

# PEACE SCIENCE DIGEST

A PROJECT BY THE WAR PREVENTION INITIATIVE

SPECIAL ISSUE "NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE"



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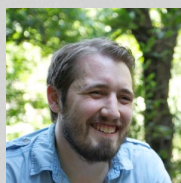
# GUEST FOREWORD

It is a pleasure to introduce this Special Issue of the Peace Science Digest on Nonviolent Resistance, which could not come at a more opportune time. We are living through a period of unprecedented ferment—with protests and nonviolent social movements exploding around the world in greater number and frequency than perhaps any time in history.

While this has been felt most recently in the United States, with the string of massive marches following the inauguration of Donald Trump, the sharp uptick in nonviolent resistance predates his election. From the uprisings across North Africa and the Middle East against authoritarian regimes to anti-austerity and anti-corruption movements that have brought down governments in many European, Latin American, and Asian countries to the fierce global struggle to stop climate change, ordinary people are organizing for social, economic and environmental justice in record numbers, leaving no part of the world untouched by the power of nonviolence.

As someone who closely follows these developments—as a teacher, journalist and occasional participant—it is both an unusually exciting and challenging time. While this growing experimentation with civil resistance is encouraging, if organizers and those participating in nonviolent struggle don't have a strong grasp on the fundamentals of how to build inclusive and resilient movements, they may not reach their full potential or effect their desired change. Thankfully, this surge in civil resistance has been accompanied by a growing academic field that is producing serious research to bolster the efforts of those on the frontlines.

We hope this special issue will deepen your understanding of and interest in social movements, and perhaps even lead you to contribute to this dynamic and increasingly urgent field of research. To stay abreast of the latest developments in nonviolent struggle, I also encourage you to follow *Waging Nonviolence* ([wagingnonviolence.org](http://wagingnonviolence.org)), an online magazine that I co-founded and edit, which publishes original in-depth reporting and analysis on this topic from academics, journalists, and activists around the world.



*Eric Stoner*

Eric Stoner

Co-founder and editor, *Waging Nonviolence*

Our vision is a world beyond war by 2030 and humanity united by a global system of peace with justice.

Our mission is to advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society.

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Tax Day March. Chicago, IL.



# NEED FOR THE DIGEST

Peace and Conflict Studies (henceforth: Peace Science) has emerged as an academic discipline with its own graduate programs, handbooks, research tools, theories, associations, journals, and conferences. As with most scientific communities, the slow migration of academic knowledge into practical application becomes a limiting factor of a field's growth, its impact, and the overall effectiveness of its practitioners.

The expanding academic field of Peace Science continues to produce high volumes of significant research that often goes unnoticed by practitioners, the media, activists, public policy-makers, and other possible beneficiaries. This is unfortunate, because Peace Science ultimately should inform the practice on how to bring about peace.

*The research and theory needed to guide peace workers to produce more enduring and positive peace, not only more peace studies, have come to stay. Bridging the gap between the peace movement moralism and foreign policy pragmatism is a major challenge facing everyone who seeks to achieve peace on Earth. (Johan Galtung and Charles Webel)*

To address this issue, the War Prevention Initiative has created the Peace Science Digest as a way to disseminate top selections of research and findings from the field's academic community to its many beneficiaries.

The Peace Science Digest is formulated to enhance awareness of scholarship addressing the key issues of our time by making available an organized, condensed, and comprehensible summary of this important research as a resource for the practical application of the field's current academic knowledge.

## Disclaimer

Research featured in the *Peace Science Digest* is selected based on its contribution to the field of Peace Science, and authenticated by the scientific integrity derived from the peer-review process. Peer-reviewed journals evaluate the quality and validity of a scientific study, giving us the freedom to focus on the articles' relevance and potential contribution to the field and beyond.

The editors of the *Peace Science Digest* do not claim their analysis is, or should be, the only way to approach any given issue. Our aim is to provide a responsible and ethical analysis of the research conducted by Peace and Conflict Studies academics through the operational lens of the War Prevention Initiative.

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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

There is much in our contemporary political reality that calls for resistance, as myriad forms of insecurity and injustice have only become more pronounced with the election of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency—an election that of course affects not only the U.S. but the whole world.

Nonviolent resistance, in particular, is central to the Peace Science Digest's focus on war and violence prevention: first, most directly, nonviolent resistance is capable of resisting military policies and practices by mobilizing mass demonstrations against war and military spending or by moving soldiers to refuse participation in violence; second, it is also capable of resisting multiple forms of so-called "structural violence," injustice related to unequal life chances for people from marginalized communities; and, third, it does all this without itself adopting violence, providing an effective alternative to armed resistance strategies, which end up simply fueling cycles of violence and creating justifications for further repression. Although many of us share this impulse to nonviolently resist—almost as a knee-jerk response to some of the terrifying statements and policies emanating from the White House—it is critical to take the next step and think about this resistance *strategically* for it to actually put pressure on relevant actors and bring about desired changes that protect people and the planet.

This Special Issue of the Peace Science Digest was put together with this concern in mind. We culled through recent scholarship on nonviolent resistance (also called civil resistance or nonviolent struggle) to find research that would be most useful for thinking through strategic questions, research with the clearest implications for organizing. A few themes emerge across the studies highlighted:

- The importance of developing mass, broad-based movements (underscored already by Chenoweth & Stephan in their seminal 2011 book, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*).
- The question of identity, power, and privilege in the context of diverse, broad-based movements: how to recognize one's position in power structures that privilege some and oppress others, and then how to work effectively and respectfully across lines of difference and power disparity.
- The need to understand particular injustices within their appropriate historical frames, as part of a continuum of oppression that demands sustained resistance rather than as one isolated event.
- The complicated nature of the relationship between nonviolent activists and police/security forces: while these may be agents of state repression, they also represent a key pillar of the state that, if pulled out from under it, could prove decisive in shifting the balance of power towards the resistance movement. Rather than maintain an adversarial stance vis-à-vis police/security forces, activists can—through nonviolent discipline and proactive relationship-building—encourage defections and bring repressive police/security forces to the side of the resistance movement.

From Standing Rock to Sweden, from Ferguson to the West Bank, join us in exploring how to employ humor in nonviolent movements, recognize diversity and privilege in transnational anti-occupation activism, sustain a broad-based struggle against racism and police violence, leverage Indigenous treaty rights to struggle against environmental exploitation, and withstand "smart" repression.



Patrick Hiller

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P. Hiller".



David Prater

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Prater".



Molly Wallace

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly Wallace".



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# Adding Humor to the Nonviolent “Toolbox”

Source | Sorensen, M.J. (2017). Laughing on the way to social change: humor and nonviolent action theory. *Peace & Change*, 42(1), 128-156.

## Key words

humor  
nonviolent action  
civil resistance  
human rights  
anti-militarism  
NATO

Struggles against human rights abuses or militarism are rarely linked—in thought or discussion—to humor. As serious matters, they deserve serious, strategic thinking about how to dismantle the power structures that enable them. But what if humor itself is a powerful tool for doing so? The author explores this possibility in the context of three recent examples of activism in Sweden and Belarus, asking how the use of humor affects the way nonviolent action operates—particularly its ability to disrupt dominant discourses and therefore challenge power.

