People Power Since 1980: Examining Reasons for its Spread, Success and Failure

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Abstract: People power has been increasingly used since 1980 to promote the third and fourth waves of democratization. Causes of this trend include the appropriateness of mass protest to resisting rigged elections, the declining success of guerrilla warfare and the role of global civil society. One key reason is the publicized success of people power, despite important failures. This article explores problems in defining success and failure, and then assesses three conditions for success highlighted in the civil resistance literature: broad popular support for the resistance, winning over some of the security services, and maintaining nonviolent discipline.

Keywords: Nonviolence, resistance, democratization
Gewaltlosigkeit, Widerstand, Demokratisierung

Unarmed resistance to repressive governments and occupying powers has a long history, even before Gandhi developed his strategy of 'satyagraha' in South Africa and during the Indian independence movement. But it has become much more common in recent decades for major popular movements to adopt nonviolent methods in order to secure fundamental political change. Since the overthrow of President Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines in 1986, the label often attached to these popular unarmed uprisings is 'people power'. People power is better understood than the term 'civil resistance' now often used in the specialized literature; and it is more appropriate than 'nonviolent resistance' to describe all the unarmed anti-regime movements since 1980. Whilst some movements have stressed nonviolence (for example the 1983-86 mainstream resistance, in which the Catholic Church was prominent, to the Marcos regime), others have included defensive violence (on the Tahrir Square, January 2011), minor force to occupy parliament and the TV building (Belgrade, October 2000), and throwing stones (as often in Palestinian protests).

This article begins with a brief survey of the dramatic rise in people power movements, especially since 1980 (Carter, Clark and Randle, 2013), and the relationship with waves of democratization. Secondly, it examines reasons for this development, both those which underlie pressures for democratization and those that specifically facilitate adoption of people power. Thirdly, it discusses possible difficulties in defining success and failure of these movements, with reference to longer-term outcomes. Finally, it considers briefly three of the major reasons suggested for success and failure of specific movements, including whether strict nonviolence helps to promote success. Success and failure are defined here in terms of the movement's political goals of gaining independence or overthrowing a regime. If a major movement of unarmed resistance turns into armed struggle, as in Syria 2011-12, this could be interpreted as a form of failure, not only in terms of the principle of nonviolence, but also because of the death toll and human rights abuses usually suffered by the civilian population. This issue is, however, outside the scope of this article.

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1. The Rise of People Power from 1980

The increasing number of people power movements is quite closely associated with what Samuel Huntington (1991) termed the third wave of democratization. He included three important West European states in this democratic transition: the fall of the Colonels in Greece in 1974, Spain's move to democracy after the death of Franco in 1975 and the Revolution of the Carnations in Portugal in 1974. Although significant unarmed popular resistance occurred in both Greece and Spain, these transitions to liberal democracy were not directly due to people power. The 1974 Portuguese revolution was triggered by a coup by young officers, although the military rebels immediately received major support from the civilian population, and Andrew Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash included it as a case study in their survey of civil resistance (2009: 144-61). One major example of people power outside Europe at the end of the 1970s was the 1977-79 movement in Iran that toppled the dictatorial regime of the Shah; but its success fairly soon led to an Islamic regime that was for a time even more ruthlessly repressive than that of the Shah – the so far unsuccessful Green Movement in 2009-10 against the stolen election for the presidency was an attempt to achieve rather greater democracy.

Therefore, the direct linkage between widespread examples of people power and the wave of democratization across Asia, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa really dates from 1980 – the year in which Solidarity in Poland arose. Some of the movements which achieved success in the 1980s and 1990s did of course have their roots in earlier forms of protest and dissent. The genesis of Solidarity, for example, can be traced back to the shipyard strikes of 1970 and 1976 and to the coming together of intellectuals and workers in KOR (Workers' Defence Committee) in 1976. But the focus here is on the culminating stages of popular unrest.

People power protests after 2000 are often grouped into a fourth wave. In many cases, especially in Africa and former Soviet states, they have been an attempt to overthrow governments which came to power after 1989. These semi-authoritarian or hybrid regimes have ceded the appearance of multi-party democracy, but in reality maintain their power through rigged elections, media manipulation and selective repression.

2. Some Causal Factors

As the link between democratization and people power suggests, there are long-term historical trends promoting both: for example economic development and rising expectations, increasing educational levels, and social change undermining cultural acceptance of established autocratic rulers. A specifically political factor has been the rise of nationalism. This has prompted demands for self-rule, which has toppled previous empires, and in recent decades led to demands for secession from pre-existing nation states.

