africans. They will soon face each other in South Africa’s first democratic elections. They have never in their lives voted—nor have their parents or their grandparents before them.

Desmond Tutu: “The struggle against apartheid, against the racism in South Africa, fundamentally had been nonviolent. We were inspired by what had happened in India, in Poland, in the civil rights movement in the United States, what was happening in the Philippines. I suppose that human beings looking at it would say that arms, arms are the most dangerous things that a dictator, a tyrant needs to fear. But in fact, no. It is when people decide they want to be free. Once they have made up that, their minds to that, there is nothing that will stop them.”

The Methods of Nonviolent Struggle

Voices from the Field: Chapter 4

Daryn Cambridge:

The methods of nonviolent action are numerous, diverse, and ever expanding. In 1973, Dr. Gene Sharp published a list of 198 methods of nonviolent action, in which he catalogued the myriad nonviolent tactics that movements have used throughout history like sit-ins, strikes, boycotts, picketing, public demonstrations, banging of pots and pans, and musical performances. Choosing the appropriate methods and then training and preparing people how to use them creatively and effectively is one of the key elements of nonviolent movement success.

In the early 1960s, John Lewis, and other activists throughout the southern United States, started attending nonviolent action trainings to prepare for what would become one of the most transformative nonviolent campaigns in US history: the lunch counter sit-ins.

John Lewis:

“In the movement, preparing for what later became the sit-ins, we were trained in tactics, techniques. But, in the process, we grew to accept the way of peace, the way of love, the way of nonviolence as a way of life, as a way of living. We had make-believe sit-ins, stand-ins in the theaters, lunch counters, and restaurants. And what we called “role playing,” social drama—pretending that someone is beating you, or pouring hot water or hot coffee on you, or spitting on you. And, could you take it? Could you restrain yourself from striking back? And a group of us, during the fall of 1959, in the spring of 1960, many of us accepted the way of nonviolence as a way of life, as a way of living. I remember so well. On one occasion during the sit-in movement, we were told that if we went down on this particular day that there was a possibility that police officials would stand by and let people attack us, beat us, and we probably would be arrested, but

we were prepared for exactly what happened. On that day, we were sitting in an orderly, peaceful, nonviolent fashion, some reading a book, some looking straight ahead, some writing a paper—no one saying a word. We were attacked, we were beaten, and the police officials came in and arrested 89 of us. It was my first arrest, and on that day, when I was arrested, I felt free, I felt liberated, I felt like I had crossed over. But the sit-in movement, not just in Nashville, but all across the South appealed to the conscious of people all over America.”

Not all nonviolent actions need to be risky or put people in harm’s way. Some of the most effective nonviolent actions are those that help build a sense of purpose in the minds of those who have chosen to join in the struggle. In 2004, during Ukraine’s Orange Revolution, Polina Beliakova and her friend were compelled to venture into the cold December streets and join the demonstrations. Their nonviolent actions were not combative or disruptive to the adversary, but rather supportive and sustaining for the movement.

Polina Beliakova:

“First, when we came, we just came to watch, and of course, when we saw it the first time and we had all those feelings, next time when we came to the Orange Revolution we wanted to contribute somehow. So, I decided I could cook some warm meals, that’s it. And the friend of mine, she was really good at knitting, so she knitted socks for protestors, and together we were only able to knit one pair of socks in one day, but we felt like it was a really really huge contribution, because we had like -15°C. When I’m talking about any Ukraine revolution, it’s winter, so we have to take it into account. And after that, we saw distributing food, distributing hot drinks was really important. So, it’s some minor contribution maybe, but from the emotional point of view and from the point of view of the population, it’s really strong I guess—even those socks.”

A lot of successful nonviolent actions are infused with humor, or they present a dilemma for the movement’s opponent, creating a situation where no matter how they respond the opponent ends up looking bad, foolish, or

defeated. In the early 2000s, Ivan Marovic helped found and lead the student-led nonviolent movement, Otpor, which helped oust Slobodan Milosevic from power. Otpor was responsible for launching what has become one of the most cited examples of a humorous dilemma action, involving a barrel, a bat, and a picture of Milosevic.

Ivan Marovic:

“In many cases, the good, humorous acts of civil resistance are actually delivering a punch line that is actually addressing the setup that was already created by the regime. For example, when we had the action collecting money for Milosevic’s retirement. The whole setup was already in place before we did it, because he was doing his third term as president, he was doing something that was considered too much that maybe he should step down, and all that stuff. And of course, the way we did it was we put a barrel in the street where we were collecting that money and the sign on the barrel was like, ‘We are collecting money for Milosevic’s retirement at the time, but if because of his economic policies you don’t have any money, bang the barrel.’ So, people were banging the barrel because it was fun, and when they were banging the barrel, more people would show up, and they were like, ‘What’s going on here?’. Then they would read the same sign and then they bang the barrel. So you see the engagement, the people are actually participating in the joke, and so it’s not just that they are collecting money for Milosevic’s retirement, but the explanation why people don’t have money—they don’t have money because of Milosevic’s economic policies. So it’s a double-edged critique. And then, finally in the end, not just so the people get involved, but finally at the end because of all this noise and people banging the barrel, the police show up. And then you have the next stage, which is when the members of the regime unwillingly actually join the joke. And so they show up, and they’re like, ‘Whose barrel is this?’, and nobody knows because all these people are just there because they heard the noise, so they finally decide it’s safest for them to remove the barrel because it’s the source of all this commotion and all these people gathering around it, so they decided to take it away. So the way we interpreted it, we took out the cameras and we snapped pictures and we say, ‘Police arrested the barrel!’ So now this is another layer of the

same joke, and people who joined the police, they joined the police to fight crime or to arrest criminals or to be respected. They didn't join the police to arrest barrels. That wasn't their idea of police work. So, they end up questioning the wisdom of the leadership of the people who actually told them to go in and do this kind of thing. So that weakened the loyalties they felt towards that leadership, so there is another component to it."

Learning Objectives

As an introduction to this chapter, this short documentary features the stories of activists, organizers, and scholars exploring the different types and applications of nonviolent methods. As you watch, please consider the following questions:

- What constitutes a nonviolent action beyond protests?
- How can methods of nonviolent action create a dilemma for their adversary?
- What helps ensure that nonviolent action is used effectively?

Activity

There are many different tools of nonviolence. In the activity below, select which pictures you think show tools of nonviolence in action.

Tools of Nonviolent Action

In this activity, you will review a few photos. Select if you think the picture depicts a nonviolent action tool.

1. Does this picture show a nonviolent action tool?



Protest after the military coup in Myanmar(Myanmar Speech 4, The New York Times)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

2. Does this picture show a nonviolent action tool?



A piano concert (Do the Lan, Pexels)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

3. Does this picture show a nonviolent action tool?



Violence erupts during protest in Kashmir (Atul Loke, New York Times)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

Activity Feedback

1. The photo shows what looks to be a peaceful protest using signs and symbols. The protestors do appear to be using tools of nonviolence.
2. This photo could very well show a tool of nonviolent action. Music and performances are often used as tools of nonviolence. It really depends on the context in which the pianist is performing.
3. It is challenging to determine if this photo depicts tools of nonviolence. It is clear that violence has erupted due to the presence of smoke in the background. However, were the individuals peacefully protesting before it turned violent? Was the violence depicted used to counter nonviolent action? Again, the context matters.

Methods of Nonviolent Action

198 Methods of Nonviolent Action

Maria Stephan:

One aspect of nonviolent movements that makes them particularly poignant—not to mention highly creative—is the wide variety of tactics available to participants. This broad spectrum of tactics enables lots of people with different skills, physical abilities, and risk tolerance levels to join nonviolent campaigns and movements. Dr. Gene Sharp documented almost 200 nonviolent methods in his 1973 classic, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. And every new campaign or movement around the world invents its own new and innovative methods.

Gene Sharp classified the methods of nonviolent actions into three broad categories: protest and persuasion; non-cooperation; and intervention.

Protest and persuasion include actions such as petitions, leaflets, picketing, candlelight vigils, the wearing of symbols, singing, protests, walk-outs, and symbolic actions such as coordinated turning on and off of lights and the banging of pots and pans. This category is primarily symbolic in nature. However, such tactics can be very effective beyond the symbolic, and risky if they take place in a country in which any forms of organized political descent or assembly is illegal or outlawed.

The main purpose of protest and persuasion actions is to send a message that something is wrong in society and people are ready to take action. This category of tactics is most commonly associated with the conversion mechanism of change that we discussed earlier. Protest and persuasion actions may pave the way to more targeted, disruptive, and/or potentially high risk actions later on when a movement has stronger organization and capacity.

Non-cooperation, the second category of tactics, consists of social, economic, and political forms of non-cooperation—such as social

ostracism, strikes, work shut-downs, withdrawals from bank accounts, stay-at-homes, and boycotts by various groups that could include consumers, workers, traders, and management. Non-cooperation means that people stop obeying the opponent and withdraw their support from the opponent's system of power and control. Another way to think about these tactics is as acts of omission—or not doing something your opponent wants you to do—as opposed to acts of commission—which means actively doing something your opponent wants you to stop.

There are many forms of social economic and political non-cooperation methods. Some of these methods require many people in order to be effective. Often, these methods to include consumer boycotts or work slowdowns allow large segments of a society's population to participate without putting them at a great risk.

The third category of nonviolent tactics is nonviolent intervention. This includes such actions as sit-ins, blocking roads, overloading facilities, establishing parallel or alternative institutions, occupying buildings, and acts of civil disobedience—and even deliberately seeking imprisonment. These methods directly disrupt the ability of the opponent to function and/or allow a movement to dissociate from a power structure by becoming self-reliant or self-sufficient in certain areas. The risk level is generally higher for this category of tactics and the level of coordination necessary to succeed is great. However, methods of nonviolent intervention can sometimes have a large impact with relatively few people participating in them. Because of the risk involved, generally the people who carry out methods of nonviolent intervention should be the most highly trained and those willing to assume greater risk.