In the first example, two Swedish activists flew an airplane through Belarusian airspace, dropping 879 parachuted teddy bears with signs reading, “We support the Belarusian struggle for free speech.” A response to an earlier action where Belarusian activists assembled stuffed animals in a central square—bearing signs like, “Where is freedom of the press?”—the parachuting bears ultimately resulted in two Belarusian officials being fired. The second and third examples involved a Swedish anti-militarist network called Ofog (“mischief”). In response to NATO military exercises in Sweden, Ofog created a “company” whose purpose was to make these exercises more realistic by providing civilian casualties. Dressed as businesspeople, activists walked through the streets “recruiting” ordinary Swedes for “jobs” as killed, wounded, or traumatized civilians. In response to a Swedish military recruitment campaign, Ofog added words to recruitment ads, changing their intended meaning. For instance, on one that said, “*Your friend does not want any help during natural catastrophes. What do you think?*” Ofog added, “By the military. Other help is welcome.” Using the ambiguity inherent in humor, these actions were able to catch their audiences off guard, spark discussion, and bring attention to free speech or militarism in ways different from how logical argumentation could have.

The author examines all three actions from the vantage point of Vinthagen’s four dimensions of nonviolent action to see how humor might contribute to, or detract from, their operation. The first, **dialogue facilitation**, refers to nonviolent action’s ability to maintain an openness towards the adversary even in the midst of conflict. On the one hand, a humorous action like those above might inhibit dialogue if observers



are “suspicious or annoyed” about the actors behind it or the lack of clarity around its meaning. On the other hand, especially compared to more aggressive forms of resistance, humorous action signals an inherent openness through its playful approach, providing an invitation to dialogue and also lots of “‘material’ for conversation.”

The second dimension, **power breaking**, is the one the author sees as best served by humor. It is widely understood in theories of nonviolent action that those in power will not give up their power—or even engage in dialogue—unless pressured. Humor is well positioned to break through dominant discourses—themselves forms of power—by disrupting the language and symbols used by those in power to represent reality in a particular way and providing alternative interpretations of that reality. Doing so opens space to question what has been considered “normal” and “natural”—like the need for a military to keep one’s community safe.

The third dimension is **utopian enactment**: the ability of nonviolent activists to enact, at least momentarily, the new reality that they envision—as when Black civil rights activists in the U.S. South engaged in normal, everyday activities like eating or swimming in “white only” spaces, enacting the integrated society they hoped to create. Utopian enactments show that other realities are possible and can create “hope [and] joy” in the midst of anger and despair. Humorous actions are well suited to such enactments, as they engage the imagination and are not bound by the usual constraints of “reality”—as seen in the international solidarity enacted by teddy bears.

Finally, the fourth dimension, **normative regulation**, re-establishes nonviolence as the norm and violence as an aberration—seen in the training for and maintenance of nonviolent discipline, even in the face of violence. Humor can play a role here in defusing potentially violent confrontations with police, as “a carnivalesque atmosphere” can make interactions “less hostile.” In cases where humorous actions can be interpreted as aggressive or involving ridicule, however, their productive role in utopian enactment and normative regulation may decrease.

While humor may contribute nonviolent action's effectiveness in some of these dimensions, it may detract from it in others. While parachuting teddy bears through Belarusian airspace challenged the regime's authority, it did not invite dialogue with the regime—only with the general public. Ofog's actions disrupted dominant militaristic discourses and engaged the general public in dialogue, but they did not enact the new anti-militarist realities activists envisioned. Most importantly, though, humor—“by playfully twisting the language of power”—provides a tool for activists to engage in what the author calls “discursive guerrilla warfare.”

Continued Reading:

**Using Humor to Expose the Ridiculous.**

New Tactics. 2013 <https://www.newtactics.org/conversation/using-humor-expose-ridiculous>.

**A 10-Point Plan to Stop Trump and Make Gains in Justice and Equality**

By George Lakey, Waging Nonviolence, January 23, 2017 <https://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/stop-trump-10-point-strategy/>

**Send in the Clowns: Opposing Anti-Migrant Citizen Patrols in Finland**

By Steven T. Zech, Political Violence at a Glance, March 22, 2016 <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/03/22/send-in-the-clowns/>

**Humor as a Nonviolent Weapon in Egypt**

By Eric Stoner, Waging Nonviolence, February 7, 2011 <https://wagingnonviolence.org/2011/02/humor-as-a-nonviolent-weapon-in-egypt/>

**The Power of Die-in Protests**

By Oliver Kaplan, Political Violence at a Glance, March 24, 2015 <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2015/03/24/the-power-of-die-in-protests/>

**Michael Moore: Fight Trump with an “Army of Comedy,”**

By Aja Romano, Vox, January 20, 2017 <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/1/20/14331072/michael-moore-alec-baldwin-we-stand-united-rally-comedy>

**Nonviolence and Humor: Carnival as a Tool of Nonviolent Resistance and Reconciliation**

By Janjira Sombutpoonsiri, PeaceVoiceTV [https://youtu.be/B-4kNTT\\_79o](https://youtu.be/B-4kNTT_79o)

**A Theory of Nonviolent Action: How Civil Resistance Works**

By Stellan Vinthagen. London: ZED Books, 2015.

Organizations:

Ofog <http://ofog.org/english>

Code Pink <http://www.codepink.org/about>

The Raging Grannies <http://raginggrannies.org/>

The Movement for Black Lives <https://policy.m4bl.org/>




## CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

With the election of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency, U.S.-based nonviolent resistance has received a massive jolt of energy. Beginning with the Women's March the day after the inauguration, the resistance has had a lot on its plate: the possibility of nuclear war with North Korea, escalation of war in the Middle East, and the undermining of international organizations and agreements, but also immigrant and refugee rights and protection, a racist law enforcement and criminal justice system, climate change and environmental deregulation, the normalization of sexual assault, an inflated military budget at the expense of crucial social programs, the gun lobby, health care, abortion rights, LGBTQ rights, anti-Muslim prejudice, workers' rights and economic inequality, and even an emboldened white nationalism—to name a few. In this context, the more we can learn about effective activist techniques—including humor—the more successful we will be at pushing back against the racist, militarist, sexist, science-denying, etc., agenda before us.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

How can these insights about the use of humor in nonviolent action be applied to current resistance to the Trump agenda, as well as to other nonviolent movements elsewhere in the world? First, it may be useful to conduct an analysis before undertaking an action (as part of a nonviolent campaign) to assess its likely effects on the operation of the four dimensions of nonviolent action, as outlined by Vinthagen: dialogue facilitation, power breaking, utopian enactment, and normative regulation. Which of these will be strengthened and which will be weakened through the action—and are these trade-offs worthwhile and useful for the overall goal of the action? Second, similarly, activists should ask themselves: who is/are the intended audience(s) for the action, will different audiences be affected or respond differently, and are these responses useful for the overall goal of the action? Finally, on the basis of this analysis, how might the action be improved to more effectively challenge dominant discourses and spark discussion while minimizing the ways in which it could be read as aggressive or disingenuous?



МУШЕК  
НА СЕБЕ!

## TALKING POINTS

- Humor can be an important component of nonviolent campaigns, especially the way it can challenge the language and symbols used by those in power, encouraging people to question what is considered “normal” and “natural.”
- Humor’s ambiguity can catch audiences off guard, spark discussion, and bring attention to important issues in ways different from how logical argumentation would.
- While humor may contribute to the effectiveness of nonviolent action along some dimensions, it may detract from it along others.

Photo Credit: Sergey Teplyakov/vkontakte  
Small dolls and other figurines display banners that read "I'm for clean elections" and "A thief should sit in jail, not in the Kremlin" in the Siberian city of Barnaul.



# Diversity, Identity, and Privilege Among Multinational Activists in Palestinian Civil Resistance

Source | Hackl, A. (2016). An orchestra of civil resistance: Privilege, diversity, and identification among cross-border activists in a Palestinian village. *Peace & Change*, 41(2), 167-193.

