

Peace, War & Social Conflict

Section of the American Sociological Association

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Message from the Chair

Recent events in the Middle East underscore the relevance of our section's scholarship to important changes in our world. We have seen how an act of self-immolation in Tunisia gave many the courage to take to the streets and demand regime change. That the impetus for a wave of pro-democracy mobilization in the region would begin in a country not known for having a strong, unified civil society suggests that a mixture of old tactics and new technologies can be a potent transformative combination.

The relationship between the military and the public may factor into the severity of violence against the protesters. A casual and by no means systematic comparison suggests to me that distant relationships have led to higher levels of repression (e.g., Libya) compared to closer ones (e.g., Egypt and Tunisia).

The effects of military interventions also appear to depend, in part, upon the nature of the repression and responses by protesters. Defections from the Saleh regime in Yemen after incidents of security forces opening fire on protesters highlight the power of strategic nonviolence.

The degree of ethnic heterogeneity also warrants careful examination. Disenfranchised minority groups often feature prominently in pro-democracy movements. Fears that revolutionary nationalist goals lie behind calls for democracy are likely to contribute to repression and backlash.

And we would be remiss not to consider the role of inter-state alliance and conflict systems in responses to protesters. The initial hesitance of the U.S. State Department to criticize the Mubarak regime stands in stark contrast to rapid multilateral military action against the Gaddafi regime. Yet once the State Department took a public stance against repression, high levels of dependency upon U.S. government economic and military aid ensured regime compliance.

While international media coverage strikes me as largely balanced, the mainstream media in the United States have provided very little coverage of bloody crackdowns in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia—two regimes supported by the U.S. government.

As history unfolds before us, I wonder whether and how differences in the roles of militaries in transition processes will influence the types of new regimes established. I feel fortunate to be part of a section whose members assist policy makers and the public in making sense of these developments. This issue contains a piece by Dr. Lee Smithey that personifies this type of public sociology. I encourage each of you to highlight relevant scholarship by section members (including your own research) in your courses as well as in your interactions with the media and public officials. Collectively, we can clarify how different sets of relationships, strategies, and dynamics of contention facilitate (or impede) democratization.

– Gregory M. Maney

Essays, Op-Eds, Etc.

The Power of Nonviolent Resistance

By Lee Smithey (Reprinted from *The Atlantic*.)

February 22 2011

A widely read *New York Times* [story](#) last week connected the nonviolent resistance in Egypt with the academic work of an American scholar, Gene Sharp. He is the author of the seminal 1973 three-volume [study](#), *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, as well as decades of further publications translated into thirty languages.

What are Sharp's ideas, and how do they help us understand events in Egypt and elsewhere?

Professor Stephen Zunes, a political scientist and another leading figure in the field, [noted](#) in the *New York Times* piece, "[Sharp] is generally considered the father of the whole field of the study of strategic nonviolent action."



Zunes is not exaggerating. Besides Gandhi, no one in the last century has more systematically laid out the theory of nonviolent power than Sharp.

The *Times* article used words like "shy" and "quiet" to describe Sharp. I have had the opportunity to speak with him on a couple of occasions, and while these adjectives are not inaccurate, he is hardly shrinking. In fact, he speaks with a certitude that reflects many decades of careful and unblinking study.

Of course, Sharp did not somehow orchestrate events in the Middle East from his base at the Albert Einstein

Institution. The uprisings that have been spreading across the Middle East are local phenomena in crucial respects. Egyptians have been organizing for years. Landmarks in recent Egyptian reformist history [include](#) the emergence of the Kefaya movement in 2003, the national strike of April 6, 2008, and the online Khaled Said campaign in 2010. Besides, who could watch the courage and passion of millions of Egyptians and claim this was not their revolution, an expression of their issues, on their turf, in their language, dance, custom, song, and humor?

And the stories of resistance in Tunisia, Algeria, Yemen, Jordan, Bahrain, Iran, and Libya are also fundamentally local ones.

At the same time, these events are connected in important ways and underpinned by a shared set of ideas about nonviolent resistance, developed by Sharp and many others, including a new generation of scholars and advocates, such as Dr. Peter Ackerman of the [International Center on Nonviolent Conflict](#).