The selection of nonviolent tactic flows from a movement's strategic goals. Tactics are typically chosen according to a movement's desire to either broaden their base of movement supporters and increase their active participation; to build the capacity of civilians to resist and maintain nonviolent discipline; to withdraw the people's cooperation from the status quo power structures; to weaken the opponents' pillars of support by undermining the loyalties of those who support them; to increase the

movement's pressure and intensity over time; and, importantly, to enhance the movement's reliance—particularly in light of potential or real opponent repression, both violent and nonviolent.

In identifying and choosing nonviolent actions, which is obviously driven by the context, strategists must first do their background homework and research about which tactic or set of tactics makes strategic sense at a particular point in the campaign or movement. They must select participants for the action; they must pick the target for the action—it could be a law, a practice, or even a particular pillar of support. Finally, they must build a record of success by choosing specific, achievable objectives and declaring small victories along the way.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[List: 198 Methods of Nonviolent Action](#)

Practitioners of nonviolent struggle have an entire arsenal of “nonviolent weapons” at their disposal. This document lists 198 of them, classified into three broad categories: nonviolent protest and persuasion, noncooperation (social, economic, and political), and nonviolent intervention. A description and historical examples of each can be found in volume two of *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, by Gene Sharp.

Tactics Part 1

Acts of Omission vs. Acts of Commission

Hardy Merriman:

There are different ways that we can think about the wide variety of tactics of actions in civil resistance. One way we can divide up different kinds of actions is by thinking about them as acts of omission or acts of commission.

Now, acts of omission are where people choose to not do things that they're expected to do, supposed to do, or required by law to do, and there are a wide array of these kinds of actions. For example, people can refuse to pay taxes; people can refuse to work or work slowly; students can decide not to go to school; people can refuse to buy certain products, obey certain social customs, recognize certain holidays. There are a lot of ways that people can choose to simply omit—to simply not do what they're expected to do or required to do.

The second category of tactics will be tactics of commission. This is where people actually do things where they're not supposed to do or that in fact are illegal to do. So, in some societies protesting, certain symbols, displaying certain banners, engaging in acts of civil disobedience—all of these could be tactics of commission, where people choose to do things, again, that go against expectations or in fact the law.

A third category would actually be a combination of both of these. And so, examples would be a boycott where people choose to not buy a certain product as a boycott, and, in fact, actively choose to buy a different product at the same time. That's a boycott. It's a combination of both. Another example would be the creation of alternative institutions—for example, a school. An alternative school could be created; I could create an alternative school that taught about civil resistance and that would be an act of commission—something I wasn't expected to do or supposed to do,

necessarily. If that school starts drawing students out of their regular activities, that would be the act of omission.

Now, there are few things that come out of looking at tactics this way. The first is that there's a vast potential for creativity here. There are so many rules in things we're supposed to do or not supposed to do. If the bending or breaking of each one of those rules represents potential for a tactic, it's amazing, actually, how many different ways people can think of to exercise civil resistance. That doesn't mean, certainly, that all tactics would necessarily be strategic, but—without violence—breaking or defying expectations, we can see that there are still a vast array of ways that people can choose to disobey and exercise omission or commission.

Concurrent with that point, we can see that there is potential for a lot of new tactics to be developed. Gene Sharp was one of the foremost researchers and scholars in this field—actually, one of the ways he defined civil resistance or nonviolent action movements was through looking at their tactics, tactics of omission and commission. Gene Sharp catalogued 198 different methods in 1973 and published them, but there hundreds more because, again, the potential for shifting obedience, shifting consent, defying expectations, are so huge and so vast, indeed, many movements create more and more tactics by their creativity.

The third point that comes out of looking at tactics as omission and commission is we can see that civil resistance is really kind of a universal phenomenon and is deeply rooted in human psychology. Children are very adept at understanding what they want to do and don't want to do. They are very adept and sometimes strategic in understanding how to exercise their choices around omission and commission. The basic impulse in all of us is, often, to do what we want to do and to not do what we don't want to do, and, to the extent that that is a fundamental human psychological foundation, we can see that, actually, civil resistance is a natural part of human behavior. What a movement does is it takes that psychological foundation and finds ways to exercise it in targeted and strategic ways to achieve political, economic, or social outcomes.



An act of omission is a refusal to perform acts that are typically required by custom or law. An act of commission is the performance of an act that is not expected or allowed.

Dispersed vs. Concentrated Actions

Maria Stephan:

Methods of dispersion involve acts that are spread out over a wider area, such as consumer boycotts, stay-aways and go-slow actions at the workplace. Dispersion methods: like the consumer boycotts in South Africa, intentional obstructionism at the workplace by the Germans during the French occupation of the Ruhr; labor strikes by oil workers during the Iranian revolution; and the famous banging of pots and pans by Chileans during anti-Pinochet movement.

Acts of dispersion are important because they force an opponent to spread out its repressive apparatus over a wider area; afford greater protection and anonymity to participants; and allow participants to engage in less risky actions. Alternating between methods of concentration and methods of dispersion reduces the effectiveness of the opponent's repression and helps the campaign maintain the initiative. It enhances the campaign adaptability, resilience and room for maneuver, when the state or other power holder focuses its repression on a particular tactic. This is particularly critical when repression makes some tactics—for example, street protest—highly risky and dangerous.

Campaigns with larger numbers of participants are more likely to produce tactical innovations. Tactical diversity and innovation enhances the ability of the nonviolent resistance to strategically out-maneuver the opponent. It also increases the resilience of a movement, which sociologist Kurt Schock refers to as the capacity of contentious actors to continue to mobilize collective action, despite the actions of opponents aimed at constraining or inhibiting their activities.

In conclusion, it is strategically critical for campaigns and movements to diversify tactics and alternate between methods of dispersion and concentration. This is important both for the resiliency of the movement and its ability to outmaneuver the opponent, stay on the offensive and create different pressure points that can help shift power in the conflict.



PRACTICAL TIP

Using methods of both concentration and dispersion reduces the effectiveness of opponent repression and builds campaign resilience.

Tactics Part 2

High Risk vs. Low Risk Actions

Daryn Cambridge:

Gene Sharp has given the world of nonviolent action one of its greatest gifts in his 198 methods of nonviolent action. There's no question that for over 30 years, it has exposed movements and action-takers to the numerous nonviolent weapons they have at their disposal. That being said, some of the ways in which these methods are categorized can be a bit too academic for a movement to effectively, creatively, or strategically discuss or explore them as actions in their arsenal. And so, the categories that Sharp lays out: they are, one: the category of nonviolent protest and persuasion. The second category he lays out is economic, political and social non-cooperation. And, the third category he lays out is nonviolent intervention. And those categories can and have been deconstructed so that specific methods can be reorganized into more useful categories, ones that are more action- or goal-oriented, if you will.

So, for example, it might be more useful for these methods to be organized into the categories of high, medium, and low risk. This type of categorization will, of course, depend on the specific context of a struggle or a movement. So, let's take nonviolent protest and persuasion methods—like street demonstrations. Now, street demonstrations in a country like Denmark carries far less risks than street demonstrations in a country like Iran, for example. Or, let's take a look at an economic non-cooperation method—like a strike. Organizing a workers' strike against a mining company in West Papua is going to carry far more risk than organizing a strike against a McDonald's in France, let's say. Or, let's take a look at nonviolent intervention method—like an occupation of space, the occupation of Tahrir Square in Egypt put a lot of people at high risk of imprisonment, of beatings, torture, and even death in some cases. The

occupation of Wall Street did lead to arrests and some physical altercations with police, but was not nearly as high risk as Tahrir.

The contextualization required for this type of re-categorization into high, medium, and low risk is part of why it may make more sense for a movement to view and explore their tactical and method choices in this way. It requires that they analyze their battlefield before discussing and selecting tactics. Which of these tactics would be high risk, given the environment in which we are operating? If we do choose high risk methods, do we have enough people who would be willing to participate in such actions? If we choose low risk methods, will it generate the kind of attention that we are seeking? These are important questions to consider.

So, after such an analysis, when looking at one's array of nonviolent methods, decisions can be made more readily, depending on what kind of effect the method is intended to have or what kinds of peoples or groups the movement hopes will participate in the action. If the movement hopes for a larger diverse turnout for an action, medium to low risk actions, for example, are probably a wiser choice. If it's determined that the campaign's success relies on the brave actions of a few in order to create the desired outcome, then high risk actions might be a better choice.

In short, protests and street demonstrations: these are methods that are commonly associated with nonviolent movements and, as a result, they can become a default or a go-to method for a movement to use. However, the process of choosing methods would be better served if analyzed from the levels of high, medium, and low risk, depending on the specific environment and context in which the movement is operating.

Constructive vs. Obstructive Actions

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

One way to look at methods of nonviolent action is to distinguish between constructive methods and obstructive methods. Constructive methods of nonviolent action focus on creating something new, building towards the

movement's vision and goals. It's a way for movements to channel their energy towards positive, constructive actions—such as building a community garden in a vacant lot or pooling neighborhood tools and resources so that everybody can share them. Obstructive methods of nonviolent action, on the other hand, are aimed at obstructing and disrupting everyday processes, procedures, and ways of life. These obstructive methods could include methods of nonviolent intervention such as sit ins, blockades and occupation or the overloading of systems.

Both obstructive and constructive methods are forms of resistance, but they manifest themselves in different ways. For Gandhi, the sword of nonviolence has two edges. On the one hand, the edge of nonviolence takes a cooperative approach—cooperation with all that is good. On the other hand, the edge of the nonviolent sword takes a disruptive approach—it takes a non-cooperative approach with evil. So nonviolence is both resistance to and non-cooperation with this evil or injustice. It is cooperating and collaboration with the good and working to create and construct the vision of the future. In this sense cooperation with good becomes a way for movements to declare what it is that they stand for, to affirmatively state the vision that they are seeking and that they represent.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Video: Holograms for Freedom](#)

On April 10, 2015, nearly 18,000 protesters—projected as holograms—marched in front of the Spanish Parliament in Madrid, Spain to protest a group of “citizen security” laws.

