Journal of Resistance Studies

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SUBMISSIONS

Authors should send all submissions and resubmissions to JRS to jorgen@resistance-journal.org.

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Some articles are dealt with by the editors immediately, but most are read by outside referees. For submissions that are sent to referees, we try to complete the evaluation process within three months.

As a general rule, JRS operates a double-blind peer review process in which the reviewer's name is withheld from the author and the author's name is withheld from the reviewer. Reviewers may at their own discretion opt to reveal their name to the author in their review, but our standard policy is for both identities to remain concealed.

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Comments column with research-based policy articles and comments to articles published in earlier issues of JRS.

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EDITORIAL

The Journal of Resistance Studies initiates collaborations with academic associations and activist communities

Jørgen Johansen, *JRS*

Stellan Vinthagen, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

There exist thousands of journals, and as a reader it is not easy to find the journals that write on topics you are really interested in and publish the kind of high quality work you want to read. At the same time, a key problem for an academic journal is how to become known, read and relevant for that quite particular audience of readers that would probably appreciate it, if only they knew it existed … Therefore, it is very much a matter of how to do the matching, like with dating … One way is to connect academic associations with relevant journals.

As JRS enters its sixth year of publication we are proud and happy to announce a collaboration with three important networks of academics and activists.

We have reached an agreement to offer the JRS to all members of *International Peace Research Association* (IPRA), the *European Peace Research Association* (EuPRA) and the *Peace and Justice Studies Association* (PJSA). After some initial discussions, we all saw the benefits of closer cooperation. There is a need for a high quality journal to publish academic texts, book reviews, comments, and discussions that the members of these three networks find relevant today.

All members will receive two e-issues of JRS free of charge during the first year. Our hope is that this experiment will result in more subscribers by individuals as well as institutions.

Of course, JRS will continue to be open to publish any texts that fit our Policy Statement, not only texts from members of these peace studies networks. We will continue to have a double blind peer review process for all articles, and we are committed to being open to a wide variety of topics within the still growing field of resistance studies.

In recent years, we have normally had a special issue for every second publication in the year, and we hope to maintain this tradition. We would welcome anyone who is interested in being guest editor(s) to present a proposal for a topic. Send your ideas to the editors and we will do our best to help with developing the topic, and make a work schedule for the process to turn the idea into a published journal.

Our special issue for 2021 will hopefully open a discussion about the relevance of traditional Peace and Conflict Studies in a rapidly changing world. In what way is this established field of social science helpful for understanding unarmed revolutions, 'nonviolent action' and the contemporary growth of unarmed protest movements?

As we have seen over the years, particularly in the critique of the 'liberal peace paradigm' (Richmond, Mac Ginty, and others), and the growth of interest in 'nonviolent action' (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011), alongside the strong emergence of unarmed protests movements in recent decades (e.g. the so-called 'Arab Spring', Occupy, the extraordinary protest wave of 2019, the Climate Justice Movement, etc.), there seems to be a need for new and more radical theoretical frameworks that help us to understand these movements. International relations has marginalized the pacifist perspectives in favor of more liberal and 'realistic' approaches, while revolution studies has historically relied on a more state-oriented approach with a special interest in armed insurgencies, while the strong field of social movement studies offers very little understanding of nonviolent action strategies. If we as researchers are interested in exploring the strengths and weaknesses of movements and developing avenues for new and creative strategies of resistance, then none of these conventional social science fields are very helpful. We at the JRS are interested in becoming more relevant for activists, organizers and resisters in their work to undermine different forms of domination. This is partly the reason why we, some 15 years ago, felt a need to participate in developing 'resistance studies'.

We invite all kinds of contributions to this special issue that can help us to move forward and better understand unarmed forms of resistance and its relations to forms of power.

JRS has also developed close cooperation with the online news site *Waging Nonviolence*, and we ask all our authors to write a shorter and more popularized version of their JRS-texts in order to be more accessible for the more activist oriented audience. These popular versions will be published

on the JRS site and sometimes also on Waging Nonviolence. Our hope is to create more interest among activists for theories and critical analyses of acts of resistance, while at the same time providing our more academic oriented readers a better understanding of, and more contacts with, the activist world. Cooperation that bridges across the often too high walls around university campuses will benefit all of us.

Our economic base is dependent on getting more paying subscribers, and we appreciate all help that we can get to ask libraries and institutions to subscribe. This is vital, since we have learnt that the most efficient way to get subscriptions is if someone that is employed or a student at the university asks their own library or institution for access to the JRS. Please contact us if you need help, advice or information about how to subscribe or get others to subscribe.

Thank you for being part of the resistance studies community. It is only by acting together that we can build critically relevant knowledge on how resistance and power are linked to social change. In a world filled with injustice and domination, our field is absolutely essential.

Literal Tricks of the Trade

The Possibilities and Contradictions of Swedish Physicians' Everyday Resistance in the Sickness Certification Process

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Abstract

*This article deals with the ways Swedish General practitioners (GPs) informally deal with the stricter standards of sickness certification and the implications of understanding these ways in terms of 'resistance.' In recent decades, procedural and bureaucratic changes within the Swedish sickness benefit system have curtailed physicians' clinical discretion with regards to the sickness benefit approval for patients. By both formal and informal means, the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (SSIA) has consolidated its power over the decision-making process. Despite widespread dissatisfaction among physicians with the current system, acts of open defiance do not seem to occur. However, as shown in a recent qualitative study, Swedish General practitioners have developed informal 'techniques' (ranging from simple exaggerations in the certificates to complex constructions of apparent objectivity) for intentionally circumventing the stricter sickness certification standards. Taking that study as a point of departure, this article will consider the use of techniques as a form of **everyday resistance**. Three dimensions of ambiguity arise which require further attention, namely: (1) the multiple motives and shifting target of resistance; (2) the complex blend of power and powerlessness which defines the situation of GPs and their resistance, and (3) the fundamental ambiguity of the resistant act of issuing sickness certificates tactically, as a particular mix of compliance and resistance.*

Introduction

Sickness benefit systems across various Western jurisdictions have witnessed fundamental reforms during the last couple of decades, effectively restricting access to sickness benefits. The effects of these reforms have been beautifully and painfully depicted in Ken Loach's feature film from 2016, *I, Daniel*

Blake. The film focuses on Daniel Blake, a carpenter nearing retirement who suffers a debilitating heart attack. Despite Blake's situation, the implementation of a 'Work Capability Assessment' deems Blake fit for work, which is in direct opposition to his physician's assessment that full time work would be detrimental to Blake's health. Dissatisfied with his capability assessment, Blake refuses to accept the situation laying down and resists, not only through explicit protest, but also by using subtle acts, such as sending out useless work applications to ensure eligibility for jobseeker's allowance. His resistance extends to the legal system as well, by appealing the decision determined by the *Work Capability Assessment*. The social worker assigned to Mr. Blake's case also finds ways to help Blake out of his predicament, and by doing so, puts herself at risk as a mediator between her client and the social security system of which she is representative.

I, Daniel Blake portrays Mr. Blake's physician as 'outraged' by the initial rejection of his claim. The absence of physician-led resistance in Loach's film underscores an important question. Why do we find countless examples of research addressing different forms of resistance among patients and social workers, yet so few (if any) that consider resistance practices in this context among physicians? Does that mean that physicians do not ever resist the reformed administration of social security systems? Or do physicians engage in resistance but in ways that are unrecognizable? If the latter is plausible, then how or at what level might resistance occur?

Because of circumstances peculiar to the healthcare sector and the nature of physicians' work (such as the fact that lives are at stake, which impedes the use of the labor strike weapon and other forms of disruptive resistance), cases of physician resistance may pass unnoticed and the physician might appear to 'offer little resistance' against the neoliberal curtailment of their clinical autonomy (Harrison and Dowswell, 2002: 208). Yet, when we look more closely at the sickness certification process that involves physicians, it seems to contain elements that are best understood in terms of (everyday) resistance against bureaucratic strictures that impinge the physicians' ability to properly provide optimal care for their patients. The fact that it is harder to engage in disruptive actions does not mean that resistance is impossible.

During 2017, I practiced as a medical intern at a primary care center for six months in Stockholm, Sweden. I realized that there is more to writing sickness certificates than mere technical skill. For my colleagues and I, the sickness certificate process was often experienced as adversarial, insofar as

claims made on behalf of sick patients sometimes failed to be approved by the *Swedish social insurance agency* (SSIA).[1] This was the rationale for setting out to explore the ways in which general practitioners (GPs) successfully appease the demands of the SSIA with experience-based knowledge that enables them to successfully navigate the increasingly stricter sickness certification protocols handed down by the SSIA. Using qualitative interviews with Swedish GPs, the collected and previously published data revealed eight 'techniques' used by physicians to ensure sickness certificate approval by the SSIA: exaggeration, quasi-quantification, omission, depersonalization of the patient voice, adjustment of disease progression, buzzwords, communication off the record and production of redundant somatic data (Shutzberg, 2019).[2] Based on these empirical findings, I will attempt to characterize how some Swedish GPs in primary health care 'resist' when completing sickness certificates on behalf of their patients.

Three levels of ambiguity will be the focal point of the analysis: The multiple motives and targets of this resistance; the peculiar mix of power and powerlessness that is a condition of possibility for this particular form of resistance; the ambiguous nature of the act as a combination of resistance and compliance. However, before proceeding to analyzing the use of techniques as a form of resistance, it is necessary to provide the reader with an account of how the situation arose. What were the reconfigurations of power relations that made it necessary for physicians to use these techniques?

How did we end up here? Reconfiguration of power relations and the curtailment of medical autonomy

Due to real and imagined scarcity of resources, through waves of governmental austerity measures, and because of ideological struggles, the last couple of decades have borne witness to fundamental reconfigurations of public administration in general, and social security systems and welfare delivery

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[1] The Swedish name of the Swedish social insurance agency is "Försäkringskassan".

[2] For a more detailed description of the different techniques (as well as my methodological approach), see Shutzberg, 2019. As the errand of this article is to develop the implications of understanding the use of the techniques as resistance, I will not be delving into a systematic descriptive exposition of them here. Nevertheless, the empirical findings will be revisited organically when it is relevant to do so, below.

in particular. Part of a global trend (interchangeably called 'Neoliberal,' 'New Public Management,' 'Managerialism'), affecting almost all welfare states of the Scandinavian countries, the Anglo-Saxon world, as well as some countries in continental Europe, the reforms of the publicly funded social security systems have entailed a number of things for its *clients*: Stricter eligibility criteria for 'disability' and 'sickness,' pressure to reintroduce unemployed 'sick persons' into the labor market, and rigorous control mechanisms to monitor patients with approved sickness benefits (Grover and Soldatic, 2012; Burström, 2015). On the level of public discourse, a person's inability to work has shifted from public health concern to concern with a person's unwillingness to work, with the implication that the latter reflects misuse of social benefit systems.[3] In addition to this discursive shift, an increased juridification and standardization of the way in which client cases are handled has extended institutional control over the professionals involved in case processing. Put simply, the work and professional discretion of healthcare workers (nurses and physicians), social service workers, and others involved with sickness and disability cases, are more tightly regulated than ever by performance indicators, scripts and routines, by organizational directives and governmental decrees (Broadbent and Laughlin, 2002; Beach, 2011; Hasselbladh and Bejeroth, 2017). Several Swedish studies have demonstrated that the 'possibility of expressing views and criticism has diminished in public organizations during the previous decade (Welander, 2017: 11). A comparative study has shown that doctors in general felt that their influence on management decisions, as well as (perceived) support from their employers, has diminished between 1992 and 2010 (Bejerot et al., 2011). There is little reason to doubt that this disenfranchisement has not dissipated, but only increased over the last decade.

For patients in need of economic assistance due to disability or sickness, physicians have clearly played a key role. Historically, the bureaucratic function of the treating physicians in a welfare state has been one of *gatekeeping*: That is, possessing and wielding the authority to approve or deny eligibility for sickness benefits. The physician was often caught in a dilemma, between the role of gatekeeper (representing the state) and the role of patient advocate (Wynne-Jones et al., 2007). From a governmental perspective, it has been claimed that (at least Swedish and British) physicians

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[3] For details on the discursive shift in a Swedish context, see Johnson, 2010. For similar processes in the UK, see McEnhill and Byrne, 2014.

too often extricated themselves from the dilemma by passively yielding to patient demands, thereby eschewing demands associated with cost reduction and acting as independent medical experts on behalf of insurance agencies (Arrelöv, Edlund and Goine, 2006; Hussey et al., 2003). The rising public costs of social insurance systems have therefore in part been attributed to the inability of physicians to curb them in accordance with governmental guidelines of austerity.

