

11-1-2012

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George Poluse
Kent State University, gpoluse@gmail.com

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Recommended Citation

Poluse, George (2012) "S.E. Nepstad. Nonviolent revolutions: Civil resistance in the late 20th century. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011.," *Journal of International and Global Studies*: Vol. 4: No. 1, Article 9. DOI: 10.62608/2158-0669.1121
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/jigs/vol4/iss1/9>

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S.E. Nepstad. *Nonviolent revolutions: Civil resistance in the late 20th century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011.

The research by Sharon Erickson Nepstad (2011) applies Mill's inductive method of difference to isolate causal factors of successful regime change in nonviolent revolutions. Nepstad measures success only if the regime in power is overthrown, not if there is a democratic transition or a democratic procedure in its overthrow (Nepstad, 2011, p. xiv). She argues that by focusing on techniques and strategies used by civilian resistance groups and regime elites, one is better able to isolate the specific factors influencing nonviolent political transformations. Nepstad's research seeks to determine which nonviolent actions exert the greatest influence in authoritarian regimes. She also examines the various strategies of actors from both sides, the role of international sanctions, and the factors that can derail a well-planned nonviolent revolt. She uses six historical cases of civil unrest to answer these questions, arguing that defection of armed security forces is the most important strategic factor to a successful nonviolent revolution. This review provides a brief summary and critique of the findings in *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th Century*.

The author applies the comparative method to six cases of domestic civil unrest during the Cold War Era. She orders the cases by regime type, placing them in three separate categories for analysis. Nepstad includes socialist regimes, military dictatorships, and personal dictatorships in her study. Each category contains one case of successful regime overthrow and one failure. The cases include the 1989 Chinese Tiananmen Square uprising and the 1989 East German revolt for the socialist regime category, the regimes of General Manuel Noriega in Panama (1987-1989) and General Augusto Pinochet (1983-1988) of Chile in the military dictatorships category, and the dictatorships of President Daniel arap' Moi in Kenya in the late 1970s and President Fernando Marcos (1968-1986) in the Philippines in the personal dictatorships category (Nepstad, 2011, p. 17). Nepstad examines each of these cases using only secondary sources, and while she acknowledges this as a research shortcoming, it does not weaken the author's conclusion. She succeeds in her goal of providing an analysis of the strategies and tactics in nonviolent revolutions. She also creates noteworthy historical narratives of each case despite the lack of primary sources.

Nepstad identifies five criteria that must be present for a revolutionary movement to occur. There must be (1) widespread grievances against the state; (2) an allegiance shift in national elites away from the state; (3) the mobilization of the public against regime injustices; (4) public unification around an ideology of rebellion; and finally, (5) the mobilizing of organizations (Nepstad, 2011, pp. 5-6). She examines both structural and strategic factors which contribute to the success of nonviolent civil resistance. Structural factors are specific macro-level indicators that contribute to the strength of a revolution. Four are present in each case: (1) economic decline, (2) moral shock or new political opportunity, (3) divided elites, and (4) the existence of a free space. Despite the presence of such structural factors in all of the cases she examined, she argues that structural conditions are not all too relevant (a claim that is later questioned in this review). She asserts instead that the strategic tactics used by individuals are more important at influencing the outcome in a nonviolent revolution.

Applying Gene Sharp's model of nonviolent resistance, she focuses on the six strategic tactics often present in civilian resistance: (1) the refusal to acknowledge rulers as legitimate; (2) the contestation of mentalities or ideologies of obedience; (3) the refusal to obey laws or

cooperate with the state; (4) the withholding of skills to sustain state activities; (5) the withdrawal of material resources; and (6) the undermining of a state's sanctioning power. Nepstad observes that the first three techniques were present in each case, while the success of withholding of skills (4) and withdrawal of material resources (5) were mixed. The last technique, undermining the state's sanctioning power (6), was only present in the cases of successful regime defeat. This strategic factor of undermining the state's sanctioning power (6) was present in the successes of Germany, Chile, and the Philippines and was absent in failures of China, Panama, and Kenya. Importantly, the source of a regime's ability to sanction comes from the armed security forces of the state. Once these forces defect, the government and its rulers lose the ability to coerce and punish the populace (Nepstad, 2011).