Tactics Part 3

Aggression & Conciliation

Althea Middleton-Detzner:

The aggression conciliation model is a part of the Kingian Nonviolence curriculum. It addresses the third principle of Kingian Nonviolence which is to attack forces of evil, not the people who are doing evil. The aggression conciliation model looks at people facing a problem or injustice and imagines that there are two responses, two approaches or modes of addressing this issue: aggression and conciliation. It suggests that people focus their aggression on the conditions and root causes of the conflict, and for people to focus their conciliation efforts towards people—potential allies. The model cautions against directing your aggression towards people—as this can lead to hostility and violence—and it cautions against directing conciliation towards the conditions, as this can lead people to accept living under unjust conditions, to choose to do nothing, to become apathetic.

We can see the aggression conciliation model manifested on the tactical level as well. There are nonviolent methods of aggression using high energy actions, confrontational actions, or actions that attack or disrupt a given situation. There are also methods of nonviolent actions that are more conciliatory, they focus on accepting, understanding. The aggression conciliation model looks at five key factors that influence the dynamics of a social conflict.

The first is: what are the conditions of the conflict? What are the factors that are contributing to the problem or to the root causes of the conflict?

Secondly, it looks at the people and society. This includes people on all sides of the issue, people who are a part of the movement as well as those who are directly involved in or contributing to the conflict.

The third factor we look at is human conciliation. Where should human conciliation be applied? It should be directed at potential allies as a way of

pulling them towards the movement to support the issues that the movement is about.

The fourth factor we look at is human aggression. Where should people's aggression be directed? It should be directed at the conditions of the conflict.

And it is through the fifth factor nonviolent leadership—the organizing, mobilization, and activating of people power—that real change can occur. Nonviolent leadership is the process of directing people's energies towards addressing the root causes of the conflict and changing the conditions of the conflict, rather than reacting to the people involved in the problem.



“Man must evolve...a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr. —

Adapting Tactics to Context

Les Kurtz:

There is no non-violent civil resistance manual that can be used in every single situation. In fact, tactics and ideas always have to be adapted to a particular cultural, social, and historical context. So let's talk a little about some examples of this and how it affects strategy, leadership, tactical choice how the message is communicated, that sort of thing.

The tactics that a movement uses has to resonate with the audience. We know, from Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan's work, that the bottom line for success of a movement is the level of participation. The higher the level of participation, the more likely the movement is to succeed. So activists, potential allies, recruits, and so on are more likely to be involved in a movement if the resistance is tailored to the specific situation where they are operating. The same is true of creating possible defectors from elites, from security forces, from the allies and the status quo.

The tactics of resistance have to match the levels and types of repression that a movement is facing. So, for example, in high repression contexts, activists will use lower risk tactics. In Argentina, for example, where there was a severe dictatorship and the slightest bit of opposition that was being expressed could result in people disappearing, people agreed to bang on their pots and pans at home or out on the balconies at a particular time at night. So what this meant is that people couldn't get arrested for banging their pots and pans, but at a particular moment in the evening, people heard this happening all over the city and they realized that there was a widespread resistance. Oftentimes, we see other kinds of low risk tactics such as funerals. Sometimes funerals are the only places where people can gather when there is a high level of repression.

Another way of adapting resistance to particular situations is to take advantage of what I like to call the aesthetics of resistance. That is using culture—the arts, cultural institutions—to try to address and express resistance or dissonance. So, for example, one of my favorites is the U.S. civil rights movement. The civil rights movement in the United States was cultivated, first of all, by the blues and then rock music, as the blues morphed into rock music, which allowed African American culture—in a highly segregated situation and context—[to become] part of mainstream US culture through the attraction young people had to African American music. Then the churches got involved and they became crucial to the development of the civil rights movements. So we had these cultural institutions—the music industry and the churches—playing a really key role. When President Obama and Michelle Obama celebrated the music of the movement at a special concert at the White House a couple of years

ago, President Obama noted that Dr. King said that they knew where they could organize when they found people singing. So, the music was used, first of all, to prepare the ground, to cultivate the soil for the civil rights movement, and then explicitly used to motivate people to actually engage in action and to empower them as they were resisting.

Now people singing is sometimes a problem. In Chile, people were singing, “He [Pinochet] is going to fall! He is going to fall!” And they were dancing in the street, and this so annoyed General Pinochet that he banned singing. Certainly, people have been arrested just for singing in public in West Papua.

Elsewhere, music has been used to mobilize large crowds of people. In Estonia, for example, sometimes called the Singing Revolution—there is a very nice documented film about it—large scale singing of patriotic nationalistic songs were used to mobilize resistance against the Soviet control over their country.

Another really important tactic that, again, has to be tailored to a particular situation is the use of humor. Humor plays a big role in a lot of movements. It helps to disarm opponents; it bonds potential recruits with resisters. But humor, of course, is often culture specific—you can’t have like a manual of jokes that could be used in every resistance situation.

There is a wonderful story of Otpor in Serbia, where they set up a barrel with a picture of the dictator Milošević on it and encouraged people to whack the barrel. This frustrated the security forces, who finally just came in and hauled away the barrel, but that resulted in a great backfire: a headline about arresting the barrel.

Another important way in which tactics have to be tailored to a situation has to do with the key institutions that are usually involved in resistance movements—especially religious institutions, workers organizations like unions, and universities. They each have their own organizational culture and so people have to find ways of resonating with those cultures.

So, how does this adaptation affect strategy, leadership, tactical choice—these kind of things? Well, really, framing is the key here—what the social movements scholars talk about in terms of framing the issue. So it has to involve creativity, cultural sensitivity, political savvy, knowing a lot about the particular situation in which the movement is taking place, and, of course, humor.

Now, the real genius of this kind of framing was the two the most well-known nonviolent resisters: Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. Now Dr. King—if you take a look at his “I Have a Dream” speech, his iconic speech—if you look at how he frames the movement, he calls upon these two central cultural themes of his audience: the American Dream and Christianity. So, what he does is he sets up the situation in which, if people consider themselves to be real American, that they believe in American values, then they have to be also in favor of the civil rights agenda. Similarly, if you are a real Christian, Dr. King implied, then you have to believe in the civil rights movement. And so, he brought together these deep themes in American culture, speaking primarily to an American audience, to try and make civil rights something that was American, patriotic American, and Christian. So, he was tailoring that to his audience.

Now, Mahatma Gandhi did the same thing in India with Indian freedom, where he took elements from various religious traditions in his own context, but then he had two major campaigns. One was a cloth boycott—a boycott of British cloth—and the second was the Salt March, the iconic Salt March. In the cloth boycott, he called upon the Indians to stop buying British cloth and instead to produce their own. So, people were encouraged to spin—getting a spinning wheel, spinning their own thread, weaving their own clothes. And this went right to the heart of the economic system that British used to control India and its colonies. And so, it was not only symbolic, but it also had to do with the political and economic system as they were structured.

Gandhi’s other major cultural adaptation was his iconic Salt March, where he marched for 40 days to the sea and then made salt from the Indian ocean, as a way of resisting British control in a very specific symbolic way,

because the British had a monopoly on the manufacture of salt and they had a tax on the salt. So, again, he set up a dilemma action for the British that made sense in that particular context because, if the British just ignored them, [the British] would look weak, but if they arrested them or repressed [the Indians] for just making their own salt out of the ocean, [the British] looked silly and harsh.

So, in all of these instances, what we see is that the sort of strategy and tactics of nonviolent resistance are working better in situations in which people take some kind of broad ideas of how to resist the system, but then adapt it to their own particular cultural and economic and political situation, so that the message of the movement resonates with people they are trying to involve in the movement, people to mobilize for the resistance, and potentially to defect other people within the elites to become involved in the movement.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Speech: "I Have A Dream"](#)

On August 28, 1963, during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered a speech to an audience of 250,000. In that historic address, King carefully framed the message of civil rights within the context of American values. Click the link above to watch or view the [speech transcript](#).

Sequencing Methods

Tactical Mapping

Hardy Merriman:

The case of the United Farm Workers relates to how migrant laborers in the United States were able to form a union. In 1965, in California and other parts of the western United States—really, all parts of the United States, but especially the west—there were migrant laborers who would go from farm to farm picking produce, fruit, vegetables, getting certain amount of money for it, and then moving on to the next farm, following wherever the harvest went.

Collectively, these farm workers were highly exploited in the United States. In fact, the average life expectancy of a farm worker in the mid-1960s was approximately 49 years. There were labor abuses, child labor, all manner of abuses, because farm workers were particularly written out of labor protections in U.S. law.

In 1965, at several grape vineyards in California, Filipino American—and then subsequently Mexican American—farm workers went on strike at a total of 48 farms. They struck those farms, they refused to work, they formed pickets around [the farms], and tried to attract attention. They tried to get the Catholic Church involved; they tried to get student activists and university campuses involved; and there was a great campaign for several months. And yet, in November of 1965, the farmers harvested a record crop of grapes.

So, if we think about a tactical map for a moment, and we think about the farmers in the middle being a corporation, for several months in 1965, the attempt was to cut off labor, to cut off that relationship, to deny them labor. However, just cutting off that relationship wasn't effective because [the grape growers] were able to harvest a record crop. How did they do it?

They got a lot of strikebreakers: they got a lot of workers to come in and pick and harvest, even while other workers were striking and not working.

Now, in 1965 and the fall, what the farm workers chose to do, who were on strike, is they chose to go to the unions that worked at the shipping docks in San Francisco, in Oakland, in California, and say, basically, “We want to become a union. You are [already] a union. Don’t ship these grapes. Let these grapes sit out in the sun and go bad before you ship them, and then we will have a victory.” And that’s actually exactly what happened. They went to the transportation workers union, the transportation workers agreed to let the grapes sit, and the product went bad.

Now, if we think about our tactical map, here is another relationship that the farmers needed to function. They needed transportation. When labor, as well as transportation started to be cut off and pressured, it actually cost the farmers money and gave the union more power. But that itself also wasn’t enough over time, and so, subsequently, the farm workers chose two major corporations that sold a lot of grapes to target. And, what they did is they sent students, farm workers, clergy people, and other volunteers to different cities in the United States to try to get consumers to stop buying grapes that were not picked by unions. In fact, what they tried to do, if we look at our tactical map, is cut off the consumer relationship there.