Consequently, one of several ways of offsetting the costs has been to curtail doctors' professional discretion in social insurance matters. This has been done through a partial transfer of the gatekeeping function, from physicians into the hands of the social insurance agencies. All welfare countries carrying out the transition have done so through a combination of both informal and formal measures, albeit with different emphases on one of the two poles. In Sweden, the SSIA has consolidated control over the sickness benefit system during the last decade mainly by informal means. It has done so under the guise of a higher certification standard with respect to both the quality and quantity of paperwork doctors must administer in the sickness certification process, exemplified by increased requests for supplemental information from physicians, or outright rejection of sickness certificates (Försäkringskassan, 2017). In the UK, the transfer of the gatekeeping function has been more formal. The Welfare Reform Act in 2007 and the institution of the *Work Capability Assessment* has legally transferred decision of eligibility from physicians to the state administrative body (Grover and Soldatic, 2012: 220; Litchfield, 2013). Outside of Sweden and the UK, similar changes have been put in motion in Norway and Australia (Krohne and Brage, 2007; Grover and Soldatic, 2012: 218).

Hence, austerity and the intimately related discourse of suspicion towards both sickness benefit claimants and the physicians who issue certificates, the relations of power between the stakeholders in social security systems have undeniably changed in favor of the social insurance agencies. For patients, enjoying benefits are conditioned by fulfilling specific obligations. For physicians, the stricter implementation of legal or quasi-legal decision processes has thus curtailed their relative professional autonomy and discretion.

But what does it mean to claim that the social insurance agency has become more powerful over time, *vis-à-vis* physicians? What kind of power is at stake here? It seems to be the power over decision-making, or what

Steven Lukes calls the first dimension of power (Lukes, 1974: 12-13). In social insurance matters, increased power means that the judgments of the social insurance agency simply weigh more, and the judgments of physicians weigh less. To some extent, the power over physicians can also be understood in terms of the so-called second dimension of power: Whereas the first dimension of power deals specifically with influence over decision-making, the second dimension deals with what Lukes calls 'nondecision-making,' that is, the capacity to withdraw a question from the negotiation table (Lukes, 1974: 18-19). The decision process regarding sickness benefits is made to appear like a non-decision for the physician. That is, the social insurance agency sets the agenda, which effectively excludes the possibility to issue sickness certificates for some patients. In terms of these two dimensions, the power of the social insurance agency over physicians and their autonomy is strictly negative and repressive: the power has pushed back on the sphere of medical judgment. These two dimensions do not focus on the degree to which the content of the medical sphere may have been altered by the recent discursive and administrative changes. What I mean by this is that power also potentially has a productive dimension, that entails an active cultivation of the 'thoughts and desires' and 'preferences' of dominated groups, aligning them to suit the interests of a dominating group (Lukes, 1974: 23). Translated to the clash between the regimes of economic rationality and medical judgments, it means that the changed discourse on sickness absence could very well have trickled down to the minds and judgments of doctors. The question that must be asked, then, is if doctors voluntarily adopt strict views on sickness benefit eligibility with conviction. Do they accept and adopt the logics of austerity as part and parcel of a purely medical practice?

It seems as if the short answer to that question is 'no.' From a long-term perspective, this third dimension of power should certainly be taken into consideration. However, the changes that have occurred during the last couple of years, or perhaps a decade, do not seem to have created any kind of substantial acceptance among doctors, particularly not among GPs. Between 2004 and 2017, the proportion of Swedish GPs who reported that their medical judgments were questioned by the SSIA rose from 10% to 57%. The number of GPs who experienced that the SSIA requested unnecessary corrections to the sickness certificates increased from 48% to 72% between 2012 and 2017. In 2017, 72% of surveyed GPs conveyed that the SSIA requested 'objective signs' of illness in cases where objective signs are notoriously difficult to identify (e.g. psychiatric disability, chronic

pain, etc.) (Alexanderson et al., 2018). These statistics suggest an increased polarization between the social insurance agency and GPs, and consequently, that the power over them (in this particular regard) is more repressive than it is productive. That is, the power of the SSIA does not seem to include control over GPs' (professional) thoughts, desires and preferences.

Resistance in the new landscape of social insurance systems

Where power is exerted, resistance should be expected. Not surprisingly, then, resistance mounted by various subordinated stakeholders in the social insurance system has been documented. From the point of view of clients (patients, welfare recipients, and so on), the juridification of the approval process has made room for resistance such that clients use the legal system to fight unfavorable decisions. Vicki Lens has shown how (both disabled and able-bodied) welfare clients seek legal assistance and 'play with the rules, using their insider knowledge of the system to resist the unreasonable and the arbitrary' (2007: 312). That social workers go beyond protocol to assist clients, despite risking repressive measures by management, has also gained attention in research.[4]

From the perspective of the physician, administrative attempts at curtailing their clinical autonomy within their 'natural habitat' (the clinic) have not been without friction. Physicians have been observed to deploy different strategies for resisting or circumventing the impact of neoliberalism, new public management and managerialism on different aspects of clinical life (Waring and Currie, 2009; Numerato, Salvatore and Fattore, 2012). However, most studies focus on different forms of non-compliance directed against *healthcare* management, i.e. the management structure *within* a hospital, primary care center and so on. The theoretical lens of resistance studies has not yet thrown any illuminating rays on the sickness certification practices of physicians. This is certainly understandable, as physicians are not formally a part of the bureaucratic apparatus of the social insurance agencies in the same way that they are an integral part of the healthcare organization. Insurance agencies wield their power over GPs from afar, and GPs counteract them from an equally long distance.

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[4] For a selection of the research concerning resistance in the line of social work, see Wallace and Pease, 2011: 138-139.

Current research on sickness certification behavior:
A privative and depoliticizing understanding of GPs

How, then, is the non-compliant behavior of physicians in the sickness certification process currently understood in scholarly literature? There is a strong tendency to understand doctors' deviating behavior in privative terms, often attributed to the individual physician's: lack of professionalism, viewed as an inability to integrate and balance his/her dual roles as medical expert and patient advocate (Swartling, 2008: 33); lack of 'textual competence' (Aarseth et al., 2017); lack of knowledge of insurance medicine (Norrmén et al., 2006); lack of negotiation skills for fending off patients seeking sickness benefits (Nilsen et al., 2015). Sometimes, researchers recognize intentional resistance in the behavior of doctors, but seldomly thematize it. For example, a textual analysis carried out by Aarseth et al. investigating medical certificates issued by (Norwegian) GPs, noticed that doctors occasionally conflate several different voices (the patient's voice, the voices of relatives, the doctor's own voice), so that 'there are no speaking subjects or references and thus the utterances have no explicit source' (Aarseth et al., 2017: 7). Aarseth et al. do mention that ambiguities in the certificates cannot be wholly explained by a lack of textual skill, and that they could possibly be ascribed to some kind of 'strategic writing', aimed at producing an '"objectivised" [...] authorial voice to justify disability benefit' (2017: 7). However, they soon revert to a privative description of the phenomenon by calling it a 'textual failure' and that GPs 'show little consciousness of the ethics of the medical certificate as a juridical document' (2017: 10).

The implicit common denominator in this field of research is a structurally functionalist, non-conflictual, understanding of the relation between GPs and the organizations they interface with, whereas the dynamics between GPs and patients are readily understood in conflictual terms. The privative and individualized modes of understanding deviation may be warranted but provide only a simplified and incomplete understanding of sickness certification practices. Recommendations based on this way of problematizing the field will consequently focus on counteracting the individual lack of skills or virtues of GPs through educational measures, or minimizing their influence on the sick-listing processes. The overall ideological effect of a privative understanding of sickness certification that does not adhere to public guidelines is that the behavior is de-politicized.

Intermezzo: The ethical problem of 'revealing' everyday resistance through research

In addition to the general ethical challenges of dealing with consent, anonymity and transparency, researching resistance brings a specific set of ethical questions to a head: What are the potential unintended effects of research on resistance? Can I as a researcher inadvertently betray the very same subject I am attempting to understand and perhaps support? What if researching the weapons of the weak becomes but another weapon in the arsenal of the strong? What if, in this concrete instance, 'revealing' the techniques of physicians will ultimately serve the interests of the social insurance agencies and fuel repressive measures? These are pressing questions to ask, especially when dealing with covert and present (in contrast to overt and historical) instances of resistance. Baaz, Lilja and Vinthagen have thematized this contradiction and the ethical challenges facing those who conduct research on resistance:

> Exposing hidden forms or mechanisms of resistance effectiveness could increase repression. There is an inherent risk that making this type of research public betrays the very logic of this type of resistance, simply by exposing that which tries to be hidden. (2018: ch. 8, para. 3)

Knowledge has the peculiar ability to wiggle out of ownership and be used for unintended purposes (such as quelling resistance), and there is really no absolute solution to that risk (other than not doing research, which is a very real possibility that should be considered). The way forward suggested by Baaz et al. is 'self-reflection, discussions and professional work by a community of researchers who are continuously discussing these issues' (2018: ch. 8, para. 5).

The sickness certification behavior of physicians is a relatively well-researched area. Also, as shown above, these behaviors have already been identified as problematic (from a managerial point of view). The state and the social insurance agency already worry that doctors are not doing what they are told. This article, as well as its descriptively oriented predecessor (Shutzberg, 2019), operates more through reframing the 'problem' and less through revealing something hitherto hidden. Reframing the non-compliant behavior of physicians in terms of resistance rather than incompetence, as behavior based on knowledge rather than ignorance, is less susceptible to reproducing status quo than merely 'revealing' hidden practices. This

study also draws attention to the concept of resistance and its necessary relationship to the concept of power. A positive exposition of sickness certification behavior with emphasis on resistance practices is consequently an exposition of the power structure that engenders resistance in the first place. Although this strategy of 'reframing' does not make the research completely immune from being co-opted and used for repressive purposes, it can contribute to raising awareness among physicians of the conditions that make their resistance inevitable. The hope is that awareness increases the chance of further organized mobilization towards a humane social insurance (and healthcare) system.

Use of techniques for having sickness certificates accepted

It can prove challenging for patients who present with incapacitating sickness or disability to claim disability benefits. The sickness certificate issued by the doctor can be questioned or rejected due to lack of 'objective signs' that serve to prove a patient is sick and unable to work. Likewise, it may be difficult to establish a coherent and convincing link between diagnosis, (objective) impairments and work disability. This can be notoriously difficult in real life clinical practice, with multiple and overlapping diagnoses, diffuse psychiatric disabilities and so on. Nevertheless, the SSIA demands that reality conforms to the regulative matrix rather than the other way around, if sickness benefits are to be granted. How do GPs handle these cases?

To address this question, I conducted a qualitative interview study with 20 Swedish GPs. Based on their responses, eight techniques were identified, particularly with respect to the way in which sickness certificates are written to ensure high rates of SSIA approval. A widespread conception among the interviewed GPs was that *quantifying* patient symptoms is crucial when issuing sickness certificates. Consequently, they feared that SSIA case workers risked missing the overall picture and deny patients sickness benefits, sometimes solely due to insufficient quantification. This problem was informally solved in mainly two ways: (1) *exaggeration* and (2) *quasi-quantification*. That is, either by exaggerating already existing quantities (such as how often a depressed patient contemplated suicide), or by inventing quantities (for example, the general inability to concentrate on menial tasks could be translated to an artificially exact duration of attention span: 'So I ask a bit about what they do during the days, "when do you wake

up?", "when do you eat breakfast?", "what do you do after that?" And then I transform it to minutes or hours or something like that'). GPs could also feel forced to (3) *omit information* about for example leisure activities and remaining work ability, fearing that such information could increase the risk of unfounded rejection of the sickness certificate. A slightly more complex way of dealing with the sickness certificate was through (4) *depersonalizing the voice of the patient*. Several GPs reported that the SSIA did not seem to be interested in the patient's own narrative because it was not considered sufficiently 'objective.' In response, anticipating the SSIA's disregard for the patient's voice, physicians circumvented this problem by objectivizing it in various ways. Some basic 'cosmetic' changes made to the written document could erase the presence of the patient:

> So you need to ask the patient, 'What is it you can't do?' You ask, but of course you don't write that you asked the patient, because it could lead to a rejection by the SSIA. I've seen this happen a number of times, that they [the SSIA] motivate it: 'Well, what the patient says doesn't mean a thing.'