Of critical significance, then, is why armed security forces defect. Nepstad argues that soldiers defect if they are convinced that the goals of the military more closely align with its citizenry than the state. Defection can occur from the top-down or the bottom-up. In the case of Chile, defection occurred from the top military offices in the junta, while in East Germany, defection occurred from the lower ranks. The case of the Philippines saw a mix of high ranking officials and subordinates defecting (Nepstad, 2011, p. 128). Importantly, once the process occurs, says Nepstad, it begins a cascading effect through the ranks. Defection is even more likely to occur when civil resisters remain nonviolent, the armed forces identify with the protestors, soldiers question the morality of the orders, and soldiers see other soldiers defecting. (Nepstad notes that in the unsuccessful cases of China and Kenya military troops were unable to identify with resisters, and the soldiers were from different ethnicities and regions. As such, not only were troops unlikely to defect, they were more likely to crack down on resisters.) Nepstad's analysis indicates that in all cases except China, religious institutions played a significant role in the defection rates. For soldiers who respected a religious institution, carrying out the state's orders created a moral dilemma, increasing the likelihood of defection. Finally, says Nepstad, once other troops were aware defection was occurring within their ranks, the other armed security forces also defected (Nepstad, 2011).

Nepstad concludes by identifying factors that can undermine a nonviolent movement's ability to successfully overthrow a regime. She argues that a divided resistance, the inability to remain nonviolent, and the backfiring of external sanctions all contribute to the failure of nonviolent movements. In each unsuccessful case, at least two of these factors were present, and all of these factors were absent in the successful cases (Nepstad, 2011, p. 131).

Despite the inclusion of six case studies, Nepstad's research remains very focused, providing a detailed analysis of the strategic factors involved in each case. This analysis, however, comes at the expense of a detailed analysis of structural conditions. One of the null hypotheses (or default assumptions) of this research is that structural conditions contribute to regime overthrow. She isolates and discusses the four important structural conditions in each case, but does not elaborate on their relevance in drawing her conclusions. The problem is that all four structural conditions were present in each case, indicating that structural conditions might be significant precursors to regime overthrow. Certainly, if some of the successful cases were missing any of the structural conditions, it would strengthen the research's conclusion regarding the importance of security force defection. However, since all four structural conditions are present the study suffers from selection bias. Nepstad's rejection of this null in her conclusion might have led to a type I error, when the default is rejected when it is, in fact, true. It is highly possible that structural conditions are essential precursors to successful regime overthrow, and the absence of any structural condition would lead only to failure.

One of the four structural factors in particular appears to be of specific relevance. Free space, the fourth of the structural conditions Nepstad noted but did not consider critical to regime change, may be one of the most important structural conditions in the cases analyzed. Religious institutions, specifically the Christian Church, acted as a free space in every case study but China. While Nepstad acknowledges this in her conclusion and discusses heavily the role of the church, she does not provide much analysis on the operation of free space in nonviolent revolutions. Free space plays vital role in the cases by giving resisters the opportunity to organize, communicate, and facilitate their activities in a safe environment. Without free space, these nonviolent revolutions might not have been able to mobilize the public or establish an ideology of rebellion.

Nepstad's research highlights important strategic elements to nonviolent revolutions. The book is relevant, given the recent events of the Arab Spring, and it would be interesting if the author applied the same methodology to these recent Middle Eastern cases. One conclusion that Nepstad discusses briefly in her last chapter is the ineffectiveness of international sanctions in overthrowing any regime. When powerful states like the US impose sanctions, doing so can have the undesired effect of generating allies to the regime in power. Sanctions can also harm the well-being of the general populace. Nepstad's word of caution on the utilization of sanctions as an international tactic should be heeded by the international community (Nepstad, 2011).

Nepstad's research thoroughly analyzes the role of strategic techniques for successful overthrow of a regime. However, while providing a detailed historical account and analysis of the strategic factors, Nepstad fails to produce an equivalent analysis for structural conditions, reducing some of the strength in her overall argument. Some political scientists and social scientists will be disappointed by the lack of analysis of structural conditions; nonetheless, the research offers some insight in predicting successful uprisings and the overthrow of regimes. Insight that proves particularly timely given the recent trend of global uprisings.

George Poluse
Kent State University
gpoluse@gmail.com