Over time, that became quite effective, and they increased their tactical repertoire further. Some volunteers and supporters of that movement blocked food distribution centers. Others cut off the relationship of stores trying to sell grapes—they did what are called the secondary boycott, where they actually stood outside stores and said, “If stores are selling non-union grapes, don’t buy anything here.”

By cutting off just one relationship, the farm workers weren’t able to [succeed]. By designing a sequence of tactics and campaigns to find new leverage points, new targets, and new ways of exerting pressure over five years, the farm workers were able to unionize 20,000 California migrant laborers in California picking in grape vineyards. That represented 85% of the migrant laborers working at grape vineyards in the entire state. They

had 150 contracts, and they inspired other movements and campaigns, as well, in other states—focusing on lettuce, citrus, and other agricultural products. It was through the sustained sequence of different tactics and different leverage points over time, the innovation involved in doing that was able to create this outcome between 1965 and 1970.



PRACTICAL TIP

To create a tactical map, focus on human relationships – people, groups, organizations, and institutions – and examine how they relate to and affect your issue.

Developing a Campaign Strategy

Nadine Bloch:

The first thing that happens when a group wants to organize a campaign or within a movement particularly is that they have to look at political education and consciousness raising. getting all their members up to a certain level or doing outreach to bring people into a certain level of understanding about the issues and what the problems are. And once you do that I mean this is the beginning of a strategic planning process and you would look at where you are in relation to where you would like to be and then set yourself some goals. It's really critical of where you are actually organizing on the ground that you have both short term and long term goals. People need to feel tangibly that they are making differences in their own lives and in the situations on the ground so very manageable, realistic and short term is critical, so that you can have a celebration of a victory within the ongoing campaign.

And also within these goals there has to be attention paid to both internal, external and what I call network goals. So internal would be about how you redevelop yourself and your organization, the people you work with, the capacities that you have. It might be fundraising, it might be leadership skills, it could be training people to write press releases, this is all part of internal goals. External goals people understand more as what your program looks like on the outside, what kind of activities you are doing, what kind of educational work, what kind of actions you might take. And there is a nebulous third group that's very important to think about which is networking or outreach to the community that would use your services or interact with your events. Without these three focus areas, you don't have to do them all the same time, but without these three focus areas at different points within a short body of time, you won't survive or make it a long term as a movement. So it's really important to have both internal and these network or outreach goals.

So when you have all these good ideas about where you want to go with strategy and it's written down on a piece of paper, you have some goals. It's really a leap for some groups to think about how to get it off the paper into the street or into the world that you are living in. Really importantly one needs to ask from the perspective of somebody that you would want to join your work. What's in it for me, what are you offering to the people that you are working with? It's really important that you listen to people when they answer these questions, a lot of it would have to do with meeting basic needs and basic needs could be just simply having someone else who thinks the same way that you do. It could also be providing clean water or drinking water or could be educational work. So thinking about how to actually serve the community that you want to bring in and work with in your movement and in your campaign is really important.

It's very important also to think about using the culture and cultural signifiers of the group that you are working with and make sure that people not only feel included and welcomed, but are heard and are embraced for what they bring to the work and that's extraordinarily powerful. And it's also very critical in the beginning a lot of ideas start with one or two people; they are talking to each other as friends. It's really important to build a group to

do support and sometimes the groups are small. You know three, four, five people sometimes they grow in numbers and then have to be split into smaller groups. Sometimes we call them affinity groups because they work together or teams or committees and it's really critical, not only for actual physical support, everybody can't do everything.

So you have somebody write a press release, you have someone do outreach, you have somebody do logistics. But also for emotional and physical support and sheer numbers of being able to reach more and more people, because we know that the power of people's power of movements comes from ever increasing numbers of people and diverse people involved in that work and so that's really important. And beyond that when you start to think about making alliances or building networks or web of connections with groups that can support each other in the movement building and in the long term campaign where there has to be a way to acknowledge that there is a basic level of agreement of how you work together. It doesn't have to include everything that every organization does but an alliance or a loose network can be very powerful and bring in more and more people who will then support the short term and long term campaigns.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[On the Ground Interview](#)

In this interview, conducted by the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, we hear from Nadine Bloch, a trainer and practitioner of nonviolent direct action. Nadine has worked with several activist groups and has been involved in several campaigns for the environment, social justice, and civil rights. Bloch expands on “traditional” conceptions of nonviolent direct

action by stressing the importance of creativity, art, and culture in making these actions powerful and effective in ways that resonate with activists and help build the capacity of movements.

Nonviolent Action and Negotiation

Nonviolent Action and Negotiation

Maria Stephan:

Negotiation and nonviolent action are two skill-based, nonviolent techniques that are used to engage constructively with conflict. Both techniques, negotiation and nonviolent action, are concerned with leverage, with power, and with strategic planning and action. Leading negotiations experts Roger Fisher, Billy Ury, and Bruce Patton define negotiation broadly as, and I quote, “Back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and others that are opposed.” Nonviolent action, of course, involves the active prosecution of conflict using various forms of protests, non-cooperation, and intervention without the threat or use of violence and involves doing things or refusing to do certain other things.

There are theoretical as well as practical linkages between negotiation and nonviolent action. Let’s first talk about a few commonalities. The first commonality involving negotiation and nonviolent action is that both are grounded in the principle that conflict should be engaged and not avoided. Negotiation expert Billy Ury wrote that we need more conflict, not less, and that the goal should be to transform conflict from its violent destructive forms to constructive forms of nonviolent action and negotiation.

The second commonality is the importance placed on power analysis in both negotiations and nonviolent action and how practically to deal with power asymmetries and a conflict. According to negotiations theory, developing the “best alternative to a negotiated agreement,” or the so-called BATNA, and diminishing that of the other party, is the main way to push the other party into negotiations and to reduce power imbalances.

Developing a strong BATNA is one of the most important ways to deal with a seemingly more powerful opponent. With nonviolent action, consent and

power go hand in hand. We know that power shifts can occur as the result of large numbers of people engaging in acts of civil disobedience and non-cooperation. Mahatma Gandhi and the civil resistance campaign against British colonial rule was able to impose serious political, economic, and moral costs on the occupying power. These costs led to the eventual roundtable negotiations.

The third commonality is the focus on strategy and strategic action. The negotiation literature emphasizes the importance of knowing one's opponents and anticipating their moves. Pre-negotiation analysis and planning are crucial. So, too, is pre-campaign planning and analysis for nonviolent action, and in preparing for the opponents' likely responses to any cause of nonviolent action. Coalition building is an essential aspect of both successful negotiations and nonviolent action. Listening to a broad spectrum of stakeholders and finding ways to bring in their skills, networks, and resources to bear is critical to success. To take one example, the Polish Solidarity Movement in the 1970s brought together workers, intellectuals, the Catholic Church, trade unions, and international journalists and other allies from the outside: this coalition building required negotiations.

Negotiations and nonviolent action are different and involve different techniques, but we should think of them as mutually reinforceable, rather than mutually exclusive. They have often been used together successfully over the course of nonviolent campaigns and movements. Martin Luther King, Jr., while sitting in the Birmingham prison, wrote in 1963:

"You may well ask: 'Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches, etc.? Isn't negotiation a better path?' You are exactly right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and establish such creative tension that a community that has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored."

In the Serbian Otpor movement, the students used negotiations with the security forces to communicate an alternative political future and to appeal

to their interest and sense of patriotism—greatly helping and prompting security forces to defect over the cause of that nonviolent revolution.

During the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa, there were a number of secret negotiations between Nelson Mandela, the ANC officials, and white government officials, paving the way to a successful democratic transition. But absent the pressure created through massive civil resistance, it is unlikely that those negotiations would have led to a successful outcome.

Negotiations were, furthermore, used between the various parts of the U.S. civil rights movement, including the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee—or the so-called SNCC—the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference to maintain unity and to present a coherent front against segregation officials.

Nonviolent action can further negotiations by improving one's BATNA and lowering the BATNA of the other party. Gandhi's Salt March is a classic example. To defy a British law that prohibited Indians from making their own salt and levied a tax on its purchase, Gandhi organized a 240-mile march to Dandi beach, where, at the end of the march, he and hundreds of thousands of marchers symbolically turned sea water into salt. This put the British in a dilemma and worsened their BATNA. Imprisoning the salt marchers would create martyrs and an outcry. Letting [the marchers] go would encourage them to commit further acts of disobedience and defiance. By reducing the British colonial regime's alternatives, the nonviolent action shifted power and led to concessions that eventually resulted in Indian independence.

Determining how to sequence negotiations and nonviolent action is a key part of any successful movement strategy. Activists and factions within movements often disagree over whether and when to negotiate with governments or other power holders. This happened during the Chinese Tiananmen protest and, more recently, it happened during the Gezi Park protest in Turkey. When to pause protest activity and start negotiating—and when to restart it without losing momentum—are very important tactical decisions.

In conclusion, we should recognize that negotiation and nonviolent action often work in tandem over the course of nonviolent action campaigns and movements. Negotiations are key to both building and maintaining movement unity and cohesion, and in pressuring and consolidating gains with the opponent. They should be thought of as two different but highly complementary nonviolent skill sets.



“You have to talk. When you are silent and don’t talk, it’s paramount to violence. Violence is a language of the inarticulate.”

– Dr. Bernard Lafayette –

The Role of External Actors

How External Actors Can Support Nonviolent Movements

Maria Stephan:

In nonviolent resistance, the role of external actors—whether they are governmental or nongovernmental—is always secondary to the role of local actors. Movements cannot be imported or exported. Building large diverse participant bases and coming up with nonviolent tactics that are appropriate to the local context are not something outsiders can do. In brief, nonviolent movements must be homegrown to succeed.

In *Why Civil Resistance Works*, Erica Chenoweth and I found that nonviolent movements are much less reliant on outside support than armed campaigns, which need weapons, sometimes air support, sanctuary, etc. from state and non-state actors. With the data we had, we found no correlation between direct state support to movements and successful outcomes. However, we did find that non-state support to campaigns before the period of mass mobilization seemed to correlate with success. And, we found out when a major state backer of an authoritarian regime withdrew that support—think the U.S. government’s decision to withdraw support from the Marcos regime in the Philippines—that seemed to correlate with success as well. However, such a withdrawal of patron support usually did not happen without mass mobilization by the people in that country.