Belief in national independence, along with emphasis on human rights and international law, has been fostered by international organizations like the United Nations. In Europe the EU, the Council of Europe and to some extent OSCE have in addition promoted an ideal of multi-party electoral democracy. Since 1990 international and regional electoral monitoring has increasingly upheld standards for multiparty elections and sometimes aided oppositions to contest stolen elections.

The growth of people power requires, however, more specific explanations. Why have popular movements so frequently since 1980 rejected serious violence and turned to strikes, boycotts, occupation of squares or buildings, and huge demonstrations? The *first* reason is that there are strong moral and political arguments against violence, especially the use of arms, and these have influenced some movements adopting unarmed methods. East European theorists, for example Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Gyorgy Konrad and Vaclav Havel put forward such considerations when discussing modes of resistance (Schell, 2004: 190-204).

A *second* major factor is the linkage between people power and the goal of multi-party democracy. Many campaigns have focused on mobilizing an opposition to an autocratic leader in a forthcoming election, bringing out the vote, monitoring the electoral process for violations, and if necessary mounting huge protests to resist a 'stolen' election. The Philippines, where after a mounting campaign of protests, Cory Aquino defeated President Marcos at the polls in 1986, and popular resistance to his attempt to ignore the results forced him to leave the country, is a well known example. The mounting, student-led resistance in Serbia from 1997 to 2000 focused on defeating Slobodan Milosevic in the October 2000 president election. Regimes seeking legitimacy through plebiscites may also provide an opportunity for their opponents to organize around a no-vote, as in the 1988 referendum on whether to extend General Pinochet's tenure of the presidency in Chile. Where the opposition seeks to stress respect for the nonviolent methods of elections and to emphasize constitutional requirements, resort to violence, especially armed violence, would be wholly counterproductive.

But a *third* even more influential reason why resisters seeking revolutionary change have turned more often to unarmed struggle is that guerrilla tactics, widely used and celebrated by liberation struggles from the 1940s to the 1970s, have begun to seem less successful. Up to the 1970s it was common for movements to begin with unarmed protests, but when these seemed ineffective and/or were met with violent repression, to take up arms. This move from unarmed to armed resistance to guerrilla warfare still occurs, as in Kosovo in the later 1990s (Clark, 2000). But there is now also a tendency for resisters to move in the opposite direction: from relying on armed violence, where it proves costly in lives and ultimately ineffective, to embracing people power. An important example is East Timor, where the initial guerrilla struggle against Indonesian occupation in 1975 was largely superseded by a younger generation, who turned from 1988 to nonviolent protest and mobilizing international opinion, and achieved a referendum on independence in 1999. Activists in Kashmir, the Western Sahara and West Papua have also recently turned towards unarmed forms of resistance (for details see Carter, Clark and Randle, 2013).

The reduced success of guerrilla war today is partly due to the fact that the active political encouragement, training and weapons provided by Mao's China and the Soviet bloc declined with changing government policies inside China and the USSR – and ended altogether in 1990 in the case of the Soviet bloc. But the more crucial reason is that (despite some notable successes in the past for revolutionary guerrilla warfare) in many countries government military forces have been able to contain armed resistance by deploying superior military might – although this is less true where state structures are weak, as in parts of Africa. Failure of quite a few guerrilla campaigns to achieve their goals seems to validate Gene Sharp's claim that opting for armed violence is to choose the type of struggle in which "the oppressors nearly always have superiority" (2003: 4). Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan argue that the central reason why more unarmed than armed struggles have succeeded (a claim they take back through statistical analysis to 1900) is that nonviolent strategy maximizes the potential for involving almost all sections of the population against the regime, whereas guerrilla methods tend to exclude those who cannot bear arms (2011: 30-61).

People power has, *fourthly*, been supported by the rise of global civil society bodies publicizing human rights abuses and other forms of misgovernment, and operating in a framework of increasing emphasis on international law and human rights. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, for example, ensure widespread publicity for nonviolent resisters who suffer imprisonment or torture and lobby for diplomatic sanctions. Moreover, international organizations, in particular the UN, can act as forums for resistance movements. Internal resistance can also be supported by transnational solidarity actions inside the site of resistance (as for example in the Palestinian struggle, where Western activists opposed the bulldozing of Palestinian homes). More often supporters campaign in their own state, for example the East Timor Action Network which lobbied the US Congress and Administration to withdraw military and economic aid from the occupying Indonesian regime. (For a discussion of transnational solidarity see Clark, 2009: 11-18, 214-18). The media of global communication, including radio and television, but nowadays increasingly the internet and mobile phones can publicize what is happening (and often bypass government censorship) and be key to organization – though new technologies can be limited by lack of infrastructure (e.g. mobile phone masts) and by government counter-action. These factors assist individual movements. But communications

also play a central role in encouraging other movements, both in transmitting the fact of resistance in other countries and in providing models of protest to adopt. This was true in 1989-91 in the Soviet bloc and in the Arab uprisings of 2011.

