

THE DYNAMICS OF CIVIL RESISTANCE, A PREVIEW

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Other books from the author: *Teoría e Historia de la Revolución Noviolenta* (Theory and History of Nonviolent Revolution), Virus, Barcelona 2013, 380 pp.

Breve Historia de la Noviolencia. (Brief history on nonviolence) Pentape, Madrid, 2010, 102 pp.

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Abstract

This book seeks to give another answer to the question about how the civil resistance works. It merges the contributions from both the academic studies and the theories of nonviolent action. In that way, a new synthesis is developed which overcome some of the main limitations of both approaches. Therefore Gandhi’s theory of conversion, and Sharp’s theory of nonviolent coercion are checked with the insights of cognitive psychology or the sociology on power (from Foucault, to Galtung or the feminist theory). Furthermore, a tridimensional approach, consistent with Habermas theory of communicative action, is proposed in which the nonviolent action is interpreted with respect three different rationalities: instrumental, communicative, and compensatory. Additionally, an analytic model of triangular character is developed as well in order to include three different perspectives from three kind of social actors: the nonviolent actor, the opponent, and the environment. This model has been tested with two case studies (not detailed in this book

as they are the second and third part of it): the autonomy movement of the Ceylon Tamil in the 50-60s of past Century, and the indigenous movement of the Cauca region in Colombia which last from the last 50 years. As a conclusion, a strategic model is developed and five stages of mobilization are proposed to the movements for their reflection on their struggle. These are: Preparation, Resistance, Expansion, Assault and Conciliation. This is one of the first contributions to the civil resistance studies on Spanish language, made from the author of the celebrated *Teoría e Historia de la Revolución Noviolenta* (Theory and History of the Nonviolent Revolution).

CHAPTER 1: THE NOVIOLENT RESISTANCE

1.1 The contributions from the social sciences and nonviolent action theories

- 1.1-1 The political process approach.
- 1.1-2 The nonviolent action theories approach.
- 1.1-3 The historical studies.
- 1.1-4 The agency/structure debate.

1.2 Development of this research

This research is based on the need to incorporate into the theory of nonviolent action a theory of multidimensional power coherent with current sociological theories. This theory of power will have to be consistent with the cognitive psychology theory that replaced behavioral assumptions on which former communicative ideas of social action were based. From this point of view, situations of conflict will be understood as situations of cognitive dissonance in which the experiences that contradict the cognitive scheme that defines the subject's reality will promote the scheme change, since it will have to adapt to seek cognitive coherence.

In turn, the theory will have to be coherent with a relational conception of power that, although already adopted by activists and theorists from the ideological approach, had been marginalized in the pragmatic theories of nonviolent conflict. From this point of view, argued among others by Luther King, David Dellinger or Barbara Deming, nonviolent action is understood as a way of altering the balance of power in order to establish a new dialogue in more egalitarian conditions, that is, as an empowerment process (King, 1963; Dellinger, 1970, Deming, 1970).

These reformulations will be integrated into a theory of power that will allow us to overcome all the limitations of Sharp's theory, which is excessively focused on only one mechanism, nonviolent coercion. In this way, the communicative dimension of nonviolence will be interpreted as a second dimension of a total of three rational dimensions of social action (or forms of rationally apprehending social action), the other two being instrumental and compensatory. So a three-dimensional theory of power will be developed.

The nonviolent coercion theory will be used in order to analyze the instrumental dimension (Case 1923, Shridharani, 1939; Sharp, 1973, Burrowes, 1996). Structural domination through disciplining and hegemony theories (Foucault, 1975, Bourdieu, 2001), together with theories of frames analysis and collective identities, will serve to analyze the communicative dimension by incorporating the contributions of cognitive

psychology Lakey, 1968, Melucci, 1988, Snow & Benford, 1988, Galtung, 1989, Martin & Varney, 2003, Muller, 2006). Finally, relational theories of power that regard it as a form of asymmetric interchange in which subordination is negotiated will be used in order to explain the compensatory dimension of nonviolent action (Lakey, 1968, Deming, 1970, Crozier & Friedberg, 1977, Vinthagen, 2015).