Some of the GPs believed that both expected and unexpected disease progression could influence patients' eligibility for renewed sickness benefit. To prevent premature termination, GPs could decide to (5) *adjust the reported disease progression*, often by understating the rate of recovery when renewing sickness certificates. The use of standardized phrases or (6) *buzzwords* when writing sickness certificates was widely reported by the GPs. They did it reluctantly, worrying that it partially dissociated the words from what they are supposed to signify. One GP illustrated with using a particular phrase when describing her clinical findings in psychiatric patients:

> I write 'cognitively impaired', because I've learnt that they want to hear that particular phrase. It's not enough to write 'memory and concentration loss'; for some reason the word 'cognitive' must be used. It has become such a routine, you use a few keywords.

Not all techniques were limited to the written content of the certificate. Some GPs would also attempt to (7) *communicate off the record* with social insurance case workers in order to maximize the chance of a desired outcome. In the direct communication between GP and case worker, they felt things could be conveyed that cannot be adequately expressed in quasi-

legal language, such as the total impression and intuitive feel of patients' abilities and disabilities. Also, GPs could feel forced to (8) *produce redundant somatic data* beyond what was deemed medically motivated, just to satisfy the demand for 'objective signs.' In these cases, the balance between expediting the sickness certification process through medically unnecessary examinations and the potential damage of extensive medical examinations was difficult. For example, one GPs recounted that she felt compelled to carry out an extra radiological examination to produce unambiguous proof of a vertebral compression fracture, even though it would not change the medical handling or outcome in any way. The alternative, to risk rejection of sickness benefit claims, would have been much more psychologically and economically stressful for the patient.

The techniques were defined as informal and unsanctioned ways of maximizing the likelihood of sickness certificate acceptance by the SSIA. Because the techniques are intentionally used it would be inaccurate to simply view them as mistakes. Their use displayed a certain level of sophistication, and the doctors went to great lengths to (at least superficially) comply with imposed rules and standards in order to circumvent them. They are *skills* acquired over the course of working clinically. Many GPs reported that they developed the skills as they realized that issuing certificates without tactical considerations was afflicted with rejections of sickness benefit claims by patients who needed them. Hence, the GPs drew the conclusion that the outcome could be partially influenced by how the certificate was written (Shutzberg, 2019). The underlying motives for utilizing the techniques provided by the interviewed GPs in these cases could be separated into four categories. The techniques were used: (a) for mending the gap between the complex reality of real patients and the coarse concepts provided by the insurance agency; (b) in the best interest of the patient; (b) in defense of professional autonomy; (c) for freeing up time for 'real' work, by using the techniques as shortcuts to minimize paperwork. I will return to the significance of the motives below.

The techniques are heterogeneous, but the common denominator is that they are used against externally imposed standards of objectivity upon the profession. To be clear, the physicians do not oppose the function of objectivity *per se*, i.e. that there are things in a human body that can be measured and verified independently of the individual physician. However, objectivity poses a problem for physicians when utilized as an inflexible bureaucratic criterion for accepting or rejecting sickness benefits for patients

whose diseases are difficult to prove through other means than listening to subjective reporting by the patient. For instance, there are currently no lab tests nor radiological modalities that can prove or disprove that a patient is depressed. The SSIA's demand for objective findings, when so-called objective data is absent, effectively casts doubt on the medical judgment of physicians. This is where the use of techniques enters the scene. Their use aims to generate *quasi*-objectivity (for example when transforming the patient's narrative into an objective finding made in the examination room); others at *evading externally imposed standards of objectivity* (for example when persuading insurance agency caseworkers over the phone); a few techniques *produce objectivity at a price* (for example when referring a patient to a redundant radiological examination to secure 'objective findings' and tangible data, which unnecessarily puts the patient in harm's way due to radiation exposure) (Shutzberg, 2019).

Understanding sickness certification in terms of (everyday) resistance: Three levels of ambiguity

Perhaps several decades worth of resistance studies has obliterated the connotative equation of the word 'resistance' to large scale, organized, collective and often public mobilization against some superior force — at least in the minds of specialists in the field. For many, the word still elicits mental images along the lines of '[f]rench men and women of the resistance fighting the Nazi occupation,' or 'a lone man standing in front of a tank as it rolls onwards to Tiananmen Square' (Pile, 1997: 1). But the tactical writing of sickness certificate is not like setting up tents and resistance in a public square.

Yet, the use of techniques identified from the interviews appears to satisfy the two criteria in common for almost all implicit and explicit definitions of (everyday) resistance (according to Hollander and Einwohner, 2004: 538, and Johansson and Vinthagen, 2016: 418): Instances of resistance are (1) acts (as opposed to a thought, an attitude, or any other static internal attribute of the actor), and they (2) oppose something. Tactically designing sickness certificates involves actually issuing the certificate and are therefore acts, and when acting in this way, GPs also indirectly oppose and challenge the insurance agency's right to accept or reject patient claims for sickness benefits. However, they are more than generic oppositional acts. They differ from the large scale, organized, collective and public forms of mobilization

that also fit into this catch-all definition of resistance. Perceiving what doctors do in the sickness certification process as resistance is more in line with the works of Michel de Certeau, James Scott, Asef Bayat, Judith Butler and Antonio Negri, who all have significantly widened the conceptual breadth of resistance in the second half of the 20th century (Baaz, Lilja and Vinthagen, 2017: 16). The positive consequence is that it has made visible a plenitude of resistance where we once saw only submission and servitude, occasionally bracketed by bursts of rebellion and revolt that are 'few and far between' (Scott, 1985: xvi). In his seminal work, *Weapons of the Weak*, James Scott argues that '[t]he rare, heroic, and foredoomed gestures of a Nat Turner or a John Brown are simply not the places to look for the struggle between slaves and their owners. One must look rather at the constant, grinding conflict over work, food, autonomy, ritual—at everyday forms of resistance' (1985: xvi). Here Scott captures why it is crucial to examine how GPs handle the sickness certification process, if it is indeed the case that resistance is not exclusively grand gestures of defiance.

The use of techniques by GPs who issue sickness certificates is something done routinely, covertly and contains a considerable amount of actively feigned (and sometimes perhaps real) consent and compliance. Acts of traditional (explicit) resistance are usually not characterized by these traits.[5] Three intimately interconnected dimensions of ambiguity and contradictions present themselves as fundamental challenges to be worked through when applying this broadened concept of 'resistance' to what doctors do when they employ techniques while issuing sickness certificates. These dimensions, dealt with below, are multiple motives and a shifting target of resistance; the complex blend of power and powerlessness which defines the situation of the GP, the fundamental ambiguity of the resistant act of issuing sickness certificates tactically, as a particular mix of compliance and resistance.

Intent, multiple motives and the ambiguous target of resistance

As mentioned earlier, the physicians had several motives for utilizing the techniques when issuing sickness certificates. Often, they had several motives

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[5] I will abstain here from more precise contrastive definitions of traditional and everyday forms of resistance. Such definitions have a way of creating more problems than solutions, and stand in the way of understanding the actual case.

simultaneously. The motives could be analytically disentangled into four main categories: The techniques were used (a) for mending the gap between the complex reality of real patients and the coarse concepts provided by the insurance agency; (b) in the best interest of the patient; (c) in defense of professional autonomy; (d) for freeing up time for 'real' work, by using the techniques as shortcuts to minimize paperwork.

Firstly, it is questionable if acts that are driven solely by the first motive (a), provided above, (that is, just making do with whatever concepts the social insurance agency wants physicians to use), qualify as resistance at all. One GP explained his motive for using techniques when issuing sickness certificates in the following way:

> It is a feeling out process. One tries to meet both the patient and the insurance agency half-way, and make both parties satisfied, and try to use as much evidence-based medicine as possible in the process. But it's a balancing act that is difficult to manage.

This motive is difficult to reconcile with the idea that the GP has an intent to resist, given that nothing appears to be *opposed*. Rather than resistance, it seems more suitable to characterize it as *coping*. That said, the remaining motives do appear to entail opposition and conflict. But between which parties? Two of the four motives given by GPs (namely motive (b) that they use techniques when issuing sickness certificates for the wellbeing of their patients, and motive (c) that they do it to defend their medical/professional autonomy) frame the field as a dualistic conflict between the GP and the social insurance agency, even though three actors seem to be involved (because the patient is a part of it as well). It is either a matter of doctor versus insurance agency, or a form of 'proxy resistance' in which the doctor resists on behalf of (or in solidarity with) the patient (Lilja and Baaz, 2016). In both cases, the GP is the resisting subject and the scenarios are hardly different in kind. Interestingly, many GPs spoke of a fourth motive (d): mitigating the load of administrative paperwork. Getting caught up in a back and forth correspondence with the insurance agency can be quite time-consuming. GPs circumvented the hassle by issuing 'warped' certificates that fit the requirements of the insurance agency. The already overburdened working conditions at the clinics consequently means that, as one GP put it: 'there is simply no time for [paperwork]. You've already met the patient, and then [the insurance agency] asks you to provide them with additional information. It is supposed to be done on time we don't have.'

It seems as if the additional paperwork becomes a problem only when it is put in relation to the amount of administrative time set by the employers and the performance compensation models (which is often not enough). The question is then if GPs are resisting the insurance agency, or if they are resisting the conditions and pace of work set by their direct employers and the performance compensation models they implement (or perhaps both at the same time)? The number of actors expands to four: the GP, the patient, the insurance agency—and the employer. Skillfully shirking paperwork in a bureaucratic structure that operates at a distance is easier than contesting one's direct employer. Is this a case of what one might call *mediated resistance*, in the sense that resistance against the insurance agency is only a necessary intermediate target, with the end-goal of the resistance being the mitigation of the total burden of paperwork? Or should it rather be called *displaced resistance*, in the sense that doctors are merely coping with (and in the last instance, consenting to) the high pace of the labor process at the clinic/workplace, by resisting the additional workload imposed by the insurance agency? In the latter case, what may be viewed as resistance between one set of actors (doctor versus insurance agency), is simultaneously submission in terms of another set (doctor versus employer).

The topic of *intent* — a concept similar to, but not identical with, motive — has sparked a cluster of debates in resistance studies (Courpasson, 2016: 5-7; Hollander and Einwohner, 2004: 542-544). Is intent required for something to qualify as resistance, or is there indeed something that can be called 'unwitting resistance'? What makes resistance significant; is it the intent or the outcome? I claim that many have taken a stance in favor of one or the other side thereby reducing intent to a formal and dichotomous concept, that must either be present (e.g. Scott, 1985) or may be absent (e.g. Certeau, 1984/2002) in resistance. Absent from these discussions is a distinction between intent(ion) and motive. I will present why I believe the distinction is relevant. Although the colloquial uses of 'intention' and 'motive' often overlap, some philosophers have suggested that they be kept apart. G. E. M. Anscombe, for example, proposed the following to be a common philosophical position: 'A man's intention is what he aims at or chooses; his motive is what determines the aim or choice' (Anscombe, 2000: 18). In the context of resistance, it could be said that the 'what' that is chosen is resistance. In some of the cases, physicians deliberately decide to oppose the insurance agency's right to decide who is eligible for social benefits. Underlying all this are the motives, that is, the answer to 'why?' an

intended action is carried out. While intent in this sense is often one thing, the underlying motives for acting can be multiple. Twisting Anscombe's quote slightly for the purpose at hand, one could say that the GPs' intent to resist the sovereignty of the insurance agency with the use of techniques is overdetermined by several motives. To reiterate, the point of this distinction between intent and motive is that the *target* of the (intended) resistant act varies depending on motive. As many of the interviewed GPs noted, there may be several motives for one act of resistance, meaning that one act may affect several targets simultaneously.

The distinction between intention and motive is by no means sharp, and they are certainly not independent of each other. One could for example object that any of the so-called motives could just as well be called intentions. Yet, I think this is a useful distinction for approaching some of the ambiguities that present themselves when physicians circumvent the social insurance agency.

Positioned between power and subjugation: the condition of possibility of resistance

The multiplicity of motives seems to undo the possibility of a simple dualistic understanding of the lines of conflict. What initially appeared as a line of conflict between GP and insurance agency, is a complicated interplay between GP, patient, insurance agency and the GP's employer. Another property of the conflict that similarly challenges the simple character of the conflict is the fact that doctors can hardly be considered to be 'subaltern,' 'weak' or 'subordinates' in a global sense.

Certainly, the role of the doctor in deciding on eligibility for sickness benefits has weakened considerably, and the doctor's power is subordinated to the increasing power of the social insurance agency, as shown above. This process is a subset of a broader set of transformations of the nodes of power in medicine; power over health has partially diffused over a range of 'powerful actors from the state to drug companies to "other" health occupations' since the mid-20th century (Coburn, 2006: 441). Furthermore, both the form and content of medical labor are becoming increasingly proletarianized (in terms of form), through a higher share of doctors being employed by others, and (in terms of content) through a routinization and standardization of the labor process (McKinlay and Marceau, 2002). At the same time, doctors still wield considerable power over their patients, healthcare staff and other

individuals (such as individual caseworkers at insurance agencies), not to mention that the profession is still held in high regard by the public and by the healthcare organizations they work in (relative to other categories of staff).