Nonviolent resistance has been changing the world for at least a century since Gandhi began challenging British racism in South Africa. (Or is it centuries? [George Lakey](#), a Peace and Conflict Studies colleague and expert on nonviolent action at Swarthmore College, told me last week that one of his students has been tracing nonviolent resistance back to at least 5 BCE, in the form of labor strikes in Egypt.)

Nonviolent resistance movements are increasingly exchanging ideas in transnational networks. A 1956 comic book published by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Martin Luther King and the Montgomery Story, was [recently translated into Arabic](#). Egyptian activists traveled to Serbia to consult with veterans of the "Otpor" movement that [overthrew Slobodan Milosevic](#) in 2000. The Serbs [shared](#) their own hard-won experience, as well as fundamental lessons of popular nonviolent resistance.

What are these lessons?

First, successful nonviolent resistance is based on overcoming fear and obedience. Despotic regimes, rather than ruling through absolute violence, typically rely on a noxious mixture of propaganda, patronage, apathy, political legitimacy, and a calibrated use of public and covert violence to generate a blanket of fear.

However, it turns out that fear and apathy can be brittle. Dissidents can hammer the first cracks in the edifice by creating low-risk ways for citizens to signal solidarity with one another and see through a regime's subterfuge.

In 1983, for example, Chileans used public ["slow-down strikes"](#) to spread awareness of dissent against the Pinochet regime. As ordinary people, including taxi

drivers and pedestrians, slowed their activities, they communicated the widespread nature of public dissatisfaction with Pinochet's rule. Through their participation, Chileans became empowered.

Similarly, Facebook offered a relatively low-risk activity in which many Egyptians could participate, see their strength, and shed their fear.

Suddenly, the unimaginable seems possible -- and this transformation in attitudes can happen at incredible speed. As Ahmed Maher of the Egyptian April 6 movement [commented](#): "When I looked around me and I saw all these unfamiliar faces in the protests, and they were more brave than us -- I knew that this was it for the regime."

Second, as Gene Sharp [insists](#), following Gandhi, "Power always depends for its strength and existence upon a replenishment of its sources by the cooperation of numerous institutions and people -- cooperation that does not have to continue."

Nonviolent resistance can leverage immense economic and political pressure because a regime relies on its citizens for labor and expertise. Targeted noncooperation can be devastating. It may be no accident that only three days after labor unions joined the protest movement in Egypt, and service workers at the Suez Canal [went on strike](#), the military took the reins from Mubarak.

Third, nonviolent discipline can be one of the most critical strategies in the protester's playbook. We usually associate revolutions with bloody armed struggles and coups, but one of the most remarkable sights during the standoff in Tahrir Square was the widespread commitment to nonviolence, despite provocative infiltration by undercover police and attacks by Pro-Mubarak supporters.

Violence by protesters can undermine public support and give regime leaders an excuse for mass repression. In Egypt, it was the regime that was discredited by violence instead of the demonstrators.

Similarly, in Bahrain, one organizer, Hussein Ramadan, [declared](#), "The people are angry, but we will control our anger, we will not burn a single tire or throw a single rock. We will not go home until we succeed. They want us to be violent. We will not."

Gene Sharp's work makes it clear that strategic nonviolent resistance is no simple solution. As unrest spreads across the Middle East, some regimes may unleash withering repression. They may crush dissent-- at least [if they can continue to command](#) their military forces. (On Monday, two Libyan fighter pilots [defected to Malta](#) in their aircraft instead of following orders to

bomb protesters.) Conversely, repression may backfire and fuel further opposition. Much will depend on the determination and skill of nonviolent protesters.

But at least they've been comparing notes closely.

General Announcements

CBSM Pre-Conference Workshop

The ASA Collective Behavior and Social Movements Section is holding a workshop this summer at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, immediately preceding the ASA conference (August 18-19). Les Kurtz, Greg Maney, and Sharon Nepstad have organized a thematic workshop entitled "Strategic Dimensions of Nonviolent Contention." This session explores the formation, implementation, and outcomes of movement strategies that rely upon nonviolent tactics. The organizers encourage preliminary papers (5-7 pages) addressing one or more of the following sub-themes: (1) building and sustaining movements using nonviolent tactics; (2) the effects of repression upon the use of nonviolent tactics; (3) defections from targets and opponents; (4) military involvement in nonviolent struggle; (5) transnational dimensions of nonviolent struggle; (6) fitting strategies with context; and (7) measuring and evaluating outcomes of nonviolent struggle. Breakout-groups will address these sub-themes and then report back to the overall group.