Therefore, the *fifth* major element in the spread of unarmed resistance is, indeed, the power of example: Demonstrating that people power can be an inspiring and courageous form of resistance, and, above all, that it can succeed. The examples may be historical. Gandhi's campaigns have had a continuing resonance – especially since Richard Attenborough's 1982 film came out and was seen all around the world. But inspiration for resistance, and for the adoption of particular methods, is often more immediate and more regionally based. For instance, in the wave of popular protests demanding multi-party democracy in Sub-Saharan Africa from the late 1980s, Zambia and Malawi drew on the methods they had used earlier to gain independence, and in Francophone countries Benin led the way in its strikes and protests and model of constitutional change (Bratton and van de Waal, 1997: 97-127). The 'colour revolutions' since 2000, as well as unsuccessful campaigns to overthrow authoritarian governments in the former Soviet bloc, have been influenced by Serbian tactics and their success in ousting Milosevic (Bunce and Wolchik, 2011).

Power of example is not only provided by national campaigns, but also protests by sectors of society can inspire their counterparts elsewhere: Students have often imitated other students, and organized workers other trade unionists. The leader of the Chilean copper miners, for example, cited the inspiration of Solidarity (Ackerman and Duvall, 2000: 291). The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, demanding to know the fate of their lost children, have also been emulated in Chile, and in the Tiananmen Mothers in China. In addition, peace and environmentalist activists in the West have had an impact in the Soviet bloc: The human chain formed by 30,000 women at the Greenham Common Cruise missile base in December 1982 had its amazing counterpart in August 1989 in the two million strong, 600 kilometres long, Baltic Chain linking Tallinn to Vilnius to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

The influence of advocates and theorists of nonviolent action is a *sixth* factor. In recent decades they have deliberately promoted strategic advice and offered nonviolent training to participants in many movements (Dudouet, 2008:10-11). In Latin America individual radical Catholics organized in SERPAJ (Service for Peace and Justice), created in 1974, actively promoted nonviolent methods. In the Philippines the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and its national section, organized training sessions in nonviolent action before 1986 for nuns and monks and members of the Aquino family – although this movement also drew on the earlier national history of nonviolent protests (Zunes, 1999: 132-42). The First Intifada of 1987-1990 was encouraged by the Palestinian Center for the Study of Nonviolence set up in the West Bank in 1984 (King, 2007:140-1). During the Arab uprisings of 2011 there was widespread publicity about the role of Gene Sharp and his Albert Einstein Institution in promoting nonviolent strategy. Some Serbian student veterans of the anti-Milosevic campaign (now organized as CANVAS) have since advised campaigns against rigged elections in post-Soviet states and also in other parts of the world. It is debatable how important external advice has actually been in the evolution of movements. But promotion of nonviolent strategy has suggested the potential for success and provided general guidelines that movements can adapt to their own circumstances.

3. Classifying Success and Failure

Why people power has quite often succeeded, and what explains the success of these movements and the failure of others, are key questions for movement participants and theorists of unarmed resistance. But before, we need to consider the complexities of assessing success and failure of movements. There are two main methodological issues: the *first* is to reconstruct the connections between early failure and later success, and vice versa. For example, the literature on democratization sometimes distinguishes between the failure of the three month 1996-97 demonstrations in Belgrade to dislodge Milosevic and the success in 2000. Apart from the fact that the earlier protests did have some success in reversing the city elections that were rigged, they were also the first major expression of an opposition that soon after began to grow in strength, so the victory of 2000 could be seen as the culmination of the events of 1996.

The *second* methodological problem is to identify the exact impact of people power protests where transformation of the oppressive regimes involves a diverse set of instruments. In particular, the relationship between people power and elite negotiations can be ambiguous. Huntington's categories for types of transition to democracy (1991) distinguish between popular unarmed movements overthrowing a regime and negotiations, but the boundary in practice is obviously blurred. Widespread protest and noncooperation, perhaps backed by international pressures, can lead to intensive negotiations that grant the central goals of the opposition.

