A Study of 'Violence' and Related Words

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Q1: Does this sentence make sense, or is it odd?

The protest was somewhat violent.

Q2: Does this sentence make sense, or is it odd?

The protest was somewhat nonviolent.

Q3: Does this sentence make sense, or is it odd?

The verdict was somewhat unjust.

Q4: Does this sentence make sense, or is it odd?

The verdict was somewhat just.

Q5: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

We are never going to live in a conflict free world. But it is possible to live in a violence free world.

Lexicology of 'Violence' and Related Words

Definitions

Domains

Usage Trends

Antonymy

Some Conclusions

Some Definitions of 'Violence'

General Use and Etymology

Law

Academic (Peace Studies)

Activist

Definition: Dictionary.com

1. swift and intense force: the violence of a storm.

2. rough or injurious physical force, action, or treatment: to die by violence.

3. an unjust or unwarranted exertion of force or power, as against rights or laws: to take over a government by violence.

4. a violent act or proceeding

5. rough or immoderate vehemence, as of feeling or language: the violence of his hatred.

6. damage through distortion or unwarranted alteration: to do editorial violence to a text.

Etymology: Dictionary.com

See 'violent':

1300-50; Middle English < Latin violentus, equivalent to vi-, shortening (before a vowel) of base of vīs force, violence + -olentus, variant (after a vowel) of –ulentus ("full of")

Definition: Collins (British)

1. the exercise or an instance of physical force, usually effecting or intended to effect injuries, destruction, etc

2. powerful, untamed, or devastating force: the violence of the sea

3. great strength of feeling, as in language, etc; fervour

4. an unjust, unwarranted, or unlawful display of force, esp such as tends to overawe or intimidate

5. do violence to

(a) to inflict harm upon; damage or violate: they did violence to the prisoners

(b) to distort or twist the sense or intention of: the reporters did violence to my speech

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Etymology: Collins (British)

C13: via Old French from Latin violentia (impetuosity), from violentus (violent)

Definition: Merriam Webster

1 a : exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse (as in warfare effecting illegal entry into a house) *b* : an instance of violent treatment or procedure

2 : injury by or as if by distortion, infringement, or profanation : outrage

3 a : intense, turbulent, or furious and often destructive action or force *<the violence of the storm> b* : vehement feeling or expression : fervor; *also* : an instance of such action or feeling *c* : a clashing or jarring quality : discordance

4 : undue alteration (as of wording or sense in editing a text)

Online Etymology Dictionary

late 13c., "physical force used to inflict injury or damage," from Anglo-French and Old French violence (13c.), from Latin violentia "vehemence, impetuosity," from violentus "vehement, forcible," probably related to violare (see violation). Weakened sense of "improper treatment" is attested from the 1590s.

From Google Ngram

1916
violence to the language   0.0000008491%

violence to the language

Black's Law Dictionary

The term "violence" is synonymous with "physical force," and the two are used interchangeably, iu relation to assaults, by elementary writers on criminal law. *State v. Wells, 31 Conn. 212.*

U.S. Centers for Disease Control

Interpersonal violence is defined as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group or community that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.

Dahlberg LL, Krug EG. Violence: a global public health problem. In: Krug EG, Dahlberg LL, Mercy JA, Zwi AB, Lozano R, editors. *World report on violence and health*. Geneva (Switzerland): World Health Organization; 2002. p. 1-21.

from
http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/definitions.html

Peace Studies: Galtung (1969)

"As a point of departure, let us say that violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations."

violence = injustice (?)

Peace and Conflict Studies:
Nagler (2001)

"Violence as we mean the term is a human phenomenon. We are violent when we injure one another, or any part of the subtly connected biosphere – of life."

Sharp's Dictionary: Gene Sharp (2012)