## Key words

Palestine  
Israel  
civil resistance  
popular resistance  
nonviolent struggle  
diversity  
privilege  
separation barrier



Continued Reading:

### **What is the Future of Unarmed Struggle in Palestine?**

By Brian Martin, Waging Nonviolence, October 26, 2015. <https://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/future-unarmed-struggle-palestine/>

### **Why Haven't We Seen a Third Palestinian Intifada (Or Are We)?**

By Will H. Moore, Political Violence at a Glance, October 14, 2015. <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2015/10/14/why-havent-we-seen-a-third-palestinian-intifada-or-are-we/>

### **International Solidarity with Palestine Grows with Israeli Assault**

By Bethan Staton, Waging Nonviolence, August 8, 2014. <https://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/international-solidarity-palestine-grows-latest-israeli-assault/>

### **How Thousands of Palestinian and Israeli Women Are Waging Peace**

By Rimana Barakat, Transcend Media Service, October 31, 2016. <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2016/10/how-thousands-of-palestinian-and-israeli-women-are-waging-peace/>

Contrary to widespread stereotypes regarding the nature of Palestinian resistance, there has long been a tradition of unarmed civil resistance against Israeli occupation—a tradition recently renewed with Israel's construction of the so-called "separation barrier" (a.k.a. "apartheid wall" [Palestinians] or "security fence" [Israelis]) that separates many West Bank Palestinian villages from their lands and livelihoods. Israeli and international activists frequently join Palestinians during anti-wall protests and actions, with a steady flow of new activists coming and going through the West Bank on a weekly or monthly basis. How does this in-flow/out-flow of diverse activists shape the possibilities for anti-occupation activism? In particular, how are identities—and the various forms of power and privilege that accompany them—negotiated in the effort to create a coordinated civil resistance movement?

The author carried out ethnographic research during 2009 in Bil'in, a village that has sustained weekly anti-wall/occupation protests since 2005, observing and participating in the Palestinian-led transnational struggle there. Using the metaphor of a musical orchestra, he describes the coordination of activists with diverse identities who combine their unique abilities to create one powerful "performance." He argues that it is precisely this diversity—and the unique forms of privilege enjoyed by different identities—that enables activists to fulfill different functions and the movement to sustain itself. Although the transient status of many activists and the varieties of privilege they experience can "set limits" to the creation of a common activist identity, activists are united by a common purpose, embodied in the weekly protests performed for a wider (media) audience.

For Palestinians, the struggle is existential. As expressed by one Palestinian activist, the community, in response to Israeli confiscation of agricultural land and olive trees, "started a nonviolent demonstration against the wall and the settlements because it threatened our life." This struggle has become profoundly entwined with the life stories of Palestinians, many of whom have family members who have—or have themselves—spent time in Israeli jails for various forms of resistance. Parents pass the commitment to struggle down to their children, and simply "continuing the struggle" becomes an end in itself. Palestinians' distinctive forms of power

include the direction of the movement itself, decisions about whom to invite to join them and how, and, when needed, the authority to rein in stone-throwing among community members.

In contrast to Palestinian activists, for whom resistance is a necessity, international activists have the luxury of choosing to join the resistance movement, some even seeing their participation as a way to engage in a more meaningful vacation than usual. Nonetheless, their presence is valuable, due in large part to their distinct forms of privilege. First, internationals use the privilege stemming from their citizenship to be a protective presence at demonstrations. One Palestinian activist notes that when Israeli soldiers “see internationals, Israelis, and cameras in the demonstrations, they change,” apparently stopping their use of live bullets. International activists also have a “low vulnerability to Israeli military prosecution,” unlike Palestinians who are at risk for arbitrary arrest and other forms of repression. Second, internationals use the privilege of their mobility—their ease crossing international borders—to publicize the Palestinian cause to their home countries and elsewhere. Finally, internationals have greater freedom to stay on the ground in Palestinian communities for weeks at a time than Israeli activists do, many of whom have daily responsibilities to attend to back in Israel.

Yet Israelis also have distinct privileges and capacities compared to both Palestinian and international activists. Most importantly, they have the insider status and hence moral authority to directly challenge Israeli soldiers who are carrying out the occupation in their name. They also have the ability to take cases to Israeli court and, like internationals, are less vulnerable to arbitrary punishment. Israeli activists can also use their identity as part of the opponent group to act as “ambassadors,” changing perceptions among Palestinians (and internationals), while also breaking down narratives within their own communities that legitimize separation and make Palestinians into the enemy. Their very presence can begin to transform the relationship between at least some Palestinians and Israelis. These acts of boundary-crossing solidarity are not always easy for Israelis, however, as “crossing over” can signify a break with Israeli identity and community, which can be as difficult and painful as it is necessary.

In short, the author argues, the diversity found in these temporary multinational groupings of activists in the West Bank is the very condition upon which the sustainability and power of the anti-occupation/wall movement is built. Rather than glossing over the various forms of privilege present among these diverse identities, the movement is best served by recognizing and putting these privileges to good use through the divergent functions that different groups of activists can fulfill in the struggle for Palestinian freedom.

#### Organizations:

Stop the Wall: <http://stopthewall.org>

International Solidarity Movement:  
<https://palsolidarity.org/>

Christian Peacemaker Teams: <http://cpt.org>

Combatants for Peace: <http://cfpeace.org>

The Parents' Circle Family Forum (Joint  
Palestinian/Israeli bereavement group):  
<http://www.theparentscircle.com>

#### Films:

Budrus, directed by Julia Bacha  
(documentary on one anti-wall movement),  
2009: <http://www.justvision.org/budrus>

Encounter Point, directed by Ronit Avni and  
Julia Bacha (documentary on Palestinian  
and Israeli members of the Parents' Circle  
Family Forum bereavement group), 2006:  
<http://www.justvision.org/encounterpoint>



## CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

With the Israeli occupation in its 50th year and a peace agreement between Israel and Palestine as elusive as ever, drawing attention to Palestinian civil resistance publicizes the daily injustices faced by Palestinians living under occupation, while also challenging the widespread assumption that Palestinian resistance is overwhelmingly violent. The more knowledge there is of such movements—and especially of Israeli activist participation in these movements—the more space opens up for Israelis and others to demand justice for Palestinians and to put pressure on the Israeli government to change its policies.

Beyond the Palestinian case, this research is valuable for helping us think through the complexities of engaging in activism across lines of difference, especially in situations of extreme power imbalance, privilege, and oppression. What does it mean to be an ally in a nonviolent struggle, to act in solidarity with those whose lives are more directly affected by the issue of concern than one's own life might be? How do activists of a more privileged identity balance the desire to participate and "help" with the desire to not become so centrally involved that they coopt the movement or reinstate forms of domination that already characterize their relationships with the marginalized group they are trying to assist? This research points to an approach that stresses the importance of movement leadership staying in the hands of those most directly affected (in this case Palestinians), while also insisting on openness and transparency when it comes to acknowledging the privileges enjoyed by allies of the movement and how these can be put to use.

## TALKING POINTS

- Though under-reported, nonviolent struggle has been a prominent mode of Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation and has only grown in response to Israel's construction of the "separation barrier" in the West Bank.
- Israeli and international activists frequently join Palestinians during anti-wall protests and actions, lending their unique forms of privilege to the movement by serving as a protective presence during demonstrations and/or helping to publicize the movement.
- Diversity among activists and their ability to fulfill different functions may, as in the Palestinian case, make a nonviolent movement more sustainable, suggesting that this diversity—and related privileges—should be recognized and put to good use.



## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

As the go-to example of the “cycles of violence” phenomenon, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not going to be resolved with either side employing ever-greater levels of violence against the other. Rather, if there is a path to peace with justice, it includes sustained Palestinian nonviolent resistance to Israeli occupation with the participation of Israeli peace activists, whose very presence and cooperation with Palestinian activists breaks down monolithic enemy images of either side and puts ever greater pressure on the Israeli government. With the adoption of widespread and disciplined nonviolent resistance, justifications for violent defense and occupation become harder for Israel to maintain, and space opens up for a broader array of more effective solutions. While it should continue to be the role of Palestinian activists to lead such movements, Israeli and international activists should continue to support and publicize them, participating as requested.

More broadly, activists should engage in self-reflection about their own identities and their relationship to structures of power before participating in any such movement, especially one focused on the concerns of a group in a more marginalized position vis-à-vis their own identities. Such self-reflection may include uncomfortable questions about how you might benefit daily in certain ways from the system that simultaneously oppresses members of the other group. Accordingly, how can your way of participating in a movement confront rather than reinforce the patterns of privilege and oppression that already exist between these identity groups? A few considerations include following the lead of those in the affected community, listening more than talking (and being mindful of the air-time you take up in strategizing sessions), asking how to be most useful, acknowledging privilege and being prepared for discomfort, and being open to what you can learn from others.

Photo Credit: Palestine Solidarity Project; Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0)



# Creating a Broad-Based Movement for Black Lives

Source | Rickford, R. (2016). Black Lives Matter: Toward a modern practice of mass struggle. *New Labor Forum*, 25(1), 34-42.

## Key words

Black Lives Matter  
civil resistance  
nonviolent struggle  
racism  
police  
solidarity  
allies



Organizations:

Black Lives Matter

[www.Blacklivesmatter.com](http://www.Blacklivesmatter.com)

The Movement for

Black Lives

[www.policy.m4bl.org](http://www.policy.m4bl.org)

In a scene from Sacha Jenkins' new documentary, a father asks his 12-year-old son to tell the camera what he's been told to do if their car is ever pulled over: "Put your hands up on the dashboard, so the police don't think you have any weapons, or show your hands." He responds, "I gotta tell a 12-year-old how to interface with law enforcement, because I'm scared that if he acts silly and does something with his hands, they will kill him... I've got to teach him how to conduct himself... so we can make it where?..." "Home." "Home. Can you imagine a film wherein white Americans, a white dad and his cute little 12-year-old son: 'Son, tell the camera what I told you to do when the cops pull us over.' America would be outraged. But because we are not considered Americans, it is what it is and things don't change." This poignant exchange cuts to the heart of the injustice propelling the movement for Black lives: in a country built on the ideal of human equality—but also built on the backs of enslaved Black women, men, and children—who actually belongs and counts as a full, rights-bearing citizen in everyday interactions with the state?

The Black Lives Matter movement emerged during the Obama presidency, an era marked, the author notes, by its seeming celebration of the American multiracial ideal but for that very reason also by its complacency regarding persistent systemic racism. Taking stock of the movement, the author outlines its origins, goals, characteristics, measured accomplishments, and strategic concerns. His purpose is to determine how the movement might strengthen itself to become "a sustained, truly mass struggle" that will be able to "pose a deeper challenge to existing social and political arrangements."

Begun as a hashtag to express outrage regarding George Zimmerman's 2013 acquittal for the killing of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, Black Lives Matter grew into a movement with the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, following the 2014 police killing of Michael Brown. Initiated by three women—Patrice Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi—it has now grown to include a number of locally driven movements across the country. The fervor with which activists took up the rallying cry underscores the potency and broad salience within the Black community of the movement's central

concern: racist violence, especially at the hands of police officers—who are experienced by many as a repressive, rather than protective, force.

According to the author, today's racist policing is simply the latest manifestation of a continuum that spans slavery, Jim Crow, and contemporary mass incarceration—all meant to “enforc[e] racial hierarchy” and exploit “black surplus labor.” While the movement initially mobilized around an end to—and accountability for—police violence, it has since broadened its purpose to address a more wide-ranging slate of injustices and fundamentally transform power relations. As a self-consciously inclusive movement, it has centered the experiences of typically marginalized identities: members of the Black community who also identify as women, queer, trans, disabled, and so on.

The author describes Black Lives Matter's methods as “militant” even if nonviolent: the disruption of everyday places and practices by occupying “intersections, sporting events, [and] police stations”; staging “die-ins”; and organizing marches and rallies. These “creative disturbances” serve to “dramatize” (to use Dr. King's word) the daily injustices experienced by Black communities. Self-consciously avoiding electoral politics, the movement wishes to remain independent, is decentralized and youth-led (though intergenerational), and also resists narratives that blame anti-Black state violence on the Black community instead of white supremacy.

So far, the movement's accomplishments include some police officers being charged and/or disciplined but also, perhaps even more importantly, a shift in the way people think and talk about racism and democratic participation. However, the movement's decentralized structure and diverse ranks mean that it must inevitably address internal tensions—regarding how confrontational to be, whether to propose policy recommendations or just focus on mounting “mass pressure,” whether to confront white supremacy only or capitalism as well, and how to address persistent patriarchy/heterosexism among activists. The movement must also address external opposition, especially from police departments engaged in “demoniz[ation]” and militarized repression of the movement but also from sections of “white America” who simply take the notion of “black criminality” as fact, uncritically consuming images of movement activists as “looters”/“thugs,” and minimize the reality of anti-Black racism, obscuring it through phrases like “All Lives Matter.”

Although Black Lives Matter has drawn diverse supporters to its protests, the author argues that it still needs to do more to fulfill its enormous potential and should therefore continue to strengthen its alliances with other social/racial justice movements.

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**Turning Away from Street Protests, Black Lives Matter Tries a New Tactic in the Age of Trump**

By Janell Ross and Wesley Lowery, The Washington Post, May 4, 2017

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/in-trumps-america-black-lives-matter-shifts-from-protests-to-policy/2017/05/04/a2acf37a-28fe-11e7-b605-33413c691853\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.80balddaa662](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/in-trumps-america-black-lives-matter-shifts-from-protests-to-policy/2017/05/04/a2acf37a-28fe-11e7-b605-33413c691853_story.html?utm_term=.80balddaa662)

**Interview with Sacha Jenkins, Mixed Reviews for Trump, A Shifting War Front, Remembering the L.A. Riots**

The Takeaway, PRI/WNYC/NPR, April 28, 2017

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By Cody T. Ross, PLoS ONE 10(11), 2015

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**What the Data Really Says about Police and Racial Violence**

By Kia Makarechi, Vanity Fair, July 14, 2016

<http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2016/07/data-police-racial-bias>

**On Second Anniversary of Michael Brown's Death, Black Lives Matter Is More Organized Than Ever**

By Sarah Aziza, Waging Nonviolence, August 10, 2016

<https://wagingnonviolence.org/2016/08/black-lives-matter-second-anniversary-michael-brown/>

**Climate Activists Can Learn a Lot from Black Lives Matter**

By Kate Aronoff, Waging Nonviolence, December 29, 2015

<https://wagingnonviolence.org/2015/12/what-climate-activists-can-learn-from-the-movement-for-black-lives/>

**Why Campaigns, Not Protests, Get the Goods**

By George Lakey, Waging Nonviolence, October 29, 2016

<https://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/election-campaigns-one-off-protests/>

**Documentary 13th Argues that Mass Incarceration Is an Extension of Slavery**

All Things Considered, NPR, December 17, 2016

<http://www.npr.org/2016/12/17/505996792/documentary-13th-argues-mass-incarceration-is-an-extension-of-slavery>



## CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

When security forces disproportionately kill or repress civilians of a particular racial/ethnic identity, the international community often advocates determinedly on behalf of the persecuted group and puts pressure on the government in question to stop such practices, sometimes framing its concern in terms of the "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine (the international community's moral obligation to protect civilians when the country in question demonstrates itself unable or unwilling to do so). But what if this repression happens in one's own country, and what if that country happens to be the United States? Is there any reason to see or treat these practices in the U.S. differently from those that happen in other countries, or to be any less outraged?