Other scholars—including Véronique Dudouet, Jørgen Johannsen, Clifford Bob, and Sharon Nepstad have found mixed results when it comes to external aid to movement. Sharon Nepstad, a sociologist at the University of New Mexico, concluded that international actors may gain inappropriate levels of power and influence when they intervene in a struggle, and they do not always use that power effectively or appropriately. Erica Chenoweth and I are now conducting a separate study that will systematically collect and analyze data on external support to around 100 nonviolent campaigns

in order to better understand the impact of external support on the trajectories and outcomes of these movements. There is still a lot we do not know about the role of outside actors and, frankly, that we hope to learn from you all, so please do share your reflections on what you believe or have experienced to be either effective or ineffective outside support to movements.

When thinking about external support to nonviolent movements, we might divide that support into two major categories: those interventions that, first of all, create an enabling environment for nonviolent mobilization; and secondly, those interventions that provide catalytic support to activists and movements.

So, what do we mean by an enabling environment? This involves the legal, political, economic, and security conditions in a country that make it more or less likely that nonviolent civic mobilization will be able to sustain itself and to succeed. Laws prohibiting peaceful assembly or that make it impossible for [civil society organizations] CSOs to receive outside funding are examples of factors that influence the enabling environment. High levels of repression by the police or security forces in response to nonviolent protests is another example. Economic investment that helps maintain the political status quo [is another example]. Governments and other outside actors can influence these environmental factors through a range of tools, including sanctions, legal assistance to address restrictive laws targeting civil society, diplomatic pressure on governments that wrongfully imprison nonviolent activists, and even military contacts with security forces from non-democratic countries.

Catalytic support to activists and movements means providing them with resources and technical support they need to, for example, rent office space; pay for signs and banners and communication equipment; pay for legal fees for detainees, for medical treatment; to be able to travel to different parts of the country; to conduct outreach to different constituencies; to organize rallies, concerts and the like. It means providing skill-based training on movement building and strategic nonviolent actions, on and offline security, etc. The challenge for outside actors is to develop

flexible aid mechanisms that can support these non-traditional civil society actors in a timely fashion and based in the reality that most campaigns and movements are often decentralized, have many local leaders, work outside of normal institutions, may engage in confrontational behaviors, and they are not linear.

There are many different types of external actors. Foreign governments, for example, sometimes have aid in development assistance arms like the U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID]; UK Department for International Development, or DFID; the Swedish International Development Agency [SIDA]; and the like. These organizations can provide direct support or technical capacity building to civil society actors. You have diplomatic corps in governments which include diplomats, ambassadors, embassies which, out in the field, can have frequent contact with civil societies and governments alike. And the militaries of foreign governments often have close ties to militaries in other countries which also, of course, means leverage points.

Then there are intergovernmental organizations, which many of you will be familiar with. The United Nations High Commissioner For Human Rights [UNHCR] issues periodic reports about the human rights situation in countries. Special rapporteurs: an important one for our course is the UN Special Rapporteur on peaceful assembly and association. You have regional human rights bodies: the Organization of American States, the African Union. You have organizations like the OSCE, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which has played a critical role in monitoring elections and reporting on fraud, which has often been a catalyst or a trigger for nonviolent mobilization in different countries. You have the Community of Democracies, which is an intergovernmental body of over 100 states that was formed in 2000 and that works with governments and civil society to advance democracy and to challenge crackdowns on civic space around the world. Intergovernmental organizations, like the World Bank—which is increasingly recognizing the importance of civil society in combating corruption and advancing good governance and economic growth—are playing an important role. The Open Government Partnership is a multilateral initiative that aims to secure

concrete commitments from governments to promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

Then you have international nongovernmental organizations: so, famous human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and Freedom House that engage in advocacy around human rights and freedom issues. You have the global civil society network CIVICUS, that's played a key role in empowering activists and movements around the world; Transparency International, which has helped empower anti-corruption activists from different parts of the world; organizations that specialize in third party nonviolent intervention like Nonviolent Peaceforce; to organizations that do training and movement building and strategic nonviolent action, like the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict and Rhize.

Then you have diaspora groups, including the Students for a Free Tibet, which provide mouthpieces for local activists—they do fundraising and training. There are Nigerian activists, based in New York City and elsewhere, who are advocating on behalf of the Bring Back Our Girls movement. Then you have university and student groups, which, of course, played a very important role during the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa by pressing for campus divestment away from the apartheid government.

Then you have transnational advocacy groups or TANs—the great example being the East Timor Action Network, which was a transnational organization that played a critical role in mobilizing international support for East Timorese independence in the year 2002. Then, you have the category of transnational labor groups. So, here in Washington, we have the solidarity center of the AFL-CIO that has provided technical and solidarity support to workers and labor unions and trade unions around the world, and advocated on behalf of their right to organize and engage in collective bargaining.

Then, you have the category of corporations, which are sometimes seen as the bad guys in nonviolent movements given their sometimes collusion with repressive governments, particularly in the extractive industries. But, given their economic and trade clout, businesses are key actors. Technology giants like Google, Facebook, and Twitter have provided critical technologies and services to activists around the world. These same technologies, though, are also being used by governments to censor, survey, and the like. The sale of technologies equipped with censorship in surveillance abilities to repressive governments is proving to be a major challenge for nonviolent activists around the world.

Then you have the category of individuals. These can include Nobel Peace laureates; people like the Pope; George Soros of the Open Society Foundation—people whose voices, moral stature, and finances have carried lots of weight and who have been able to provide sometimes moral and material support to nonviolent activists and movements.



FEATURED RESOURCE

[Diplomat's Handbook](#)

A Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support is meant to present a wide variety of case studies documenting and explaining specific country experiences. It also identifies creative, human, and material resources available to Missions, the ways in which Missions and diplomats have supported requests in the past, and describes how such support has been applied. A review of these experiences bears out the validity of our belief in our inter-dependence. It will hopefully also provide practitioners with encouragement, counsel, and a greater capacity to support democrats everywhere.

Repertoire of Actions for External Actors

Maria Stephan:

In addition to these different categories of external actors, you have different types of support. So, the first, and probably the most obvious, is financial support, which is direct monetary assistance by governments and by nongovernmental actors to support activist projects or campaigns. These could include small grants by the National Endowment for Democracy, by the Open Society Foundation, or by German foundations like the Heinrich Boll Foundation.

The next category of support is moral or symbolic support. These include actions to amplify the voices of nonviolent activists so they don't feel like they are alone. It includes the use of nonviolent tactics in different countries to demonstrate solidarity to campaigns, to victims of human rights abuses. It includes supporting tours in different countries by nonviolent activists so they can explain their campaign, their movement, and why are engaging in nonviolent struggle.

Then you have the category of technical support. This can include providing books, translations, equipment to activists in campaigns in different countries. Organizations like the Albert Einstein Institution, the International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, and the American Friends Service Committee all provide this type of support.

You have the category of training support. So, this can be training everything from elections monitoring, budget monitoring, and social auditing, that organizations like the International Budget Partnership specialize in.

Civilian protection is another type of external support. This involves third party nonviolent intervention by groups like Peace Brigades International, Nonviolent Peaceforce, and Christian Peacemakers Teams, whose goal is to protect human rights defenders and deter violence—and this has been used effectively in places like Guatemala, Sri Lanka, and Palestine.

Then you have practical participation, which is direct participation in protest and other actions with local activists. This can be done by diplomats from embassies in-country or by third-party solidarity activists.

Then you have the category of sanctions. Sanctions can include travel bans, asset freezes, and either target individuals or sectors of a particular society.

Another category of external support is safe passage for defectors, which means providing asylum, amnesty, or incentives for elites to leave. This was an important form of support during the Libyan revolution when a number of diplomats and ambassadors from the Libyan government defected. Then you have the removal of support for a patron government, which involves threatening and actually cutting financial or military assistance, which is something that happened during the People Power campaign in the Philippines when the U.S. withdrew support for the Marcos regime.

The final category is preventing and mitigating repression, which might entail: UN Security Council resolutions that condemn violence against nonviolent protesters; diplomatic interventions—such that are highlighted in the Diplomat's Handbook for Democracy Development Support—or the use of military-to-military leverage—so, how militaries in democratic countries can influence the behaviors in the thinking of militaries and non-democracies. An important text in that regard is *Military Engagement: Influencing Armed Forces Worldwide to Support Democratic Transitions*.

So, there are a lot of different types of external actors and kinds of support that they can provide—both to influence the enabling environment and to provide direct support to activists and movements.

Let's talk about the disadvantages and advantages of outside support to nonviolent campaigns and movements. One obvious disadvantage is that direct financial support could undermine the local legitimacy and authenticity of nonviolent campaigns and movements. As we know, governments are often very eager to blame any form of dissent or opposition on outside actors and the provision of direct support can

sometimes add fuel to the fire. Over Reliance on external support could discourage local ownership and participation which, of course, is important for the success of nonviolent movements. External support could make it easier for regimes to crack down on activists or nonviolent movements. Sometimes, there are security risks for activists if they associate too closely with foreign governments and other outside actors.

Advantages of external support: international solidarity can certainly boost the morale of activists to show that they are not alone and that their voices are being heard. Certain forms of external support can help improve the skills knowledge and know-how of activists. Small amounts of targeted money can be very helpful for launching actions and campaigns and to communicate to different audiences. External interventions can increase pressure points on governments and help deter violence and repression.

What principles should guide external support for nonviolent campaigns and movements? First, it's important to know the local context. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to supporting activists and movements. Secondly, the consent of local actors is paramount. These actors, after all, are the ones putting their lives on the line to challenge injustices and oppression; they have the most to lose when it comes to outside intervention. Third, appreciate the risks and rewards. Again, context matters: there may be huge legal and other obstacles to providing and receiving assistance that outside actors should be very well aware of. Fourth, there should be some shared commitment to core values of tolerance, pluralism, and inclusivity between outside actors and local activists.

