YOUTH for DEMOCRACY

LEARNING FROM NONVIOLENT STRUGGLE ACROSS THE WORLD

HUMANITY IN ACTION

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for
Democracy

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Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK
DANIDA | INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

HUMANITY IN ACTION

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Foreword

Youth for democracy

By ANDERS JERICHOW

Christian Friis Bach, Danish Minister of Development Cooperation - speaking at the Youth for Democracy conference

Just a few years ago it was still a question; whether or not nations in the East, the South, in the Muslim World, in the Buddhist world, would ask for democracy.

The so-called international community generally recognized that the need for stability would require acceptance and even support of existing dictatorships. Although, one by one; repressive regimes had fallen in Central and Southern Europe, South Africa and South America, the somewhat arrogant notion by the international community – that some people apparently are made for oppression – still prevailed.

Whenever another society calls for the overthrow of authoritarian rulers, international media and politicians to this day still claim that it has come as a surprise – claiming, they could not know that people would call for regimes to change. As if corruption in these states was unknown. As if oppression in these states was popularly appreciated. As if censorship was the deliberate choice of the common people.

Admittedly, it wasn't.

What was unknown - and apparently comes as a surprise time and time again - is the fact that people eventually turn against repressive rulers. But then again: Did we seriously think that some people would opt for dictatorship rather than democracy? Did we seriously think that some people would prefer torture and censorship to the rule of law and freedom of speech?

In October 2011 the Danish branch of Humanity in Action hosted a conference for youth activists from a broad range of societies in political transition. All of them were facing various degrees of dictatorship at home, and all of them were involved in a struggle for political accountability, democratization, equal rights and freedom of speech in countries such as Egypt, Zimbabwe, Syria, Venezuela, the Sudan and Belarus. Other participants arrived on a more successful background, having toppled the Serbian dictatorship some 11 eleven years earlier.

They met in Copenhagen to share experiences from the fight against repression, to create an international network of young activists and to formulate recommendations for the international civil society in support of movements involved in the most noble endeavor possible: to hold their governments responsible and to call for the right to elect their own leaders, their own parliaments and their own governments – in freedom and democracy.

In this book international activists and scholars offer an insight to the nonviolent struggle across cultural, linguistic and even political barriers. It takes on history, strategy, economy, statistics, technology, society, culture and democracy when depicting why and how nonviolence is pursued - or can be pursued – as a means to bring democratic change.

Hopefully, it will serve as inspiration for activists still facing the need to replace authoritarian rule with participatory democracy. If it serves to activate, inspire, and make youth in Denmark as well as around the globe conscious of the world they live in: Great. If it serves as inspiration for you in the support of civil society internationally, great as well – it is needed!

This is humanity in action.

Anders Jerichow
Senior Correspondent at Danish daily newspaper „Politiken" . He serves as Chairman of the board of Danish PEN and Humanity in Action Denmark. Jerichow has published several books on the Middle East and human rights

A Chronicle of Nonviolence

By STEVE CRAWSHAW

A view of the conference room, front row from the left; Kudakwashe Chakabva, Student Activist, Zimbabwe, Srdja Popovic, Student Leader in Otpor!, Serbia, Rima Marrouch, Journalist, Syria & Yahia Ramadan, Human Rights Activists, Egypt

If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. Then quit. No use being a damn fool about it.
W.C. Fields

Our natural tendency to place the possible in the past leads us often to overlook the acts of our contemporaries, who defy the presumably immovable order of things, and accomplish what at first sight has seemed impossible or improbable.
Czesław Miłosz, 1987

Let us be honest: at first glance, the analysis of W.C. Fields, above, may sound more plausible than that of the Polish Nobel-winning writer Czesław Miłosz, with his apparently idealistic insistence that things may be achievable which we would never have believed in. We all prize "pragmatism", and we are taught from a young age that we should never expect to be able to change too much.

And yet: Milosz was proved right, with remarkable speed. And often, those who were at the forefront of change were the youth.

Within two years after Milosz wrote those words, his native country, Poland, had gained a non-Communist prime minister, after forty years of being run as a one-party state. Three months after his election, the Berlin Wall was down. Both Poland's changes and the changes in East Germany that brought the Wall down were the direct result of nonviolent revolutions. They were also the result of those who, on being told that their resistance was both dangerous and futile, decided to continue anyway.

Starting Point

This brief essay makes no attempt to catalogue all the nonviolent and youth revolutions that there have been over the years – nor to give a history of exactly how each of those revolutions happened. Instead, I will seek to give an idea of just how varied some of the protests have been – and how remarkable it has been that they succeeded against all odds. More often than not, students or young people have been at the forefront of the change.

The author was privileged to witness a number of the revolutions – the birth of Solidarity in Poland, the East German protests insisting "We are the people!", the velvet revolution in Prague, the fall of Milosevic in Belgrade, and others. Some of the protests described here have already achieved their astonishing goals. Others are still waiting for a successful outcome.

The most obvious starting point for even the briefest account of nonviolent protest is the story of the Mahatma Gandhi, who took a 24-day march to the sea with a crowd of his supporters and crumbled a handful of salty mud to protest at British salt tax laws, in India in 1930. Gandhi's protest – including refusing to use violence, even when people were being clubbed to the ground -- helped hasten the end of the British Empire. But that was only the beginning.

Gandhi's protests were very much in the minds of the civil rights protesters in the American South a quarter of a century later, in the 1950s. Racism was entrenched, both legally and socially. To give just one example: At the time when President Obama's Kenyan father married his Kansan mother, such a mixed marriage was deemed illegal in more than half of American states.

The civil rights protests were imaginative and brave. Overwhelmingly, they were led by young people. Some of the most notable moments included the bus boycott of 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama, a protest against laws which forbade blacks to sit in the front part of buses – and even obliged them to give up their seat towards the back of the bus, if there were no more seats left for white passengers at the front.

American Civil Rights Movement

The most famous example of protest against that unjust system was Rosa Parks, a seamstress who on December 1, 1955 refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery when ordered to do so. The driver asked Parks: "Are you going to stand up?" She said no. When the driver threatened to have her arrested, Parks famously replied, "You may do that." Much less famous than Parks – but in some ways just as significant -- is the teenager Claudette Colvin, who made exactly the same courageous gesture nine months earlier, at the age of 15. The bus protests led to a year-long boycott of the buses, which ended in victory for the civil rights protesters.

In 1960, Jim Lawson, a 28-year-old American preacher who had studied the Gandhian principles of nonviolence, organized an extraordinary series of protests against segregated food counters. He practised with students, black and white together, to ensure that they would respond to violence with nonviolence. Endlessly repeated role-plays prepared the students for the violence yet to come. In Nashville blacks were prohibited from using the toilets or sitting at lunch counters to eat. Lawson and his colleagues were determined to change that. On February 27, 1960, groups of young blacks and whites sat down together at the food counters all across

the town. They were beaten, they were arrested – and still they came. One of the participants, John Lewis, a 23-year-old seminary student, remembered the mass arrests as a turning point. "I felt high, almost giddy with joy," he wrote later. "We sang as we were led into cells much too small for our numbers, which would total eighty-two by the end of the day." The food counter protests also ended in victory for the protesters, after two months of beatings and arrests. On May 10, 1960, the targeted Nashville stores served black customers for the first time.

Then, in 1961, came the remarkable Freedom Rides, where overwhelmingly young protesters, black and white, came together and risked their lives to challenge the segregated facilities at long-distance bus stations all across the south. They were attacked; their bus was burnt by extremists, the protesters were extraordinarily lucky to escape with their lives. The establishment was against them - senior aide to the city police chief in Birmingham, Alabama, told white extremists that they could do what they wanted: "You can beat them bomb them maim them, kill them. I don't give a shit. There will be no, absolutely no arrests." But the Freedom Riders won through and forced a change of the rules.

The protests – and changes -- continued, including the famous speech by Martin Luther King on August 28, 1963, where he told the massive crowds gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC: "I have a dream....." King himself told an interviewer that he could imagine that there might be a black president in a few decades' time. – "I am very optimistic about the future." King was assassinated and most believed that his optimism about the future was entirely unfounded. And then, in 2008, Barack Obama was elected US president.

Fighting Segregation - Creating True Solidarity

In South Africa, the white regime claimed that it was necessary to lock up those who demanded black rights, in order to keep South Africa "free". But mostly nonviolent protest continued for many years, with youth often playing an important part.

When Nelson Mandela was on trial in 1964, he told the judge: "I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all people live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for, and to see realized. But, my lord, if it needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die." Mandela spent 26 years in a jail on the desolate Robben Island, off the South African coast. The worldwide protests and demands for his release did not end (even though some Western politicians thought it was best to have "constructive engagement" with the apartheid regime); some of the most important protests were the youth protests that exploded in 1986. Mandela was released in 1990, and

became South Africa's acclaimed president in free and democratic elections in 1994. There were many protests across Communist Eastern Europe after the Second World War – in East Berlin in 1953, in Budapest in 1956, in Prague in 1968 after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Perhaps the most powerful wave of protests was in Poland in 1980, when millions of Poles came together in the shipyards and then across the country to demand the creation of an independent trade union, Solidarity. Solidarity was not just a trade union – it was an independent voice, in a one-party state. Astonishingly, the Communists in Moscow gave way. They tried later to change their minds – and the Polish government put tanks on the streets and declared martial law in December 1981.

But Solidarity was not defeated. Despite arrests and killings, the Poles came up with many mischievous protests against the regime, including putting television sets in babies' prams (to protest against the lies of the television news, which nobody wanted to watch) and a mischievous group called Orange Alternative, which mocked the regime, for example by implausibly demonstrating in favour of the government, or by demanding less strenuous working hours for the secret police.

Those protests – and many others, where people were beaten, tear-gassed and sometimes killed – eventually wore the regime down. In 1988, the government agreed to roundtable talks with the Solidarity opposition.

In June 1989, Solidarity dramatically defeated the Communists in those seats which it was allowed freely to contest. In August 1989, Poland gained a non-Communist prime minister, thus changing the entire post war political landscape.

During the months that followed, revolutions broke out all across Eastern Europe – including crowds in the East German city of Leipzig who defied the threat of gunfire in order to force the authorities to back down. Exactly a month after a dramatic evening where 50,000 risked their lives to demand peaceful change the Berlin Wall came down.

Final Collapse of Communist Europe

Two weeks after that, a student demonstration in Prague appeared to end in the death of one of the protesters. This so enraged the Czechs that the demonstrations got bigger day after day for a week. People jangled keys in Wenceslas Square in the centre of Prague, echoing the words of Czech fairytales: "The bell is ringing, the story is over." For the Communist leaders, it was. They, too, resigned. One of the protesters who was beaten described afterwards what it felt like. "As I lay on the ground, for the first time I felt free."

Just a few months after the central European revolutions were

over; they spread to the Baltic States, annexed by Stalin 50 years earlier. In August 1991, a hard-line coup in Moscow was brought to its knees by the unarmed crowds who defied the tanks. The coup crumbled in just three days.

The Soviet Union itself, held together by Communist rule, no longer existed by the end of the year. In August 1991, a hard-line coup in Moscow was brought to its knees by the unarmed crowds who defied the tanks. The coup crumbled in just three days. The Soviet Union itself, held together by Communist rule, no longer existed by the end of the year.

A decade later, Serbs were eager to be rid of their warmongering leader, Slobodan Milosevic. The student movement Otpor had huge impact – not least by constantly using a sense of humour against the regime. As Srdja Popovic, one of Otpor's leaders (and author of one of the essays in this volume) declared: "I'm full of humour and irony, and you are beating me. That's a game you always lose."

Milosevic held an election in September 2000, and then declared that he had won. Serbs disagreed. Vast crowds poured on to the streets to claim what they believed was a stolen election. Milosevic refused to go – until eventually there was one giant demonstration in the Serb capital, which persuaded him that, to quote the Otpor sticker which could now be seen everywhere in Belgrade: "He's finished!" The city celebrated – and Milosevic was a few months later dispatched to the war crimes tribunal in the Hague.

A Worldwide Phenomenon

IIt was not just in Europe that nonviolent protest achieved extraordinary change – including unseating rulers who claimed to have won elections which in reality they had lost. In the Philippines, the dictatorial President Ferdinand Marcos claimed in February 1986 to have won election victory over Corazon Aquino, widow of a murdered opposition leader. The Philippine voters did not believe in Marcos's victory – and went out on the streets in vast numbers, protesting at what had happened. Young women computer operators risked their lives by leaving the election count with documents which proved that the election was rigged. After two weeks of protests, democracy won.

In China, huge crowds of Chinese students gathered in Tiananmen Square, "the Square of Heavenly Peace" for weeks on end in spring 1989. On June 4, 1989, the Chinese regime put paid of all hope of change by massacring students and other protesters in or near the square.

Twenty years later, some claimed that the Tiananmen Square massacre had been forgotten. But Liu Xiaobo, one of the authors of the dissident document Charter 08, was jailed for daring to de-

mand basic democratic change. He was awarded the Nobel peace prize in 2010.

In Burma, the generals reacted in 1988 to demands for democracy by opening fire and killing large numbers of protesters. They held elections in 1990 – and promptly punished the winner of the election, Aung San Suu Kyi, by locking her up and keeping her under house arrest for most of the next 20 years. In 2007, there were huge demonstrations which were lethally repressed. In 2010, the generals finally felt obliged to release Aung San Suu Kyi. Burmese reacted with delight to her release. There is still no democracy in Burma – but the desire for change amongst ordinary Burmese remains strong, as seen also in the film Burma-VJ (2008).

In military Argentina in the 1970s and 1980s, some of the most remarkable protests were those of the so-called Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo – women who risked their lives to protest at their "disappeared" children, gathering every week at the Plaza de Mayo in central Buenos Aires. Those "disappearances" were usually another word for murder. Today, successive democratic Argentine governments play an important role in speaking out on human rights issues around the world.

Argentina was very far from the only place where women had a leading role in nonviolent protest. Liberia is just one of the countries where women's protests played a historic role. At the time of a bloody civil war in Liberia, women of all faiths gathered together, united by a hatred of the war, and demanded an end to the bloodshed in 2003. Eventually, the peace talks succeeded. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was elected, Africa's first woman president. She said: "It was ordinary Liberians who reclaimed the country and demanded peace."

Changes to Come

Despite such an extraordinary and varied history of nonviolent history, conventional wisdom continued to insist that change in the Middle East and North Africa would never come. Their main argument was: we have not seen change until now – therefore, we will never see change.

