

SPAN1131 Epiphany Term. Western Sahara Seminar 1: Understanding nonviolent strategy

Before the seminar

Please read:

Stephan, Maria J., and Mundy, Jacob. "A Battlefield Transformed: From Guerrilla Resistance to Mass Non-Violent Struggle in Western Sahara." *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 8, no. 3 (2006): 1-32. Available at <http://jmss.org/jmss/index.php/jmss/article/view/132/148> [accessed 19 December 2016].

You will also need to refer to the following readings (which you will have already read for the lecture) for this seminar:

Merriman, Hardy. "Theory and Dynamics of Nonviolent Action." In *Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East*, edited by Maria J. Stephan, 17-29. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Available on DUO.

Chapter 14 of Sharp, Gene. *How Nonviolent Struggle Works*. East Boston: The Albert Einstein Institute, 2013. Available at <http://www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/How-Nonviolent-Struggle-Works.pdf> [accessed 19 December 2016].

Please write brief notes in response to the following questions:

- 1) How does nonviolent resistance serve to lessen the effectiveness of one of an authoritarian regime's key sources of power (sanctions)?
- 2) How does internal group unity help to increase the effectiveness of nonviolent action?
- 3) Why have solidarity groups in Spain been especially active in favour of the Saharawi cause?

Please note down any questions about anything mentioned in the readings or lectures so far. We can go through these in the seminar.

During the seminar (to be discussed as a group)

- 4) Taking into account the lecture, the Stephan and Mundy article and what you recall from the *Life is Waiting* film (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QzRzm4uFxU>), which sources of power, pillars of support, mechanisms of change and tactics have been used by Saharawis in their struggle?

5) From what you have read (and watched) so far, can you envisage how culture (widely speaking) and the arts (especially poetry) might play a role within a nonviolent struggle against a foreign and violent occupying power?

6) Had you heard of Western Sahara before taking this course? Are there any indications as to why the conflict is so unknown in the Mundy article? From what you recall of the *Life is Waiting* film, what is the role of cultural production and the arts in raising awareness about the Western Sahara conflict?