To complicate things even further, work in the healthcare sector (similar to many other interpersonal occupations delivering public services) is characterized by the fact that the 'raw material' of the production process happens to be real existing humans, namely patients. As a result, this severely restricts the tools available for exercising power, since disruptive acts such as strikes, sabotage and similar forms of resistance may be legally and/or ethically difficult (or impossible) to carry out. Labor strikes in the healthcare sector, for example, are almost always partial, as a total strike could lead to serious harm to patients in need of healthcare services, thus making service disruption ethically difficult to justify (Thompson and Salmon, 2006).[6]

The use of all the techniques are to varying degrees evident of the fact that physicians are both the subject and object of exerted power. Even though the SSIA has rendered the physician relatively powerless in social insurance matters, their opinion and authority still matter. Above all the techniques I have addressed, what I call 'communication off the record' illustrates this. When requested by the SSIA to clarify sickness certification documents, some GPs may sometimes phone SSIA caseworkers directly in order to persuade them to accept the sickness certificate. It could take the form of asserting one's own medical authority, for example, using categorical statements about the state of the patient: 'Sometimes I notice that it helps to say, "there is no doubt about it",' said one GP. Occasionally, some GPs might remind the caseworker of their superior medical knowledge. This authoritarian form of persuasion works only because the doctor's authority in medical matters is acknowledged, if not by the SSIA as an institution, then at least by individual caseworkers working within the institution.

Hence, the relatively powerful role of the doctor (in terms of general social status as well as in relation to other groups, as delineated above) seems to be at odds with two fundamental assumptions which I take to be the standard position of resistance studies iterated by Scott (1985), namely that forms of everyday resistance are somehow reserved for those without formal

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[6] Even though it is probably a result of postponed elective medical interventions, it is an amusing side note that patient mortality rates seem to remain constant or even decrease when doctors strike (Cunningham et al., 2008).

or institutional power, and that everyday resistance is necessary when explicit and organized forms of contentious politics are difficult or impossible to pursue.[7] However, forms of everyday resistance do not seem to be exclusive to the absolutely powerless. Structurally superordinate agents such as pilots, white army men, and white power movement activists have been shown to engage in such infrapolitical (and at times extremely reactionary) activities as well (Ashcraft, 2005; Miller, 1997; Simi and Futrell, 2009). The second assumption made by Scott, which I contest, is that the dominated and dominant positions in a conflict are clearly distinguishable from one another (if not in a real sense, at least analytically). But in some cases of everyday resistance, this distinction is muddled because subordination in one given power structure is fought by means of superordination in another. For example, David Collinson's study of manual workers notes that humor is used as a way to resist managerial authority. Jokes and banter predominantly revolved around consolidating their masculine identities and ridiculing the perceived lack of masculinity of their superiors (1988). The use of humor in the English lorry-making factory elicits a double effect, both (micro-)emancipatory (in terms of class relations) and reproductive (in terms of patriarchy); or put in terms of the position of the joking working class men, the subordinate position in a class system was fought by means of patriarchal superiority.

Although physicians do not regularly fight their subordination to the SSIA by superordination in terms of gender, Collinson's case illustrates a mechanism that takes place when GPs resist SSIA's decisions. It is through their superordination in relation to the individual caseworkers (most often superordination in terms of medical authority, but occasionally in terms of gender as well) that they resist the SSIA as an institution. Occasionally, the communication off the record with individual caseworkers could take on this very form. One younger GP expressed some frustration with the way older, male colleagues made use of their power: 'I never fall into a bullying position, in the way that some old-mannish chief physicians can be, when they call [caseworkers] and say: "What do you mean, sweetie?"' In the cases the GPs

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[7] This first assumption is to some extent shared by other canonical literature in the field, such as Certeau, 1984/2002 (see especially xvii). Here, everyday resistance is presented as almost inversely proportional to the degree of marginality of the actor, symbolized by the ideal type of the "immigrant worker" who becomes even more creative resistance-wise, because he does not master language etc.

happened to be men, the question is whether the use of communication off the record is purely emancipatory and progressive, or if it might also reproduce a patriarchal order. The individual caseworker is, as it were, a chink in SSIA's institutional armor. Hence, resistance is rather enabled through the medical authority vested in GPs by the healthcare organization that is intertwined with, but distinct from, the insurance agency.

The point is that the specific form taken by GPs' resistance, as routine and covert, is not solely explained by their powerlessness, or that it is possible despite their power. Rather, it is because they do have some kind of power and influence over the sickness certification process to begin with, that they resort to such means.

Resistance through, underneath or within compliance? Active production of compliance and its relation to resistance

Parallel to the contradictory positions of the doctor, and the ambiguity of his or her relation to the social insurance agency, the act of issuing a sickness certificate is itself ambiguous and contradictory. To evade the regulatory conditions set by the insurance agency, GPs go to great lengths to *appear* as if they are closely adhering to these regulatory conditions. Not only do they prefer to do it secretly, but the short-term success for both GP and the patient is dependent on its secrecy. The secret character of this resistance is an acquaintance between strange bedfellows: *resistance* and *compliance*. One could easily make valid arguments both for why it fits into compliance rather than resistance, and vice versa. It may be tempting to treat some human actions as something that belong to one of these two categories: 'Is it resistance *or* compliance?', one might ask. Consequently, disappointment ensues when the phenomenon refuses to conform to the question. The result is that the analysis risks getting bogged down in frustrating antinomies. If it is indeed resistance, it cannot possibly be compliance; but if it is compliance, it cannot possibly be resistance. Dennis K. Mumby has suggested that this 'dichotomic' approach has produced research on opposite sides of the divide: either research that reduced some forms of everyday resistance to being complicit with the reproduction of a dominant order (in the last instance) or works that 'often romanticize employee efforts to resist organizational control' (Mumby, 2005: 21). Instead, he proposes a dialectical approach, less preoccupied with pigeonholing acts either as resistance or compliance, and

more interested in how resistance and compliance may co-exist 'dialectically.' Mumby is not alone in his attempt to defend the dialectic between resistance and compliance (see Ashcraft, 2005; Ybema and Horvers, 2017; Paulsen, 2014).[8] The claim that some activities can be interpreted simultaneously as both resistance *and* compliance does however not absolve research from investigating how they relate to each other in particular and concrete cases. Hence, depending on circumstance, the contradictory coexistence of resistance and compliance in one act takes on particular forms. I will present some possible logical relations between resistance and compliance below, and look where the practices of GPs might and might not fit.

Some activities constitute resistance merely by meticulously adhering to rules and regulations. An archetypal example of resistance *through* compliance is what has been called 'ca'canny,' 'foot-dragging' and 'work-to-rule.' By following all rules and regulations to the letter, workers can slow down production output. This can either be an end in itself, or employed in order to create leverage against employers, pressuring them to yield to workers' demands (see for example Scott, 1998: 310; Paulsen, 2014: 113). In these cases, whether intent is openly declared or not, whether it is a tactic implemented after other actions (such as traditional strikes) fail or not, the logical relation between compliance and resistance remains the same: in order to resist, one complies, and the compliant act is itself a constitutive element of the resistant act. Hence, the compliant element is put to work directly in the service of resistance. One could object against this view on work-to-rule by pointing out that workers historically resorted to work-to-rule actions when traditional strike action failed. Work-to-rule could then be understood as a way of dealing with an already existing and enforced compliance. The pioneers of union work-to-rule action, the *National Union of Dock Labourers*, for example, resorted to slowing down labor in Glasgow during the late 19th century as means for wage negotiation, only after they realized that their traditional strike actions were being crushed by the use of scab labor (Brown, 1977: 3-8). Even if the reason for adopting work-to-rule strategy is reactive, it nevertheless constitutes a case of compliance that is resistance in and of itself.

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[8] Mumby is, of course, not the first to point out the complicated interplay between resistance and control/compliance/consent. However, a systematic genealogy of the phenomenon lies beyond the scope of this article.

When doctors circumvent and resist the social insurance agency by tactically warping sickness certificates, the compliant element does not relate to resistance in the way mentioned above. The compliant element is neither identical to the resistant act, nor does compliance automatically work in the service of resistance. It more resembles a facade that enables resistant activities to continue undisturbed in the background. Hence, it is more appropriate to call it 'resistance underneath compliance,' which differentiates it from the first case of resistance through compliance. Workplace time theft provides many examples of this kind of covert resistance. Sometimes, time theft does not require a substantial active production of compliance: In its simplest case, avoiding work is just a matter of arriving late and/or leaving early, making personal telephone calls, taking long lunches and breaks, or excessively socializing with other workers. None of these activities necessarily require anything other than just doing them without notifying the boss. They are simply covert. However, many workplaces use strict regimes of 'surveillance and control' that may be trickier for workers to circumvent (Stevens and Lavin, 2007: 41). Making up a story about an illness to justify sick leave, or falsifying time sheets, for example, require something more than not telling the boss, but involves an active production of ostensible compliance. The French have a very fitting metaphor for this logical relationship between compliance and resistance: La perruque, 'the wig.' According to Michel de Certeau, 'La perruque is the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer' (1984/2002: 25). Compliance is a covering layer beneath which resistance can thrive. The question, then, is whether GPs' use of techniques is a form of resistance or autonomy, underneath a wig of actively produced compliance? The use of some techniques is. The most salient technique that qualifies as resistance underneath compliance is 'communication off the record.' The written sickness certificate itself is the compliant surface that functions as a public stamp of legitimacy, whereas the communication off the record works behind or underneath it, as an additional underlying layer of communication with, or influence on, individual caseworkers. Although the written sickness certificate itself is a precondition for the resistance, it is not identical to the resistant act.

While communication off the record is a technique that is distinct from the written sickness certificate itself—which is why it can be called resistance underneath compliance—this spatial metaphor of resistance underneath compliance fails to fully capture the logical relation between compliance and resistance in some of the other techniques employed within the actual

written sickness certificate. When exaggerating symptoms or clinical findings, or using certain buzzwords that the social insurance agency may like, or cunningly transforming the narrative of the patient into 'objective' clinical signs, there is no distinction to be made between a compliant surface and some underlying level of resistance. The resistance against the social insurance agency is, as it were, mounted from within the compliant surface itself. Using techniques when issuing sickness certificates is one single act, containing both compliant and resistant elements. How is resistance within compliance any different from resistance *through* compliance? In the case of resistance within compliance—which is what I am dealing with here—the compliant element is on a more equal footing with the resistant element. Neither is necessarily in the service of the other. This intimate interconnectedness of resistance and compliance is not a unique occurrence.

GPs' acts of resistance against the social insurance agency are not passive. They are not merely carried out through tacit consent, nor through empty lip service to the hegemonic ideological conviction that (waged) labor miraculously heals the sick, but through an active participation in producing documents that quantify, in minute details, a human life. Acts of resistance that depend heavily on the active construction of compliance (which does not unambiguously work in the service of resistance) have a limit. At some point, the construction of apparent compliance might turn into real compliance. Perhaps it is not even a point but something that happens parallel to the enactment of resistance. A non-dialectical approach would perhaps reduce it to compliance. There are in fact several solid arguments for calling the phenomenon compliance in the last instance, especially if the benchmark is centered on outcome. Asef Bayat, for example, points out that some activities that have been identified as resistance, such as household centered survival strategies among low-income Egyptians and use of informal networks in popular classes in Cairo, 'may actually contribute to the stability and legitimacy of the state' by 'shift[ing] some of [the state's] burdens of social welfare provision and responsibilities onto the individual citizens.' In fact, these activities may in some cases even be encouraged by the state apparatus, he claims. It is therefore more appropriate to call them 'coping strategies' rather than resistance (Bayat, 2000: 545). Bayat's position raises two questions that are pertinent to the matter at hand: (1) Can the systematic use of the techniques available to GPs in any way contribute to the stability and legitimacy of the social insurance agencies? (2) Does the

social insurance agency in any way encourage or benefit from the use of techniques?