Finally I'll leave you with a question to consider. Given systematic attempts by governments and non-state actors around the world to shut down civic space and given the reality that authoritarian governments are learning from each other, do we, in the international community have a responsibility to push back against this pushback and to provide moral and material support to nonviolent activists who are realizing internationally recognized human rights and using nonviolent means to challenge injustices and oppression? What does the responsibility to assist mean?

Should there be an international norm focused on the responsibility to assist nonviolent activists and movements, and, if so, what would that norm mean in practice?

Managing Violence and Repression

The Paradox of Repression

Les Kurtz:

So what is the paradox of repression? Well, what it means is that: repression has unanticipated consequences—it can backfire on the people who are using it to try to demobilize a movement. So, it actually weakens the repressors; it sours public opinion toward the regime; it empowers the movement, the resistance; and it raises doubts among the supporters of the system who wonder, “What kind of system are we supporting?” Gene Sharp, in fact, tells organizers, when they are trying to repress, in fact, you are doing something right.

Lee Smithey and I have been thinking about repression as a line along a continuum of demobilization actions, things that authorities do to try to shut down a movement or to demobilize it. And it goes from overt violence on one end to hegemony on the other.

So, overt violence includes things like executions, assassinations, arrests, that sort of thing. And then, there has been a big trend among governments to use less lethal methods—things like pepper sprays, tasers, lasers, acoustic devices—active denial systems, they call them. And then, along that continuum is the idea of intimidation: either harassing or surveilling activists. Manipulation—co-opting or selectively facilitating some movements and not others. Then, what we call soft repression—that is things like stigmatizing, diversion, ridiculing activists or their leaders or the group. And then, finally, probably the most effective method of repressing is hegemony, where people internalize the legitimacy of the authority system. Latent repression, we might call it, where people self-center instead of getting involved in active resistance.

Part of what we are interested in is looking at what we call repression management. The repressors—the authorities—and the dissidents are both

trying to manage repression. So it's a kind of framing contest going on. So, we start with [Erving] Goffman's idea of "impression management"—that is, the role of performance or what Jeffrey Alexander calls "cultural pragmatics." And so, activists sometimes engage in preemptive choreography—that is, they plan ahead, they try to choreograph how repression and people's response is going to get played out. So, we have to connect with an audience in some kind of convincing and authentic ways.

Now, the main goal is to try to make the repression visible, because it won't backfire if it's not visible, if it doesn't generate what Goffman calls "moral outrage." So, there should be some kind of adept handling, reshaping of the flow of history in the desired direction. So, activists will try to enhance backfire by making it more visible when it happens and try to shape the frame of how it's interpreted.

Now, [David] Snow and [Robert] Benford, the people who work on framing of social movements, say that there are three framing tasks that have to be attended to: the diagnostic, the prognostic, and mobilizing. That is, the diagnostic: what's wrong? The prognostic: what's the solution? And then, mobilizing: how do you get people to actually act? So, the media becomes especially crucial in shaping how everyone views events of repression.

So, there are really three keys: shaping a frame; choreographing tactics that expose the injustice of some kind of repression; and thirdly, engaging in what's often called dilemma actions. The advantage of nonviolent resistance is that it reduces social boundaries and increases participation. Violence, on the other hand, enhances boundaries and increases the risk of participation.

First of all, activists can try to set the stage framing their cause in popular ways and encouraging the development of collective identities, ethnic identities, nationalism, or some other kind of group identity. So, when the movement is attacked by standing publics who have this kind of overarching identity are more likely to feel as if the attack was directed at them as well.

A second tactic is careful choreography of the tactics that contribute to diagnostic framing, so that the action itself labels or reveals the injustice of the system that's being resisted. So repression only makes the resisters' frame resonate even more strongly with the broader public of potential recruits. And then, it builds on preexisting cultural and social structures. So, collective identities can be activated by choreographing events—setting up events that symbolically or ritually express these deeply-held, sometimes sacred identities that people have, and it raises the cost of repression.

One advantage that nonviolent activists have is that they can empathize with agents of repression and they can develop more creative strategies for framing it. Rachel McNair, in fact, argues it would be helpful for nonviolent activists to become familiar with the symptoms of what she calls “perpetrator-induced traumatic stress.” That is, she calls it PITS—it's kind of like PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder], except it has to do with a kind of stress that's created by someone who is actually engaged in the acts of violence.

Thirdly, tactics can be designed that encourage some kind of ethical dilemmas among the authorities. They are often called dilemma actions. And this involves framing the confrontation in ways that force agents of the regime to reconcile the repression with their own ethical system. When repression occurs, then it's more easily interpreted as violating the shared ethical norms in a culture. So, it can help precipitate divisions within the ranks of the regimes or encourage sympathy for movement among bystanders who aren't involved but are observing what's going on.

Research Findings on Violent Flanks

Erica Chenoweth:

Violent flanks are simply elements of the population that either join the campaign and turn to violence, or emerge from outside the campaign, in a way, to sort of free-ride on the campaign's contentious moments. And violent flanks can be either intra-movement—that is, from within a

nonviolent movement—or they can just be inter-movement, which means they're more or less contemporaneous; they exist in same time in the same place but not necessarily directly linked to the otherwise nonviolent campaign.

What we know about the impacts of violent flanks now is that a lot of research happened in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s trying to understand whether violence actually helped otherwise nonviolent social movements. So, work by people like Herbert Haines, William Gamson, and others, [who were] trying to use events-level data to understand if a protest or a strike was disruptive or violent and if it actually got the political organization further toward its goals. Now, both of those authors concluded that, indeed, more disruptive and militant activity ended up helping these campaigns, in part because they were able to elicit more third-party support, which is how Haines describes success, or, according to Gamson's description, success is when they achieve their political goal.

Now, an important caveat to this study is this: first of all, Haines describes success as the ability to get support from external actors. He doesn't actually look at success as the achievement of the strategic outcome. And the way that Gamson actually defines violence is: he defines it as disruption. So, he actually says that when people engage in disruptive civil disobedience and very disruptive actions, like strikes, that counts as violence. I think that the way that these two scholars have defined their terms and measured them has given people a false sense that their conclusions mean that violence works. In fact, if anything, what violence does for nonviolent campaigns is maybe help them achieve some short-term progress or tactical objectives—like pulling in more attention to the movement or getting very radical people to become involved or to give them support.

However, in our data, the NAVCO Data, Kurt Schock and I have developed a study where we look empirically over time at the impacts of violent flanks and on the success rates at a strategic level—that is, whether the movements achieve their goals outright or not at the end of the campaign. And what we find is that, actually, there's a slight negative correlation

between a nonviolent campaign having a violent flank and the outcome of false success. Our argument is that this is mostly driven by the fact that nonviolent campaigns with violent flanks are typically smaller and more homogenous in terms of the people who participate. One can see this pretty concretely in any type of micro-event, where you see a number of people demonstrating. It might be a very diverse group of people who are demonstrating. And what might happen is that a small part of these participants might start to engage in violence. Now, if that happens, often the opponent will respond violently, and they'll start to employ crowd control tactics and, in some extreme cases, even lethal violence against the demonstrators.

Now, what's really critical is what happens next. What often happens next, in the case of campaigns with these violent flanks that sort of welcome or even encourage them, is that at the next demonstration, there are probably going to be fewer people and they are much more likely to be all young males. Why would that be the case? Because these are the most risk-acceptant people in the society and they're the ones who are, in some sense, biographically available for active street violence.

Now, the campaigns of nonviolent action that are very diverse and disciplined might have the same exact demonstration. In fact, even though they don't provoke the police, the police might actually start to repress them using crowd control or even lethal tactics sometimes. But, the really critical thing is that when these campaigns have been nonviolent, that kind of violence directed toward them will often draw even more participants and even more female participants and even more elderly participants.

This is the process of backfire. And when backfire happens, violence directed towards the movement actually increases the size of the mobilized participants. It turns out that that's a really important process in explaining whether these movements actually achieve strategic political success in the end or not. And for violent flanks to interrupt the process of expanding mobilization and to undermine the process of backfire is probably the main reason why these violent flanks have that negative impact on the overall success. So, in our paper—which is under review right now—we test these

kind of hypotheses on a number of different cases and we find that, in the end, even though many nonviolent campaigns succeed, even though they have violent flanks, that they're pretty risky and that most movements are probably a better off from a strategic perspective, if they can avoid, manage, or just not have violent flanks.



Backfire happens when violence directed towards the movement actually increases the size of the mobilized participants.



“By placing confidence in violent means, one has chosen the very type of struggle with which the oppressors nearly always have superiority.”

– Gene Sharp –

Case Study: Denmark

Case Study: Denmark

Confined within the walls of a South African jail, the young lawyer from India found no reason to complain.

Some say that jail is a palace. Others look upon it as a beautiful garden. Some others hold that through the jail gates, we shall pass from our present bondage, to freedom.

The year was 1907. The young lawyer from India was Mohandas Gandhi. Gandhi led his fellow Indians in a nonviolent struggle against racial oppression for eight years. They marched into forbidden territory. They burned their registration papers. They expected to be arrested—and they were not disappointed. Gandhi said: Nonviolent refusal to cooperate with injustice is the way to defeat it.” J.C. Smuts, the interior minister, tells Gandhi: “You reduce me to helplessness. How can we lay hands on you without looking like villains?” He became known for his ability to mobilize people, and his increasingly simple way of life. He gave his nonviolent weapon a name: “Satyagraha”—holding to truth. In every decade and on every continent, underdogs have taken up Gandhi’s strategies to fight for their rights and freedom.

Bernard Lafayette: “Nonviolence means fighting back. But you’re fighting back with other weapons.”

The power that Gandhi discovered changed the twentieth century.

Spring weather comes early in 1940—adding to the illusion that tranquil Denmark can remain untouched by the war that is spreading across Europe. Danish government has proclaimed neutrality and reduced its armed forces by half. Denmark intends to remain at peace. On the morning

of April 9, everything changes. Attacking by air, land, and sea, the German war machine meets token opposition in the south, but then Denmark orders its troops to lay down their arms.