Those sceptics should perhaps have read and understood the words of Czeslaw Milosz, quoted at the head of this paper. In quick succession, nonviolent protests ended the unloved – and apparently unstoppable -- regimes in Tunisia and in Egypt. The Tunisian revolution began with the self-immolation of a 26-year-old vegetable seller, Mohammed Bouazizi. Other rebellions spread all across the region.

What became known as the Arab spring, and the prospect of an outbreak of democracy in various Arab countries, also inspired Palestinians to renew their demands for change.

At the time of writing, the outcome of these many revolutions

is not yet certain. One thing we do know, however: the region – and thus, perhaps, the world – will never be the same again.

As the list above will perhaps make clear, we should never think that things are not going to happen, just because they have not happened yet. Courage continues to achieve astonishing change, all around the world.
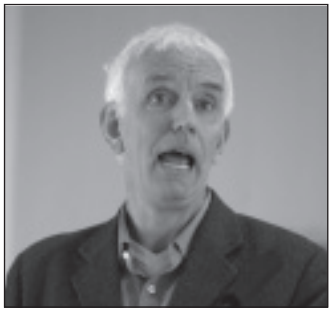
Steve Crawshaw
Chief of Staff for the Secretary General, Amnesty International. From 2002 to 2010 he worked for Human Rights Watch, first as UK director and then as United Nations advocacy director. He was a journalist for many years, first with Granada Television in the UK and then joining the Independent at launch in 1986. He reported for the Independent on the East European revolutions, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the Balkan Wars. Other stories included interviewing Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and witnessing the fall of Serb leader Slobodan Milošević. He is the author of Goodbye to the USSR (Bloomsbury, 1992) and of Easier Fatherland: Germany and the Twenty-First Century (Continuum, 2004).

Become the Change You Want
– How to become a successful nonviolent movement

By SLOBODAN DJINOVIC, JORDAN MAZE & SRDJA POPOVIC

This article is adapted from a publication by the Center for Applied NonViolent Action and Strategy (CANVAS) entitled "Ten Easy Pieces: Otpor's Strategy for Winning a Nonviolent Regime Change and Transition to Democratically-Elected Rule"

The past decade has seen an enormous increase in the frequency and diversity of nonviolent struggles worldwide, from the Occupy Wall Street protests targeting corporate influence to a wave of uprisings affecting the entire Middle East. We watched in awe as people power movements toppled dictators in Serbia, Georgia, Ukraine, and the Maldives and wondered why similar attempts proved unsuccessful in Belarus, Iran, Zimbabwe, and other nations. Participants in Otpor, the catalysts of Serbia's 2000 nonviolent revolution and subsequent transition to democratically-elected rule, studied their own success and the success of others to formulate a set of ten key strategies that one can adapt for any nonviolent struggle. When implemented by a movement that operates on the principles of unity, planning, and nonviolent discipline, these strategies can be extraordinarily effective.

The Basics:
Unity, Planning, and Nonviolent Discipline

Unity: A unified movement is the first step to garnering public support; without a consistent message and a clear structure, the movement will quickly lose steam. Young Serbian activists learned from the mistakes of their predecessors and constructed a cohesive movement before they officially began the campaign against Slobodan Milošević in 2000. Otpor was unified on all levels. On the political level, it presented a "unifying proposition" to various branches of the Serbian opposition and NGOs. Organizationally, Otpor operated on the principle of "open debate in bringing a decision; strict discipline in executing a decision." And on the national level, Otpor created its vision of tomorrow, or its proposal for the future, by listening to people and formulating a message that resonated with the public.

Planning: There is no such thing as a successful spontaneous nonviolent movement. Nonviolent struggle is a form of warfare – it must be implemented deliberately and with a clear objective in mind. In the late 1990s, Otpor offered the public two documents outlining operational elements of its grand strategy to oust Milosevic: "Declaration of Free Serbia" and "OTPOR Manifesto." The grand strategy was the blueprint for individual and local strategies, such as the mobilization and recruitment of activists.

Nonviolent discipline: One act of violence can ruin the movement's credibility forever. Otpor invested much of its resources into reiterating the importance of nonviolent discipline to its activists and preparing them for violent actions from the Milošević regime. Otpor also chose its allies selectively: it drafted a clear policy with regard to anti-regime groups who had the potential to be violent, like soccer fans. These efforts proved successful; the Serbian Revolution of 2000 was not contaminated with violence and the subsequent transfer of power was peaceful.

Once a movement is unified, well-organized, and committed to nonviolence, it can look to the following "ten commandments" of nonviolent struggle.

1.
Take an Offensive Approach

Sun Tzu, the author of the ancient The Art of War, claimed that no one can achieve victory while occupying the defensive position. If you want to win, you must take the offense. This means that your movement should always be one step ahead of the regime, forcing the regime to respond to its provocations.

On January 13, 2000, Serbian Orthodox New Year, Otpor organized a rally as the official beginning of a yearlong campaign to oust Milošević, "This is the Year." After a night of celebration, Otpor told attendees to go home and think about the decade of misery they had just endured, and what they were going to do to put it to an end.

Although this call to action was serious and solemn, for the next year, Otpor members used humor and playfulness to force the regime on the defensive. One such event involved two men and a turkey. The two young men put a flower behind the turkey's ear to illicit an association with Miloševics wife, who was known for this fashion statement, and let it loose in a central square. Adding insult to injury is the fact that in Serbia, calling a woman a turkey is an offensive jab. The turkey was the subject of much attention, eventually attracting the police. The regime's security forces were faced with three options: let the turkey continue to humiliate the first lady, arrest two men for simply releasing a turkey, or to arrest the turkey. Police officers chose the final option, effectively making fools of themselves and decreasing their own legitimacy.

Ukraine's Pora! (It's time!) movement followed a similar pattern: acts of protest and persuasion punctuated by positivity and humor. Pora! participants began preparing for the 2004 elections four years early, and these efforts paid off. It sponsored frequent concerts doubling as anti-regime rallies, headlined by popular, previously apolitical bands. In 2004, a student threw an egg at regime-backed candidate Viktor Yanukovych, causing the media to instantly declare the student a terrorist supporter of opposition candidate Yushchenko's nationalist policies. The student was arrested, became an instant celebrity, and the egg became the center of many successful humorous anti-Yanukovych campaigns. By responding so severely to a simple egg, the regime put itself on the defensive and lost support.

2.
Understanding the Concept
"Power in Numbers"

A movement must recruit large amounts of activists and train them well. Otpor grew exponentially in the late 90s, starting to add other social groups to its fold in the year 2000 as the election approached. In order to retain members and ensure that they were well educated in its goals, Otpor used the Act-Recruit-Train model, which can be adapted to any movement. By identifying potential supporters, attracting them to a meeting or an action, and investing in training them in specific skills, the movement can grow at an alarming rate.! In the final protest before Milošević was ousted in Serbia, the police refused to shoot into the crowd because they knew that their friends and family members were there.

3.
Developing a Superior
Communication Strategy

At the outset, Otpor defined its four target audiences and created a strategy to communicate with each one. Otpor's audiences were: membership and supporters, a wider audience, potential allies within oppositional parties and NGOs, and the international community. Although communication strategies varied slightly between these groups, Otpor's overarching campaign was unified and consistent. It designed the now ubiquitous black fist as the opposition's "brand" and employed the fist in all of its advertising campaigns.

To learn more about branding during the Serbian revolution, see "Branding in Serbia" (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wisA6VnfcPQ).

In 2011 the Egyptian opposition quickly united and created a communication strategy that proved superior, abandoning individual logos and adopting the Egyptian flag as its symbol. Face-

book and Twitter have received perhaps more than their fair share of credit for Egypt's organizational success – although social media was instrumental in uniting the youth population, the opposition used email, text messages, and the influence of community leaders to reach less-connected populations. When the Muburak regime disabled use of the Internet, the movement continued to thrive and even became more active, as Egyptians came to the streets to learn about what was happening.

4.
Creating the Perception
of a Successful Movement

Each nonviolent movement has moments of frustration and failure; the key is to minimize the press these receive and to always remain on the offensive. Otpor created the image of a successful movement by employing the following tactics: picking the battles it knew it could win, knowing when and how to proclaim victories, and capitalizing on its growing popularity.

Although the Syrian movement to overthrow Bashar al-Assad is still in relative infancy, Syrian activists have done an exemplary job shaping the international image of their movement. They announced the formation of an opposition coalition, the Syrian National Council, and published its mission statement and goals online immediately afterward. With the help of the Syrian diaspora, opposition activists have been frequently publishing editorials and scholarly works to raise awareness of their nonviolent movement, and they announce their on-the-ground victories via social media outlets instantaneously.

The Belarusian opposition, on the other hand, has been unable to overcome its past failures and reinvent itself as a successful movement. It could not take advantage of the momentum from its well-publicized fall 2011 dilemma action, which consisted of small groups meeting in the streets and clapping in unison. Belarusian activists have not been able to build a winning record, and for this reason it is plagued with bad press and disunity.

5.
Investing in Skills
and Knowledge of Activists

Otpor dedicated extensive resources to the training of its activists. Its "human resources centre" organized workshops for over 300 regional Otpor leaders, making the movement as grassroots as possible. Besides workshops, Otpor educated its members about past successes and failures, studying the methods used in India, Poland, and other countries. It also used theoretical knowledge available in books like Gene Sharp's "From Dictatorship to Democracy" to create its own training manual for activists.

6.
Cultivating External Support

In Serbia, the international community was one of the key players in the conflict, as it had the power to exert pressure on an ailing regime. With the help of other opposition parties and using skillful communication, Otpor switched the international rhetoric from negative "blind pressure" and "shotgun sanctions" towards Serbia to one of targeted support for Serbian pro-democratic forces.

7.
Inducing Security Force Defections

In order to co-opt the regime's security forces, thus reducing the likelihood of a coordinated violent response from the regime, Otpor developed direct and indirect contacts within the coercive pillars of power: the judiciary, security services, police, and the military. Having secured these contacts, Otpor used a pattern of reassurances, warnings, and appeals to convince individuals and groups to defect to their side. Otpor reduced the social distance between its members and the coercive pillars, which avoided violent conflict during the revolutionary climax.

Egyptian activists used similar strategy to induce security force defections, their target was not the police, but the military. They approached soldiers as peers, initiating personal conversations and offering them flowers. To learn more about the Egyptian opposition's policies towards security forces, see the Al Jazeera documentary People & Power: Egypt - Seeds of Change (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrNz0dZgqN8).

8.
Resisting Oppression

Otpor prepared for the regime's oppressive tactics. In doing so, it lowered the "costs" of repression for the movement while increasing the "price" of using repression for the regime. Otpor followed four main principles to prepare for regime oppression:

- Maintaining a decentralized leadership while developing tasks for both low-profile and high-profile leaders;

- Those who had experienced the Serbian police's procedures debriefed other Otpor members about what to expect, creating a database of knowledge in order to avoid surprises and overcome fear;

- Using humorous and motivational messages to maintain high morale within the organization and in the general population;

- Shining light on atrocities committed by the regime, while crafting actions of support for Otpor members who had been arrested.

9.
Using Elections as a Trigger for Change

Politics is often conceptualized as a vague force outside the average person's control. Election fraud makes things personal – the government has stolen your vote, so what are you going to do about it? Having learned from previous experiences with Milošević in the 90s, Otpor predicted that there would be election fraud in 2000 and warned the Serbian people to expect it. Then, Otpor mobilized its supporters against the predicted fraud in a variety of ways. It planned rallies on the days before the election, and on Election Day, proclaimed victory by publically reading results and holding street celebrations in 30 cities.

When the "official results" were announced in favor of Milošević, Otpor had already organized a general strike in protest of the falsified results. Election fraud was the final straw in a long list of grievances against Milošević. The Serbian opposition took advantage of this key moment and used it to bring down the "Butcher of the Balkans."

10.
Enabling Peaceful Transition of Power

A set of favorable conditions in Serbia in combination with the opposition's brilliant transition strategy led to a chaos-free, peaceful shift of power by means of state institutions and democratic processes. Almost immediately following the "revolutionary climax," the opposition restored key state stakeholders such as the Belgrade city parliament, and elections for mayor were held the morning after.

Within days, the opposition coalition's presidential candidate Vojislav Kostunica was sworn in, and in less than a month, federal and municipal assemblies were constituted. Two months later, Serbia held parliamentary elections, which led to the first post-revolutionary democratic government of Serbia, led by Zoran Đin i . The quick and effective management provided by the opposition movement was key to the longer-term stability the country has achieved.

This final point is by far the most challenging for any nonviolent movement struggling for the overthrow of a regime, as evidenced by continuing conflict and deadlock in Egypt and past failures in Kyrgyzstan and Georgia. In the case of Ukraine, the opposition movement ushered in a relatively peaceful transition, only to introduce a government so plagued with scandal and mismanagement that in 2010 Ukrainians elected Viktor Yanukovych as president,

the candidate against whom the people orchestrated the Orange Revolution in 2004. Yulia Tymoshenko, the revolution's co-leader, now sits in prison on charges of corruption and embezzlement. A movement's vision of the future can only be achieved if it sticks to its principles before, during, and after its revolutionary climax.

Conclusion

Activists have effectively applied these ten commandments of non-violent struggle in many movements, including India, the United States, South Africa, the color revolutions, and the revolutionary wave in the Middle East and North Africa. "People power" has traditionally been a generic concept existing in history textbooks and rearing its head once every few decades. Now that success-full "people power" movements are becoming more frequent, the idea of grassroots nonviolent struggle is taking root as a proven and formidable alternative to violence. With serious and informed planning, a nonviolent movement can use these ten strategies to contribute to the quickly growing list of political conflicts solved without a single bullet fired.

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CEO of the telecommunications company Orion Telekom. Djinovic is also an innovator in democracy and technology, founding Serbia's first wireless Internet company and a founder of Otpor! movement that ended the Milosevic era. He has since become a leader exponent of sharing strategic non-violence training for democracy movements and peaceful opposition groups in the world's remaining dictatorships - training activists and students in Burma, Vietnam, Venezuela, South Korea, Zimbabwe, Georgia, Egypt and the greater Middle East.

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In Need of a Future
Causes and consequences of high youth unemployment - the case of North Africa
By DHALIA HASSANIEN & DOROTHEA SCHMIDT

"Whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice; And whereas conditions of labour exist involving such injustice hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled."
Preamble of the International Labour Organization Constitution 1919

"Frustration is an emotion that occurs in situations where a person is blocked from reaching a desired outcome. In general, whenever we reach one of our goals, we feel pleased and whenever we are prevented from reaching our goals, we may succumb to frustration and feel irritable, annoyed and angry. Typically, the more important the goal, the greater the frustration and resultant anger or loss of confidence."