Regarding the first question, there are two ways in which this could be the case: a) physicians willingly use overly positivistic biomedical terminology to describe complex medical states that do not admit to such a description. There is, for example, no reliable test (beyond checklists) to objectively prove the presence of a depressive disorder. Still, GPs do their best to do so as they are instructed by objectifying and quantifying their findings. The secrecy then turns into active complicity with an inappropriate operationalization of scientific terms; b) there is the risk that refusal and resistance (if identified as such by the actor) merely play a comforting role. Resistance could itself be a way of coping. It has been suggested by Alessia Contu that diluted forms of resistance, cleansed equally from risk as well as transformative rewards, can have such a psychological function:

> In this decaf resistance, we receive a payment in the form of the illusion that we are still having the thing (resistance). However, we do not have to bear the cost that is associated with having the thing itself, which is the danger of radically changing things as we know them. (Contu, 2008: 374)

This so-called 'decaf' resistance thereby defuses actual resistance. The activities characterized as 'decaf' resistance rather than real resistance are mainly acts of parody, irony, satire, and cynicism; acts that rely on and are understood in terms of discourse, subjectivity and identity (Mumby, 2005; Collinson, 2003). Does this criticism apply to tactically choosing how to write sickness certificates as well? Authoring a sickness certificate with the use of techniques is a discursive activity in a very literal sense, but less symbolic than that of parody, irony, satire and cynicism. The effects of authoring a certificate in a particular way have direct economic consequences for the patient, and the aggregated sum of them have a significant impact on the distribution of societal resources. Furthermore, it saves actual time for the doctor. It also restores a professional autonomy in a very 'real' sense. Yet, is it possible that the use of techniques gives GPs only a feeling of professional autonomy without giving them the actual thing? Possibly. But as shown above, there are several motives driving physicians to act, among which the defense of professional autonomy is but one. For the individual patient, being granted sickness benefits, when he or she could just as well have been refused, the

resistance does more than elicit a feeling—it influences the course of events in a very real sense.

Regarding the second question that Bayat imposes one to ask (whether the insurance agencies in any way encourage or benefit from the use of techniques), it has—to my knowledge at least—never been openly admitted by insurance agencies. However, the absence of open encouragement does not exclude the possibility that the Swedish social insurance agency may benefit from the ad hoc solutions to complex patient cases, nor does it exclude the possibility that they might implicitly encourage light cosmetic changes to sickness certificates. For example, Michael Lipsky notes that although the American criminal justice system publicly denounces police brutality and transgression of law in crime fighting, it:

> Allows police recruits to presume that they can approach with impunity young people hanging out in certain neighborhoods to see whether they are in possession of guns or drugs, even if they have no evident cause for suspicion other than the coincidence of age, race, and neighborhood. Young police officers learn that judges will back them up if the young people claim that the officers planted evidence or made up their own descriptions of the encounters. (Lipsky, 2010: xv)

Although the scenarios may appear as diametrically opposed (GPs defend their patients, while police oppress their 'clientele'), Lipsky's case raises some important and relevant points: The state apparatus allows some degree of professional discretion for their street-level bureaucrats, even when that discretion straddles (or at times violently transgresses) the border between legality and illegality. Furthermore, the street-level implementation (or non-implementation) of bureaucratic regulations (such as police brutality, but also physicians' resistance to the sickness certification process) can be publicly denounced and implicitly encouraged at the same time. Analogously then, what appears as resistance could be interpreted as the smoothing out of the rough edges of a social security system that, by and large, works according to its design and purpose. Hence, the so-called resistance is nothing but the weak contours of a human face artificially plastered onto a progressively stricter social insurance system. Nevertheless, there is no evidence to suggest that the SSIA encourages GPs to distort sickness certificates. In fact, as I have attempted to illustrate, social insurance agencies in welfare states actively push back against individual GPs.

Conclusion

What GPs do when they influence the decision process regarding sickness benefits can be understood in terms of everyday resistance. GPs resist the social insurance agency by employing subtle techniques within and beyond writing sickness certificates, in order to maximize the chance of having them accepted by the social insurance agency. These techniques are in the most literal sense 'tricks of the trade.' The resistance constituted by using techniques is fraught by ambiguities and contradictions: The target of resistance is not always clear-cut; the motives are not always altruistic and supererogatory; the distinction between resistance and compliance is not always simple. It is difficult to know whether it challenges the power relations between patients and professionals on one hand, and the social insurance agency's policies of austerity on the other. In short, everyday resistance is messy—at least in the form it has been observed to take among GPs in relation to the Swedish social insurance agency. The main point is this: Despite its ambiguities and contradictions, despite its dangerous proximity to consent and compliance, GPs who employ informal techniques to circumvent the social insurance agency are resisting. Despite its messy character, it is still what stands in between sick patients and the neoliberal juggernaut of austerity. This is what resistance looks like in the clinical everyday life of a Swedish GP. It is resistance adapted to the concrete circumstances and constraints of the healthcare sector, and more importantly to (and against) the recent wave of curtailed medical autonomy. There are certainly many other ways to resist in the healthcare sector when traditional modes of resistance are partially off the table. The use of techniques in the sickness certification process is but one example.

Although the interview material is limited to Swedish GPs in primary care, it is reasonable to assume that the findings are generalizable to other countries with similar publicly financed sickness benefit systems in which the state is a powerful stakeholder. This assumption is supported by earlier research on the similarities in sickness certification praxis in Norway and the UK (Aarseth et al., 2017; Hussey et al., 2004). Whether the findings are further generalizable to social insurance systems that are privately financed is an open question, but the lines of conflict are probably different. There is also a possibility that the findings are generalizable to the topic of resistance in the healthcare sector as a whole.

Furthermore, one needs to ask what has been gained by understanding what GPs do in terms of (everyday) resistance. As I see it, there are three advantages: Firstly, there is a *descriptive* advantage; what doctors do in the sickness certification process simply makes more sense when understood in terms of resistance. The common hypothesis that GPs 'fail' to issue sickness certificates in accordance to bureaucratic guidelines, and that they are not susceptible to educational measures because of personal ineptness, is more unlikely. Resistance, and the conflict of interests it presupposes, explains why this phenomenon subsists. Secondly, there is also what I would call an ethical advantage; recasting the behavior in terms of resistance counters the conception presented in scholarly literature that doctors do not comply because of moral shortcomings. Through resistance, which is situated in a complex set of power relations, the naive idea that doctors are simply immoral may be done away with. It is, as it were, an ethical defense through politicization. The third point is political; too often (and not only regarding the topic of sickness benefits), it is assumed that the main line of conflict runs in between the physician and patient. I hope to have shown that an equally constitutive (if not the main) line of conflict regarding the question of sickness benefits runs in between the bloc of patients and healthcare workers (whose interests converge) on the one hand, and a bureaucracy of austerity on the other.

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Beyond Hunger Strikes:
The Palestinian Prisoners' Movement and Everyday Resistance

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Abstract

Studies on prison-based resistance often focus, understandably, on the phenomenon of hunger strikes. However, most collective hunger strikes are preceded and complemented by other types of resistance, including the formation of alternative institutions and various forms of non-cooperation. These everyday acts of resistance, usually unpublicised, form a necessary foundation for the organisation of sustained hunger strikes, and are also ends in themselves in terms of maintaining prisoners' sense of dignity and frustrating the intended order of the prison authority. In this article, I use the Palestinian prisoners' movement as a case study to explore how prisoners' everyday acts of resistance, including the establishment of a 'counterorder' of parallel institutions, the development of a political education system, and day-to-day non-cooperation, are crucial for maintaining a sense of agency, gaining rights, and transforming power relations within, and at times, beyond the prison space. Using Johansson and Vinthagen's (2020, 2016) model of everyday resistance, the research demonstrates how extending the repertoire of prison-based tactics beyond hunger strikes facilitates the subversion of both the spatial and temporal boundaries of the prison to allow for a disruption of the intended power dynamics established by the state.

Introduction

Prisons often function as epicentres of protracted conflict, with states using mass incarceration and arbitrary detention to control dissent, and detainees simultaneously seeking to subvert the prison space to organise and resist (McEvoy 2001, Buntman 2003, Shwaikh 2018). While academic studies and media coverage understandably focus largely on hunger strikes in these contexts (Scanlan, Stoll, & Lumm 2008, Nashif 2008, Shwaikh 2018), hunger strikes represent just one tactic of prison-based resistance. Indeed, hunger strikes are usually preceded and complemented by less conspicuous

but equally influential forms of everyday resistance that establish an organisational foundation for hunger strikes and broader activism.

What does everyday resistance look like in the context of imprisonment in protracted conflict, and what are the impacts? In this article, I use Johansson and Vinthagen's (2020, 2016) model of everyday resistance to demonstrate how extending the repertoire of prison-based tactics beyond hunger strikes builds a foundation that facilitates the subversion of both the spatial and temporal boundaries of the prison to allow for a disruption of the power dynamics established by the state. Specifically, I use the Palestinian prisoners' movement as a case study to explore how prisoners' everyday acts of resistance, including the establishment of a 'counterorder' (Rosenfeld 2004) of parallel institutions, the development of a political education system, and day-to-day non-cooperation, in addition to hunger strikes, became essential for maintaining a sense of agency, gaining rights, and transforming power relations within, and at times, beyond the prisons.

Incarceration is widespread across Palestinian society,[1] regardless of geographic location, socioeconomic standing, or political affiliation. Approximately 20 percent of the Palestinian population (and close to 40 percent of the Palestinian male population) have been detained or imprisoned at least once (Addameer 2016), including an estimated 500-700 minors every year (DCI 2018). Some detainees have been in prison for decades, while others have been held for days or weeks at a time in detention, and many have been arrested on multiple occasions. Widespread incarceration began after the 1967 war, coinciding with the start of the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. From the early days of imprisonment however, Palestinian prisoners have mobilized to claim rights and improve conditions by engaging in acts of resistance that challenge the status quo of the prison system.

Crucially, I discuss everyday resistance as intentional tactics distinct from compliance; although compliance may be a veritable strategy for individual prisoners within and beyond the Palestinian context for 'getting by' (Allen 2008), or resisting for survival (Buntman 2003, Bosworth 1996), the tactics discussed here, though relatively restrained, were organised, deliberate, and collectively strategic. It should also be noted that the tactics

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[1] My use of the term "Palestinian society" in this context, and my references to "Palestine" throughout the article, refer to the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem.

discussed here were mostly conceived and coordinated by the prisoners themselves, rather than by external factions or political parties. Indeed, especially in the post-Oslo years, prisoners were not only resisting the Israeli prisons, but also what they often perceived as the complacency of their own parties, with prisoners organising 'political strikes' against the Palestinian Authority in 1995, 1998, and 2000. In these ways, prison resistance in Palestine was neither individually automatic nor externally orchestrated, but rather intentionally cultivated and developed by prisoners with activist backgrounds who managed to create opportunities for everyday resistance within the spatial and temporal confines of the prisons.

Using an oral history approach, the article is based on narrative interviews with former Palestinian prisoners, making their voices a central part of the research. I conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with former prisoners in the West Bank, as well as eight interviews with lawyers and staff members at human rights and prisoners support NGOs. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, I relied partially on snowball sampling, but I also intentionally sought out participants who had been imprisoned in different eras and in different prisons, as well as participants from different political parties and geographic areas of Palestine. I also conducted three semi-structured interviews with former members of Israel's security sector; the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet), the Israel Prison Service (IPS), and the intelligence branch of the Israeli Police, to better understand how authorities perceived different tactics and when they were most likely to negotiate. I used thematic coding to analyse the interviews, and I include quotes from the most representative interviews in this article, using first names or pseudonyms in most cases for confidentiality purposes. While interviews formed the core of the research, I also reviewed prisoners' letters and diaries in archives at the Nablus Public Library and the Abu Jihad Museum for Prisoner Movement Affairs at Al-Quds University in Abu Dis to confirm and supplement data from the interviews.

The article is organized as follows: First, I draw from civil resistance and social movement literature, especially Johansson and Vinthagen's (2020, 2016) model of everyday resistance, to establish the theoretical framework. Second, I discuss the repertoire of resistance that prisoners employed, including establishing a counterorder, developing a political education curriculum, and engaging in everyday acts of non-cooperation, as well as organizing hunger strikes. Third, I analyse how these strategies subverted traditional power relations, resulting in the affirmation of dignity and the

gradual claiming of rights within the prisons, and the extension of activism beyond the prisons. I conclude by discussing how prisons in protracted conflicts function as epicentres of everyday resistance and anchors for broader activism.