If you've attended a CBSM workshop before, you may recall that the format of the workshops is different than most professional meetings. Instead of presenting a formal paper, participants are asked to present a 5-7 page "position paper." The position papers can make reference to your ongoing research but are designed to really facilitate discussion rather than to present data. Please submit an abstract indicating your desire to participate in this session to cbsmworkshop2011@hotmail.com and Nepstad@unm.edu.

"Peacebuilding in Africa"

Special issue of the Journal for Peace & Justice Studies
Fall 2010 Volume 20: Number 2



This special issue is a collection of essays edited by Ron Pagnucco, College of St. Benedict/St. John's University and Chris Hausmann, University of Notre Dame, and includes the following essays: :

- S. W. Ramadhan, "The Concepts and Practice of Peace, Peacebuilding and Religious Peacebuilding: Lessons from Kenya."
- R. Puopolo, "Propositions of the Second African Bishops Synod: A Selection and Introduction."
- J. Healey, "How Small Christian Communities Promote Reconciliation, Justice and Peace in Eastern Africa."
- T.D. Whitmore, " 'My Tribe is Humanity': An Interview with Archbishop John Baptist Odama."
- S. Toton, "The Peacebuilding Potential of Catholic Relief Services Savings and Lending Communities in Rwanda."
- J. Steyn Kotze, "In Search of Justice: African and Western Approaches to Transitional Justice."
- L.A. Young and J. Prestholdt, "Refugee Participation on Peacebuilding: The Case of Liberian Refugee Participation in the Liberia Truth and Reconciliation Commission."

For information on ordering copies, please contact:
Sharon Discher, sharon.discher@villanova.edu
610-519-4499
www.peaceandjustice.villanova.edu/journal/

Call for Papers

Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change
volume 34

Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change, a peer-reviewed volume published by Emerald Group Publishing, encourages submissions for Volume 34 of the series. This volume will have a thematic focus on nonviolent civil resistance and will be guest edited by **Lester Kurtz** (George Mason University) and **Sharon Erickson Nepstad** (University of New Mexico). We encourage submissions on the following topics: variations of nonviolent strategies, the effects of repression on nonviolent movements, reasons for the recent rise of nonviolent revolutions, factors shaping the outcome of nonviolent struggles, and the international diffusion of nonviolent methods.

Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change (RSMCC) is a fully peer-reviewed series of original research that has been published annually for over 30 years. We continue to publish the work of many of the leading scholars in social movements, social change, and peace and conflict studies. Although RSMCC enjoys a wide library subscription base for the book versions, all volumes are now published both in book form and are also available online to subscribing libraries through Emerald Insight. This ensures wider distribution and easier online access to your scholarship while maintaining the esteemed book series at the same time.

RSMCC boasts quick turn-around times, generally communicating peer reviewed-informed decisions within 10-12 weeks of receipt of submissions.

Submission guidelines

To be considered for inclusion in Volume 34, papers should arrive by **October 1, 2011**.

Send submissions as a WORD document attached to an email to BOTH Lester Kurtz and Sharon Erickson Nepstad, guest RSMCC editors for Volume 34, at lkurtz@gmu.edu and nepstad@unm.edu. Remove all self-references (in text and in bibliography) save for on the title page, which should include full contact information for all authors.

- Include the paper's title and the abstract on the first page of the text itself.
- For initial submissions, any standard social science in-text citation and bibliographic system is acceptable.

For more information, please visit the RSMCC [homepage](#).

Jan Marie Fritz (Professor at the University of Cincinnati and Senior Research Fellow with Centre for Sociological Research at the University of South Africa) has been selected for the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in Human Rights and International Studies in Denmark. She also is an author of the following publications: (1) "Women, Peace, Security and the National Action Plans" by Jan Marie Fritz, Sharon Doering and F. Belgin Gumru; *Journal of Applied Social Science*, 5/1(Spring, 2011):1-23 and (2) "Sécurité des femmes et des filles par pays: Un Plan d'Action National "1325" peut-il prévenir et/ou traiter la question de la violence conjugale?"