The presence of racism in U.S. law enforcement is difficult to deny: one study found that "the probability of being Black, unarmed, and shot by police is about 3.49 times the probability of being white, unarmed, and shot by police on average" (Ross 2015). Of course, it may be true at the same time *both* that members of the Black community are disproportionately and unjustly killed at the hands of the state *and* that many police officers may be acting not out of overt malice but because they feel genuinely threatened—but the crux of the matter is that their very assumptions about danger and threat have racial dimensions, and that must be acknowledged and addressed. In other words, the fact that a young Black man is assumed—in a spur-of-the-moment decision—to constitute a threat just because he is walking around a particular neighborhood or wearing a hoodie or even running away, often without any other indicators of violent intent, is itself the problem. Until children and young people and adults of all identities can walk around without fearing for their lives at the hands of the people who are supposed to be protecting them, the U.S. will not be an equal society.

## TALKING POINTS

- Black Lives Matter is a nonviolent movement that emerged in response to several high-profile, well-documented killings of unarmed Black people, most at the hands of police.
- Racist violence in law enforcement must be understood within the broader historical context of slavery, Jim Crow, and mass incarceration of Black people—all of which have served to "enforc[e] racial hierarchy" and exploit "black surplus labor."
- Black Lives Matter has broadened its purpose from addressing only racist police violence to addressing a broader slate of injustices, centering the experiences of more marginalized members of the Black community, and fundamentally challenging power relations.
- To become a broad-based, sustained movement capable of "pos[ing] a deeper challenge to existing social and political arrangements," Black Lives Matter needs to, among other courses of action, strengthen its alliances with other social/racial justice movements.



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## Exploring Questions About Identity, Power, Language, and Capitalization

You may notice that we have chosen to capitalize “Black”, “Indigenous” and “Native” in our analyses. Below are a few sources that discuss reasons for and implications of this decision:

### The Case for Black With a Capital B

By Lori L. Tharps, The New York Times, November 18, 2014

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/19/opinion/the-case-for-Black-with-a-capital-b.html&assetType=opinion&r=0>

### The Discussion on Capitalizing the “B” in “Black” Continues

By Barrett Holmes Pitner, The Huffington Post, November 24, 2014

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/barrett-holmes-pitner/the-discussion-on-capitalizing-the-b-in-Black-continues\\_b\\_6194626.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/barrett-holmes-pitner/the-discussion-on-capitalizing-the-b-in-Black-continues_b_6194626.html)

### Ask a Radical Copyeditor: Black with a Capital “B”

By Alex Kapitan, The Radical Copyeditor, September 21, 2016

<https://radicalcopyeditor.com/2016/09/21/Black-with-a-capital-b/>

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

When unarmed civilians are being killed at the hands of the state—whether that killing is due to direct targeting or fear or negligence—citizens must put pressure on police forces and government officials to acknowledge and address the problem. Action can be taken by holding police officers accountable and transforming police department norms that may legitimize racial profiling or harsher treatment towards people of particular racial/ethnic identities. The larger and more broad-based the Black Lives Matter movement becomes, the more pressure these police departments and government officials are going to feel. Building a broad-based movement means the widespread participation of allies, which necessarily brings with it complicated questions about identity and power in organizing: How can allies support the Black Lives Matter movement without reinstating the very relationships of privilege and oppression that the movement is trying to abolish? Alicia Garza, one of the founders of Black Lives Matter, provides a powerful and useful response at the end of her short essay “Herstory” on the Black Lives Matter website: “[W]hen Black people cry out in defense of our lives, which are uniquely, systematically, and savagely targeted by the state, we are asking you, our family, to stand with us in affirming Black lives. Not just all lives. Black lives. Please do not change the conversation by talking about how your life matters, too. It does, but we need less watered down unity and [ ] more active solidarities with us, Black people, unwaveringly, in defense of our humanity. Our collective futures depend on it.” In other words, it is important that allies acknowledge *difference* in experience and especially the way in which members of the Black community *in particular* live in a society that often treats them as if their lives do not matter. Speaking in universalisms—“we’re all one” or “all lives matter,” as nice as those sentiments may sound—erases the unique injustices that the movement is trying to confront.



# Indigenous Civil Resistance and Treaty Rights

Source | Hastings, T.H. (2016). Turtle Island 2016 civil resistance snapshot. *Journal for the Study of Peace and Conflict*, 11, 58-68.

## Key words

Indigenous rights  
civil resistance  
nonviolent struggle  
Native Americans  
First Nations  
treaty rights

Continued Reading:  
**Stand with Standing Rock**

<http://standwithstandingrock.net/>

**Stories about Dakota Access Pipeline**

<http://www.npr.org/tags/492631446/dakota-access-pipeline>

**The Dakota Access Pipeline, Environmental Injustice, and U.S. Colonialism**

By Kyle Powys Whyte. *Red Ink: An International Journal of Indigenous Literature, Arts, & Humanities*, January/February 2017

[https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2925513](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2925513)

**Reckoning at Standing Rock. Want to Understand the Pipeline Protests? Start with the Founding Fathers**

By Paul VanDevelder, *High Country News*, October 28, 2016

<http://www.hcn.org/articles/Reckoning-at-Standing-Rock>

**How to Support Standing Rock and Confront What It Means to Live on Stolen Land**

By Berkley Carnine and Liza Minno Bloom, *Waging Nonviolence*, October 13, 2016

<https://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/support-standing-rock-confront-means-live-stolen-land>

**Protests Against the Dakota Access Pipeline Sweep the Nation**

By Sarah Aziza for *Waging Nonviolence*, November 16, 2016

<https://wagingnonviolence.org/2016/11/protests-dakota-access-pipeline-dapl-sweep-nation>

2016 saw the emergence of a powerful movement against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) through land vital to Native communities, especially the Standing Rock Sioux. For non-Native people who have not been paying attention to Indigenous rights struggles over the past several decades, the #NoDAPL movement may have served as a wake-up call to some of the injustices still confronting these communities. For others, as pointed out in this article, #NoDAPL is simply another in a long line of civil resistance struggles Native communities have mobilized, often successfully, to claim their rights. The author highlights this recent history of Native American and First Nations civil resistance movements on Turtle Island—the name, from Lenape mythology, that refers to the landmass others call North America—and takes stock of their characteristics, challenges, and successes, arguing that nonviolent resistance has been a more effective strategy than violent resistance in defending Native peoples and their “lifeways.”