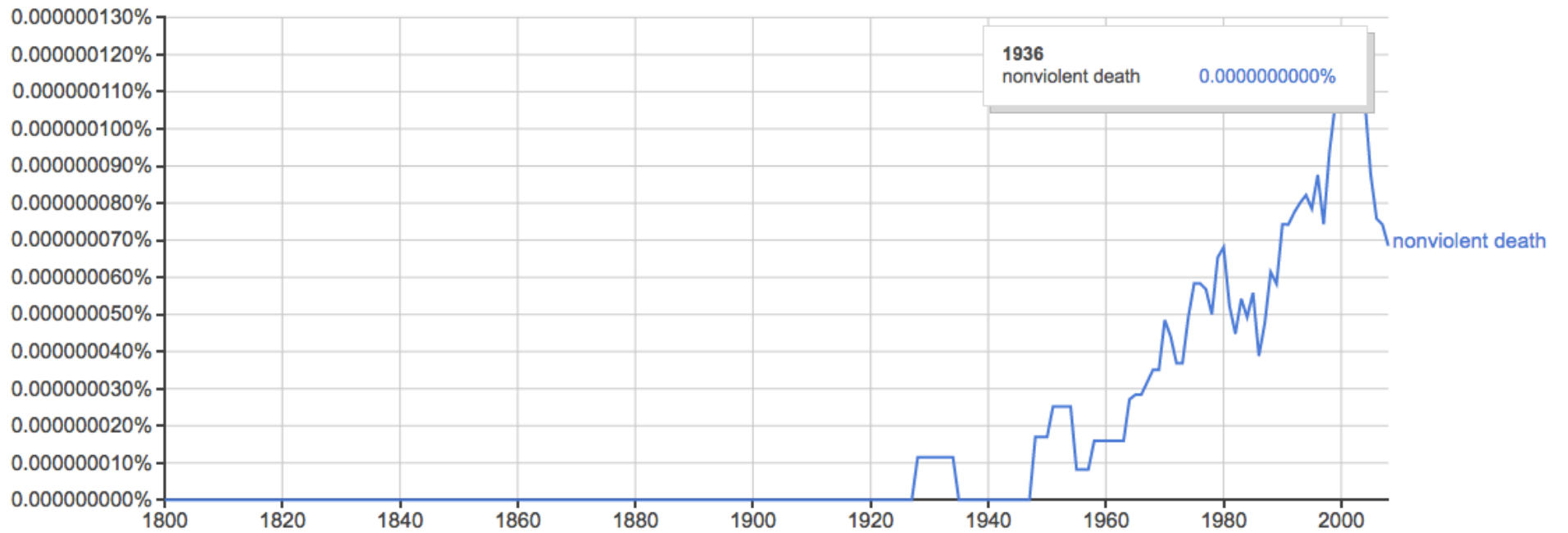"The direct infliction of physical injury or death on persons, by whatever means, or the threat to inflict such harm."

Activist: East Point Peace Academy

"Physical or emotional harm."

Activist: East Point Peace Academy

"Physical or emotional harm."

Does this seem odd at all?

Ahimsa =? Nonviolence

'Ahimsa' is the absence of an intention to do harm (Nagler, 2008)