Excerpt

In 2011 the world watched in awe as young people in countries throughout the Middle East and North Africa began a series of uprisings that came to be known as the start of the 'Arab Spring'. After having lived for many decades under oppressive regimes, the youth in the region took to the streets demanding their rights, democracy, and their entitlement to a decent job that would allow them to live economically independent lives with dignity in the future.

Why did the Arab Spring happen now? Why are young people in the region suddenly speaking out and defending their rights, even with their lives? And why did this especially occur in North Africa? The answers to these questions are manifold within many contributing factors. But one common feature in the Arab world is that young people's futures looked increasingly grim with decent job opportunities being (and continuing to be) very limited.

This article tries to make the case that a bleak-looking future frustrated young people and triggered the revolutions and uprisings in North Africa and other regions. A large part of this frustration is due to the lack of decent work opportunities for young people. Despite the fact that today's young people received more education than their parents and grandparents, job opportunities remain limited and their chances to live an economically independent life are very small. It is argued in the article that having a decent job is important because it not only ensures economic independence, it also provides personal satisfaction and allows for a life in dignity and freedom. Finally the article argues that labour markets that are well organized provide space through social dialogue for people to express their opinion and act as socially responsible people, which in turn minimize the risk of violent social uprisings.

The Labour Market Situation for Young People: Huge Lack of Decent Work Opportunities

In the past two decades, the region of North Africa has seen considerable progress in some human development indicators. Education and health have vastly improved, and extreme poverty has declined. Despite these progresses, some challenges remain, most importantly inequality and exclusion. Gender discrimination, disparities in economic development within countries, and unequal access to services and education are all expressions of this. In one way or another, many of the deficiencies in these societies are related to labour markets and the limited access to, and availability of, decent work for many people, particularly young people in the region. Therefore addressing labour market issues through the provision of decent jobs can help to respond to the aspirations of people and will add to building the basis for democratic, peaceful regimes.

What are the challenges of labour markets in the region, and why are they so persistent? At least before the financial and economic crisis, most countries in the region saw solid growth rates and successful economic reform processes in some areas. But this growth did not translate into enough job creation and the type of jobs created were often low productivity jobs, which for the increasing share of well-educated young people did not provide a real option. In addition, contrary to global population trends worldwide, the share of young people in the North Africa has actually grown significantly in the past few decades. Since 1990 employment growth in the region has failed to keep up with the working age population, making it increasingly difficult for young people to find a decent job.

The Highest Youth Unimployment in the World

Looking at the situation of young people in labour markets indicates the magnitude of the decent work deficit:

Youth in the Middle East and North Africa currently have the highest unemployment rates in the world at 23.6 percent. Today, young people's risk to be unemployed is four times higher than adults' risk. The high unemployment rates for youth and particularly women are worrisome given that they already have low labour

participation rates (36.5 percent for young people and 28 percent for females are the participation rates). This means that even the few who look for a job find it hard to get one. Taking together the high unemployment rates and the low participation rates it turns out that out of 100 people that could potentially work, not even half of them do so. And even though some of the non-working people might be engaged in education, this share is still too high and creates an unnaturally high employment dependency ratio, where too many people without work depend on very few people with a job.

However high the unemployment rates are, it is only the tip of the iceberg as the majority of jobs created are not decent, meaning they are low paid, do not provide social security, do not give people a voice at work and do not respect international labour standards.

Most jobs created are in the informal sector where one does not find decent jobs. More than four out of ten people working in North Africa in 2009 had a vulnerable job which means they are working either as own-account workers or as an unpaid family worker mainly in the informal sector. In all countries in the region the share is considerably higher for women than for men. Wage and salary work – the type of job with a higher likelihood of being decent – has not increased considerably over time. This lack of good quality jobs is one of the reasons why so many people are still poor, despite the fact that they work. This is reflected in the high share of the working poor who earn less than two US dollars a day, which account for 40 percent of the total population. Although these people are working, they are unable to escape poverty.

One of the reasons for the low share of decent jobs in the formal sector has been the low levels of productivity increases. The little increases in productivity in the region are usually achieved through investment in technology, often accompanied by shedding of labour. Increasing productivity through better working conditions has seldom been the path taken in the region which fails to provide organizational innovations, pro-worker policies and practices, respect for workers' rights, an improved and enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, gender equality, social dialogue and fundamental investments in health and physical infrastructure. Also, achievements in education across the countries have not led to satisfactory growth in productivity. Low productivity growth is particularly ominous because it is productivity growth that provides the possibility for improved wages and living standards.Another reason for the lack of decent work is the slow structural shift. Traditional economic theory foresees that during their development process countries move from agriculture as the main source of production to manufacturing, and after that to the service sector. Labour force movements of course reflect this pattern and also this change goes hand in hand with increasing productivity levels and income levels. This is not happening in North Africa. Agriculture continues to play a strong role, accounting for almost one third of all employed people in 2009. The largest sector is the service sector, which accounts for almost 50 percent of overall employment, but has a high share of low productivity jobs. The education system – even though in terms of quantity, the population is more educated than ever –faces serious quality issues. Across the region, employers identified the lack of necessary skills as a barrier to expanding business and employment at all education levels. Higher education does not equip young people with modern skills (for example in the area of IT), and the vocational training system does not provide them with the type of skills needed in competitive markets. Important soft skills are not part of the curriculum at all levels.

Creating their own business is often the only option young people are left with. But it is also too often not a feasible option as young people do not have the knowledge or the skills to open a business, and governments do not ensure a favorable business environment. What also has an impact on the bad situation for young people in labour markets is the fact that the labour legislation is not in accordance with ILO international labour standards and/or that international labour standards are not implemented.

Adding to their difficult situation, social protection schemes (including social security, (social assistance as well as social insurances), wages, working conditions, and occupational safety and health regulations) often do not cover. One important part of social protection is wages. Wages only increase when productivity increases. Given the low increases in productivity, there has been very little room for wage increases in the past decade in all of the countries where data is available in the region.

Some young people would like to work abroad and indeed migration in the region could offer the possibility for many young people to gain employment and offer their potential in another country when unable to find jobs in their homeland. However this opportunity is often not used or when used leads to unfortunate situations for migrants. Many migrants end up with poor quality jobs, no social protection and no respect for their rights. This is mainly the result of bad management of migration policies and management systems.

In Western systems there are a set of institutions that help people to find jobs, in case they do not manage themselves. Such employment services and employment programmes are an important part of the strategies of these countries to especially handle the most vulnerable parts of their societies. This system is not effective in North Africa. Public employment services are chronically understaffed and do not have the means and the knowledge to provide good services. Also, active labour market policies exist mainly on paper, but their implementation remains weak.

Linkages Between the Lack of Decent Work and Social Unrest

All the above-mentioned points make it impossible for young people to secure a stable future. This creates frustration amongst young people and also their parents who have invested heavily into the education of their children. The lack of decent work opportunities can certainly become one important part of the set of catalysts for young people to start protesting especially at a point in time when young people face a more challenging future than their parents. In recent years young people in the region had to increasingly realize the financial struggles ahead of them.

With the increasing cost of marriage, education, food and property, it is highly unlikely that the current generation of young people will be able to financially provide for their children at the same level that their parents were able to. As a result of increasing prices and poor wages, many young people face the inability to maintain their living standards, and will inevitably have to drop in socio-economic status. It is evident for these young people that a decent job is the only way out of their situation, which is why the call for such jobs has become so strong.

The Way Forward

The region is about to close a window of opportunity that was well utilized in other regions in the world: Profiting from their young population structure as a potential for socio-economic development. It is because economies do not provide young people with decent jobs that this opportunity is not utilized. This is especially problematic given the high level of education young people have in comparison with their parent's generation. A reform and heavy investment in the education system is thereby one of the most urgent tasks in the region.

Adding to the frustration of the education system, an additional trigger of the revolutions and uprisings was the lack of opportunities to freely express your opinion. As explained above, decent work contains the important component of social dialogue. Social dialogue means that you have the right to express your opinion, and that you have the right to negotiate your working conditions with your employer in a process of dialogue – not fighting.

It is through this social dialogue that workers and employers can come to commonly accepted solutions regarding challenges in the workplace. Being heard and recognized in such a way contributes to one's feeling of dignity and reduces the likelihood of frustration. Through social dialogue not only does the worker win, but a the employer will profit as well as it will increase the productivity of the workforce and have a positive impact on the investment climate in the long run.

This type of social dialogue does not exist in the region, which means that a strong but institutionalized channel to express needs and desires has so far not been used. Nevertheless, the pure will to have social dialogue and an independent trade union does not mean that you will automatically get it. Partners involved in social dialogue need to build their knowledge base to better understand how labour markets function, and what can be done to create decent jobs, etc.

They need to learn what it means to bargain and what it takes to solve problems. Only if all three social partners have such a basis, can a balanced dialogue take place. This is of course not a process that can be accomplished overnight, but without this building of balanced and equally capable and strong forces, social dialogue will not be possible.

This is also a process, which in the future needs to be embedded in education systems. Students Unions, more emphasis on participatory teaching methodologies, more respect for students' concerns need to become an essential part of all curricula across all levels of education.

It will finally be important that social dialogue does not only function for the formal sector. It is just as crucial to develop dialogue mechanisms within the informal economy, otherwise the likelihood of this part of society to start fighting for their rights will increase – and they are much larger in number.

Although social dialogue will not solve all problems, it has to be part of the parcel towards the development of democracy, freedom and dignity for people. Likewise, the labour market is also only one piece of the puzzle. If economies do not create jobs for the huge cohort of young people entering labour markets, even the best social dialogue will not help to decrease frustration.

Also other factors need to be corrected: Quality education needs to be made available for more young people, social protection systems that reach out to all need to be established, youth participation at all levels of social life needs to be ensured, and respect towards international labour standards needs to become an automatically respected part of labour legislation and labour contracts. A good set of labour market policies and labour market institutions can help to bring more young people into good jobs.

Finally, governments alone will not be able to tackle the challenge alone. The international community has to assist countries in creating decent employment opportunities for young people not only through technical assistance, but through moral as well as financial assistance. level, Otpor created its vision of tomorrow, or its proposal for the future, by listening to people and formulating a message that resonated with the public.

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Think Again: Nonviolent Resistance

Resisting the temptation to take up arms against a dictator isn't just the moral thing to do – it's also the most effective way to win

By ERICA CHENOWETH

"Nonviolent Resistance Is Admirable but Ineffective."

Hardly

In the current geopolitical moment, it may seem hard to argue that a nonviolent uprising is a better tool for uprooting a dictator than the violent kind. Armed rebels, backed by NATO air power, are on the verge of ending four decades of despotic rule by Muammar al-Qaddafi in Libya. Meanwhile to the east, Syria's Bashar al-Assad has with impunity killed more than 2,200 members of a mostly nonviolent resistance to his family's long-lived rule.

Arguing in favor of the Syrians' tactics, and against the Libyans', would seem counterintuitive -- but for the evidence. The truth is that, from 1900 to 2006, major nonviolent resistance campaigns seeking to overthrow dictatorships, throw out foreign occupations, or achieve self-determination were more than twice as successful as violent insurgencies seeking the same goals. The recent past alone suggests as much; even before the Arab Spring, nonviolent campaigns in Serbia (2000), Madagascar (2002), Ukraine (2004), Lebanon (2005), and Nepal (2006) succeeded in ousting regimes from power.

The reason for this is that nonviolent campaigns typically appeal to a much broader and diverse constituency than violent insurgencies. For one thing, the bar to action is lower: Potential recruits to the resistance need to overcome fear, but not their moral qualms about using violence against others.

Civil resistance offers a variety of lower-risk tactics - stay-aways (where people vacate typically populated areas), boycotts, and go-slows (where people move at half-pace at work and in the streets) -- that encourage people to participate without making enormous personal sacrifices. This year's peaceful uprising in Egypt saw the mobilization of men, women, children, the elderly, students, laborers, Islamists, Christians, rich, and poor -- a level of participation that none of Egypt's armed militant organizations in recent memory could claim.

"Nonviolent Resistance and Pacifism Are the Same Thing."

Not at All

When people hear the word "nonviolent," they often think of "peaceful" or "passive" resistance. For some, the word brings to mind pacifist groups or individuals, like Buddhist monks in Burma, who may prefer death to using violence to defend themselves against injustice. As such, they confuse "nonviolent" or "civil resistance" with the doctrine of "nonviolence" or "pacifism," which is a philosophical position that rejects the use of violence on moral grounds.

But in civil resistance campaigns like those occurring in the Arab Spring, very few participants are pacifists. Rather, they are ordinary civilians confronting intolerable circumstances by refusing to obey – a method available to anyone, pacifist or not. Even Mahatma Gandhi, the iconic pacifist, was a highly strategic thinker, recognizing that nonviolence would work not because it seized the moral high ground, but because massive noncooperation would ultimately make the British quit India: "We should meet abuse by forbearance," he said. "Human nature is so constituted that if we take absolutely no notice of anger or abuse, the person indulging in it will soon weary of it and stop."

"Nonviolent Resistance
Works Better in Some Cultures Than Others."

Wrong

Nonviolent movements have emerged and succeeded all over the world. In fact, the Middle East -- routinely written off by people elsewhere as a hopeless cauldron of violence -- can boast some of the biggest successes, even before the Arab Spring. The Iranian Revolution that took down Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi's dictatorial regime and brought Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to power was a nonviolent mass movement involving more than 2 million members of Iranian society (though also a useful reminder that nonviolent uprisings, like the violent kind, don't always produce the results one might hope for).

Palestinians have made the most progress toward self-determination and lasting peace with Israel when they have relied on mass nonviolent civil disobedience, as they did in the demonstrations, strikes, boycotts, and protests that dominated the First Intifada from 1987 to 1992 -- a campaign that forced Israel to hold talks with Palestinian leaders that led to the Oslo Accords, and convinced much of the world that Palestinians had the right to self-rule.

In the Americas, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil have all experienced nonviolent uprisings, ousting military juntas and

at times replacing them with democratically elected leaders. South Africa's nonviolent anti-apartheid campaign fundamentally altered the political, social, and economic landscape there, while the African National Congress's forays into revolutionary violence yielded little. Europe, of course, can claim some of the most iconic examples: the 1989 Eastern European revolutions, for instance, and the Danish resistance to the Nazi occupation during World War II.