This compensatory dimension will be our fundamental reference as nonviolent action can be analyzed as a process in which instrumental and communicative dynamics are set in motion to break the legitimacy and effectiveness of the opponent's actions. These dynamics will seek the transformation of the hegemonic paradigm thanks to the incorporation of nonviolent actor's points of view in it and to the disruption of the opponent's social system, which will not be able to continue its activity normally due to non-collaboration and intervention processes issued by nonviolent action. The point of view of the compensatory rationality will lead us to understand these processes as a kind of empowerment related to an asymmetric negotiation process in which the subordination to the social order imposed by the opponent will depend on the legitimacy and capacity of action of the different actors.

In this way, in the second chapter, a three-dimensional theory of power will be constructed. This will allow us to establish a three-dimensional theory of domination in chapter three. In the next three chapters an analysis of each of the dimensions of power will be made, with particular attention to its relationship with what the nonviolent action theories have stated about these aspects. Therefore, in these chapters what has been said about how the different dynamics of nonviolent action works will be analyzed in detail in order to afterward elaborate a grounded critique which will allow a proposal based on the three-dimensional theory of power to be elaborated. As a corollary, we will then dedicate a chapter to the resistance dynamics, summarizing what the processes that social movement scholars have pointed out as preconditions for a movement to appear, in order to synthesize the characteristics of a movement initial phase.

Merging these perspectives the factors that the authors on strategy of nonviolence have indicated as influential in the success of nonviolent action will be compiled and revised in order to develop new ones consistent with our three-dimensional approach. At the same time, new factors will be developed. In this way we will need three more chapters to analyze the factors related to each dimension. The eighth chapter to analyze the instrumental factors, the ninth the communicative and the tenth to analyze nonviolent action as a form of negotiation in which instrumental and communicative factors from the preceding chapters converge and are understood as empowerment processes.

Finally, all the factors and processes identified will be united by constructing an analytical model based on the consideration of a communicative triangle that affects the way in which the different events and actions implemented during the conflict are interpreted. This is why our model has been called "triangular", since the triangle defines the different perspectives from which actors interpret the conflict. These triangle vertices should not be confused with the three rational dimensions used to understand the functioning of nonviolent action. In this chapter therefore, not only the instrumental and communicative factors related to each actor will be assigned, but also they will be ordered temporarily to establish a logical sequence, which in turn will facilitate the subsequent creation of a strategic model.

In Chapter 12, a summary of the results of the empirical study will be presented. In it, this model has been tested for the cases of the Tamil movement for autonomy in Ceylon before becoming Sri Lanka, and the indigenous Nasa resistance in the Colombian Cauca since the sixties. The failure of the Tamil movement, despite using a strategy based on Gandhian satyagraha, can be explained by the theory developed in this research as a consequence of not taking into account the cognitive processes of the formation of social consensus from antagonistic identities, combined with an organizational weakness that prevented it from facing repression. On the contrary, the success of the Colombian Cauca indigenous movement, despite its little nonviolent discipline, can be interpreted as well as an organizational success in a context of great repression, and a communicative one due the ability in redefining not only their own cosmology, but also get a fundamental network of alliances.

The triangular model based on the three-dimensional analysis of social action has been also applied to other case studies of which there is abundant bibliography in this regard, such as nonviolent Palestinian resistance, the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, civil rights movement in the United States, Danish resistance to Nazi occupation or the movement against military service in the Spanish state. Although these cases has been used to illustrate some concepts developed throughout the book, an exhaustive analysis of them have not been done. Therefore they are not included in the comparative analysis. For all these cases, monographic and comparative studies are expected to be released soon.

This theoretical work will be finished by proposing a strategic model to synthesize the lessons that this research can bring to nonviolent movements. This model will point out the different phases a social movement has to pass through to achieve success. Therefore it will indicate the different intermediate objectives to be sought at each moment of its process. According to this model, the actor must first break down the barriers that inhibit mobilization by creating a collective identity that will be capable of energizing nonviolent action (preparation phase). After this, it must focus on the instrumental and communicative factors related to the actor himself (resistance phase). Later, it has to be able to develop those factors that transform the social and cultural environment (expansion phase). Finally, the movement has to work in the factors which directly concern to the opponent, otherwise he will face a challenge for which he will not be prepared (assault phase). A final stage will be added after the movement success in order to safeguard the demands gained (conciliation phase).

This research will therefore be very useful both to historical scholars and to social or political movement activists at any stage of mobilization. It will help them to understand where to focus their energies step by step.