Jytte Bruun: “We could not imagine that it had anything to do with the war, or occupation or anything like that. We flew out of our beds and looked out of the window. They were very close. Those Germans, they were always so noisy. Suddenly we realized that this was something very terrible.”

The invaders capture the headquarters of the Danish army General Staff without firing a shot. Disbelieving Danes wander the streets, watching helplessly. German leaflets and posters say: We come not as enemies, but as friends... and promise that Denmark will remain under Danish law and government. It's hard to believe.

Børge Hoff: “We asked them, ‘What do you want?’ ‘Well, we have come to help you against the British.’ And we said, ‘We guess you’re the right ones to do that.’”

Hitler has occupied an entire country in under six hours. Late that afternoon, Danish Prime Minister Torvald Stauning asks the Danish Parliament to officially accept the terms of the German occupation.

Søren Stauning: “My father felt that his policy was the least harmful for the people. If we had used the military on April 9th, they would have bombed Copenhagen without a doubt and thousands of people would have lost their lives.”

Rather than suffer certain defeat, Danish political leaders choose not to fight. Their goal is survival. They will attempt to hold the Germans to their promises — to respect Danish neutrality. They will negotiate the terms of occupation under protest—hoping to turn the charade of friendly relations to Denmark's advantage.

Herbert Pundik: “The king was in place, the parliament was legislating. The police was in charge of the law and order, the Danish courts were functioning, and the Jewish community was functioning.”

At the start, German troops are well-mannered and respectful. But their very presence is a provocation. Danes wonder: now that we have capitulated, what next? They have not prepared for a German occupation. They have no Gandhi. They have no resistance organization.

Ninna Almdal: “In most homes the attitude was we have to accept this and try to make it work. But for goodness sake don’t try to have anything to do with them, never speak to a German soldier. And be careful what you do.”

Danish cabinet ministers adopt a policy of resistance disguised as collaboration. Danes will cooperate with the Germans, but only as a tactic to preserve self-rule. German demands will be negotiated by diplomats, delayed by bureaucrats, and quietly obstructed when possible. For many Danes, it’s not enough.

Henrik Nissen: “Denmark was humiliated. The whole population actually suddenly felt that they had lost something, something of their dignity, something of their country’s dignity. What were you to do? What could you do in this situation? You couldn’t go out fighting, the fight was not there. So they gathered in the park of the city and sing national anthems.”

Every week, the songfests grow, signaling the birth of Danish solidarity against a common enemy. And Danes take new pride in their King—who rides alone every morning, as always.

Jytte Bruun: “People were very proud that we had a king. It was like a way of demonstrating against the Germans and we weren’t interested in any form of dictatorship.”

Germans ignore exhibitions of national pride—as long as they do not interfere with German objectives—to use Denmark’s farms to feed the

German army, to use Danish factories and shipyards to supply war materiel. Relations with Germany are handled by Danish Foreign Minister Erik Scavenius—a man many believe is pro-German.

Henrik Nissen: “When people argued with him and said, ‘Well in the long run we are losing our respect all over the country,’ he said, ‘Well yes, that’s correct but we might keep our respect and be, and be dead all of us.’ And he said, ‘How many corpses do you want in order to save your honor?’”

Scavenius wants the Germans to think they are getting what they want—to keep pressure off Denmark. In November 1941, he goes to Berlin to sign a treaty justifying the German invasion of the Soviet Union. When his photograph with Hitler is published in Denmark, outraged students take to the streets. After five days, Danish police restore order, but public support for the Scavenius policies is severely damaged. Underground resistance leaders condemn even tactical collaboration as treason. Their primary weapon is information. The illegal press reaches two and a half million—Denmark’s entire adult population.

Uncensored news of the war, gathered from the BBC and other sources, fuels Danish hopes. And the illegal press also encourages active resistance of all kinds. Small-scale attacks—arson, the stealing of weapons from German soldiers, pouring sugar into gas tanks—are the work of untrained high school students. They say: “If the adults won’t do something, we will.”

German authorities order local police to crack down, but patriotic young Danes are determined.

Axel Ljungquist: “I was very angry at the time. A lot of young people were angry. And we were angry that we hadn’t done more—resisted more than we had. We later realized that it was a hopeless situation. But that doesn’t change the feeling, which I still have, that we protected our country so poorly.”

In November, SS General Werner Best takes charge in Denmark. Hitler tells him to rule with an iron hand. Best pressures Erik Scavenius, the new prime minister. But most Danes have turned against the Scavenius policies. On BBC broadcasts from London, a Danish political exile—John Christmas Moller—now speaks defiantly against the prime minister and calls for active resistance. “Understand that the merciless rule here. And it’s time for Denmark to take a stand. Are you going to join and are you willing to contribute. We must ensure that we do not harm the soul of the nation.”

Spring, 1943. The German occupation is three years old. A facade of cooperation continues, but popular loyalty is shifting to the resistance movement. By day, the government campaigns against sabotage. By night, explosions rock the factories and rail lines, cutting German supply lines at their source. By summer of 1943, reports of German defeats in Russia, North Africa, and southern Europe encourage the Danes to more vigorous resistance.

Henrik Nissen: “There were strikes in the provincial towns. Not only strikes in the factories but the whole cities, where administration, stores, everything was closed.”

Sabotage attacks more than double in only one month. But those Danes who are unable to carry out sabotage find other ways to resist, even defying their own government.

Børge Hoff: “First of all, we worked really slowly. We never worked at the same speed as before the war. We received orders to build new ships. But the ships were never finished. The construction was sabotaged. So in the end they had to drag them down to Germany to finish them.”

Henrik Nissen: “The Danish authority did whatever they could to stop the strikes. And they found out that this was impossible. They could not. They had lost the authority. The authority of leading these masses lay with some local, unauthorized, not elected leaders and with the illegal press.”

A government in name only, Danish political leaders have one last act to perform. On the morning of August 28, 1943, they receive an ultimatum from the German occupiers: Strikes must be banned, curfews imposed, saboteurs executed. Denmark must answer by 4:00 PM. Parliament debates the demands for six hours.

Henrik Nissen: “Now these were demands they could not say yes to. And then they told the Germans that they could not accept this ultimatum.”

Foreign minister Scavenius and his Cabinet resign. Parliament goes home. Denmark is no longer under Danish authority. Direct German rule, postponed for three years by the Scavenius policy of cooperation, descends on Denmark. The Wehrmacht occupies key facilities. Gatherings of five or more persons are banned. The new rules are brutally enforced.

Ninna Almdal: “Now we knew where we were, two opposite parties and cooperation had become impossible. So, we would have to go our different ways, trying to make things work, of course, but there was no doubt now that they were the enemy and we were the occupied country.”

With the fig leaf of friendly relations removed, Germany has suffered a defeat, and now faces a hostile and rebellious population. Danish resistance groups quickly filled the vacuum, communicating through the well-organized illegal press. Just weeks later, they face their first crisis, when Adolf Hitler orders his commanders to impose Germany’s racial laws in Denmark.

Herbert Pundik: “Having survived from the outbreak of the war, there was, of course, kind of, you know, a belief that things would be all right. But the shield which had protected us against the fate of the Jews in the rest of Europe—the shield disappeared and we were standing undefended against the Germans.”

The German Gestapo has obtained a list of names and addresses for the 7000 Danish Jews. But plans for the roundup have been leaked. The Jews are warned. Thousands of Danes step forward to save them.

Herbert Pundik: “I remember the shock I got when — the day I went to school and suddenly the headmaster knocked on the door and called me and another Jewish boy out of the class and told us you’d better hurry up, because your parents are waiting for you, you have to get out of your flat, the Germans are coming tonight.”

The roundup begins on the night of October 1. But the Jews have been hidden in attics and cellars, in the churches and homes of thousands of Danes who have spontaneously taken them in.

Axel Ljungquist: “We were sent, for example, one time to Fyn, to Odense, to pick up some Jews who were arriving by train from Jutland. And we were to help them pass as casually as possible through the German checkpoints at Størwaeld. The ferries there were closely guarded by the Germans. So it was necessary for us to pretend that we had a relationship with these people.”

Their refuge will be Sweden—only a few miles across waters patrolled by the German navy. They hide in forests and wait. Herbert Pundik and his family are picked up by one of the many fishermen who risk the voyage—and save all but a few hundred of Denmark’s Jews.

Herbert Pundik: “I looked back towards the coast and I saw something which I never forget in my whole life. I’m not a religious person myself, but still I were—I’m still moved when I think about it. On this sandy beach, I saw the three persons, our, so to say, savior, his wife and the wife of the fisherman, kneeling on the beach with folded lifting hands towards heaven praying for our—our safe passage.”

The rescue of the Jews has united and inspired Danes just as they are coming to view the resistance movement as their de facto government. The

Freedom Council publishes a first clandestine leaflet in November, 1943—a program of resistance aimed at denying Germany the benefits of occupation. With explosives and equipment air-dropped by British forces, the underground avoids human targets; concentrating on war-related industry. Their first targets are Danish industries and transport that supply the German army. Each success brings harsher and deadlier reprisals by the Nazis who bomb theaters, clubs, and Copenhagen's renowned Tivoli Gardens. In a desperate move to stop the explosions, the German governor puts the population of Copenhagen under curfew in June 1944.

Henrik Nissen: "It was triggered off by a large sabotage at one of the Wain factories. And really not the sabotage, but the open drive by the Copenhageners. They would see the smoke going up from the factories, which annoyed the German governor so that he declared a curfew, which was to start every afternoon at 6:00."

Workers at the Burmeister & Wain shipyard retaliate with an ingenious but risky scheme.

Børge Hoff: "We had hoped to get rid of the curfew. We wanted to have our freedom. We didn't want to be locked up at night. At 12:00 noon we went to the gate and started kicking it. We said we want to go home because we needed to water our gardens."

1,200 shipyard workers go home early. They insist it's not a strike. They must tend to their gardens in the afternoon because the curfew stops them from gardening in the evening. The "go home early" movement spreads fast. Thousands of workers in other factories walk off their jobs. But few go to their gardens. Congregating in the streets, they demonstrate, build bonfires, and taunt German patrol. Six Danes are killed on the first day.