And in Asia, successful nonviolent resistance has succeeded in casting off oppressive regimes in places as diverse as India, the Maldives, Thailand, Nepal, and Pakistan.

"Nonviolent Movements Succeed by Persuasion."

Not Always

The moral high ground is necessary, but hardly sufficient. Campaigns need to be extremely disruptive -- and strategically so -- to coerce entrenched dictators to abandon their posts. Nonviolent resistance does not necessarily succeed because the movement convinces or converts the opponent.

It succeeds when the regime's major sources of power -- such as civilian bureaucrats, economic elites, and above all the security forces -- stop obeying regime orders. The literary scholar Robert Inchausti put it well when he said, "Nonviolence is a wager -- not so much on the goodness of humanity, as on its infinite complexity." As in war, the key for a nonviolent campaign is to find and exploit the opponent's weaknesses.

Take the recent uprising in Egypt. In the first days of the uprising, military and security forces cracked down heavily on protests. But the demonstrators were prepared: Activists -- influenced by recent nonviolent revolutions elsewhere -- circulated instructions to protesters detailing how to respond to the crackdown and began placing women, children, and the elderly on the front lines against the security forces. The handouts encouraged protesters to welcome the soldiers into the ranks of the movement and strongly forbade any violence against them. Movement leaders also made sure that repressive acts against peaceful protesters were caught on video and publicized.

Ultimately, the Egyptian Army refused orders to suppress the campaign -- and Hosni Mubarak's regime lost one of its key centers of power. Here again is an advantage that nonviolent groups have over armed guerrillas:

Loyalty shifts among the security forces are difficult for small, clandestine, violent groups to achieve. Violent threats typically unite the security forces, who join together to defend against them (which is precisely why the Syrian regime insists it is fighting "armed groups" rather than unarmed civilians).

"Only Weak or Weak-Willed Regimes Fall to Nonviolent Uprisings."

Not True

Many nonviolent campaigns have succeeded against some of the bloodiest regimes on Earth, at the height of their power. In fact, a vast majority of the major nonviolent campaigns in the 20th century were facing down regimes such as Gen. Muhammad Zia ul-Haq's in Pakistan, Slobodan Milosevic's in Serbia, Augusto Pinochet's in Chile, Suharto's in Indonesia, and various imperial rulers who were clearly invested in maintaining power over their colonies. During the famed Rosenstrasse incident in Berlin in 1943, for example, even the Nazis showed their vulnerability to nonviolent protests, when German women organized protests and faced down SS machine guns to demand the release of their Jewish husbands -- a small victory against one of history's most genocidal regimes, and an unthinkable one had the protesters taken up arms.

In fact, almost all major nonviolent campaigns of the 20th and early 21st centuries have faced massive and violent repression. In Pinochet's Chile, for instance, the regime often used torture and disappearances to terrorize political opposition. In such circumstances, engaging in visible mass protest would have been highly risky for those opposing the government. So in 1983, civilians began to signal their discontent by coordinating the banging of pots and pans -- a simple act that demonstrated the widespread support for the civilians' demands and showed that Pinochet would not be able to suppress the movement with the tools at his disposal. People also walked through the streets singing songs about Pinochet's impending demise -- a practice that so irked the general that he banned singing. But such desperate measures demonstrated his weakness, not his strength. Ultimately, Pinochet caved and agreed to hold a 1988 referendum on the question of whether he would serve an additional eight years as president. Opposition leaders took the opportunity to organize nonviolent direct actions that focused on coordinating "no" votes, obtaining an independently verifiable vote count, and holding Pinochet accountable to the results. When it was clear that Pinochet had lost, the military ultimately sided with the Chilean people, and Pinochet stepped aside.

"Sometimes Rebels Have No Choice but to Take Up Arms."

Not True

The current civil conflict in Libya, it's easy to forget now, began with nonviolent protests in Benghazi around Feb. 15. The demonstrations were summarily crushed, and by Feb. 19, oppositionists had responded by taking up arms, killing or capturing hundreds of

Qaddafi's mercenaries and regime loyalists. In his infamous Feb. 22 speech, Qaddafi said, "Peaceful protest is one thing, but armed rebellion is another," and threatened to go "house by house" in search of the rebel "rats." Few civilians would be willing to participate in unarmed resistance after such threats, and what had initially begun as a peaceful movement unequivocally became an exclusively violent rebellion. It appears now to have been a success, but one that came at an enormous cost: Although an accurate death toll for the conflict is thus far impossible to come by, some counts midway through the war put the casualties as high as 13,000 deaths.

Could it have been otherwise? Hindsight is 20/20, of course, but if Libya's activists had a chance to evaluate their experience, they may have recognized a few mistakes. First, the movement appeared to have been fairly spontaneous, unlike the well planned, highly coordinated campaign in Egypt. Second, the nonviolent movement may have focused too much on a single tactic -- protests -- to pursue its aims. When movements rely exclusively on rallies or protests, they become extremely predictable: sitting ducks for regime repression. Successful movements will combine protests and demonstrations with well-timed strikes, boycotts, go-slows, stay-aways, and other actions that force the regime to disperse its repression in unsustainable ways. For example, during the Iranian Revolution, oil workers went on strike, threatening to cripple the Iranian economy. The shah's security forces went to the oil workers' homes and dragged them back to the refineries -- at which point the workers worked at half-pace before staging another walkout. This level of repression required to force the masses to work against their will is untenable because it requires a massive coordination of regime resources and effort. In fact, what we know from previous cases, such as Iran, is that the kind of violent reprisal Qaddafi used against the nonviolent uprising at the outset is often unsustainable against coordinated nonviolent movements over time.

Moreover, the rebels' nearly immediate turn to violent resistance evoked the strongest reaction from Qaddafi, and it immediately excluded large numbers of people who might have been willing to regroup and brave the streets against Qaddafi but who had no interest in joining what was sure to become a nasty fight. Before NATO lent its support, the largest gains the Libyan opposition made were during the nonviolent phase of the uprising, which involved massive protests that shut down the country, elicited numerous defections from key regime functionaries, and even led to the taking of Benghazi without significant bloodshed. But once the rebels reacted to Qaddafi's repression by taking up arms, they required NATO intervention to stand a chance.

Or consider Syria, where the decision to use violence or not is similarly wrenching. In August, following months of peaceful mass protests, Assad ordered a full-scale military bombardment of

Hama, a largely Sunni city known for an armed Islamist uprising that was even more brutally crushed in the 1980s, and other opposition strongholds across the country. Time to grab your gun, right?

Even in such cases, nonviolent movements have choices. They could respond to regime violence by switching tactics. In fact, Syrian activists have been doing this well, avoiding regime repression by using flash mobs and nighttime protests, which are more difficult to repress.

Daytime protests are now well planned, with multiple escape routes and mirrors to blind snipers trying to shoot protesters. Syrian activists have also so far largely avoided the temptation to respond to regime provocations with violence -- a critical decision, not only because taking up arms may undermine their domestic bases of participation and support, but also because it makes security forces more likely to obey orders to repress the movement. Because the regime has expelled journalists and cut off electricity in cities under siege, Syrian activists charge their laptops using car batteries and make fake IDs to get close to security forces so they can document human rights abuses and share them online. The continued mobilization resulting from these acts may help the opposition forge indispensable links with regime elites. Nonviolent resistance is, in effect, a form of asymmetric warfare. Dictators predictably rely on their perceived advantages in brute force to defeat challengers. It's best to fight the enemy where you have an advantage -- in this case, people power, unpredictability, adaptability, and creativity -- rather than where he does.

"Nonviolent Uprisings Lead to Democracy."

Not Necessarily

There is a strong empirical association between nonviolent campaigns and subsequent democratization, which shouldn't be terribly surprising: Higher levels of political participation and civil society -- factors that make a nonviolent uprising more likely to take root -- tend to lead to higher levels of democracy. But there are important exceptions. The Iranian Revolution -- one of the world's largest and most participatory nonviolent uprisings -- eventually ushered in a theocratic and repressive regime. The Philippines has endured several major nonviolent revolutions and continues to struggle with democratic consolidation and corruption. The largely successful Orange Revolution in Ukraine seemingly heralded a new era of political liberalization, but recent setbacks suggest the country is reversing course.

But none of these outcomes would likely have improved if the revolutions had been violent. In fact, in most countries where violent revolution has succeeded, the new regimes have been at least

as brutal as their predecessors -- as anyone who has lived in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, the French Revolution, the Afghan civil war, or the Cuban Revolution could tell you. As Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the Burmese pro-democracy movement, put it, "It is never easy to convince those who have acquired power forcibly of the wisdom of peaceful change."

The bottom line is that while nonviolent resistance doesn't guarantee democracy, it does at least more or less guarantee the lesser of the various potential evils. The nature of the struggle can often give us a good idea of what the country will be like after the new regime takes shape. And few people want to live in a country where power is seized and maintained by force alone.

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(Columbia University Press, 2011) with Maria J. Stephan of the U.S. State Department; and Rethinking Violence: States and Non- State Actors in Conflict (MIT Press, 2010) with Adria Lawrence of Yale. The author of dozens of scholarly and popular articles, she hosts a blog called Rational Insurgent

Internet and Mobilization in Defense of Human Rights

By DR. MASSOUMEH TORFEH

During the heady days of protests in Cairo, one young activist tweeted about why digital media was so important for mobilization. 'We use Facebook to schedule the protests, Twitter to coordinate, and YouTube to tell the world,' she said. The protesters around the world openly acknowledge the role of digital media as a fundamental infrastructure for sharing information. Twitter and Facebook are now important sources of rapidly moving news and information.

Yet digital media didn't oust Hosni Mubarak. The committed Egyptians occupying Tahrir Square did that. The role of new technologies is exaggerated at times. They do not actually instigate change but are available as powerful mechanisms for shari ng ideas t hat could pot enti ally l ead t o change and democratization. Political change is only one outcome. Yet, there is no denying that they have provided a unique toolbox for ordinary citizens, especially the young, to express their views. This toolbox is used for both the expression of personal feelings, and for voicing social and political opinion including discontent. In authoritarian states it has a further function for the citizens: It is used for political mobilization where people are denied the right to express their opinion, denied the right to information, and denied the right of assembly and peaceful protests.

We have witnessed the use of new information and communication technologies in all recent movements for change. The fall of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia, and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt will be recorded as a process of Internet-enabled social mobilization, as will be the uprisings in Syria, Bahrain and Yemen. In Iran in the post-election protests of the summer of 2009 Iranians used this communications toolbox to the full. Protesters used social networking sites to organize rallies and communicate with those outside their own country, such as foreign media, amid tight restrictions on state media. In Indonesia opposition activists used mobile phones to mobilize for toppling Suharto in 1998. In the 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine in 2004 the Internet became such an influential tool when only 4% of the population was online. In Kyrgyzstan too in the 'Tulip Revolution' in March 2005, mobile phones played an important role for mobilizing demonstrations. In Saudi Arabia a woman driver used the YouTube to tell the regime she was driving despite the driving ban, and women in Kuwait used new technologies for mobilizing support for the right to vote. Princess Ameerah gave the news in a tweet that the Saudi King Abdullah had intervened to revoke the sentence on the woman driver of receiving ten lashes.

Facebook, which attracted a record 500 million people in 24 hours and is known as the world's biggest social networking website, has now unveiled sweeping changes to its web site to increase 'active sharing' and 'active engaging' on listening and reading so 'you can have your friends with you wherever you go'. Facebook may be doing it for sharing music and film but in authoritarian states this concept of sharing with selected friends lies at the heart of political mobilization with groups that you trust. In a dictatorship, where the intelligence services eavesdrop in all channels of communication, the young mobilize amongst trusted friends. It gives the activist the upper hand in organizing demonstrations that take the authorities by surprise.

Negative Political Aspects

Authoritarian regimes have hit back in several ways. They have either tried to block the use of certain Internet sites or infect trusted sites and emails. We all remember how Google has regularly clashed with China over attempts to limit public access to its Internet services. During the uprising in Egypt, Google executive Wael Ghonim was detained by Egyptian authorities after taking part in the protests that led to the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak. Ghonim had been involved in founding an anti-torture Facebook page that helped inspire demonstrations.

In states such as Iran or China the authorities see the Internet as a soft power tool used by the West to create an uprising and as such they have blocked many web sites and used virus attacks on personal emails and known opposition web sites. They send contaminated emails to known opposition figures or young activists. 'The cyber war is really going on,' says an Iranian activist. They also cut off mobiles and block SMS facilities. After the mass arrests in Iran of the political activists involved in the post-election protests of 2009 the authorities used torture and intimidation as methods for extracting information about others sharing the Internet. So some activists have, under prolonged physical and mental torture, had no choice but to give out information such as email addresses or Facebook details of other activists. The authorities have penetrated and read emails and then used them as evidence for what they rank as 'subversive activity'. In most cases the emails or discussions were in defense of human rights or in demand for the right to communicate or plan peaceful protests.

Another dangerous offshoot of the use of Internet has been that terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda and Taliban have also

widely used it as a means of confronting the West. They mix propaganda to influence the young while at the same time encouraging their supporters to use violence against their state. The US born Anwar al-Awlaki who was recently killed by a US drone was one of the main culprits. He used social media to export al-Qaeda ideology of violence. His sermons were available on YouTube and other websites. He operated his own blog and was active on Facebook and MySpace. They portray their propaganda as a battle of ideas. Although the numbers of youth using such web sites are relatively small, the phenomenon of the use of Internet for publicizing violence has not been sufficiently discussed. We tend to discuss the success of these web sites and ignore the negative impacts.

Iran's Summer of Discontent and the Internet

It is difficult to locate exactly when and where the use of new communication technologies, the Internet, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and mobile phones began as a mobilization toolbox. However, we all witnessed one of the most potent combined uses of communication technologies for mobilization during and after the Iranian contested presidential elections in June 2009. Millions of people, mostly youth, came out to oppose the election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as the president. There was a rapid, powerful popular mobilization that used a wide range of digital technologies to organize and to get the message out to the world. All international media were relying on the footage sent by demonstrators since international media was not allowed in Iran. More importantly the internal mobilization of opposition demonstrations and rallies was done solely by the use of blogs and mobiles. It set an example for the ‚Jasmin Revolutions‘ or the ‚Arab Spring‘.