South Africa, where open negotiations took place from 1990-94 (principally between the South African government and the African National Congress), is an obvious example, and surely a success for internal resistance supplemented by external pressure that included economic boycotts and cultural and sporting isolation. But in some other transitions arising from elite negotiations the role of popular protest is more ambiguous.

Some of the ambiguities of success and failure are suggested by specific movements. Solidarity is a good example. It was an extremely impressive movement, encompassing not only the shipyards and industrial workers, but students, intellectuals and professionals, and most notably the small farmers. However, a mass independent union – even though it was careful not to challenge directly Communist Party rule – was in practice a major threat to the Soviet model. To avoid Soviet military action, General Woyciech Jaruzelski imposed martial law in December 1981, imprisoned many activists, and forced Solidarity underground. For the next few years Solidarity developed a network of local organizations and forms of indirect resistance, but it seemed to have failed. However, in

the changing political climate created by Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika and foreign policy of active detente, Solidarity was able to re-emerge, negotiate with the regime, and win resoundingly the semi-free parliamentary elections of June 1989. The changing stance of the Soviet government was clearly crucial. But Solidarity had laid the political groundwork (including influencing many senior members of the Polish Communist Party), and Solidarity's success certainly helped to precipitate the movements that destroyed the Soviet bloc.

An even more complex example is provided by Burma (Myanmar). The movement of 1988-90 to overthrow the military regime was categorized by Kurt Schock as a failure, and not surprisingly, given the harsh repression that ensued for the next two decades. But he does suggest that the development of civil society might create potential for change in the long term (2005: 91-8). The suppression of the brave uprising led by the monks and nuns in 2007 – precipitated by economic hardship, but with clear political implications – seemed to confirm this judgement. Yet, in 2011 the military regime, now headed at least nominally by a civilian, began to make significant concessions, release Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest and other restrictions, and allow the National League for Democracy to contest 48 parliamentary seats and win all but two of them. It can be objected that the Burmese regime is primarily influenced by a desire to improve relations with the West, in order to counter Chinese dominance. But the international economic and diplomatic sanctions have been prompted by protests demanding corporate disinvestment and by Western governments' reactions to the suppression of the democratic opposition and denial of human rights. It is also still questionable how far the regime is prepared to go towards democracy, and how it would react to a third people power movement. But in the long term the Burmese struggle for democracy may not be a failure.

Longer-term outcomes are not only relevant to assessing short-term failures or successes. Apparent success in overthrowing military rule or an autocracy may quite soon be reversed. An obvious current example is the Maldives, where a campaign from 2004-8 deposed an autocrat, who has made a comeback and begun to crush opposition in 2012. More generally, temporary success in toppling an autocrat does not necessarily translate into changing the autocratic and/or corrupt tendencies of political leaders or into fundamentally altering the political culture of a regime. These problems have been very evident in Georgia after the Rose Revolution of 2003 and Ukraine after the Orange Revolution of 2004-5. In Serbia, the dangerous nationalism that characterized Milosevic still has a powerful influence on Serbian politics. Moreover, a major regime change, as in South Africa, often does not bring about the social changes many activists hoped for, such as greater economic equality. These caveats about long-term success, important as they are, in many cases raise questions about political culture, general socio-economic conditions for successful democracy and the structural constraints of global capitalism. Therefore, in looking for reasons for success or failure, it is not unreasonable – as Sharon Nepstad argues – to start from the immediate outcomes of a campaign (2011: xiv). But it is worth asking whether any of the conditions for immediate victory may have a bearing on longer-term success as well.

4. Reasons for Success and Failure

One major question concerns the role of great powers that shape the international context and can either directly (and indirectly) aid people power opposition movements or assist the regime to block them. Since the reduction and then ending of cold war confrontation, the US government has been much more willing to support resistance to right-wing authoritarian regimes, for example in Chile in 1988. US administrations have also encouraged movements in Serbia (after 1996) and in the Colour Revolutions. Russia, especially under Putin, has sought to counteract Western influence and assisted pro-Russian regimes in the former Soviet bloc. But there is scope to debate how decisive such influence is. More generally, individual governments can sometimes help, but they can also make movements vulnerable to charges of acting on behalf of foreign interests (Carter, 2012: 166-70). Most analysts agree that external intervention cannot substitute for an effective internal movement.