The author begins with the fact that, unlike other identity groups struggling for justice in the U.S. or Canada, Indigenous groups can claim sovereign rights as nations with their own governance structures—which also means that activists often mobilize *in tandem with*, as opposed to *against*, their (tribal) governments. Practically speaking, this fact provides Indigenous activists with an additional tool in their activist toolbox: the nation-to-nation treaties previously negotiated with the settler governments of the United States and Canada. He notes that occasionally simply mentioning the existence of a treaty, and the fact that “tribal lawyers are standing by,” has been enough for action to be taken in favor of Native communities. In other cases, of course, the process is not so easy, but the existence of treaties as legal documents to which the federal government must be held accountable helps enormously. For instance, in 1974 two brothers from the Anishinaabe nation, upon realizing that they had treaty rights to do so, “purposefully and openly fished on off-reservation waters” and presented a copy of the treaty to the game warden who came to arrest them. The matter was taken up in the courts, who ultimately ruled in their favor. But although they had established their legal right to fish in these off-reservation waters, they still faced the wrath of angry mobs who met

them with racial slurs and sometimes even violence as they were trying to fish. The author himself, along with other allies with the organization **Witness for Peace**, would, in the late 1980s/early 1990s, accompany them to the fishing spot as a protective presence. Eventually, media attention, which highlighted the contrast between the nonviolent Anishinaabe people simply fishing and the “inebriated racists” trying to stop them, shifted the opinion of the public and ultimately government officials in favor of treaty rights. This case draws out a number of elements of Native civil resistance worthy of note, in addition to treaty rights leverage: the strategic importance of nonviolent discipline, the power of media in shaping the outcome, the key supportive role that can be played by non-Native allies (as well as by Indigenous allies globally), and the ultimate need for broader public education and opinion change on Native history, rights, and struggles.

Beyond treaty rights (mostly regarding access to resources on land ceded in treaties—sometimes with dubious levels of consent—to which tribes have historical ties), the author mentions mobilization around a range of other issues: environmental protection, tribal health care, law enforcement, borders/boundaries, tribal dignity, consultation (on various policies affecting tribes), and basic sovereignty. Of these, he pays special attention to anti-nuclear and anti-pipeline (environmental) activism against attempts to store nuclear waste and extract or transport oil close to Native communities, noting how these movements have become “more effective at drawing [in] coalition partners and using their special sovereignty statuses to wield power disproportionate to their populations.”

Throughout the article, the complex and multi-faceted nature of Native identity—and its relation to various forms of resistance—emerges as a common theme. First, the author brings attention to the importance of national (e.g., Sioux) and band (e.g., Brule Sioux) identities as opposed to the blanket identity of “Native American” or “First Nation,” which he says is more often used by non-Native people than by Indigenous people themselves. He does, however, note the way in which a pan-Native American identity developed to some degree in the U.S. (through the emergence of AIM—American Indian Movement—activism in the late 1960s/1970s) whereas it did not in Canada. Finally, he highlights the emergence of a complicated warrior identity, both in relation to participation in the U.S. military—often in the name of and to gain status for their tribal nations rather than out of allegiance to an oppressive federal government—and in relation to longstanding anti-settler resistance, including the resistance of nonviolent “warriors.”

Organizations:

Global Divestment Mobilization  
<https://globaldivestmentmobilisation.org/>

350 (a global climate movement)  
<https://350.org/>

**Witness for Peace:** According to the mission statement on its website, “Witness for Peace (WFP) is a politically independent, nationwide grassroots organization of people committed to nonviolence and led by faith and conscience. WFP’s mission is to support peace, justice and sustainable economies in the Americas by changing U.S. policies and corporate practices that contribute to poverty and oppression in Latin America and the Caribbean. We stand with people seeking justice.” Activists with the organization have often engaged in unarmed accompaniment to protect other activists/human rights defenders in areas of concern, using their international or otherwise privileged status to deter violence.

WFP, “Mission & History,” Witness for Peace

[http://witnessforpeace.org/?page\\_id=369](http://witnessforpeace.org/?page_id=369)



# CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

From April 2016 until late February 2017, enduring a fierce winter, Standing Rock Sioux water protectors and their allies created an encampment where they gathered and prayed to resist the proposed construction nearby of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) under the Missouri River and across their sacred sites. The encampment and its acts of civil disobedience drew widespread media attention and support but also brought repressive responses from local police and private security companies. Although President Obama temporarily halted construction in light of the Standing Rock people's concerns, President Trump has since reinstated the project, and the camp has been dismantled. This article helps to situate the so-called #NoDAPL movement in the broader context and history of "settler colonialism" (Whyte 2017), broken treaties, exploitation, and persistent Indigenous civil resistance on Turtle Island (or North America). Understanding construction of the pipeline as part of this continuum of oppression, displacement, and trust-violation endows the resistance movement with greater meaning—a movement that needs to be seen not as an over-reaction to an isolated incident but as a justified response to a steady onslaught of injustices.

More broadly, this history focuses attention on the widespread modes of domination by which some groups of human beings interact with both other groups of human beings and the natural world—instrumentalizing both for self-centered gain with no regard for Indigenous self-determination or ecological balance. It is becoming abundantly clear that such practices are neither socially nor environmentally sustainable. As climate change becomes a clear and present danger, non-Native folks have much to learn—and fast—from resistance movements and lifeways of Indigenous peoples about how to live sustainably without obliterating the world or one another.

## TALKING POINTS

- Nonviolent resistance has had greater success than violent resistance in Indigenous struggles against settler oppression and exploitation in the U.S. and Canada.
- Indigenous civil resistance—which affirms the sovereign rights of Native communities as nations—is unique among other forms of civil resistance in North America insofar as it can leverage treaty rights in its struggles for justice.
- Common issues at stake in Indigenous civil resistance movements include treaty rights, environmental protection, tribal health care, law enforcement, borders/boundaries, tribal dignity, consultation (on various policies affecting tribes), and basic sovereignty.
- Indigenous civil resistance movements are building connections with other Indigenous allies globally and with non-Indigenous settler allies locally, who can support Native-led civil resistance movements in various ways, including as a protective presence at actions or protests.





## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

For Indigenous activists, this research highlights the importance of maintaining nonviolent discipline, while also thinking strategically about both the use of media and collaboration with global and local allies to facilitate shifts in public opinion and create broad-based movements that will be more resilient and have greater impact. For non-Native allies, this research reminds activists of the broader historical context informing Indigenous struggles and what that means for the significance of a specific movement itself but also for the role of settler allies in that movement—those who benefit in many ways from the forms of exploitation that have deprived Native communities of their livelihoods and sacred places but who also have access to particular forms of leverage that can put pressure on those spear-heading that exploitation and dispossession today. For instance, allies of #NoDAPL can go right to the source and move their personal savings out of banks financing the DAPL project and into local banks or community credit unions that are not. Going a step further, they can mobilize their employers and cities to do the same. (See <http://www.defunddapl.org/> for further information.)

More broadly, non-Native allies can educate their families, friends, and communities on the historical and contemporary injustices facing Native communities so that Indigenous civil resistance movements can be met with even greater empathy and support. Finally, activists should continue to draw out the connections between local struggles like #NoDAPL and the broader global climate justice movement; the former grounds and gives a human face to an issue as daunting as energy consumption and climate change, while the latter provides #NoDAPL and other such movements with additional urgency and wider relevance that can galvanize broader publicity and mobilization.

Photo Credit: Dark Sevier, Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 Generic (CC BY-NC 2.0)  
Nov. 30th to Dec. 7th



# Nonviolent Resistance and Government Repression

Source | Chenoweth, E. (2017). Trends in nonviolent resistance and state response: Is violence towards civilian-based movements on the rise? *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 9(1), 86-100.