The main engine of the movement in Iran was the young who were extremely computer savvy. They had been using the Internet for several years for communicating messages and for exchanging gossip and personal feelings. ‚I keep blogging so that I can breathe in this suffocating air... so that I feel I am somewhere where my calls for justice can be uttered... I write a web log so I can shout, cry and laugh, and do the things that they have taken away from me in Iran today,‘ wrote an Iranian blogger in 2004. Now was their chance to use this tool of networking for creating real change in their country. They were convinced that the elections were rigged and their votes not counted. They had already seen that many of their preferred candidates had been filtered out of the pool of candidates.

Their first demand in all Internet exchanges and in demonstrations was ‚Where is My Vote?‘ On 16 June 2009 Tehran witnessed the biggest demonstration in 30 years as around two million people, mostly young, came out to demonstrate against Ahmadinejad.

They spread their messages on the Internet and called it ‚the Green Wave‘. Green was the colour that the opposition had used for its election campaign. Many Iranians on Facebook changed their profile pictures to a green square that included the text ‚Where is My Vote‘. And many non-Iranians tweaked the icon to ‚Where is Their Vote?‘ Facebook became a space for posting videos articles and photos sent by mobile or by email attachment from people in Iran.

Most of the young were permanently logged in and Facebook's chat facility helped many to keep in touch. Almost instantly the external network pundits summarized the Iranian process as a ‚twitter revolution‘. Everyone knew that for the latest news on Iranian developments they had to go to You Tube for the footage posted by email, and to twitter and Facebook for the minute-by-minute updates. Footage taken by Iranian youth was being shown on all major international TV news channels such as the BBC, CNN, and Aljazeera. The WebEchology project linked to Harvard Berkman Center recorded over two million tweets from 7 June up to 26 June 2009 about the election in Iran. Approximately 480,000 users had contributed to the conversation. Twitter, Facebook and You Tube became the main channels of conversation, discussion and mobilization. The young used them to the full with creative new ideas using photos and footage recorded on their mobiles.

The Regime Hits Back

The effect of anti-government protests was devastating for Iran's ruling clique. Millions of Iranians had come to the streets to protest the presidency of Ahmadinejad. In an unprecedented way the protestors denounced the regime and its supreme leader. The regime almost crumbled. It faced a serious crisis of leadership. A group of young Internet savvy activists had in a matter of a few months managed to become a potent enemy of one of the most powerful dictatorial regimes in the world. They had discredited a regime that was pretending it had mass support at home, and its only enemy was the West.

Through their photos and footage posted on the Internet and on YouTube the protestors had brought the brutality of the regime to the world's attention. It was plain for all to see. They had caused serious embarrassment for the contested president Ahmadinejad who was pretending to be in full control. The young who were taking part in this Internet revolution were non-political for the most part. Initially they only wanted their basic rights respected and their votes counted. They hated being cheated out of their votes but did not want violence. Yet as they witnessed the brutal methods of the regime in treating the protestors, they became increasingly angry demanding an end to a regime that was denying

them their rights. Thus they caused a serious crisis of unity inside this powerful regime pushing the supreme leader and the president into open confrontation with other powerful ayatollahs.

Iranian authorities had to hit back. It was, apart from everything else, a question of survival. They had to find a mechanism to destroy what they regarded as the ‚enemy within‘. So they labeled it as a ‚soft power‘ war directed by the West. They began blocking Internet sites and the BBC Persian TV, which was showing the footage taken by the demonstrators. Iran formed a 12-person unit to monitor the Internet and to locate anti-government bloggers and web sites. The government teamed up with private companies to begin giving out free home Internet filtering software. They also cracked down on dissent within the educational system, hinting that professors who do not toe the official line will be sacked. Then they started a full campaign of arrests, intimidation, torture, forced confessions and faked trials to put young protestors, journalists, web loggers, human rights lawyers, and opposition leaders in jail. They called them cyber-war agents‘ and detained and charged them. Many still remain in jail and Internet and email communication is now very limited. One of the regular methods used by the Iranian regime was to get email and Facebook information from those arrested by torturing them and threatening to harm their family and loved ones. So under pressure some gave the email addresses and Facebook connections of trusted friends. The state used this for further arrests. Two Iranian bloggers killed themselves in October 2011 after being detained by security officials. The two had been under intense pressure to testify against their friend Kouhyar Goudarzi, a prominent human rights activist, who was arrested on 31 July and has since been missing in very suspicious circumstances. Many young activists were taken in, beaten up, intimidated and tortured. Several went on hunger strike in prison and prison treatment of young activists became a serious human rights issue reported widely by all international and local human rights organizations.

These forced extractions of information and the subsequent arrests of more activists have now discouraged many Iranian bloggers from using the Internet. Emails have been hacked and Facebook discussions entered into. Even trusted emails such as Gmail accounts were hacked as were Facebook accounts designated to close friends. So if there were 15 people involved in one discussion, most were arrested. Authorities having found access to the details of discussions then used them as evidence for what they termed ‘subversive’ activity, the punishment for which could potentially be very serious. ‘All our problems since 2009 have been the result of the use of Internet’ says Shadi Sadr one of the pioneers in the use of Internet for political mobilization in Iran. ‘Now the Internet is no longer trusted. The authorities are taking all our colleagues to

jail and using their Internet exchanges as evidence against them.’ This is rather a devastating consequence of a movement that had achieved such a lot of success at the outset.

New Methods

Iranian activists are now thinking about new ways to approach the problem and computer scientist in the US and in Europe are providing alternative solutions through the creation of safer Iranian domains. Specialist companies are trying to get technology designed to bypass government filters and other censorship. Babak Siavoshy, 27, works at the Censorship Research Center (C.R.C.), whose engineers have developed software called ‘Haystack’ that makes it near impossible for censors to detect what Internet users are doing. ‘Double-click on Haystack and you browse the Internet anonymously and safely,’ Siavoshy said to New York Times. ‘It's encrypted at such a level it would take thousands of years to figure out what you're saying. It's a potent open-society tool. It's just a matter of getting it to Iran – and that's still illegal.’ US officials have tried to waver sanctions on Iran so that they could ‘issue a general license that would authorize downloads of free mass-market software by companies such as Microsoft and Google to Iran necessary for the exchange of personal communications and/or sharing of information over the Internet such as instant messaging, chat and e-mail, and social networking’.

Inside and outside, Iranian websites carrying news and editorials are becoming the order of the day while blogs contain new material not available within the regime-controlled channel. Many bloggers became journalists and some are working abroad for the international media broadcasting to Iran. Others have set up NGOs defending human rights. They continue to call for freedom in Iran and continue to hold the Iranian regime to account wherever they are and whatever they do. Here is a cadre of talented young people constantly reinventing itself to defend its human rights, and justice for Iran.

Conclusions

In conclusion it could be argued that some of the strengths of this ‘Internet Revolution’ may ultimately have become its weaknesses. The young have seen their own power in confronting a powerful dictatorial state. Yet they have also seen its limitations, and are presently feeling apprehensive about what the future may bring. In Iran we saw how their strength in rapid organization became their weakness once Internet was slowed down. Their mixed vision, which initially brought all different groups together, became a weakness once they were dispersed and their Internet and email contact was cut. Their spontaneous strategy, which had initially caught the gov-

ernment by surprise, now left them unable to continue organizing without the Internet. This had damaging consequences since they did not know what the next step should be. They lost their focus once Internet was cut. Another strength, which turned into weakness, was their creativity. They were the pioneers in this form of Internet mobilization and thus they did not have a model to follow or to learn from. The 'Arab Spring,' which followed the Iranian 'Tweeter Revolution' of the summer of 2009, did have a model to fall back on. They had seen the experience of the young in Iran and were apprehensive. They ensured persistence in their movement and tried to formulate their demands more clearly.

Nevertheless the future of some of the more successful examples such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Yemen are still unclear. In Egypt the political landscape has not been defined yet and we still cannot be sure of the role that will be played by the powerful Muslim Brotherhood. Moreover, as Tunisians form their first constituent assembly we know that the Islamist groups have the majority but we still don't know whether they will insist on Islam playing a major role in the running of the state.

On the plus side, the emerging political landscape in Tunisia and Egypt might be described as post ideological, in which naked appeals to ideology are being tempered in favor of more universal and practical political programs. Thus the dominant more moderate Islamists in Tunisia and Egypt pose a serious challenge to the stricter versions of Islamism. This could be said to be the path to post-Islamism, and a direct result of the events we have witnessed in the Middle East and Iran over the past three years.

In Iran the fundamentalists still have the upper hand. However, the Islamic Republic has also received the message of the protest marches and the women's movement before it. The ruling clique in Iran is facing a serious crisis of leadership. There is tension between the contested president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Supreme Leader. Moreover, the president is being challenged by the parliament and by the judiciary too. The three main pillars of power – the parliament, the judiciary, and the president -- are in confrontation with each other. The chance of t his tension spilling int o the military, the Revolutionary Guards, is alarming. This tension could be said to be a direct result of the post-election confrontation posed by a movement mainly organized through Internet mobilization.

So at the very least the Internet mobilization for change in Iran and in parts of the Middle East has posed a serious challenge to Islamists, and to dictators. The young, as the main engine of the movements have forced the dictators to listen to their demands and to respect their freedom of speech and their right of assembly. Moreover they have forced the Islamists to adapt to a new reality where populist but non-ideological economic and political messages are more successful than base appeals to religion. They ushered in an important change by rejecting ideology and replacing it with practical concerns like freedom, and economic equality. In effect the Internet movement became a powerful non-political non-ideological pressure group demanding freedom and economic development for better jobs and better life.

Yet the danger is that none of these movements have as yet formulated a comprehensive plan for how their demands need to be turned into practical policy for the future. The strength of spontaneous mobilization has turned into a weakness in that there has not been sufficient thinking and sufficient theorizing into that alternative ideal future political state. There has been more negative communication about what the movements do not want and less about how to replace the existing systems. This is the key to safeguarding the achievements of these Internet-led movements in Iran and in the Middle East.

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Rethinking Democratic Development

By ANDERS PRIEN

These days, the final effort of the monsoon washes the Burmese Highlands – bringing soft rain as we sit outside a modest house on an elevated bamboo staircase. The house belongs to one of the local farmers; his family has lined the walls of their home with newspaper clippings that show famous Westerners. On the roof, the mold from this rainy season has sealed in the dust from the dry one.

Outside the house, hay and grass are stacked in the shape of a pagoda (pyramidlike tower); the fields in the valley turn greener every day and the first leaves of rice are visible in the paddy field.

The farmer is participating in a training session on sustainable agroforestry (Agriculture incorporating the growing of trees). Organized by a Burmese civil society organization, the session takes place at the local farming school on the outskirts of the village. It has become a gathering ground for poor farmers from nearby villages, a place to exchange experiences and knowledge on how to improve their lives as farmers collectively, through training sessions that assist villagers in responding to the urgent needs for food and clean water. Today, the farmers share their experiences on how to plant trees and crops in a sustainable manner. None of them own a lot of land and it is therefore crucial to prevent the soil from being washed away during the rainy season. The aim of these training sessions is to reduce the poverty caused by decades of underdevelopment in Myanmar. The nearby hills are characterized by their lack of infrastructure, hospital system and schools, a consequence of the still ongoing civil war and a non-existing willingness from the country's authoritarian regime to share the resources of the land.

"It is important that people learn how to utilize their limited land in the best possible way, so that they may survive on what little they have", Saw Tun says. He works for the civil society organization that is orchestrating today's training.

I soon notice that there is more at stake in today 's training than the immediate alleviation of poverty by producing food – also on the poor farmers' agenda is the question of who is to be in control of, and benefiting from, nature's resources.

Victims of a clouded and Corrupt Game

Despite the fact that Myanmar is one of the poorest countries in the world, when looking at the welfare of the inhabitants, people live on fertile soil full of opportunities for growth.

Only the well-connected people benefit from the country's natural resources due to biased redistribution based on decades of systematic corruption and repression. where m Money and connections ultimately determine whether or not you have access to land and resources.

Whether it is timber, gems or opium, it is in the hands of businessmen with connections to representatives from the regime and to China, a state starving for resources. China supports the steady flow of natural resources across the border in order to ensure the country's rapid progression. Furthermore, ethnic minorities have become victims in the ongoing extraction of natural resources and they suffer as a result of the negative environmental and social impacts. There are numerous examples of individuals deprived of any prospects for personal gain and compensation.

Several of these farmers have witnessed logging companies clear out vast forest areas for timber. They have observed how the soil has become leached and eroded in close proximity to their villages. They are concerned because the soil has become infertile, rivers dammed and clean drinking water has turned into mud. The continuing degradation of the land and uncertain access to natural resources complicate the lives of the farmers, especially the most marginalized and those without land, those of whom everyday life is dependent on the variety of products that are derived from the forest.

"My family has always lived by the forest; it has provided us with firewood, our animals can graze there and we can find many edible plants in it – we need the forest when last year's rice harvest has almost run out and we are waiting for the new rice to ripen on the fields". Another adds that "We collect firewood in the forest, which we then use to cook our food, and we gather wood in the forest in order to build our houses". The forest is an integral part of people's everyday struggle to meet their basic needs.

Change in the Cyclone's Trail

When the cyclone Nargis moved across the Irrawaddy Delta in southern Myanmar in May 2008 it left a trail of death, caused by the destructive storm and tidal surge driven inland from the sea. A swarm of people, animals and houses were swept away and afterwards, half of the families were homeless with no opportunity to take shelter from the persistent monsoon. The storage from the year before washed away, the fishing boats were crushed in the waves, and people's rice fields had become impossible to cultivate having been drenched in seawater.

To the amazement of the local people, neither the government

nor the military showed up to help. Weeks went by as emergency aid failed to arrive. But despite the fact that the devastations had been overwhelming, a determination began to grow among the people to help each other; they had realized that the government would not help them and that they had to organize themselves in order to relieve affected villages and families. In the face of the government's callous response, Burmese civil society groups and individuals raised money, collected supplies, and traveled to the badly affected parts of the Irrawaddy Delta to aid the survivors in shattered villages.

Nargis became a turning point for civil society in Myanmar and paved the way for a new tendency in the way civil society organized in Myanmar; together, people found ways to approach the lack of development in the country, both when it came to the provision of daily needs to the population, as well as encouraging the formation of local democratic institutions.

The working environment for civil society now grew rapidly, in spite of restrictions from the central authoritarian government. The approach of the civil society organizations was founded on a humanitarian motivation and is not based on the existing political alliances and oppositions in the country.

Taking a political stance would prevent the civil society organizations from helping people, since the authoritarian regime would ban and hinder their work. This does not so much mean that their work is politically neutral as it means that they strive towards change and progression, without the appearance of a political opposition to the regime.