Domains

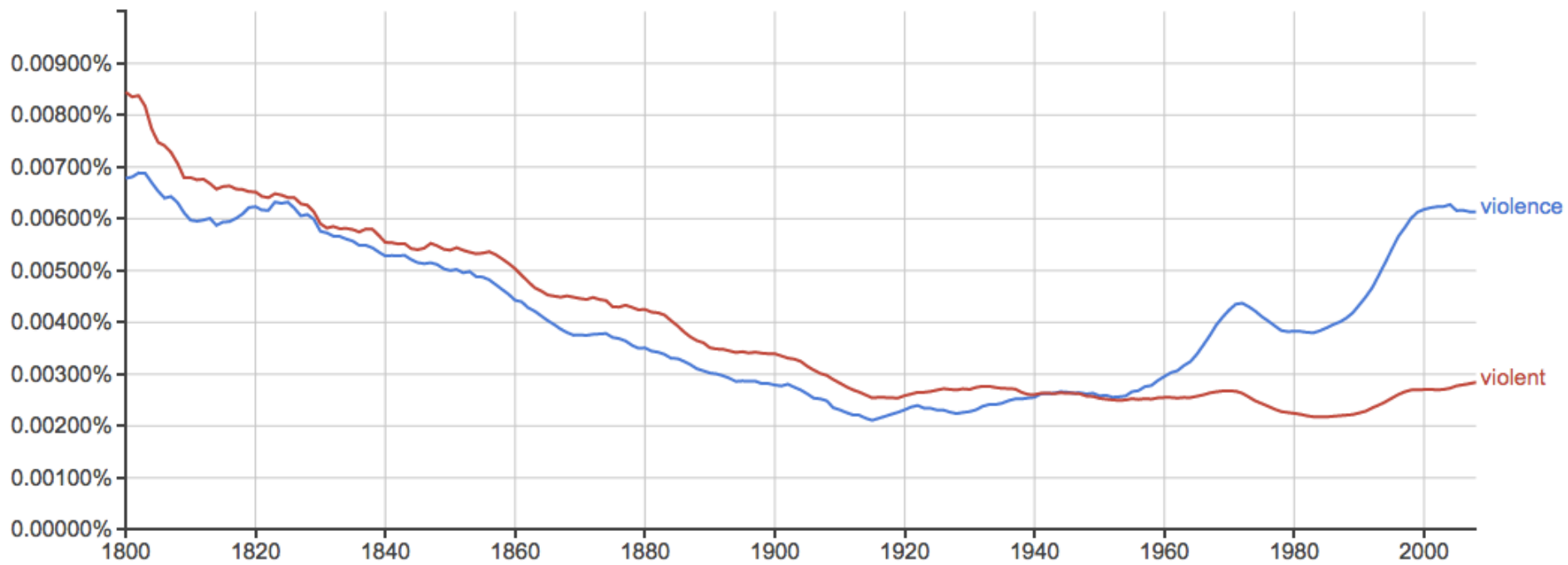Process: *forceful violent explosive*

Outcome: *harmful destructive disastrous*

Intent: *mean malign vicious*

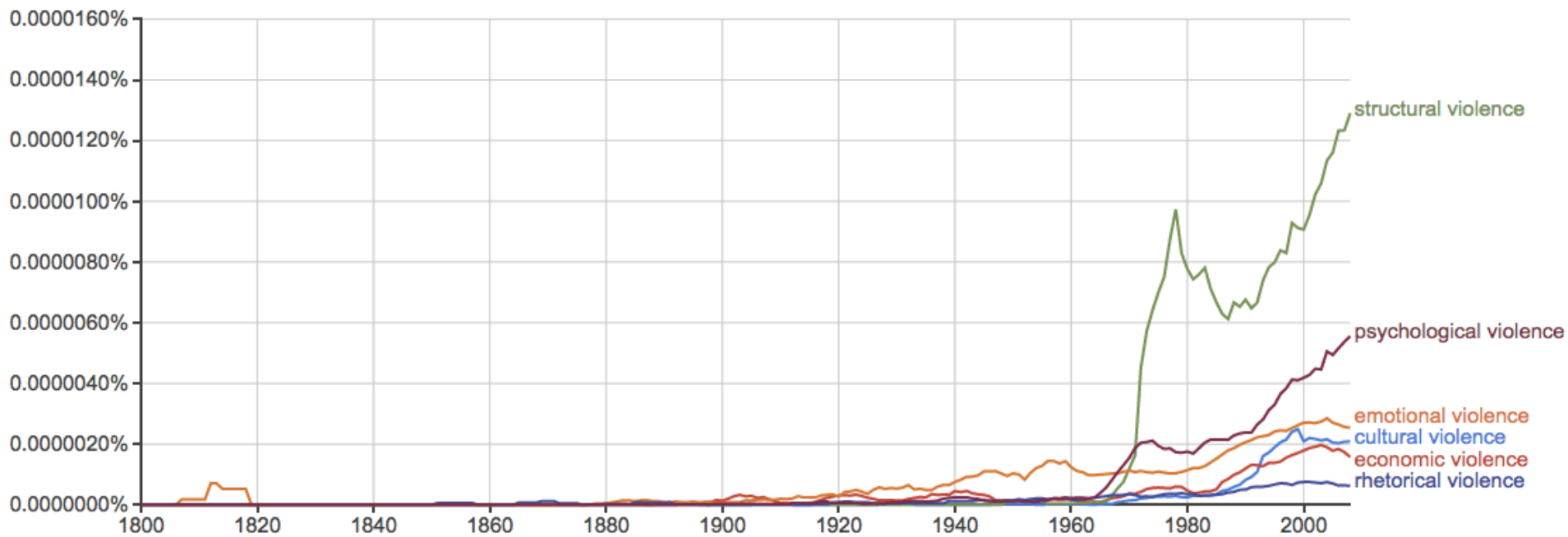Prospect: *hazardous dangerous perilous*

Stance: *threatening menacing terrorizing*

Usage Trends

0.0000160%											
0.0000140%											
0.0000120%										structural violence
0.0000100%										
0.0000080%										
0.0000060%										psychological violence
0.0000040%										
0.0000020%										emotional violence
										cultural violence
										economic violence
0.0000000%										rhetorical violence
	1800	1820	1840	1860	1880	1900	1920	1940	1960	1980	2000

Antonymy

Similar results for…

Partially

A bit of

A lot of

So it appears… 'Violence' and 'nonviolence' are ungraded antonyms.

Nagler's Law

NV + V = V

Nagler's Law

$$NV + V = V$$

$$NV + V - V = V - V$$

$$NV = V - V$$

$$NV = 0$$

Conclusions

'Violence' is a very broad term, with a definition that has expanded to include many forms of forceful action, harm, and injustice

Therefore, using the term 'violence' is not very specific. We may want to use more specific terms when they apply.

Conclusions (continued)

'Violence' and 'violent' are increasing in scope and (recently) usage

'Nonviolence' is an ungraded antonym of 'violence'

Therefore, the scope and space for 'nonviolence' is diminishing