Here, therefore, the focus is on the movement internally. There are important issues of strategic planning, organization and leadership that influence the likelihood of success. But three reasons put forward in much of the literature (for example Chenoweth and Stepan, 2011; Nepstad, 2011; Schock, 2005; and Sharp, 2005) are:

i) mobilizing support from most of the population;

ii) winning over sections of the armed forces and security services; and

iii) maintaining nonviolence.

i.) It is essential to gain the support of most of the people in order to achieve the strategic goal of undermining the regime's sources of power – for example its moral legitimacy (at home and abroad); its administrative efficiency and its ability to repress opposition. Mass support is needed for effective non-cooperation through boycotts, strikes or tax refusal. But it also enables a campaign to deploy a wide range of methods in order to build solidarity and morale or show defiance at attempts at repression – perhaps leaving a much smaller number to risk imprisonment or torture at earlier stages of the movement. At the final stage, widespread support is needed for a general strike or major prolonged demonstrations, and if there are constitutional referenda or elections, a majority is needed in the voting process. Some movements are luckier than others in having a people unified by ethnic and religious identity – as in Poland. But if there are serious cleavages it is important, if possible, to transcend them. Support from all classes, religious groups and ethnic groups (where there is ethnic diversity) is also likely to influence some members of the police, security services or armed forces if they can identify with some of the resisters.

ii.) Winning over troops and security personnel can be achieved by encouraging direct or less overt disobedience of orders, defections, or mutiny among the ranks – typical of a revolutionary situation. This is easier when many of the army are conscripts and/or when they have a sense of community

with the protesters. It can also be achieved through behind-the-scenes negotiations at various levels to ensure the commanders do not obey orders at a crucial juncture – as happened in Serbia in October 2000 and in Ukraine in 2004-5. Sometimes in a crisis, long-standing divisions between armed services may play a role, as in Chile in 1988 (widely used as an example of successful people power), when the air force and navy refused to allow Pinochet to ignore the results of the plebiscite that denied him a further period of office as president. The failure of the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests has been ascribed partly to the failure of the students (and the workers supporting them) to win over the troops ultimately mobilized to clear the Square and suppress the movement. The local garrisons and their commanders did appear reluctant to break through civilian cordons, even after the declaration of martial law – but the Party leadership may also have been hoping to avoid serious bloodshed at this point. The deployment of military units from other parts of China signaled the final crackdown.

iii.) Sharp has stressed the strategic importance of maintaining nonviolent discipline for several reasons, including winning over troops (2005: 390-4). Nepstad links the failure of the Tiananmen students to gain sympathy from the soldiers partly to some violent incidents in the final days that suggested the situation was out of control (2011: 36). Certainly, courageous resistance linked to disciplined nonviolence may sway troops. The nuns and demonstrators calmly facing tanks in the Philippines in 1986 are a good example. But military personnel may also be persuaded to switch sides where there is not a commitment to strict nonviolence and protests sometimes erupt into rioting. An example within our time frame is Indonesia 1998, where Vincent Boudreau records that some sections of the military began to support the students (2004: 234). Disaffection from the regime and sympathy for the aims of demonstrators, as well as the behaviour of protesters, clearly come into the equation.

Maintaining nonviolent discipline is, however, important for other reasons: It may induce sympathy among undecided sections of the internal population and gain international legitimacy for the protesters. The backfire-effect of harsh repression (Martin, 2007) is much more likely if it does not appear to be provoked or justified by violence. The tendency of regimes to try to provoke violence (or to use security services to give the impression of serious rioting by the protesters) indicates that it tends to validate their own brutal repression.

Do the three conditions for immediate success very sketchily outlined above also impinge on the prospect of longer-term success? The *first* requirement for widespread support from all (or almost all) sections of the community clearly does have longer-term implications. Even if the resistance achieves immediate victory, if society was seriously divided (as for example in Ukraine in 2004) the pendulum may swing back. If religious or ethnic divisions can be superseded during a struggle, there may be more hope that these communities can coexist in a multi-party context. The *second* requirement of winning over at least sections of the military may also reduce the danger of a military coup against a newly established regime. The *third* condition, maintaining nonviolent discipline and avoiding sabotage and riots, may sometimes increase the likelihood of some previous opponents being converted. In the longer term it may set a precedent for the forms of protest adopted in the future, and thus influence the political culture.