Many of the organizations share the vision of a democratic Myanmar with Aung San Suu Kyi and her party NLD (National League for Democracy), but do not attempt to bring it about through politics. Instead, their aim is to inspire the people with democratic awareness and cooperation/corporation by responding to their everyday concerns such as corruption, lack of land tenures or education. The civil society organizations have become a source of inspiration to many young people who see a concrete opportunity to struggle for a more democratic society, not least because of the fact that the political battle for democracy has been weakened by the regime's constant acts of tyranny, propaganda and crimes against the population.

Since Nargis, the civil society organizations have turned their attention towards other parts of the country and have begun meeting the urgent development needs in the isolated mountainous areas in the ethnical provinces that are strained by the civil war and the lack of development. Several civil society organizations are now carrying out projects among the ethnical minorities in Northern Myanmar. Here, in the Kachin state, you will find the farmer school that Saw Tun works for.

The Silent Art of Overcoming Corruption and Authoritarian Control

Yet another group of farmers have arrived from a nearby village to participate in today's training session. They have brought a water buffalo, normally used when working in the rice fields; the village has agreed upon sharing some water buffalos, as only a handful have got enough money to keep buffalos themselves. The shared buffalo is a result of the farmers' renewed organization and corporation, where they trade both resources and experience. This week, it is not only about cultivating the forest and the fields, as there is a parallel and more diffuse and covert agenda that is seldom brought up without complications in an authoritarian country such as Myanmar.

"We try to make people aware of the potentials of their land and the forest and to empower them to collectively claim their rights and access to those resources in order to overcome the widespread corruption and land degradation, they are experiencing in their villages", Saw Tun states.

Corruption and authoritarian control are ubiquitous in the everyday lives of the Burmese – it has become general and acceptable as an effect of decades of dictatorship and oppression. The fact that the regime's own civil organization USDA counts several million members is one obvious sign. The members of this organization are watching the others in their villages and stay close in order to segment the authoritarian politics, propaganda and control of the regime among the people. With their connections, they are forerunners themselves in the spreading of corruption. Many of them find themselves at the bottom end of the bureaucracy, so corruption has evolved as a means of mere survival. It is corruption that Saw Tun works to be rid of by teaching democratic organization and rights among the civil population.

Scarceness of land is a major problem for many farmers in upland Myanmar, either because the land on the slopes is of poor quality, or because the farmers are not formally registered as landowners and therefore risk losing their land. Saw Tun points out that "It is significant that people realize how they are being exploited by the undemocratic forces and relations in society, that they begin to work against corruption by organizing themselves and get together in a more democratic manner. Farmers can exchange experiences and stand together for their rights and access to their own land. This way, hopefully, they can attain the rights to their own resources and protect their villages, their land tenure and the forest". Saw Tun stresses that change does not have to take place through political will, but that changes may happen in a person's everyday environment and that change is something that is passed on from individual to individual, something that occurs in the relation be-

tween people – that change towards a more democratic society is founded on reliability and respect for others.

At the same time, he has to be a realist and as a young activist in a civil society organization, he often has to work on terms set by the regime. Democratic development is not a subject that can be openly debated in Myanmar; it is something that can only be brought up in cautious hints, in a corner of the tea salon or on a desolate dirt road riding in a rickshaw. Democracy is something that an individual must attempt to introduce in relation to his or her fellow people, which may seem an insurmountable task in a hushed country such as Myanmar.

Many restrictions still exist for the Burmese civil society organizations attempting to build a democratic society from the ground up, but civil society groups are trying to develop the socio-political space in order to bring about this change, learning by experience how to operate when faced with the constraints of everyday authoritarian control and politics. Several organizations continue to work unhindered even without official registration.

The Bedrock of a Future Democracy

Saw Tun points out that it is still difficult to work in many of the ethnic villages, as access to a lot of areas is restricted due to the civil war between the ethnic rebel forces and the army of the authori-

tarian regime. One farmer explained to me how he is among the fortunate: In his village, they merely heard shots from inside the jungle. Members of his family situated closer to the Thai border, had been forced to flee to a refugee camp on the other side of the border when their village was burned down – simply because the government army suspected that the villagers were sympathizing with the local rebel force.

I have noticed that several of the villagers are wearing red cotton strings. Saw Tun explains that the red cotton strings commemorate family, the displaced people of the civil war and gives protection from the wrath of the forest spirits who visit them with disease and renders them powerless. In this land, it seems as if the forest is not only made up of trees; it is both necessary to the survival of the villagers and home to both good and evil spirits.

The villagers tie cotton strings around each other's wrists in connection with this year's harvest, where all the villagers gather to harvest the rice. This year, rice will also be grown on the slopes, which is part of today's training at the farmer school.

In the trees, the cicadas are on guard and create a sense of artificial silence, where no one dares to ask about the future of Myanmar. Let us hope that civil society organizations - such as the one Saw Tun works for - can become the bedrock of future democracy in Myanmar as a result of the fact that they help people promote and encourage the formation of organizations in the country.

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RAPtivism

– Arab rappers in solidarity with uprisings in the Middle East & North Africa

By AISHA FUKUSHIMA

Massoumeh Torfeh, Research Associate at the Centre for Media and Film Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) - giving her presentation at the conference

Many prominent Arab hip-hop artists inspired by uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa have released music in solidarity with protesters in the region. Though the messages of these new songs are not necessarily new to Arab hip-hop, the urgency and relevance of this new music has gained these artists increasing international attention.

While Arab hip-hop started to gain its recognition in the '90s, tracing back the history can be difficult in light of the fact that it stems from such a complex fusion of diasporic communities, people, art and culture. In North America, for instance, artists such as Fredwreck and The Narcicyst are cited as pioneers of Arab hip-hop, while groups such as DAM are credited with jump-starting the movement in Palestine.

In a conversation with Excentrik, an East Bay music producer, actionist (action activist and loud player), he explained, Yeah, there's an Arab hip-hop scene, but it's a global scene, it's not like a localized scene. Unfortunately, there's not enough cats doing quality shit that have like a [single] place to go in any of these cities... It's an esoteric scene, it's random because it's so big and so spread apart. While there are certainly active indigenous Arab hip-hop scenes throughout much of North Africa and the Middle East, the majority of the most celebrated emcees in the global scene are based in North America and Europe, where hip-hop has had a longer history and faces less challenges in terms of censorship. That said, artists still find opportunities to collaborate and work together across both national and international lines. "Most of us Arab rappers are very well connected," said Rush of Cairo's premier rap group, Arabian Knightz. Collaborations between rappers can be recorded from different studios and files can be shared with the click of a mouse.

"The combination of hip-hop and the Internet, and the ability to record it and put it up online immediately and bypass all these typical media outlets and typical industry outlets is what makes it so powerful," explained Syrian-American rapper Omar Offendum in a phone interview from Los Angeles.

In North America, Iraqi-Canadian rapper, The Narcicyst and Omar Offendum are two of the most highly acclaimed emcees in the global Arab hip-hop scene. Omar Offendum often evokes the work of Arab poets through his lyrics, emphasizing the links between poetry and hip-hop. The Narcicyst, who recently released a book entitled "Fear of an Arab Planet: The Diatribes of a Dying Tribe," touches on themes ranging from Orientalism to homeland security in his music. One of his most popular songs, 'P.H.A.T.W.A.' released in 2009, is set in an airport. "We went from, supported to subordinate, can't afford it, ordered / My motherland smothered and mortared, morbid, at borders / I'm sorted out from beardless cats that boarded the plane as I was boarding," The Narcicyst raps.

The UK also boasts some of the world's most recognized Arab rap artists such as Lowkey, who is of British and Iraqi heritage, and the Palestinian rapper, Shadia Mansour, also known as "The First Lady of Arabic Hip-Hop." Both are known for linking artistry and activism, rapping about topics such as Palestinian resistance, occupation and terrorism. "They calling me a terrorist / Like they don't know who the terror is / When they put it on me, I tell them this / I'm all about peace and love / They calling me a terrorist / Like they don't know who the terror is / Insulting my intelligence / Oh how these people judge," raps Lowkey in the song "Terrorist." Together, they have toured extensively and collaborated on titles such as "Long Live Palestine" which incorporates Mansour's distinctive Arabic flow and emotive singing voice.

Rapping in the Middle East

In Tunisia, a young emcee by the name of El Général was among the first in the Arab hip-hop scene to gain international attention for his raps related to the most recent waves of political unrest in the North Africa. He released two songs "Rais Le Bled" (Mr. President/President of the country) and "Tounes Bladna" (Tunisia, Our Country) which were both included on the Mish B3eed mixtape put out by 'Enough,' a Libyan movement voicing dissent against the Gaddafi regime.

According to The UK's Observer newspaper, "Rais Le Bled," released in November 2010 "lit up the bleak and fearful horizon like an incendiary bomb," reaching audiences around the world through new media platforms such as YouTube. "My president, your country is dead / People eat garbage / Look at what is happening / Misery everywhere / Nowhere to sleep / I'm speaking for the people who suffer," he raps in Arabic. The song was quickly banned in Tunisia, but Al Jazeera Television and Tunivision were still able to pick up on the El Général story followed by other notable media outlets such as TIME magazine. Shortly thereafter, the release of "Tounes Bladna" resulted in the 21-year-old rapper's arrest from his family's flat in the town of Sfax in Tunisia. El Général was released

after three days of interrogation thanks to an outpouring of public protest in his favor.

The January 25 uprisings in Egypt sparked a second wave of protest music from the global Arab hip-hop scene, fueling an outpour from prominent artists such as The Narcicyst, Shadia Mansour, Lowkey and Omar Offendum. This time, the songs would be multinational collaborations, incorporating news clips from Al Jazeera and photos from demonstrations in the music videos.

On February 4, just weeks after the January 25 demonstrations, Egyptian rap group Arabian Knightz posted the song "Not Your Prisoner" featuring Shadia Mansour, and the Palestinian-American producer, Fredwreck on YouTube. Lyrics alternate between English and Arabic, opening the dialogue to a larger international audience. "Destructive destruction, running my district / Antichrist running it, spittin' evil wisdom!" raps Rush (one of three members in the group). The song became an instant YouTube success, accruing thousands of views within 24 hours of being posted.

When asked in a Skype interview about the role of their music in bringing about social change, Rush replied, "The people who started the revolution are teenagers. I doubt that the motive of the revolution, the music they were listening to while planning all these things, was 'habibi' music. I am sure it was hip-hop." The 'habibi' music Rush refers to can be described as sentimental, easy-listening pop that is widespread in Arabic media channels. That music, according to many Arab hip-hop artists, fails to address the real concerns of youth on the front lines of protest throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

The North American Connection

A few days later, North American artists The Narcicyst, Omar Offendum, Freeway, Ayah, Amir Sulaiman and producer, Sami Matar contributed to the dialogue with a collaboration entitled "#Jan25." The song, posted on YouTube, has drawn nearly 200,000 views, and even caught the attention of Al Jazeera, which interviewed Omar Offendum shortly after the song was released.

"I heard 'em say / The revolution wont be televised / Al Jazeera proved 'em wrong / Twitter has 'em paralyzed / 80 million strong / And ain't no longer gonna be terrorized / Organized - Mobilized - Vocalized / On the side of TRUTH," raps Omar Offendum in the opening verse of the song. The use of graphic Al Jazeera news clips and gorilla photography throughout much of the music video illustrates the grassroots nature of the Arab hip-hop scene, using a combination of audio and visual media to communicate their message to a growing audience of listeners.

In the meantime, mounting tensions in Libya inspired 26-year-old Chicago rapper M. Khaled to release a music video entitled "Can't Take Our Freedom," featuring UK rapper, Lowkey. The first lines of the chorus, "You can't take our freedom, or take our soul / Take our freedom or take our soul / You are not the one that's in control / You are not the one that's in control," sum up the overall message of the song speaking to the Gaddafi regime.

"It was never my intention to be a political rapper, or write political songs," said M. Khaled in an interview with Arab Detroit News. Even so, this most recent release has become one of his most popular tracks to date. This song also seems to tie back to the legacy of his father, Mohamed Ahmed, who was reportedly held as a political prisoner in Libya for five years after leading student protests against the Gaddafi regime. "Like, could we be this close? Nah, couldn't be / But if the people in Egypt and Tunis could do this, decide their fate...then why wouldn't we?" raps M. Khaled.

Although the original music video for "Can't Take Our Freedom" was removed from YouTube for reasons that are not entirely clear, several fans have reposted the song using their own personal online accounts. In addition to gaining popularity online, the song attracted the attention of media outlets such as ABC World News and CNN that profiled the story of the young rapper.

The Solidarity Rap

Each of these new protest songs in their own way illustrates a collective consciousness around growing political unrest in the Middle East and North Africa among artists in the Arab hip-hop scene. Solidarity with protesters is the central theme that runs throughout much of this new music. This solidarity is also reflected in the collaborative nature of many of these pieces featuring hip-hop artists who are spread across different cities and continents. Even on a local front, Bay Area hip-hop pioneer Davey D released a "Beats for Revolution Mixtape" that features "Not Your Prisoner" and "#Jan25," alongside the sounds of Dead Prez, Public Enemy and Immortal Technique.

As political unrest continues to unfold throughout much of the Middle East and North Africa, many Arab hip-hop artists are optimistic, but cautious.

"One thing governments cannot take away from the people is the will to live," wrote Lebanese-Armenian Bay Area rap artist Tru Bloo in an e-mail. "I think we, in the U.S., have a lot to learn from these movements," she added.

"There is a hopefulness and a sobering feeling," said Oakland-based Lebanese American soul singer, Naima Shalhoub, of the ongoing events.

Still, artists involved in the Arab hip-hop scene remain inspired by the significance that music has in motivating and empowering youth. "The way kids listen to music is a really powerful thing," said London-based rapper Logic after his concert at the University of California, Berkeley with Shadia Mansour and Lowkey last month.

Realizing the power that their music has to speak to youth in the face of adversity, Arab hip-hop artists do not take their work lightly. "Music plays a big role in influencing people," said The Narcicyst, "and I almost think for our generation... music speaks to us louder than politics does."

Aisha Fukushima
Educator, singer and self-proclaimed 'RAPtivist' (rap activist). Aisha graduated from Whitman College in 2009 with an honors degree in Rhetoric and Film Studies and minors in French and Gender Studies. Upon graduating, Aisha travelled the world with the support of the Watson Foundation and created an international 'RAPtivism' (rap activism) project. Having lived in countries as diverse as France, Japan, South Africa, Senegal, Morocco, the UK, India, Denmark and The Netherlands, Aisha is constantly working to expand her knowledge of the intersections between music and social justice around the globe.
Aisha has been writing, speaking and performing for over ten years. She has also established several community-based youth programs including the 'Turn Off The Stereotypes' project and the Whitman Institute of Summer Enrichment (WISE).