Theoretical Framework

This research situates prison-based resistance in the context of everyday resistance. James Scott (1985) states that, 'Where institutionalized politics is formal, overt, concerned with systematic, de jure change, everyday resistance is informal, often covert, and concerned largely with immediate, de facto gains' (xv;).   However, everyday acts of resistance can have a powerful transformative effect when accumulated over time (Norman 2010), in terms of both consciousness development and tactical organization. As Scott writes, 'such kinds of resistance are often the most significant and the most effective over the long run' (1985, xvi). In the context of prisons, however, it is helpful to extend beyond Scott's conceptualization of everyday resistance, which he defines as mostly individual, uncoordinated, and covert. Adnan (2007) for example notes that covert resistance and outward compliance often shift into open dissent or confrontation (even if falling short of outright rebellion or revolution). This understanding of everyday resistance, as gradual and unpublicized but still coordinated and confrontational, is especially useful for the prison context, where everyday resistance is both individual and collective, and while out of the public eye, still directly challenges authorities.

Further, in the prison context, it is crucial to recognise that 'power and resistance are involved in a complex interplay with one another' (Johannson and Vinthagen 2016, 420). On the one hand, prisons represent the epitome of Foucault's (1979) notion of disciplinary power, in which individuals are 'replaced by a multiplicity that can be numbered and supervised' (201). On the other hand, prisoner resistance underscores the relational nature of that power; as Gordon (2002) notes, 'individuals can resist the mechanisms of control in a world in which power is ubiquitous' (125). In other words, prisons are sites of both control and resistance in which power is constantly being (re)negotiated between prisoners and administrators; thus, everyday acts of resistance, while not as 'spectacular' as riots, protests, or even hunger strikes, are still intentional, coordinated, and confrontational.

Building on this concept of everyday resistance in the context of power relations, I situate this research using Johansson and Vinthagen's

(2020, 2016) framework, which is based on the assumptions that everyday resistance is a practice; it is historically and intersectionally entangled with power; and it is variable in different contexts (Johansson and Vinthagen 2016, 418). They thus propose a framework based on repertoires of everyday resistance, relationships of agents, spatialization, and temporalization of everyday resistance (419). I extend this framework by situating it within the prison context, noting the specific repertoires, power relationships, and spatial and temporal implications of prison-based resistance, especially in protracted conflicts.

However, as Hollander and Einwohner (2004) note, 'Resistance is defined not only by resister's perception of their own behaviour, but also by targets and/or others' recognition of and reaction to this behaviour' (548). I thus integrate Johansson and Vinthagen's framework with Hollander and Einwohner's (2004) typology of resistance, identifying three sets of actors: actors (or agents), targets, and observers; or, in the case of prison resistance, prisoners, prison authorities, and external networks, respectively. Focusing primarily on the repertoire dimension, I use the following framework for understanding Palestinian prison-based resistance, and everyday prison-based resistance more broadly:

TACTICS	ACTORS	EFFECTS
Counterorder (including education system)	Prisoners→Prisoners (Agents)	Subverting power dynamics: dignity, organisation, self (rather than state) discipline
Noncompliance	Prisoners→Authorities (Targets)	Gradual rights in prisons
Everyday resistance + hunger strikes	Prisoners→Authorities & External Networks (Observers)	Influencing broader resistance by linking activism to prison issue (Spatial-temporal dimension)

I discuss how prisoners employed a range of tactics, including the establishment of a counterorder (or alternative institutions), the development of a political education curriculum, and everyday acts of noncompliance, in addition to hunger strikes, to maintain their dignity, push for gradual rights, and subvert

the power dynamics in the prisons. Over time in protracted conflicts, the issue of imprisonment and prisoners' activismoften extendes beyond the immediate prison space to become a salient force in the broader struggle.

Repertoire

Palestinian prisoners employed a range of everyday resistance tactics. Tilly's concept of 'repertoires of contention' (Tilly 2004, McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly 2001), or the set of tools or actions available to a movement in a given context, is helpful for considering the use of different tactics within the prison context. Although repertoires emerge in relation to the opportunities or constraints imposed by the state or authorities, I adopt Johansson and Vinthagen's (2020) view that activists, including prisoners, use decisive, creative innovations (105) that are often proactive and not just reactive. In this section, I focus on key elements of everyday resistance used by prisoners, including the establishment of a counterorder, the development of an educational curriculum, and daily acts of noncompliance, in addition to hunger strikes. Together, these everyday tactics contributed to a sustained repertoire of prison-based activism that helped prisoners maintain a sense of dignity, contributed the gradual realisation of rights, and provided a foundation for hunger strikes and broader advocacy.

Organizing for Resistance: Establishing the Counterorder

Prisoners' resistance was grounded not in high-profile actions like hunger strikes, but in the development of a structural framework that organized daily life and enabled prisoners to assert agency over their time in prison. As Hafez, a prisoner from 1967 to 1985 recalled, 'We continued organizing and building ourselves, and our life built on this. We forced the Israeli authorities to give us our rights' (interview with author, 2012). Indeed, prison-based acts of resistance, and the gradual implementation of rights, would have been nearly impossible without the highly organized administrative system developed by prisoners in the late 1960s and early 1970s that proved integral to the relative successes of subsequent prison-based activism.

The establishment of alternative institutions, or the *nitham dakhili* ('internal organization'), by prisoners was a form of everyday resistance in itself, and also proved imperative for fostering the unity, discipline, and coordination necessary to organize subsequent actions and strikes.

According to Bartkowski (2015), from a civil resistance perspective, 'alternative institutions' or 'parallel institutions' can refer to a 'variety of entities ranging from informal or illegal networks or associations of people... to more formal, semi-official, or legal organizations... The resort to alternative institutions might be instinctive as a result of severe oppression or perceived impenetrability of the system' (229). Likewise, Stephen Zunes (2015) notes that parallel institutions are essential for 'fostering social organization,' undermin[ing] the repressive status quo,' and 'form[ing] the basis for a new independent... order' (109, 117).

In the case of Palestine, Rosenfeld's (2004) use of the term 'counterorder' is particularly useful in conceptualizing the parallel system that prisoners developed, as it enabled them to transform their place in the prison regime from victims to agents. According to Rosenfeld (2011), the counterorder was especially powerful because it encompassed 'all spheres of the prisoner's daily life, starting from the material conditions and… fundamental necessities, continuing with education, and culminating in the prisoner's ongoing participation in political discussion and democratic decision-making' (7).

The counterorder provided a foundational structure for resistance, as well as a unifying sense of purpose and identity. As Bornstein writes, 'instead of being isolated, dependent, and obedient, the organized prisoners buil[t] an identity of themselves as men [sic] on the front line of resistance to occupation and at the political center of the struggle' (Bornstein 2010, 466). As former prisoner Hafez noted, 'We managed to build a complete organization in the prisons, which fulfilled all the needs of the prisoners inside the jails. We put a "security wall" between ourselves and the Israelis who were aiming to destroy us' (interview with author, 2012).

Ashkelon Prison[2] was one of the first sites where prisoners developed the counterorder, by organizing according to political affiliation and instituting an alternative order with an elected administration, education system, financial system, and communications system. However, the system spread quickly within and between other prisons, ironically due in part to prison authorities' attempts to counter resistance by transferring presumed leaders to different prisons. As former prisoner Mohammed explained:

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[2] Ashkelon Prison started holding Palestinian prisoners in 1970. Located on the Israeli coast just north of Gaza, the prison was geographically difficult for West Bank families to visit, and prisoners were subject to inadequate food, clothing, and medical care (See Aruri 1978 and Tsemel 1977).

When the struggle began between the prisoners and the jailers, the prison administration would come and take 10 or 15 of the leaders of this prison and transfer them to another jail. This was very important, because those leaders had many attributes. First, they had the charisma to be leaders in other prisons. Second, they knew the way to organize the other prisons. Third, they were very educated, and they could have a big influence anywhere they were sent. This is the way [the counterorder] went from Ashkelon, to Beersheva, to Tulkarem, to Nablus, to Jenin, to anywhere (interview with author 2012).

In this way, the counterorder model that emerged in Ashkelon Prison diffused throughout the wider prison network.

The counterorder functioned along two interdependent axes, one 'ideological-political' (commitment to a political organization), and the other 'unionist-political' (commitment to the prisoner population as a whole, especially those in the same cell and wing) (Rosenfeld 2004, 247). The major factions of the broader Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) were represented in the counterorder, including Yasser Arafat's Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah), and the left-leaning Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and much of the leadership and educational curriculum was organized through party lines. In later years, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, though not part of the PLO, would also contribute to the counterorder through the organization, education and support of their prisoners.

More than ideology, the political organization proved necessary for maintaining discipline and order, as well as for communication with faction leaders outside the prison. It should be noted however that coordination with external factions did not equate to control by those factions; on the contrary, prisoners strategically engaged with political parties for communicating and mobilizing support outside, but mostly maintained their own leadership structures and agency within the prisons. Further, detainees of all backgrounds made efforts to cooperate, creating an interdependent federation of sorts that far surpassed the tenuous unity that existed between factions on the outside at the best of times. While tensions still remained and relations between factions were imperfect, many prisoners noted that they recognized that their collective identity as political prisoners surpassed their identity as members of one faction or party. As Hafez remembered, 'Most

importantly we constructed something united from all the political factions despite the many ideologies. We made these arrangements as a community inside a wall, but it was very ordered' (interview with author, 2012). In some ways, the political factions and the counterorder reinforced each other. As Rosenfeld (2004) notes,

> in practice, carrying out the commitment to one's political organization was conditional on the unionist commitment toward the prisoners' collective. The opposite was also true, since the prisoners' counterorder derived its legitimacy from close cooperation between the prison-based branches of the Palestinian organizations (247).

Parallel to the political factions, committees became the central internal organizing feature of the prisons, with prisoners developing an extensive election process for different levels of committees and leadership. Elections within each political faction took place every six months to determine a 15-person leadership committee called the Revolutionary Council, a seven-person Central Committee, and a faction leader. The bi-annual elections ensured a rotation of leadership and an inclusion of multiple voices in the coordination of the counterorder. Once each faction had elected a single representative, these leaders formed yet another committee and served as the negotiators and spokespersons to the prison authorities, and their decisions were respected by the rest of the prisoners. As one former prisoner commented, 'There was a high level of commitment to the rules and laws set by the [Palestinian] leaders of the prison' (interview with author, 2012). The leadership model proved to be essential in maintaining the order and discipline necessary both to struggle for rights through collective resistance and to exercise restraint and negotiate when necessary.

In addition to the central leadership committee, smaller committees were established at the cell and wing levels to coordinate day-to-day affairs and agendas, especially in the areas of academic study, economic/social relations, and communications. The daily schedules were highly regulated, again contributing to the internal discipline that formed the foundation of the prisoners' counterorder (Rosenfeld 2004). As Akram, a prisoner in the early 1980s, noted, '[The prisoners' leadership] laid down how to exploit every moment. Time for eating, time for study, time for discussions, time for cleaning up, time for rest' (Rosenfeld 2004, 238).

Khawla, a female ex-prisoner, explained how the counterorder, replicated in the women's prison, provided a structure to daily life that made the time in prison useful and productive:

> We had a daily program. You didn't have empty time. I remember all the time I was rushing to finish everything I had to do. I taught other people. I read books for the girls or women who couldn't read. I wrote the plans for what we would discuss in the session the next day. I listened to the news. We used the time in a very effective way (interview with author, 2014).

Committees were created to deal with day-to-day affairs such as cleaning, apportioning goods and food, and, by the 1980s, kitchen work and radio monitoring. Other committees were responsible for academic studies, political meetings, and representing the prisoners to authorities. As Rosenfeld (2004) explains, 'some of the tasks were allocated by a weekly or monthly rotation, while others were determined according to such criteria as seniority and experience, leadership quality, and personal proficiency' (247). In general, the majority of prisoners did their part, big or small, to support each other and maintain the functioning of the counterorder.

The internal order was further strengthened by the economic and social relations that the prisoners established. As Mohammed recalled:

> From the beginning, prisoners decided that everything would be divided equally among them, because some people received visitors, and some received nothing. Those who had visitors received some tea, some cigarettes, fruits, but others had nothing. So the first act [of organizing] was to make equal rations among the prisoners. Whatever entered the prisons was divided equally for all the others (interview with author, 2012).

The situation was the same in the women's prison. As Khawla summarized,

> All the time I felt that I was a part of this community, and that it was not about me as an individual, as a person. Everything is for everyone, the food, the clothes, everything. Only the underwear were for you as a person, everything else was for anyone (interview with author, 2014).

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This system of distribution, even among non-socialist political factions in the prison, proved instrumental in maintaining solidarity among prisoners and preventing competition. As Akram noted:

> In prison there are several things in private "ownership," like a towel, a cup, or a blanket. But everything else is held in common: sugar, tea, cigarettes, bread. There was neither competition nor exploitation, not only because there aren't many things there that can emphasize the differences between people, but mainly because of the importance we ascribed to this aspect (as quoted in Rosenfeld 2004, 248).