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Gütekraft: Grundlage der Arbeit für Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit und Menschlichkeit

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Abstract: With the term 'goodness-force' an ideal typical model is presented. It is based on different approaches developed and successfully implemented by three protagonists: the Catholic Hildegard Goss-Mayr, the Hindu Mohandas K. Gandhi, and the atheist Bart de Ligt. The synthetized model is an attempt to describe the common core of the various traditions of nonviolence, namely the conception of how nonviolent action typically works. Three manifestations can be differentiated: goodness-force as a pattern of interaction, a concept for behavior, and a human potential. This concept can be practiced on six levels including steps of escalation. The chief elements of impact are action by committed individuals, 'contagion', and mass non-cooperation built on these two.

Keywords: ‚Goodness-force', Satyagraha, nonviolence, nonviolent action, civil conflict-management
Gütekraft, Satyagraha, Gewaltlosigkeit, gewaltfreie Aktion, zivile Konfliktbearbeitung

1. Einleitung

Als Mohandas K. Gandhi das Kunstwort *Satyagraha*[1] prägte, nahm er an, dass die Sache, um die es geht, so alt sei „wie die Menschheit" (Gandhi 1999, 9: 361). Dennoch sah er sich zu dieser begrifflichen Neuschöpfung veranlasst. Mit ihr überführte er auch eine uralte Praxis in ein elaboriertes Handlungskonzept zum Abbau gesellschaftlicher und politischer Missstände, mit dem er vier Jahrzehnte öffentlich experimentierte.

Satyagraha begann am 11. September 1906 (Gandhi 1999, 34: 87): Zusammen mit Gandhi verpflichteten sich 3.000 Inder im Johannesburger Theater feierlich, die gegen die indische Minderheit gerichtete rassistische Gesetzgebung in Südafrika nicht länger hinzunehmen und für ihre Abschaffung notfalls ihr Leben einzusetzen.[2] Ihnen gegenüber stand die geballte Macht des Regierungschefs General Jan Christiaan Smuts. Bei ihren vielfältigen Aktionen zivilen Ungehorsams (z.B. Verbrennung von Pässen) hatten die engagierten Inder und Inderinnen in der Folge schwer unter dem Einsatz des staatlichen Zwangsapparats zu leiden: Tausende kamen in Gefängnisse, es gab Tote und Verletzte. Doch nach acht Jahren erwies sich Satyagraha als stärker: Die Gesetze wurden zurückgenommen.[3] Damit war die Grundlage für weitere Anwendungen dieser Streitkunst geschaffen. Dazu gehörte auch der weltberühmte Salzmarsch in Indien 1930, der das Ende der englischen Kolonialherrschaft einläutete.

Im Englischen gab Gandhi Satyagraha meist als *non-violence* wieder, was zu den deutschen Bezeichnungen ‚Gewaltfreiheit' oder ‚Gewaltlosigkeit' führte. Bei ‚non-violence' handelt es sich aber genau genommen um die Übersetzung eines anderen indischen Begriffs mit Jahrtausende alter Tradition: *Ahimsa*, Nicht-Gewalt. Mit ihr sah Gandhi Satyagraha sachlich zwar eng verbunden. Das Wort ‚non-violence' erwies sich aber dennoch als irreführend. Denn die verneinenden Bezeichnungen vermögen die indische Tradition nicht angemessen abzubilden. Gandhi selbst legte besonderen Wert auf den Aspekt der Kraft. Deshalb sprach er häufiger auch von „love-force", „truth-force" und „soul-force".[4] ‚Gewaltlos' oder ‚gewaltfrei' suggeriert in der westlichen Welt jedoch das Gegenteil. Dort lässt es eher an Schwäche denken: an die Verneinung von etwas, das als stark gilt (Gewalt). Gandhis Verständnis verkehrt sich mithin in sein Gegenteil.

Allerdings gab es auch im westlichen Sprachraum Versuche, die Bedeutung von Satyagraha angemessener wiederzugeben: „Festhalten an der Wahrheit" (Sternstein 2008: 59) ist zwar nicht falsch, bleibt aber ebenfalls missverständlich. *Satya* be-

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1 Sprich: Satjagrah (zweite Silbe lang).

2 Vgl. Arnold 2011a.

3 Vgl. Tendulkar 1961-1963, Vol. 1: 149; Gandhi 1972.

4 Siehe Wörterstatistik in http://wp.martin-arnold.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/2011-1030.-G%C3%BCtekraft-Gesamtstudie_002.pdf, ab S. 520. Stand: 29.3.2013.