Supporting the Democratisation of Others

By LARS ENGBERG-PEDERSEN

From the left; Rima Marrouch, Journalist, working for the Golf Center on Human Rights, Syria & Judith Chiyangwa Human Rights Activist, Zimbabwe - answering questions from the floor

What is democracy? This question was the object of intense discussion in Denmark in the 1940s on the background of the World War II and of two decades of outspoken scepticism regarding democracy. Two professors and public opinion makers, Hal Koch and Alf Ross, represented two positions in the debate and though they did not disregard the views of the opponent, they each emphasised clearly different aspects of democracy.

Democratic States or Minds?

Alf Ross, being a law professor, understood democracy as a form of government (Ross, 1946). Democracy is a set of formal institutions, including elections, which enable decisions when people disagree. The institutions are organised around principles of majority, the rule of law, and representation. Minorities are protected inasmuch as they enjoy constitutional rights. In a nutshell, democracy should protect the liberties of the individual while enabling collective decision-making, all through formal institutions.

Hal Koch, on the other hand, saw democracy as a way of living (Koch, 1945). He focused on the dialogue between people and argued that a democratic conversation is characterised by the pursuit of a better understanding of the subject. This is only possible if the participants listen and are ready to accept the opponent's arguments. If a majority rules without seriously listening to alternative views, it is undemocratic. In a real, living democracy, mutual respect, tolerance and the willingness to understand and accept alternative views to one's own are salient features.

These different views are important to bear in mind when discussing the possibilities of supporting the democratisation of others. Evidently it is easier – though not easy in itself – to change formal institutions than it is to change the hearts and minds of people. Some would argue that changing the institutions would subsequently bring about a change of people's minds. Others regard institutions as the rules of the game, which individuals relate to in order to optimise their benefits. Yet others propose that formal institutions do not work if they have no backing in social norms and ideas.

There is actually evidence to support all three different approaches to the relationship between formal institutions and individuals' views and behaviour. There is no one-to-one

relationship, but much mutual dependence and influence depending on the circumstances. And this is probably a major conclusion: The specific relationship between institutions and individuals depend on the history, development and the political actors of an individual country. Therefore, the roads to democracy may be as numerous as there are countries.

Development Cooperation and Democratisation

In the early days of international development cooperation, democracy and political issues were of relatively low importance. An example of this can be seen in the 1971 legislation for Danish development cooperation, here in my translation:

"The purpose of Denmark's national assistance to developing countries should be, through cooperation with the governments and authorities of these countries, to support their efforts to achieve economic growth and, in this way, to contribute to ensuring their social progress and political independence […]"

Development cooperation was about growth, investments, technological transfer and the like. It was seen as a technical matter, and non-interference was a major issue. Moreover, the thinking was – as reflected in the dominant development theories of the day – that once the developing countries 'took off', they would become developed like the countries in the Western world. Economic development would automatically bring about social and political change, so it was not necessary to reflect on political issues.

At least two factors explain this. First, during the Cold War the super powers and their respective allies were concerned about getting friends and supporters. Whether these were democracies or had authoritarian regimes was of little importance as long as they were 'in our camp'. For many donor countries, development assistance was a way of buying political support. Secondly, decolonisation had thoroughly questioned political interference by the former colonial powers. This was evidently important in relation to countries like Britain and France, but also the Scandinavian countries were influenced by this sentiment. The political development of poor countries was not regarded as a legitimate element in development cooperation.

Democracy Through Trade and Free Markets

This changed completely with the end of the Cold War. In many developing countries, the beginning of the 1990s marked a change towards democratic governments. New constitutions were adopted and elections held. Development cooperation was also influenced by the change. In the first half of the 1990s Official Development

Assistance (ODA) fell remarkably. The need to buy support was no longer perceived to be important in many donor countries. Moreover, this was the heyday of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) conducted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. According to these programmes, the crux of the matter was to "get policies right" and to limit the role of the state since the market would do the trick and create development.

The SAPs had two effects of relevance for the present discussion. First, they legitimised interference into the policy-making processes of developing countries and, secondly, they legitimised that donor countries reduced their financial contributions to development cooperation as the market was expected to stimulate development. With the end of the Cold War, developing countries experienced, accordingly, deteriorating conditions on two fronts; their political independence was reduced and they were less attractive for financial support.

Democracy Through "Good Governance"

As the limited success of the SAPs became apparent, donor agencies swung towards getting institutions right . The argument was that markets do not function by themselves – they need proper institutional back up. This laid the ground for a new set of interventions focusing on good governance . Originally concerned with efficient policy-making and implementation to create an enabling environment for market activities, this notion was quickly enlarged to include the creation of institutions for human rights, democracy, the fight against corruption, etc. No corner of the political development of poor countries was any longer deemed to be irrelevant for development cooperation.

Another trend in development cooperation has been to emphasise people's participation and civil society. From the 1980s and onwards an interest in bottom-up approaches has surfaced in a recognition of the fact that centrally conceived ideas are difficult to turn into reality if they are not well received on the ground. Moreover, people living in a certain locality have a better idea of local problems and potential solutions than outsiders. This view has led to discussions of different ways of integrating people in development activities from direct participation to different forms of representation.

Furthermore, civil society and its multitude of diverse organisations (CSOs) have increasingly been acknowledged as an essential part of a country's development process. While many CSOs are heavily engaged in service delivery, the last 15 years have seen an increasing emphasis on advocacy activities, democracy education, budget tracking and the like. Many international NGOs have grown considerably in recent years so despite a contemporary set-

back of CSOs' room-for- manoeuvre in many countries, privately organised development and democracy activities are likely to gain further importance in the years to come.

Development cooperation has also been influenced by a broader conceptualisation of poverty. Although income is still the central aspect of poverty, social and political issues like isolation, marginalisation and vulnerability have gained importance. Democracy has entered this discussion as a remedy for the political marginalisation of poor people. Another tendency linked to the above is an increasing interest in human rights and rights-based approaches. It is not only convenient to integrate people in development activities, they also have a right to get their social, political and economic needs fulfilled. An important element in this is the distinction between rights holders and duty bearers, which is a way of linking citizens on the one hand and politicians and civil servants on the other in a representative democracy. Rights- based approaches are particularly popular among CSOs and have so far not gained much ground in official aid although they influence Swedish and now Danish development policies.

Democracy or Development?

It has been argued that international assistance to support democracy and development cooperation are two separate fiefdoms operating side-by-side in many countries and that their convergence is doubtful (Carothers, 2010). The support for democracy as a distinct objective on its own emerged in the 1980s in the US under the Reagan administration and in Europe with the political foundations, notably in Germany. Originally, there was undoubtedly an uneasy relationship between this work and development cooperation as democracy supporters were not much concerned about broader development issues, focused a lot on better-off countries with authoritarian regimes and were happy to engage bang on in politics. During the 1990s and onwards, the two camps approached each other, however. Development practitioners recognised the importance of institutions and politics while democracy supporters acknowledged that you cannot live from democracy alone.

Nevertheless, there is a long-standing underlying debate about the relationship between democracy and economic development. Whereas it is a common official view that "all good things go together", not least in the academic literature some argue that a "healthy dose of authoritarianism" is necessary for economic development particularly in its early phases. Savings and investments have to be prioritised over consumption to stimulate industrialisation and productivity increases, and this is easier done if those in power do not have to cater to the needs of the population. On the other hand, the argument is that without democracy and an

accountable government there is no guarantee that capital will be allocated to productive use. Moreover, significant inequalities may produce unstable societies, which inhibit investments and growth. Both camps can easily find support in the real world. The democracy protagonists will say that no rich country is ruled by an authoritarian regime, and their counterparts will point to the incredible growth percentages in non-democratic East Asian countries.

Notwithstanding this debate, which is unlikely to reach a conclusion in the near future, it is to my mind difficult to detect a serious and vocal scepticism regarding democracy in contemporary official development cooperation. Yes, the World Bank's mandate prevents it from getting seriously involved in political matters. Yes, American aid may be stronger influenced by a focus on growth. Yes, international development cooperation is biased towards technical and bureaucratic approaches, and yes, some are understandably reluctant to call for elections in fragile countries as the very first thing after peace agreements or the fall of dictators. Still, the move towards institutional development, good governance and democratic values is so pervasive in European development cooperation, which accounts for more than 60% of total ODA, that, all in all, democracy and democratisation must be seen as strong notions in today's development cooperation.

Democratising Others

One thing is that democracy looms large as an objective in development cooperation; another is whether aid is a good tool to stimulate democratisation. As almost always, there is no clear answer. It depends on the context, on the nature of the support for democracy and on the character of the general cooperation. There are, however, fundamental dangers in the endeavour to democratise others.

One conclusion is that the introduction of formal democratic institutions is no guarantee for democratisation of a society. The democracy wave that affected many countries notably in Africa in the early 1990s has produced different systems formally democratic, but poorly rooted in society. In some countries, one party dominates the scene completely and the only political competition takes place within that party. Elections are regularly conducted, but without party political competition. In other countries, different parties compete at elections and alternate in power. However, the political differences between the parties are miniscule and they barely represent broad social interests in the population.

It is, therefore, increasingly recognised that democratic institutions are not sufficient to establish democracies. Democratic institutions may still be important in the long run as they do affect how politicians and voters act, but they do not democratise

a political system by themselves. Some suggest, accordingly, that development interventions including democracy support should "go with the grain" (Levy, 2010). This means that democracy support should take a point of departure in existing institutions and practices and not in idealised and typically Western ideas about what democratic institutions should look like. One should build on and try to develop those parts of the existing political system that have a democratic potential. By supporting such institutions and actors the hope is to pull the whole system in a democratic direction while preserving a match between formal institutions and informal practices.

Building Democracies

Another conclusion is that democracy support needs to pay attention to Hal Koch's ideas about democracy. Formal democratic institutions are important and legitimate in a Western context, but not necessarily so in non-Western countries. However, many social norms, religious or secular, in these countries speak to democracy as a way of living. Respect, tolerance and mutual understanding are just as widespread norms in non-Western countries as in Western, and they may constitute an important basis for building democratic political systems. CSO activities explaining people's rights, stimulating political debates and exchange, conducting advocacy, clarifying rules and procedures, monitoring rulers, etc. may all contribute to building democratic public practices on existing community norms and ideas. This is not something that produces quick, earth-shattering change, but there is amble evidence that CSOs can help marginalised social groups claim their rights and engage in political processes sometimes with remarkable results.

No matter whether one leans towards Alf Ross or Hal Koch, democratisation is an extremely complicated issue because it affects people's basic values and perceptions. A change of these is only possible if people themselves believe in the change. This is why democracy support is a completely different ball game compared to building health clinics, schools, etc. though these are by no means apolitical issues. And this is why the role of aid agencies, official or private, is all the more delicate when it comes to democratisation.

International development cooperation is organised along the lines of the gift economy. Aid providers decide independently whether, how much, to whom and under which conditions they want to give aid. Aid receivers receive. They have basically no influence on the terms of the trade. The consequences are twofold. First, the priorities in development cooperation are the result of domestic politics in donor countries and therefore very often unrelated to development needs. Secondly, development cooperation tends to strip the receivers of the responsibility for their own development.

These consequences are detrimental to development and although they may be tolerable in lack of better alternatives as long as development cooperation concentrates on infrastructure and the like, they are difficult to accept when it comes to people's core values.

Support the Existing Processes

Does this mean that development cooperation should abandon democracy support? In the contemporary world, this is not a realistic option for two reasons: First, aid providers are not ready to stay away from the issue, and secondly, many groups and organisations in poor societies fight for democracy with very little means. They should not be abandoned and this is why development cooperation – despite its significant limitations – may play a useful role in democratisation. It is, however, essential that foreign development practitioners are keenly aware that their task is to support already existing processes and actors pulling society in a democratic direction. There is no entrepreneurial role to play for them. Democratisation should be a natural process if it should produce a living democracy.

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Youth for Democracy

Meet Yahia & Judith

The first objective of Youth for Democracy conference was to bring together activists, to exchange ideas, experiences and knowledge. We managed to cross cultures, borders and continents to help create an international network between the activists and used these unique opportunity to let them empower each other. There were activists from the recent revolution in Serbia in 2000, from the ongoing revolution of Egypt and included activists who are currently struggling in countries such as Zimbabwe, Belarus, Venezuela and Sudan. It would go against the spirit of the conference and this book to not to give them a voice. In the following two case studies you will meet Yahia from Cairo, Egypt, where he studies for his B.Sc. degree in Applied Arts. He has worked to promote democracy, human rights, and women running for elections. Yahia is the founder and official spokesman of the Nubian Democratic Youth Union, which is an independent youth organization defending the rights of the Nubian people and minority groups in Egypt. The second activist is Judith, who is a human rights activist involved in projects that aim to promote democracy, freedom for oppressed groups, and leadership for young people in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, women s rights are very central in Judith s work. She has a Bachelor s degree in Sociology and Gender Development from the Women s University of Africa. To meet the other activists simply go to the conference website:
www.humanityinaction.org/youthfordemocracy

Yahia – From Egypt

My name is Yahia and I'm a 26 year old man. I'm a human rights activist: I'm involved in minorities, religions, ethnicity issues and I'm also interested in women rights. I'm leftist, Nubian blogger and a big fan of twitter.

Introduce the work your organization does
Nazra for Feminist Studies is a research organization focused on woman's rights; it is composed of young researchers and activists of both sexes. We aim at enhancing the involvement of young men and women in the gender debate in Egypt and the Middle East, believing firmly that women's rights represent an indivisible element of Human Rights on the one hand and of democracy on the other. We seek to let out a younger voice within the Human Rights and feminist movements in Egypt, opening a door for the participation of a new generation of activists and researchers.

Nazra takes into consideration the social context and societal pressures affecting the situation of women and their acquired rights. Nazra also takes great interest in the tremendous strain that

feminists and women's rights activists suffer. Therefore, we hope to develop theoretical frameworks for mechanisms of support and action that can help alleviate and, ultimately, eradicate such pressures. We invest special effort in studying and developing innovative methods of communication with regard to women's issues and the obstacles facing their advancement.

We invest special effort in studying and developing innovative methods of communication with regard to Women's issues and the obstacles facing their advancement.