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**When Protests Are Powerful, The Powerful Punish Protest** By Libero Della Piana, People's Action Blog, Common Dreams, May 10, 2017. <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/05/10/when-protests-are-powerful-powerful-punish-protest>

**How Nonviolent Resistance Works: Factors for Successful Peacebuilding in Samaniego, Colombia** By Cécile Mouly, María Belén Garrido, and Annette Idler, Political Violence at a Glance, July 25, 2016. <http://politicalviolenceataglance.org/2016/07/25/how-nonviolent-resistance-works-factors-for-successful-peacebuilding-in-samaniego-colombia/>

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**Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict** By Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan. New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

**Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th Century** By Sharon Erickson Nepstad. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

**Mutiny and Nonviolence in the Arab Spring: Exploring Military Defections and Loyalty in Egypt, Bahrain, and Syria** By Sharon Erickson Nepstad. *Journal of Peace Research*, 50(3), 2013, 337-349.

**Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies** By Kurt Schock. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

**Crowd Counting Consortium** By Erica Chenoweth and Jeremy Pressman <https://sites.google.com/view/crowdcountingconsortium>

A greater number of resistance movements are choosing to adopt nonviolent forms of struggle as the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance becomes more widely known. At the same time, however, the success rate of these nonviolent movements is decreasing. What accounts for this lower rate of success, just as the effectiveness of nonviolent strategies is catching on? The author suggests that part of the answer lies in target governments becoming increasingly savvy in their responses to nonviolent movements, now that such movements are recognized to pose a real threat to their power. In light of this possibility, how can nonviolent resistance persist and succeed in repressive contexts?

The author begins by reviewing data on major episodes of nonviolent and violent contention over the 20th and early 21st centuries to discuss changes in the adoption and effectiveness of nonviolent resistance. She finds that, over the last several decades, there has been a substantial rise in the adoption of nonviolent resistance and a corresponding drop in the adoption of violent resistance in cases of anti-regime or self-determination struggles. This shift, she argues, is likely due to three factors: knowledge of the increasing effectiveness (until recently) of nonviolent resistance, the development of global norms regarding human rights and a related willingness to challenge tyrants, and technological advances that facilitate communication.

Turning to the question of effectiveness, the author notes that nonviolent resistance has been remarkably successful, achieving an average success rate of over 50% between 1940 and 2010 (compared to a much lower success rate for violent resistance). From 2010 to 2016, however, there has been a marked decrease in the success rate of nonviolent movements. She argues that this is not due to an increase in brutality against these movements; in fact, nonviolent resistance movements are actually much less frequently subjected to mass killings than violent resistance movements are (23% and 68% of nonviolent and violent campaigns respectively, 1955-2013), and this frequency has even declined over the last several years. However, more limited lethal violence is still very much a common response to resistance movements, including nonviolent ones, and its use has actually recently increased: 92% of nonviolent campaigns since 2007 experienced some form of lethal violence against them compared to 80% of nonviolent campaigns 1900-2006.

Lethal repression is just one of several tools that regimes have developed to counter nonviolent resistance movements, and the author suggests that it is the development of “more politically savvy” responses that may account for the recent lower success rate. These refined responses fall into three categories: “reinforcing the loyalty of elites,” “infiltrating and dividing opposition movements,” and “reinforcing public claims to legitimacy.” (See table.) Other possible reasons for the recent lower success rate include inadequate skills in nonviolent resistance strategy among the greater number of groups now adopting these methods; the higher percentage of predominantly nonviolent movements since 2010 nonetheless containing elements that “destroy property, engage in street fighting, or use lethal violence” (which diminish the distinct power of a nonviolent movement); and the greater skill with which governments have recently been able to keep security forces from defecting.

### **Methods of Authoritarian Adaptation Against Nonviolent Resistance:**

#### Strategies to Reinforce Elite Loyalty

- Pay off the inner entourage
- Co-opt oppositionists
- Use public brutality against accused defectors to deter further defection

#### Strategies to Suppress or Undermine the Movement

- Use direct violence against dissidents or their associates
- Counter-mobilize one’s own supporters
- Plant plain-clothes police and agents provocateurs
- Solicit the help of paramilitary groups and pro-state armed militias
- Infiltrate the movement and engage in surveillance
- Pass pseudo-legitimate laws and practices that criminalize erstwhile legal behaviors
- Add administrative and financial burdens to civil society groups

#### Strategies to Reinforce Support among the Public and Other Observers

- Blame foreigners and outsiders
- Mischaracterize domestic oppositionists as terrorists, traitors, coup plotters, or communists
- Conceal information through censorship and spin
- Remove foreign journalists from the country

From Chenoweth, E. (2017). Trends in nonviolent resistance and state response: Is violence towards civilian-based movements on the rise? *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 9(1), 94.

with the repressive regime (as happened during the Nazi Holocaust); accompanying or providing proactive presence for threatened activists or communities in war zones; or resisting local armed activity by carving out zones of peace.

The author also highlights ways in which activists can improve the ability of nonviolence to respond to and persist amid violence. One important way they can do this, according to Brian Martin whom the author cites, is to be strategic in the way they represent and publicize the actions of the movement in contrast to the actions of the regime to highlight the regime’s repressive methods. Another important way is for communities and movements to build their organizational capacity—and strengthen civil society institutions more broadly—as those that have greater capacity are more likely to be resilient. Finally, because security force compliance is so instrumental to a regime’s ability to carry out violent repression, including mass killings, foreign governments can help facilitate security force defections by making escape from the country less risky for those wishing to defect.

If “smart” repression does not work for the regime and escalates to mass killings, how can nonviolent movements persist or even succeed in highly repressive contexts? Although violent repression can sometimes have its intended effect of dampening a movement, violence against nonviolent movements can also backfire against the regime using it—galvanizing public support and participation and creating rifts within the regime itself. In addition, nonviolent movements/methods can overcome, resist, prevent, or protect people from violence in the midst of war or violent repression by pressuring the adversary to address grievances and resolve the conflict; rescuing or hiding those being targeted through a refusal to cooperate

## Key words

civil resistance  
nonviolent struggle  
repression  
mass killings  
civilian protection



## CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

In the first few months of 2011, during the so-called Arab Spring, it began to feel like anything was possible: first, Tunisia's president Ben Ali stepped down, then after over two weeks of protest and repression Egypt's president Mubarak stepped down, with throngs celebrating in Tahrir Square; there was even a brief glimpse of hope in Bahrain, Syria, and Libya, among others. But of these cases, Tunisia stands out as the lone country that has secured democratic gains from its nonviolent resistance movement. The other cases were less successful: for instance, one year after a democratically elected president took office, military rule returned to Egypt; Bahrain's movement was unable to sustain itself in the face of severe repression; after persisting for quite some time in the midst of violent repression, Syria's nonviolent movement was steadily over-run by an armed movement composed of defected Syrian soldiers, leading to the civil war that has brought massive destruction to that country over the past six years; and threats of mass killing in Libya in response to its uprising resulted in NATO military intervention, the death of Qaddafi, and subsequent widespread instability and violence, providing a haven for the extremist group ISIS. These cases all have a bearing on the recent finding that nonviolent resistance—though still more effective than violent resistance in achieving its goals—is becoming less reliably effective. The fact that leaders may be learning about nonviolent resistance, noting its effectiveness, and adapting their responses when targeted by such movements means that nonviolent activists must stay on their toes and maintain versatility in their own adaptive responses. It also provides an unsettling illustration of the way in which academic research and its objects of study are deeply intertwined, with the researcher potentially influencing the phenomenon being studied in unintended ways—such as when research on the operation and effectiveness of nonviolent resistance may better inform the strategies of governments who wish to counter such movements.