The 'Box Committee,' or financial committee, was established to distribute prisoners' finances equally. At the time, prisoners contributed what they could, usually based on donations from families. The committee then bought things like tea, coffee, and cigarettes and distributed them equally to each person, regardless of how much they had paid. As Ahmed, who spent 18 years in prison in the 1970s and 1980s, explained,

> Every shekel was for all and returned back to all. In the prison life, even those who were capitalists in their mind, in the prisons they thought that if there was a person who had much more than another, the person who had less will be depressed, so we couldn't protect every person unless we distributed our benefits, what we had, equally. So it was a very "imaginary" life, not what we would have outside, but in the prison, it was actually very, very good for the life of the prisoners and for the struggle (interview with author, 2012).

Ahmed's reference to the 'imaginary' life inside the prison illustrates how, in some ways, prisoners were able to practice in captivity what their fellow compatriots outside could not. By having less actual freedom, prisoners struggled to carve out more personal freedoms in their daily life through their self-organized resistance. Somewhat ironically, it was precisely because they were living in difficult conditions of confinement that they did these seemingly ideal things that were difficult to execute on the outside.

Prisoners maintained internal relations through a coordinated communication system that operated within prisons, between prisons, and between prisoners and external contacts, including written materials, verbal communication, and 'signs other than the written and the verbal,

such as knocks, hand gestures, facial expressions' (Nashif 2010, 54). Verbal communication, which was prohibited or restricted in early years, became more common as prisoners' resistance over time allowed for increased interaction between cells and sections, sometimes through direct communication in the prison yard during the daily break (once the right to such interaction was won) and, by the 1980s, between prisoners who worked in prison facilities like the kitchen, library, or the corridors. As one prisoner recounted, 'Each [political] faction would fight to allocate more workers to the corridor and the kitchen… These workers are like the veins in the body' (Nashif 2010, 56).

However, 'the most important vehicle for the transfer of knowledge in and out of the prisons were the *cabsulih* (Nashif 2010, 59), or capsules, tiny rolls of paper folded into a cylindrical shape approximately three to four centimeters long and one centimeter wide, containing political orders and correspondences, as well as books, articles, and poems. The writing in the *cabsulih* was tiny and nearly unreadable to the untrained eye, such that each political faction had certain individuals and sub-committees responsible for decoding the messages. As Nidal remembered,

> I learned how to write on very thin paper in small, clear handwriting, so
> that I managed to write 14 to 15 pages of regular books on one side of
> one page of the *cabsulih*. If I used both sides, I could fit 30 to 35 pages.
> Small but clear (interview with author, 2012).

Once rolled, the paper was usually wrapped in plastic, with the edges melted with a lighter to create a seal, after which it could be transported by hiding it under one's tongue, in the rectum, or swallowed. In general, *cabsulih* were hidden in the mouth when being exchanged during family visits while rectal or internal placement were more common for exchanging messages between prisons when prisoners were being moved between facilities or to and from the medical facility. The *bostah*, or the vehicle used to transport prisoners, thus became central to the prisoners' development of an inter-prison postal system of sorts. As Nashif (2010) writes, 'the postal networks of the community cross and trespass upon the... prison system by building parallel, contesting, and sometimes mocking channels of communication on the same… grid of spaces designed to imprison them' (65). The *cabsulih* also enabled the political faction leaders inside and outside the prisons to exchange information, orders and directives, which would prove essential in

coordinating resistance and diffusing activism during peak times of struggle, such as hunger strikes.

Another form of communication among prisoners consisted of sharing news from the outside world, especially with regards to the political climate. While the prison administration ultimately permitted radios in 1985 in response to a hunger strike demand, earlier prisoners relied on smuggled radios for their news access.[3] Once the radios were inside the prison, designated 'news teams' would listen, record, and disseminate the news to the other prisoners. Nidal remembered his experience as a member of the news team:

> We would sit in the corner and put blankets over ourselves and start listening to the news. There were three of us, and we used to write everything… For example, I would start with the first sentence and write the first three or four words of that sentence. The next guy, who is listening to the same news, will start from the fifth word and the other from the next and so on. We used to write all the statements of the PLO and the Arab states and UN officials, political leaders, and Israeli politicians. Then every morning there was a report to be distributed to all prisoners to deliver the news (interview with author, 2012).

According to Nidal, the prison authorities knew that the prisoners had smuggled radios, and would often conduct searches for them, so the prisoners had to hide them carefully, sometimes in the floor or walls, inside mattresses, and later wrapped in plastic or nylon and hidden in the toilet. Radios were also sometimes moved between prisons when prisoners were transported. As Nidal explained, many methods were used, including hiding the radios in boxes of *halwa*, a traditional sweet:

> They used to remove the cover of the package, and take off some of the *halwa*, put the radio in nylon inside it, and then put the *halwa* back on the surface. Then with lighters they used to put the plastic wrapping back and burn it slightly so the plastic would melt and match again. It wasn't perfect but it was the way we had available (interview with author, 2012).

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[3] Radios were sometimes smuggled by guards, but in the case of Beersheva Prison, the radios were smuggled by Israeli prisoners who were given occasional day-leave passes.

In these ways, prisoners continued to utilize creative means to 'get by' the authorities and maintain the counterorder.

Education

Perhaps the most notable aspect of the counterorder was the education system, through which 'the pedagogy and the revolution [were] interwoven to create a revolutionary Palestinian pedagogical system' (Nashif 2010, 72). Both the political educational content and the learning process itself strengthened the prisoners' counterorder, such that 'reading/writing became the praxis of resistance... not just in and by itself but, more importantly, as part of the community-building process'(Nashif 2010, 74). Likewise, Rosenfeld (2004) writes that the 'the learning process [was] just as interesting as the content of the studies' (256), reflecting a critical pedagogy approach (Freire 1970) that focused on education for informed liberation while challenging prisoners' accepted ideologies.

Integrating process and content, the education system combined independent reading of progressive literature with political discussions and critical debates. As one prisoner explained, 'Love of the homeland became more rooted [in prison] for two reasons: my discussions with other people and my reading' (quoted in Rosenfeld 2004, 256). As former-prisoner Issa explained,

> There were intensive educational programs, intellectually and politically, to the level where the prison was considered to be as a school. It was very well organized, so the awareness was really high, continuously. This "school" was teaching the prisoners two things: to commit with the collective decision and to enrich their political and intellectual level in regards to the conflict. Therefore the infrastructure of the prisoners was very, very strong (interview with author, 2012).

Like most aspects of the counterorder, the education curricula were organized by each political faction, though there were also group discussions between members of the different parties to compare ideas and philosophies. In general, each political organization's education program 'devoted a central place to studies of the history of the Palestinian national movement, to their ideologies and to the specific development of the movement, and to discussing their positions on current political questions' (Rosenfeld 2004, 255). As former-prisoner Khawla recalled, in the women's prison, 'We were

members of political parties or organizations, so we taught each other about our principles, our values, our programs in this organization. So it was a kind of re-education for these women' (interview with author, 2014).

Studies also included analyses of other modern 'liberation' movements, such as Algeria and Vietnam, which were compared and contrasted to the Palestinian struggle. Other topics included social theory, especially the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, political theory, history, military strategy, literature, and languages, including Hebrew. General courses that were not politically specific, including language, science, and general history, were usually conducted as open forums, not divided by faction. As Khalil explained,

> Most of our activities were in reading and writing. Sitting in small groups with each other, and one person would talk about any situation in the world. We read many many books, politics, economics, literature, diplomacy, socialism, communism, every subject, we read about it. So, the very educated men were giving their experience to their cellmates (interview with author, 2012).

All prisoners were expected to participate in the education program, and it formed a core part of the daily schedule and regimen in the prison. As one former prisoner described,

> Through the will and perseverance of the prisoners, prison was transformed into a school, a veritable university offering education in literature, languages, politics, philosophy, history and more. The graduates of this university excelled in various fields. I still remember the words of Bader al-Qawasmah, one of my compatriots whom I met in the old Nablus prison in 1984, who said to me, "before prison I was a porter who could neither read nor write. Now, after 14 years in prison, I write in Arabic, I teach Hebrew, and I translate from English" (Al-Azraq 2009).

Classes were usually held in the morning, while independent study and reading took place in the afternoon and evening. Each day there were typically two classes, or sessions. Older prisoners, who had experience and knowledge about Palestine, would teach the new arrivals by taking a small group of young prisoners to learn about the political history. The history would start

with the early origins of the Zionist movement, then the first World War, the British Mandate, the Zionist movement in Palestine, the Nakba,[4] and the establishment of Israel, covering the main phases of modern Palestinian history. One of the daily sessions would usually be about Palestine, and the other would be about the political faction, such as Fatah, and its history and ideology. These lessons included the history of the political faction, the early battles, and military operations. As one former prisoner noted,

> This was to give you the knowledge about the Fatah movement and its political theory and ideology, and their goals and beliefs, what kind of society they were trying to build, and what methods and tools they used to achieve these goals (interview with author, 2012).

While the different political factions developed their own curricula, some prisoners organized group sessions, in which individuals from different political ideologies would debate and discuss a given theme. In these small group sessions, every two or three days, there was a discussion in the shared cell in which all parties and all prisoners would participate. They would pick one topic; for example, the fragmentation of the PLO, or the state of Fatah at the time. Prisoners from Fatah would present something, then the Popular Front would present their point of view, and there would be general discussion.

As Rosenfeld (2004) notes, the curriculum 'rested for the most part on a reservoir of educated people in the prison' (254), many of whom had attended university in the West Bank or abroad, and others who had become experts in specific areas during their studies in prison. As former prisoner Khalil remembered:

> In Beersheva, I was teaching Arabic history because I read a lot of historical books. So I drew maps of every Arabic state, and I would speak about its history for a large group, about 40 prisoners at that time. I was delighted to teach. And I was teaching myself also (interview with author, 2012).

The curriculum also depended in part on the availability of books and written materials. Initially, prisoners had no access to pens or paper, and

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[4] Literally translated as 'the catastrophe,' the Nakba refers to the displacement of approximately 750,000 Palestinians during the 1948 War.

access to books was limited, rights that were eventually won through strikes and resistance. Even when books were permitted however, they were very few in number, and topics were limited to general culture and religious texts, with any political material prohibited. Classic books on philosophy, literature, and theory were less restricted, and formed the foundations of the early prison libraries through the services of the Red Cross.

After subsequent hunger strikes, prisoners were allowed to receive a limited number of books from the outside, though all books were still checked by the prison administration, and books on Palestine or politics were still prohibited. These materials thus had to be smuggled in through other means, usually through prisoners instructing families to rebind the books. Family members would change the covers of the books and put non-political photos inside the books, such as those of famous singers or celebrities, so that a censor seeing the images would be led to believe the books were non-political in nature. Sometimes the first several pages of text were replaced by content about food, movies, or other popular culture, with the political text hidden within or interspersed throughout. At other times, books were hand-written out and transported via *capsulih*. As former prisoner Ahmed recalled:

> We copied the books to send from one jail to another. For example, books that might be allowed in Beersheva Prison were not allowed in Ramallah Prison, so for the most important books especially, we copied the books by hand in very small letters and rolled it like a *capsulih* and our families swallowed it and sent it to other jails, or we did that when we were transferred from one jail to another (interview with author, 2012).

In this way, the education system depended largely on the organization of other parts of the counterorder, and on the support of external contacts.

As Rosenfeld (2004) writes,

> Studies also relied upon study booklets that were written, edited, and updated by those responsible for the different courses. Distributed regularly among the prisoners in spite of systematic efforts by the prison authorities to confiscate the material, the books were copied in small, dense writing… that could be readily folded up and hidden (254-255).

These 'copybooks,' or slim notebooks, served as textbooks of a sort, summarizing complex, theoretical texts in physically compact and conceptually comprehensive formats, and were also transported between prisons. As Khalil explained:

> We wrote them in handbooks, then one of us would put cigarette ashes in a glass of tea and swallow it, so he'd feel sick and feverish, and we'd call the administration and say he needs a doctor. Then when they transferred him to the hospital, he took the book with him and gave it to another prisoner from Nablus or Ramallah prison who was also in the hospital. In that way we distributed many handbooks to different jails (interview with author, 2012).

In later years, after several hunger strikes, prisoners gained the right to have prison libraries, which further facilitated the educational curriculum as well as independent learning. As Khaled, who was first imprisoned in 1982, recalled,

> Through a long struggle, the prisoners' movement was able to win and maintain the right to a library… Every day, the prisoner holding the position of "librarian" would pass through the different cells and sections, and prisoners would exchange the book they had just finished for the one they were about to begin. The librarian carried the "library book," a record of the books available in the library, and a list of the books each prisoner had requested (Al-Azraq 2009).