Introduce the goals of your organization:
- Establishing and entrenching women's rights in Egypt and the Middle East through research of the factors that determine conditions for women.
- We are providing special interest to two factors that we find most important: legal organization and social variables.
- Enhancing the involvement of young men and women in the gender debate in Egypt and the Middle East.
- Letting out a younger voice within the Human Rights and feminist movements in Egypt, opening a door for the participation of a new generation of activists and researchers.

What is your motivation for your work?
I have always been concerned about marginalized groups and empowering them whether it be ethnic, gender or religious minorities that are aiming for equality and a diverse state – a civil diverse state will make Egypt a better place for all and that is my main motivation, and I believe that I will make the world better.

What thoughts and reasons did you have when choosing a non-violent path?

I do not believe that any change would ever be supported by the people if the change is built on violence as the first and only way of struggling. Any change should start by mobilizing people to protest and to fight for their rights, building their capacities so that they will be capable of fighting and reaching their goals and building a modern civil and democratic state.

How did you develop your nonviolent strategy?

Actually, at first I didn't realize that I was developing a strategy. I only felt that it was the right way to fight, to provide knowledge to people so that they can support you and so that they can give you the legitimacy to speak for them and to fight for their rights.

What is the key to staying nonviolent?

I don't think that there is a key to staying non-violent because (based on my experience) you may be forced to protect yourself by being violent; the key is never to start the violence yourself and never adopt it as a tool for fighting for your rights.

In your opinion, what limits are there when using a nonviolent strategy and is a non-violent approach always the right one?

My limit is when you're fighting an army, when all the tools and ways are blocked and when you have to really fight a violent fight to get your rights and freedom – but you still have to keep violence at a minimum level.

In your view, how can the message of nonviolent struggle gather more attention?

I think that people do want to live the change that they are trying to bring about or at least share in the making of a new era, and this will never happen if it all started with violence.

The west has focused much of its attention on how youth activist are playing a crucial part in the nonviolent movements; is this true?

That's true but still, we have to take into consideration that the youth is so easily fed up and that they can easily change their way of struggling if they found out that it's useless.

How do you think youth is best motivated to struggle for rights and democracy?

The youth has grown up in an oppressed atmosphere and also it is being ruled by a bunch of old dictators. They are not involved in the decision making that affect their lives and future. They are the group that is the most in need of democracy.

Judith Chiyangwa from Zimbabwe

My name is Judith; I am a 34 year old woman. I am a human rights activist involved in projects that promote democracy and leadership for young people in Zimbabwe. I am also involved in the true emancipation of the oppressed; especially the young girls/women through programs that seek to facilitate access to these freedoms.

Introduce the work your organization does

I am currently involved with two organizations: Casals & Associates: An organization that manages grants for the USAID in Zimbabwe of which the program focuses on transitional initiatives. The Girls Legacy: The Girls Legacy is a non-governmental organization, which seeks to build the capacity of young women and girls through leadership development and mentoring so that they can live empowered lives and become models and agents of change in their communities.

The organization achieves this through its three programs: the Scholarship Program, the Leadership Development Program and the Mentorship Program.

Introduce the goals of your organization:

- The Girls Legacy:
- To strengthen the capacity of young women and girls by providing resources to assist their education.
- To facilitate the empowerment of young women and girls so that they can become models and agents of change in their communities.
- To facilitate mentorship for girls and young women for continuity and sustainable development across generations at community, national, regional and international level.
- To facilitate an enabling environment for young women and girls to realize their full potential.
- To create spaces and platforms for young women and girls to engage in issues that affect their lives.

What is the motivation for your work?

Young women and girls have to be prepared for the human insecurities that continue to amass in Zimbabwe. On top of the list is poverty that has been enhanced by the political instability of the country; poverty leads to violence, HIV and AIDS. Young women make up 58% of HIV infections due to a combination of factors such as unequal power relations and the economic hardships that Zimbabwe is currently facing. All this must be seen in a context where girls are also still being discriminated through patriarchy, tradition, religion and male dominated dictatorship. However, as a process there is need for preparedness in benchmarking a sustainable transition of leadership and empowerment of the young people to their full development. My motivation is that I have gone through this process when growing up and realized the gaps. Women in Zimbabwe are the majority making up 52% of the population, and their participation especially in politics is evidenced in being coerced to political rallies and in voting. Their participation in taking leadership roles is limited as they are treated as second class citizens. If these women withdraw their participation, it basically means there is no political participation in Zimbabwe. Thus, it is eminent that the young people be informed of how they can participate in shaping their present and future.

What thoughts and reasons did you have when choosing a non-violent path?

The history of Zimbabwe has shown that every national process, whether it is political, social or economic is led by political leaders who use militarization as a strategy. The story of the liberation struggle still continues to be knocked into young people's heads, which translates to kill in order for you to get your freedom . Based on this, Zimbabweans have been exposed to viol ence that has been facilitat ed by the military. Civilians need to organize themselves using non-violence as a tool to show resistance towards the use of violence as a form of translating political or social change. The nonviolent path endorses tolerance, which allows communities to coexist.

How did you develop your nonviolent strategy?

I realized that advocates of nonviolence believe cooperation and consent are the roots of political power: all regimes, private and public institutions and the armed segments of society such as the military and police depend on compliance from citizens. The strategy of non-violence therefore was developed to undermine the power of rulers by encouraging people to withdraw their consent and cooperation on the issue of violence. In the current context of Zimbabwe, violence has resurfaced in high density areas and is being used as a tool of control; thus, withdrawal of consent and cooperation on unleashing violence to fellow citizens will undermine the retrogressive forces power to the people. This therefore becomes a philosophy and strategy for social change that rejects the use of violence as a political tool. In the program that we did, we focused on women as agents of change: in many struggles, women have been more tolerant, allowing diversity in opinions and still working together.

What is the key to staying non-violent?

I think the key to staying nonviolent is being tolerant and understanding that power lies with the people. This will in turn translate to coexistence of the human race.

What limits are there when using a non-violent strategy and is a nonviolent approach always the right one?

In as far as some of the work I have done, the limitations are largely on lack of knowledge from the communities on the various nonviolence methods that can be used as a strategy either for communication or passive resistance. For a community that has been exposed to a lot violence, there is need for massive training in understanding the non-violent strategy. I believe the nonviolent approach is the right approach especially for Zimbabwe at the present moment, as an alternative approach will give the retrogressive forces no grip in terms of fostering violence as we are faced with a referendum and elections.

Have you found inspiration from other non-violent movements or people?

I have learned from and been inspired by the Women in Liberia who did the "Pray the Devil to Hell" non-violent campaign as a means to oust Charles Taylor. I was also inspired by the Serbian revolution and had an opportunity to meet and work with the Bojan Boskovic, Rajko Boži and Vladan Joler from the Exit Foundation, who used music and social media as a strategy in ousting Slobodan Milosevic. I was also introduced by Vanessa Ortiz online to "In Woman's Hands", which supports women leadership in nonviolent movements.

The west has focused much of its attention on how youth activist are playing a crucial part in the nonviolent movements; is this true?

To a certain extend it is true. In the Zimbabwean context it is a bit different in the sense that there is a wide gap between the poor and rich. The majority of the poor is the youth who have no jobs and no source of income to proceed to tertiary institutions. This means that this group of people has become vulnerable and prone to be used as agents of violence. In such cases they "worship" a

master who gives instructions on operations. There is also a lack of knowledge among the youth on nonviolent strategies, which limits their response to being reactive. In this discourse, the young women are extremely invisible as the issue of human insecurities is still a major cause of concern in Zimbabwe. A small example is that during the 2008 violence, a lot of girls were raped by young men and where left pregnant or with HIV or both. Addressing such an issue becomes different when dealing with the mainstream, as those who are intimate to this issue are the girls and women. Recently, the youth has embarked on the use of social media as a way of engagement and this has offered an alternative in building and giving momentum to the nonviolent movement.

How do you think the youth is best motivated to struggle for rights and democracy?
Youth belongs to different tribes, which makes their needs and motivations different. Overall, I believe that if there is hope and a clear road to a democratic state, the youth can be motivated enough to move along that path. From the various groups that I have been involved in, one issue that was clear and that gave the youth the zeal to move forward was the idea of being consulted as plans for their future are being designed.

When mobilizing people do you use any kind of social media – Facebook, Twitter etc. – as tools for creating democratic awareness?
With the "Girls Legacy", the use of social media and especially Facebook has enhanced our work in reaching out to members, but also in tapping knowledge and creating a viral network that allows a flow of information. The feedback loop is visible as many of the outcomes are turned into action.

Do you feel as if the outside world cares and knows about the struggle you are having?
At this point, I think that the world does not care much because they are not aware of the struggle we are having. The media helps by facilitating a focus on what sells, like people killing each other during elections etc.

However, no media reports on the levels of poverty in Zimbabwe which are alarming; nor are the media dealing with how this will contribute to our future struggles. I believe it is important to understand the culture of Zimbabweans and assist in finding ways and strategies to conclude the transitions, which should give birth to a new democratic Zimbabwe.

The international society have been taken by surprise of recent developments when dealing with non-violent struggles – in your opinion, how does the international society best support nonviolent movements?
I think that the best way to support non-violent movements is to first understand the environment they are in and allow the communities to determine the particular strategy, they find plausible. There is a lot of healing that needs to happen, especially in the Zimbabwean context. Communities need to be exposed to processes of engagement, especially around parties that have been involved in conflict or dispute. There is also the issue of recourse to justice, particularly because one party suffered at the hands of another party. This becomes essential in creating conditions for durable solutions and a bit of stability. The other aspect that lacks and which can be enhanced, is telling the Zimbabwean story. A lot of documentation needs to be done in various forms and shared so that those in-country and outside can have a true idea of what Zimbabwe is.

HUMANITY IN ACTION

Humanity in Action (HIA) is an international organization that educates, inspires and connects a network of young leaders committed to protecting minorities and promoting human rights—in their own communities and around the world.

HIA has educated over **1,000 young leaders in their 20s and 30s** who now form a unique international network. It contributes in innovative ways to advance human rights and democratic freedoms.

HIA's **annual fellowship programs** bring together more than 100 European and American university students and young professionals each summer in **Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, and the United States** to discuss, learn and research in international groups. HIA Fellows meet leading experts and activists to study the Holocaust and contemporary challenges to minority rights. Fellows write **research-based articles** and develop **teaching tools** to share what they learned in their programs. HIA supports all Fellows financially for the duration of their programs, allowing for the merit-based selection of diverse applicants.

HIA also provides professional development opportunities. It maintains an international network of students, young professionals, established leaders, experts and partners for which it organizes a range of **educational and career opportunities,** including seminars, workshops, study trips, and fellowship positions at leading civic and political institutions, such as the European Parliament, U.S. Congress, and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. These opportunities encourage emerging leaders to develop their professional abilities and introduce established leaders to the ideas of the younger generation.

HIA's network of leaders is a valuable resource to policy-makers, diplomats, educators, business leaders, and civic-minded individuals and organizations. By the end of the decade, **HIA will connect over 2,500 professionals working in all sectors, on a range of critical issues, in countries around the world.**

HIA is a non-profit, non-partisan organization with governing and advisory Boards in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and the United States. HIA's international headquarters is in New York City. Major supporters of HIA have included the Ford Foundation, Mellon Foundation, the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ), the Dutch Ministry for Health, Welfare and Sport and the U.S. Department of State. Over 12 years, HIA has raised more than $12 million for its work.

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- **Aage og Johanne Louis Fonden**
- **Danidas Oplysningsbevilling (Danish Foreign Ministry)**
- **EU-Nævnet**
- **British Council**

Recommendations for Governments and Civil Society

Outcome Of "Youth for Democracy" Conference:

1. Non-violence action is more effective than violent action and more likely to lead to sustainable change and stable democracy.
Recommendation: Governments and civil society should promote research, education at all levels and especially at university level, awareness, financial support and advocacy on non-violent activism. The conference encourages the appointment of a special rapporteur at UN for nonviolent movements and that donor governments create opportunities for the funding and establishment of a specialized institute for the support of nonviolent movements in authoritarian regimes. Further, governments should improve access to visas and support of exiled individuals.

2. Spontaneous nonviolent campaigns without strong strategies and planning often fail.
Recommendation: Democratic activists and external supporters must ensure that commitment and grassroots spontaneity are combined with thorough strategic planning and dynamic tactical skills.

3. Planning for the day after the dictatorship ends is just as important as planning to end the dictatorship.
Recommendation: Governments and civil society should "stay on course" and strongly support democratic movements after regimes fall and the international spotlight goes away.

4. Nonviolent activists can learn from and be inspired by each other's struggles.
Recommendation: Governments should actively support the creation of platforms, where non-violent democratic movements can engage and civil society organizations should build strong networks of nonviolent activists, encourage knowledge exchange, support activist trainings, and finance the translation of activist tools, which can be made available for download free of charge**.**

5. Opposition moments cannot succeed without unity.
Recommendation: Governments and civil society should encourage different opposition stakeholders and political actors to unite around their similarities and to respect their differences within a uniting framework.

6. Independent media create the space for nonviolent movements to grow.
Recommendation: Governments and civil society should be strong advocates for a free press within authoritarian regimes and work to provide open access for international media.

7. Activists require safe and secure communication tools.
Recommendation: Civil society should provide anonymity for nonviolent activists through safe and untraceable tools online, and train activists in their use.

8. Social media can truly help build movements - but you can't click your way to democracy.
Recommendation: Civil society should not overestimate the power of social media. How to put social media to the best use in nonviolent struggles and educate the youth in the importance of organizing should be a topic of research.

9. Activists need to seek out what they want from their external partners - and not just take what their partners want to offer.
Recommendation: Governments and civil society need to find out what activists truly need by engaging in a continuing dialogue with activists.

10. Global solidarity matters to local nonviolent movements.
Recommendation: Civil society organizations that are not located in the country in question should demonstrate and broadcast their support for nonviolent movements. Governments should crack down on moral hypocrisies, i.e. national champion industries providing tools, technology and arms to oppressing regimes. The CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Charter, which is part of the UN Global Compact policy initiative for businesses, should be more widely acknowledged and adhered to.

These recommendations are the outcome of the Humanity in Action Denmark conference: Youth for Democracy - Learning from Nonviolent Struggles across the world. The recommendations were compiled through a dialogue between the conference's speakers, youth activists and the audience, October 29 2011 Copenhagen.

YOUTH for DEMOCRACY

HUMANITY IN ACTION