(Country-Based Security for Women and Girls: Can a 1325 National Action Plan Prevent and/or Address Intimate-Partner Violence?) by Jan Marie Fritz. Pp. 253-261 in Ginette Francquin (ed.) Tu me fais peur quand tu cries! Sortir des violences conjugales. (Paris: ERES, 2010)

On April 12, **David R. Segal and Mady W.**

Segal joined Mrs. Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden at the White House for the inauguration of the First and Second Ladies' Joining Forces initiative in support of military families. The Center for Research on Military Organization has joined forces with the Office of the First Lady, the Department of Defense, and the Treasury Department, providing research on the employment experience of military spouses.

Course Announcement: Application of Problem Based Learning (PBL) to teach course titled, War and Peace - Global cultural approach, produces empirical data to support interactive critical thinking learning outcomes. The course is offered at Behavioral Science Department, University of Cincinnati, course # is 28-soc-375-001. I would like to share the teaching pedagogy-the application of PBL for teaching War and Peace class with the section members who have the similar teaching related interest. The instructor is Dr. Grace Auyang. Syllabus and PBL assessment form are available by emailing to grace.auyang@uc.edu.

PW&SC Section Member Research and Publications

Ender, Morten G. (forthcoming). "Boredom: Groundhog Day as a Metaphor for Iraq," in Janice H. Laurence and Michael D. Matthews (editors). *The Oxford Handbook of Military Psychology* (London and NY: Oxford University Press).

Ender, Morten G. (forthcoming). "Military Brats: Growing Up Separated," in Meg Wilkes Karraker and Janet R. Grochowski, *Families with Futures: A Survey of Family Studies for the 21st Century* (Mahwah, NJ & London: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2nd edition).

Ender, Morten G., David E. Rohall, Andrew J. Brennan, Michael D. Matthews, and Irving Smith (forthcoming). "Civilian, ROTC, and Military Academy Undergraduate Attitudes toward Homosexuals in the U.S. Military," *Armed Forces & Society*.

Ben-Yehuda, Nachman. *Theocratic Democracy*, Oxford University Press. The book focuses on the *kulturkampf* (including its continuous violence) in Israel. Book Description: The state of Israel was established in 1948 as a Jewish democracy, without a legal separation between religion and the state. Ever since, the tension

between the two has been a central political, social, and moral issue in Israel, resulting in a cultural conflict characterized by repeating eruptions of violence between secular Jews and the fundamentalist, ultra-orthodox Haredi community. What is the nature of this cultural conflict and how is it managed? In *Theocratic Democracy*, Nachman Ben-Yehuda examines more than fifty years of media-reported unconventional and deviant behavior by members of the Haredi community. Ben-Yehuda finds not only that this behavior has happened increasingly often over the years, but also that its most salient feature is violence--a violence not random or precipitated by situational emotional rage, but planned and aimed to achieve political goals.

Join the Section on Peace, War and Social Conflict, or Renew Your Membership

If you are a member of the ASA, now is the time to consider showing your support for the work of the Section on **Peace, War and Social Conflict** by joining the section or renewing your membership. To do either online, you can go to

<https://www.e-noah.net/ASA/Login.asp>

If you are not already a member of the American Sociological Association, and would like to join the Association and the Section, you can do so online by going to

<https://www.e-oah.net/ASA/Profile/General.asp?S=1>

Any questions you might have regarding membership in the association can be addressed to membership@asanet.org; or you can telephone the ASA at 202-383-9005, ext. 389.

Questions about membership in the section may be directed to Steven Scanlan at scanlans@ohio.edu

Section Listservs

Section Announcement Listserv:

Please send your announcements to any of the following officers and they can post your announcement to the listserv: Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, and immediate Past Chair. Announcements are automatically sent to all section members via email. Messages are routed via peace_war-announce@listserv.asanet.org.

To be excluded from the list, email infoservice@asanet.org. A marker will be placed on your record so that your e-mail address will be excluded when the distribution list is refreshed. ASA will refresh the distribution list on a bi-monthly basis or as needed.

Section Discussion Listserv:

To join the section discussion listserv you must send an email as described below:

1. In the address field type in majordomo@listserv.asanet.org; leave subject field blank;
2. In the text of the message type **subscribe peace_war**
3. Make sure there is nothing else in the message (no signature)
4. Send the message. You will receive confirmation, and an authorization key with which to confirm that you really want to join the list. Once you reply positively to that you will get a welcome message.

The section's discussion list, at peace_war@listserv.asanet.org, unlike the section announcement list, is not "prepopulated" with e-mail addresses of section members. Individuals must subscribe.