



# Nonviolent Struggle: Theories, Strategies, and Dynamics

By Sharon Erickson Nepstad

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**Nonviolent Struggle: Theories, Strategies, and Dynamics** By Sharon Erickson Nepstad

From Gandhi's movement to win Indian independence to the Arab Spring uprisings of 2011, an expanding number of citizens have used nonviolent action to win political goals. While such events have captured the public imagination, they have also generated a new surge of scholarly interest in the field of nonviolence and civil resistance studies. Although researchers have produced new empirical data, theories, and insights into the phenomenon of nonviolent struggle, the field is still quite unfamiliar to many students and scholars.

In *Nonviolent Struggle: Theories, Strategies, and Dynamics*, sociologist Sharon Nepstad provides a succinct introduction to the field of civil resistance studies, detailing its genesis, key concepts and debates, and a summary of empirical findings. Nepstad depicts the strategies and dynamics at play in nonviolent struggles, and analyzes the factors that shape the trajectory and outcome of civil resistance movements. The book draws on a vast array of historical examples, including the U.S. civil rights movement, the Indonesian uprising against President Suharto, the French Huguenot resistance during World War II, and Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers. Nepstad describes both principled and pragmatic nonviolent traditions and explains various categories of nonviolent action, concluding with an assessment of areas for future research.

A comprehensive treatment of the philosophy and strategy of nonviolent resistance, *Nonviolent Struggle* is essential reading for students, scholars, and anyone with a general interest in peace studies and social change.

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#### Review

"After languishing for years as a small and somewhat ghettoized area of research, the study of non-violent contention has blossomed in the last decade into one of the liveliest subfields within the broader study of contentious politics. And yet, to date, there has been no single text that surveys and summarizes the mushrooming work in this important area. There is now. Even better, that volume has been authored by, Sharon Nepstad, one of the key figures contributing to the scholarly renaissance in the field. Must reading for anyone who hopes to understand the dynamics of this especially significant form of contentious politics."

--Doug McAdam, Stanford University and co-author of *Deeply Divided: Racial Politics and Social Movements in Post-War America*

"In her latest book, Sharon Erickson Nepstad provides a sweeping and thoughtful survey of nonviolent resistance—from philosophical roots to historical and contemporary applications, and from theoretical foundations to unanswered empirical questions that remain. This book will certainly be an invaluable resource for students and researchers of nonviolent struggle for years to come."

--Erica Chenoweth, University of Denver

"This is a long-overdue and badly-needed book for this rapidly expanding subfield. For nearly twenty years I've taught an upper-division undergraduate seminar on nonviolence and this is just the kind of text I've been looking for but have yet been able to find."

--Stephen Zunes, University of San Francisco

"Sociologist Nepstad (New Mexico) intended her book as a primer on the variety of forms and strategic choices facing those who are interested in resistance to authority as part of achieving social justice. This makes it highly useful as a textbook for courses in human rights, peace studies, or social movements. But it is also a strong introduction to the theories about, history of, and research on, nonviolence for researchers whose work has bordered on but not included this."

--M.M. Ferree, University of Wisconsin-Madison, ICHOICE

"The book provides a clear summary of research on nonviolent struggle and a good introduction to nonviolence and nonviolent action for undergraduates in courses on social movements and peace and conflict." --Kurt Schock, Rutgers University Newark, *American Journal of Sociology*

## About the Author

**Sharon Erickson Nepstad** is Professor of Sociology at the University of New Mexico. She is the author of numerous articles and three books, including: *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th Century* (2011, Oxford University Press); *Religion and War Resistance in the Plowshares Movement* (2008, Cambridge University Press); and *Convictions of the Soul: Religion, Culture, and Agency in the Central American Solidarity Movement* (2004, Oxford University Press).

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