Axel Ljungquist: "There were barricades in the streets. Everything was set on fire in the streets. All work stopped. No one wanted to go to work. All these things...all these things created a sense in the population that the

Danes now had to fight against the Germans. And that was probably the most crucial effect of the general strike.”

Nazi Governor Werner Best tightens the vise daily. Troops are ordered to shoot at groups of five or more. Then he cuts off electricity, gas and water. Danes respond by cooking on fires and dipping water from a nearby lake. Best tries to blockade the city, to cut contact with the outside world. The population follows instructions from resistance leaders: “Until the curfew ends and shootings stop, stay on strike,” says the Freedom Council.

Børge Hoff: “I looked up to it. It was the country’s lawful.... the ones we listened to. ‘We’ll be on strike until tomorrow at 12:00’. It was very, very clear to see. The people followed that. And precisely at 12:00 the next day, everything started up again. The Germans had great respect for that.”

Best is desperate to resume production, but his military options are limited as troops have been taken out of Denmark to fight the losing war. Most of all, he knows that Danish workers are worth more alive than dead. On the 9th day, Best concedes. He will end the curfew and withdraw his troops if the strikers go back to work. The Freedom Council issues a victory bulletin which ends the walkout. It declares strikes are their most effective weapon. Unwittingly, the Danes have adopted Gandhi’s favorite tactic—by simply withdrawing their obedience.

Recognizing the power of non-cooperation, the Council shifts its emphasis from encouraging sabotage to coordinating strikes. In the next month they call for a series of symbolic two-minute stoppages.

Jytte Bruun: “When the clock on the city hall struck 12:00 noon, everything stopped in the city hall square. There would be complete silence. And that’s just something you did.”

Denmark suffers through one last brutal winter with shortages in fuel, water and food. And then it was spring.

Ninna Almdal: “As was normal in those days we gathered around the wireless to hear the message from the BBC, and then all of a sudden, the transmission was interrupted and then came this wonderful message that the Germans had given up.”

A Danish historian concluded: Denmark had not won the war, but neither had it been defeated or destroyed. Most Danes had not been brutalized by the Germans, or by each other. Nonviolent resistance saved the country and contributed more to the allied victory than Danish arms ever could have.

Axel Ljungquist: “It was a physical feeling, the combination of euphoria and the chills. It felt so strange. The tears welled up and I remember very clearly that I spontaneously said, ‘So, we survived!’ Those were probably the first words out of my mouth. So we survived.”

Conclusion



Congratulations! You have made it to the course conclusion. It is now time to self-reflect and earn your certificate (Photo: [Eberhard Grossgasteiger Pexels](#)).

In this course, you have had the chance to learn the fundamentals of civil resistance movements and their application. In this concluding chapter, you will get the opportunity to self-assess your own learning and earn your certificate.

Thank you again for taking this course. If you are interested in learning more about how civil resistance, we recommend completing our Civil Resistance 2 and Civil Resistance 3 courses. We hope to keep seeing you in the USIP Global Campus courses!

Reflect and Share

At the beginning of the course we asked you to complete a self-assessment. Retake the self-assessment below and compare your answers to those you provided at the beginning of the course before continuing to the activity below.

Post Self-Assessment

Take a moment to reflect on your knowledge of the theory, history, and strategy of nonviolent movements, and provide feedback on the course.

1. Rate your confidence level for the following statement: I can describe the importance of nonviolence.
 - ☐ Very Unconfident
 - ☐ Unconfident
 - ☐ Somewhat Confident
 - ☐ Confident
 - ☐ Very Confident
2. Rate your confidence level for the following statement: I can define nonviolent civil resistance and how is it distinct from other forms of social and political action.
 - ☐ Very Unconfident
 - ☐ Unconfident
 - ☐ Somewhat Confident
 - ☐ Confident
 - ☐ Very Confident
3. Rate your confidence level for the following statement: I can apply the principles and tools of nonviolent action to a cause I am passionate about.

- ☐ Very Unconfident
- ☐ Unconfident
- ☐ Somewhat Confident
- ☐ Confident
- ☐ Very Confident

The following three questions allow you to provide feedback on your experience in the course.

1. Rate your confidence level for the following statement: I would recommend this course to a friend or colleague.
 - ☐ Very Unconfident
 - ☐ Unconfident
 - ☐ Somewhat Confident
 - ☐ Confident
 - ☐ Very Confident
2. Rate your confidence level for the following statement: I will use what I learned in this course in my daily work.
 - ☐ Very Unconfident
 - ☐ Unconfident
 - ☐ Somewhat Confident
 - ☐ Confident
 - ☐ Very Confident
3. How would you rate your level of understanding of the course content, AFTER taking the course?
 - ☐ No Understanding
 - ☐ Little Understanding
 - ☐ Some Understanding
 - ☐ High Understanding
 - ☐ I Could Teach Others

Thank you for participating in this course! If you would like to provide us with any more feedback, please email globalcampus@usip.org.

Reflect on any or all of the following questions in the discussion forum below.

- Where do you see the most growth in your understanding of civil resistance and how will it contribute to your work?
- What are some areas of improvement that further learning could help strengthen?
- How can you continue to develop the skills/understanding you developed in this course?

Certificate



Find a comfortable and quiet location and get ready to take your exam and earn your certificate. ([Photo: Pexel, Anna Shvets](#))

[This exam](#) will test your retention of the knowledge presented in this course. If you pass the exam with a grade of 70% or above, you will be presented with a Certificate of Completion. If you do not have an internet connection, you can take a paper copy of the exam below. Good luck!

1. True or false - historically, nonviolent movements have been twice as successful as violent movements in achieving their goals?
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
2. What theory of power posits that those in power are dependent on the obedience and goodwill of the people?
 - ☐ Soft Power
 - ☐ Exchange Power
 - ☐ Power Over
 - ☐ Pluralistic Power

3. Which of the following is an example of 'destructive power' as defined by Kenneth Boulding?

- ☐ An office supervisor offers a worker that is reluctant to sign off on an incomplete contract a raise in order to compel her to add her signature to the questionable document.
- ☐ A little girl threatens to break a boy's favorite toy on the playground because he will not give up his spot on the swing set for her.
- ☐ An adolescent promises to clean the garage out if his parents buy him a new phone. The parents have been wanting the garage cleaned for months but their son had been refusing to help.
- ☐ A group of students collectively buy their teacher a book that they know she has been wanting as a sign of appreciation at the end of a school year.

4. What form of violence "perpetuates and encourages a set of values and beliefs that violence is the ultimate form of power and a necessary part of life?"

- ☐ Structural Violence
- ☐ Cultural Violence
- ☐ Destructive Violence

5. According to scholars like Robert Ruggie, what are the three dimensions of change that are necessary for conflict transformation?

- ☐ Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Communal
- ☐ Cultural, Social, and Political
- ☐ Transactional/Interactional, Attitudinal, and Structural
- ☐ Local, Regional, and Global

6. According to Maria Stephan's and Erica Chenoweth's research, do skills or conditions have a bigger impact on the chances a nonviolent, civic movement will achieve success?

- ☐ Skills (example: planning, nonviolent discipline, sequencing of tactics)
- ☐ Conditions (example: regime type, literacy rate, demographics)

7. What are the first four stages in Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan (MAP)?

- ☐ 1. Conditions Ripen; 2. Prove Failure of Institutions/System; 3. Take Off!; 4. Status Quo
- ☐ 1. Status Quo, 2. Take Off!; 3. Prove Failure of Institutions/Systems, 4. Conditions Ripen
- ☐ 1. Status Quo; 2. Prove Failure of Institutions/Systems; 3. Conditions Ripen; 4. Take Off!
- ☐ 1. Status Quo; 2. Conditions Ripen; 3. Take Off!, 4. Prove Failure of Institutions/Systems

8. What are the last four stages in Bill Moyer's Movement Action Plan (MAP)?

- ☐ (5) Perception of Failure; (6) Win Majority of Public; (7) Continuing the Struggle; (8) Success!
- ☐ (5) Win Majority of Public; (6) Perception of Failure; (7) Continuing the Struggle; (8). Success!
- ☐ (5) Perception of Failure; (6) Win Majority of Public; (7) Success!; (8) Continuing the Struggle
- ☐ (5) Continuing the Struggle; (6) Perception of Failure; (7) Win Majority Public Opinion; (8) Success!

9. In the Kingian Nonviolence tradition, movements should engage in nonviolent direct action prior to engaging in negotiations with their opponent.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

10. Which of the below is an example of a 'pull tactic' that will pull pillars of support away from the opponent and towards the movement?

- ☐ Talking with a business leader that supports the regime about the value of a movement, appealing to her patriotism or a sense of duty to her fellow countrymen.
- ☐ Threatening the families of soldiers that remain loyal to the regime.
- ☐ Defacing a police station that supports a corrupt leader.

11. What is the key difference between a campaign and a movement?

- ☐ Campaigns have a common narrative and one tangible goal; movements have a long-term goal.
- ☐ Campaigns have a long-term goal; movements have a common narrative and one tangible goal.
- ☐ Campaigns are made up of a series of smaller movements.
- ☐ A movement is focused on tangible wins, such as a policy change or legal change.
- ☐ All of the above.

12. According to NAVCO 2.0, more centralized or hierarchical movements tend to be more successful in the long-term.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False

Final Exam Answer Key

1. True
2. Pluralistic Power
3. A little girl threatens to break a boy's favorite toy on the playground because he will not give up his spot on the swing set for her.
4. Cultural Violence
5. Transactional/Interactional, Attitudinal, and Structural
6. Skills (example: planning, nonviolent discipline, sequencing of tactics)
7. 1. Status Quo; 2. Prove Failure of Institutions/Systems; 3. Conditions Ripen; 4. Take Off!
8. (5) Perception of Failure; (6) Win Majority of Public; (7) Success!; (8) Continuing the Struggle
9. False
10. Talking with a business leader that supports the regime about the value of a movement, appealing to her patriotism or a sense of duty to her fellow countrymen.
11. Campaigns have a common narrative and one tangible goal; movements have a long-term goal.
12. True