Photo Credit: Michael F. Hiatt / mfhiattphotography.com



## TALKING POINTS

- More resistance movements are choosing to adopt nonviolent forms of struggle as the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance becomes more widely known.
- Since 2010, the success rate of nonviolent movements—though still higher than that of violent movements—has decreased dramatically, partly due to target regimes' use of increasingly savvy responses.
- Contrary to popular belief, nonviolent resistance movements are subjected to mass killings much less frequently than violent resistance movements are.
- There are multiple ways nonviolent movements/methods can overcome, resist, prevent, or protect people from violence, including “political jiu-jitsu”—when violent repression against a nonviolent movement backfires against the regime using it.
- Nonviolent activists can strengthen a movement’s ability to withstand and lessen the chances of violent repression by strategically publicizing the contrast between their own actions and those of their opponent, strengthening organizational/civil society capacity, and taking measures to facilitate security force defection.

## PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

If targeted regimes are adapting their responses to be more effective against usually highly effective nonviolent resistance movements, nonviolent activists (and scholars of nonviolent action) will have to devote even greater attention to studying these more politically savvy techniques and how they might be confronted more successfully. This study already suggests three possible approaches for at least persisting amid such violence, or even trying to prevent further violence: strategically publicizing the contrast between the activists’ own actions and those of their opponent to highlight the repressive nature of the opponent, building organizational/civil society capacity for greater resilience, and taking measures to facilitate security force defection. These suggestions are consistent with other recommendations of scholars such as Burrowes, Chenoweth & Stephan, Nepstad, and Schock for how to make a nonviolent movement succeed: consider those actions—including the creation of a mass, broad-based movement—that will strengthen the will and capacity of the nonviolent movement to persist (even in the face of repression), while weakening the will and capacity of the opponent to do so (including by creating cracks in the opponent group, especially security forces). What this means in terms of relations with security forces might be counterintuitive: rather than seeing and treating soldiers and/or police as the “enemy,” nonviolent movements should find creative ways to engage them and to draw many of them to the side of the movement, something facilitated by the movement’s maintenance of nonviolent discipline.



## [TESTIMONIALS]



*This Magazine is where the academic field and the practitioners meet. It is the ideal source for the Talkers, the Writers and the Doers who need to inform and educate themselves about the fast growing field of Peace Science for War Prevention Initiatives!*

**John W. McDonald**  
U.S. Ambassador, ret.  
Chairman and CEO, Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy



*As a longtime peace activist, I've grown weary of the mainstream perception that "peace is for dreamers." That's why the Peace Science Digest is such a useful tool; it gives me easy access to the data and the science to make the case for peacebuilding and war prevention as both practical and possible. This is a wonderful new resource for all who seek peaceful solutions in the real world.*

**Kelly Campbell**  
Executive Director, Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility Co-founder,  
9/11 Families for Peaceful Tomorrows



*The Peace Science Digest is the right approach to an ever-present challenge: how do you get cutting-edge peace research that is often hidden in hard-to-access academic journals into the hands of a broader audience? With its attractive on-line format, easy to digest graphics and useful short summaries, the Peace Science Digest is a critically important tool for anyone who cares about peace – as well as a delight to read.*

**Aubrey Fox**  
Executive Director, Institute for Economics and Peace



*The field of peace science has long suffered from a needless disconnect between current scholarship and relevant practice. The Peace Science Digest serves as a vital bridge. By regularly communicating cutting-edge peace research to a general audience, this publication promises to advance contemporary practice of peace and nonviolent action. I don't know of any other outlet that has developed such an efficient forum for distilling the key insights from the latest scholarly innovations for anyone who wants to know more about this crucial subject. I won't miss an issue.*

**Erica Chenoweth**  
Professor & Associate Dean for Research at the Josef Korbel School of  
International Studies at the University of Denver



*Peace Science Digest is a valuable tool for translating scholarly research into practical conclusions in support of evidence-based approaches to preventing armed conflict.*

**David Cortright**  
Director of Policy Studies at the Kroc Institute of International Peace Studies at the  
University of Notre Dame



*How many times are we asked about the effectiveness of alternatives to violent conflict? Reading Peace Science Digest offers a quick read on some of the best research focused on that important question. It offers talking points and summarizes practical implications. Readers are provided with clear, accessible explanations of theories and key concepts. It is a valuable resource for policy-makers, activists and scholars. It is a major step in filling the gap between research findings and application.*

**Joseph Bock**  
International Conflict Management Program Associate Professor of International Conflict  
Management, Kennesaw State University



*"We must welcome the expansion of peace awareness into any and every area of our lives, in most of which it must supplant the domination of war and violence long established there. The long-overdue and much appreciated Digest is filling an important niche in that 'peace invasion.' No longer will anyone be able to deny that peace is a science that can be studied and practiced."*

**Michael Nagler**  
Founder of the Metta Center for Nonviolence

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## PEACE POLICY

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The Peace Science Digest is a project of the War Prevention Initiative

<h2>OUR VISION</h2>	<p>Our vision is a world beyond war by 2030 and humanity united by a global system of peace with justice.</p>
<h2>OUR MISSION</h2>	<p>Our mission is to advance the Global Peace System by supporting, developing and collaborating with peacebuilding efforts in all sectors of society.</p>
<h2>OUR CORE VALUES</h2>	<p>Nonviolence – We promote strategic and principled nonviolent solutions over any kind of armed conflict.</p> <p>Empathy – We view social problems through the eyes of others and respectfully communicate with each other in the pursuit of mutual understanding.</p> <p>Planetary loyalty – We consider ourselves global citizens, living in harmony with humanity and nature.</p> <p>Moral imagination – We strive for a moral perception of the world in that we: (1) imagine people in a web of relationships including their enemies; (2) foster the understanding of others as an opportunity rather than a threat; (3) pursue the creative process as the wellspring that feeds the building of peace; and (4) risk stepping into the unknown landscape beyond violence</p>
<h1 style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">AREAS OF FOCUS</h1>	<h2>WE SUPPORT</h2> <p>Support Rotary International’s focus on peace by aiding the Rotarian Action Group for Peace with human, logistical and content-related resources.</p> <p>Support development of effective strategies to convince Americans that the United States should not promote war, militarism or weapons proliferation, but rather embrace conflict resolution practices that have been shown to prevent, shorten, and eliminate war as viable alternatives to local, regional and global conflicts.</p> <p>Support building grassroots social movements seeking a world beyond war.</p>
	<h2>WE EDUCATE</h2> <p>Actively contribute to peace science and public scholarship on war prevention issues.</p> <p>Share information and resources with multiple constituencies in an understandable manner.</p> <p>Provide evidence-based information on peace and conflict issues with immediately potential doable policy advice to public policy makers.</p> <p>Advance the understanding and growth of the Global Peace System.</p>
	<h2>WE ENGAGE</h2> <p>Convene national and international experts in ongoing constructive dialog on war prevention issues via our Parkdale Peace Gatherings.</p> <p>Connect likely and unlikely allies to create new opportunities.</p> <p>Participate in peacebuilding networks and membership organizations.</p>
<h2>UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS</h2>	<p>We are at a stage in human history where we can say with confidence that there are better and more effective alternatives to war and violence.</p> <p>A Global Peace System is evolving.</p> <p>Poverty, employment, energy, education, the environment and other social and natural factors are interconnected in peacebuilding.</p> <p>Peace Science and Peace Education provide a path to a more just and peaceful world.</p> <p>Multi-track diplomacy offers a sectoral framework for creating peacebuilding opportunities</p>