Khaled remembered how prisoners 'raced for the writings of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Amado, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, Hanna Mina, Nazim Hikmet, and many others.' He also noted the prisoners would sometimes write out entire books with pen and paper to make more copies available, especially for books that were in high demand, such as Ghassan Kanafani's *Men in the Sun*[5] and Naji Alloush's *The Palestinian National Movement*.

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[5] Originally published in 1962, *Men in the Sun* tells the story of three Palestinian refugees from Lebanon who seek passage to Kuwait to find work, but die on the way when the truck smuggling them encounters various delays and checkpoints. The book was controversial for its subtle criticism of Arab states' corruption, passivity, and treatment of Palestinian refugees.

The education program, and later the library system, facilitated prisoners' individual well-being by enabling them to engage in intellectual pursuits and critical thinking. Moreover, the education system both reinforced and relied upon other collective elements of the counterorder for its success, including the communication system, the notion of social equality, and the adherence to discipline. In turn, the knowledge gained through the curriculum, and perhaps more importantly, through the interactive learning processes, provided prisoners with the foundations for engaging in more direct forms of resistance.

Everyday Acts of Non-Cooperation

While hunger strikes perhaps represent the peak of prison-based resistance, nearly all long-term hunger strikes were preceded by other individual and collective actions, including refusal to work at assigned jobs, refusal to acknowledge prison guards, refusal to comply with counting and searching protocols, refusal of family or lawyer visits, refusal to shower or shave, refusal to leave the cell, and refusal of meals. These actions directly challenged the prison administration and forced some changes in policy by making the established system difficult to manage, or ultimately, unworkable.

Actions were typically organized in response to specific policies. As Nidal explained:

> Many things actually came, not through hunger strikes, but through direct challenging of the administration. For example, the strip-searching. They used to make prisoners take off their clothes in front of each other to search them, just to humiliate them. They knew there was nothing inside [their body cavities]. So the prisoners decided to challenge that. We said, okay, we won't take off our clothes, even if the guards hit us, or we are punished in the isolation cells, or maybe punished by prevention from family visits. The prisoners were ready to take this risk and challenge that policy (interview with author, 2012).

Similar actions included refusing to stand for the prisoner counts that took place three times a day, and refusing to address the guards as 'my lord' or 'my master,' as required in the early days in some prisons, including Ashkelon (Hafez, interview with author, 2012).

These gradual actions served several purposes. Primarily, they aimed to challenge specific policies, such as the strip searches or counting protocol.

They were also useful however in sending a message to the prison authorities that the prisoners were willing to struggle and resist. As Nidal noted,

> These kinds of steps were taken to reject specific measures and to say to the prison administration that we are strong and we are ready to struggle against you. You have to stop this kind of searching, or humiliating people, or doing these violations (interview with author, 2012).

Finally, these types of actions served as a sort of practice or training for the 'last resort' option of the extended hunger strike. Resistance in general gave practice in discipline and organization, while temporary refusal of meals specifically helped prepare prisoners physically and mentally for prolonged hunger strikes. As Nidal comments:

> It was a continuous process. So on the one hand, these steps, to refuse one meal or to refuse for one day or two days is just to send a message that we are refusing this and we are ready to struggle. On the other hand, it was a kind of preparation for the prisoners, knowing that we were going to do bigger and better things, but we had to do something at that moment. It was for me a kind of training…. It gave you the sense of a longer hunger strike, how it would be, and whether we were ready to do that or not (interview with author, 2012).

Hunger Strikes

States are obligated under international law[6] to maintain the health of prisoners (Lines 2008). Hunger strikes thus intentionally aim to push the prison administration, or the state government, to the point that they can no longer ensure prisoners' health, thus making internal prison administration difficult while simultaneously risking international shaming and condemnation, creating a classic dilemma action (Sørensen and Martin 2014). Furthermore, in protracted conflict situations, states recognize that

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[6] Even if the state does not recognize prisoners as Prisoners of War (POWs) covered by the third Geneva Convention, minimum standards of treatment for all prisoners were articulated in the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1957), and have also been upheld in human rights case law (see Kudla v. Poland, § 94, European Court of Human Rights, 2000).

the death of a prisoner could galvanize the local population's support for prisoners and spark renewed activism, resistance, or violence (Vick 2013), ultimately backfiring (Martin 2007) on the state.

In Palestine, hunger strikes have been used since the early days of incarceration and have continued to the time of writing, with over thirty documented hunger strikes by Palestinian prisoners.[7] Hunger strikes have resulted in a gradual realization of rights and improvement of conditions, ranging from improved food and better bathing conditions; to access to books, writing materials, and eventually radios and televisions; to establishing negotiation policies between prisoners and the prison administration. The first reported Palestinian hunger strike took place in Ramle prison in 1968, but the primary organizing site for early hunger strikes was Ashkelon Prison, notably the same site credited with the emergence of the counterorder. At Ashkelon, an initial one-week hunger strike in 1970 was followed by a larger strike in 1973 that lasted for 24 days, and then by an open (across multiple prisons) strike beginning in December 1976 that lasted 45 days initially, and was extended for another 20 days in February 1977.

The 1973 strike was particularly noteworthy in terms of its accomplishments. The strike lasted for three weeks and ended with a meeting between the Ministery of Police (now the Ministry of Public Security) and the prison leaders. This meeting, or negotiation, resulted in the replacement of the commanding officer of the prison, improved food quality, permission to congregate in the yard, and permission for the Red Cross to bring books to prisoners. As one prisoner commented, 'One can say that the uprising brought about a complete change in the conditions of Ashkelon prison' (Rosenfeld 2004, 244).

The 1976 Ashkelon strike produced even greater gains, going beyond improved material conditions to the realization of further rights and the establishment of an elected representative prisoners' body, which would prove essential in negotiating rights with the prison administrators moving forward. The demands included bringing in books, pencils, and pens; rejection of working in the factories inside the prisons; allowing prisoners to determine rules inside the cells for themselves; rejection of having to say 'sir' to the guards; and recognizing the political factions that were created inside the prison by the leadership. However, as one former prisoner emphasized,

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[7] For a helpful timeline of Palestinian hunger strikes, see Zena Tahhan, "A Timeline of Palestinian mass hunger strikes in Israel."

'the primary achievement of the strike was that the prison administration was forced to negotiate with this body that represented the prisoners. This was the beginning of reshaping the relationship between the jailers and the prisoners' (interview with author, 2014). Indeed, the recognition of a representative prisoners' body that could speak directly with the prison authorities was crucial in establishing a new dynamic by which prisoners could negotiate policies and conditions directly, often averting other strikes.

While not all strikes were successful, the combination of inside and outside pressure on the prison system resulted in notable improvement of conditions and extensions of rights. The specific demands of the hunger strikes varied over time and between prisons. They were typically written in a statement and communicated to the prison administration by an elected representative. It should be noted however that, in contrast to later individual strikes undertaken after the second intifada, the demands of earlier hunger strikes concentrated on improving conditions in prison, rather than focusing on individual or collective release. As Nidal noted, in the early strikes, 'the demands were very simple. We're talking about more blankets, improvements in the food, allowing prisoners to communicate while they are in the yard, allowing them to write letters to their families, bringing pens, papers, pencils, books, those small things' (interview with author, 2012). Other early demands included the cessation of beatings, reducing crowdedness in cells, permitting prisoners to cook their own food, and permitting the elected prisoner representative to negotiate directly with the prison administration (Nashif 2010, 51-52).

Despite the constraints of the prison context, prisoners managed to develop a repertoire of resistance to maintain a sense of dignity, push for rights, and subvert the presumed power relations of the prison. Tactics varied depending on the particular prison and the external conflict dynamics. In general though, prisoners relied largely on everyday acts of resistance, supplemented by hunger strikes at key points in the struggle for rights.

Discussion: Power, Rights, and Spatial-Temporal Extensions of Resistance

Prisoners' diverse repertoire of tactics, rooted in everyday actions, allowed them to transform the prison space from one of control, as intended by the state, to one of resistance. The multi-dimensional nature of the repertoire made it possible for prisoners to direct their activism towards different

'targets' with different effects, including self-empowerment (by focusing on self-discipline and organisation), the realisation of gradual rights (through noncompliance with prison authorities), and the extension of activism beyond the spatial and temporal constraints of the prison via hunger strikes and cumulative resistance.

First, by focusing on themselves as agents, prisoners were able to transform the power relations in the prison, mainly through the development of the counterorder and the education system. The counterorder served a logistical function by enabling prisoners to organise their lives around a daily routine, and by coordinating elements of day-to-day life like finances and communication. Further, with its clandestine elections and rotating leadership system, the counterorder created an alternative institution that regulated prisoners' lives, taking that role away from the sole discretion of the prison authorities, as well as asserting prisoners' independence from external factional leadership. Indeed, the internal leadership structure enabled by the counterorder allowed prisoners to develop and coordinate their own resistance in the prisons, rather than take directives from political party elites,[8] and the rotating nature of the leadership ensured that no single faction leader could wield too much influence. Moreover, the counterorder provided a sense of individual and collective ownership of the time and space in the prison, giving prisoners a sense of purpose and dignity, as well as self-discipline and organisation for engaging in more confrontational acts of resistance.

Second, prisoners were able to improve conditions and gain some rights through everyday resistance to the prison authorities (as targets) in the form of noncompliance. Prisoners engaged in a sort of 'radical pragmatism' (Norman 2020), by employing actions that aimed to wear down the prison guards over time, essentially by challenging the authorities to respond with sustained discipline beyond their capacity. Hunger strikes, which were 'illegal' and

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[8]   As several prisoners noted, while political factions in the prisons were separated in later years, they mostly overcame the corruption and deep divisions that plagued external political parties especially in the post-Oslo period. For example, the Prisoners Document of 2006, signed by prisoners representing the four largest Palestinian political factions (Marwan Barghouti of Fatah, Sheikh Abdel Khaliq al-Natsche of Hamas, Sheikh Bassam al-Saadi of Islamic Jihad, and Abdel Rahim Malouh of the PFLP), was one of the first calls for a national unity government, and also laid out parameters for a two-state solution.

carried their own punishments, likewise aimed to make the prison operation itself unworkable, thus forcing concessions. Like the counterorder, everyday non-cooperation also had a psychological element by showing the prison administration (and affirming to the prisoners) that they had agency and were willing to resist. Indeed, everyday resistance was not only about actions, but about mindset, asserting agency in contrast to the intended prison aims of compliance and obedience. While some prisoners still adopted compliance as their primary coping mechanism, especially in the years after the Oslo Accords and the second intifada, the collective nature of the counterorder in the early decades made everyday resistance, or at least solidarity, an accepted and welcome norm for most prisoners. The internal solidarity, especially in the early years, combined with counterorder rules limiting communication with guards outside of elected prisoner spokespersons, also helped prisoners resist prison administration and police intelligence attempts to recruit informers from amongst the prisoner population.

Finally, by sustaining everyday resistance over time, and coupling it with hunger strikes, prisoners were able to make imprisonment itself a key issue in the conflict and even influence external mobilisation. In this way, prisoners' resistance extended beyond the spatial constraints of the prison by rippling out to political factions, communities, and local and international solidarity networks (observers). According to Foucault (1980), 'space is fundamental in any exercise of power' (252); this especially applies to prisons where, as Johansson and Vinthagen (2015) note, 'the concept of panopticism as a model for disciplinary power shows the link between spatial orderings and discipline' (125). However, prisoners were able to subvert the prison space from one of control to one of education, resistance, and organising, mainly through everyday acts of resistance. Further, they were able to propel their activism beyond the prison walls, largely through the solidarity campaigns that emerged alongside hunger strikes, but also by linking the issue of imprisonment to the broader liberation movement.

Likewise, the concept of prison inherently involves state control over prisoners' time. However, while constrained by their sentences, prisoners were able to transcend the temporal constraints through their activism. As Johansson and Vinthagen (2015) state, 'Temporalization of everyday resistance may be about creating and embodying a different or alternative conception of and relation to time than the dominant one' (130). Indeed, prisoners used everyday resistance to subvert time in several ways. First, as indicated above, the counterorder, and the education programme in

particular, enabled prisoners to take control of their daily schedules and gave their days a sense of order and purpose, rather than having their time being controlled solely by prison authorities. Second, in terms of everyday resistance, prisoners' actions cumulated over time, such that everyday actions taken by early prisoners influenced both the conditions and the activism of later prisoners, enabling resistance to extend beyond temporal constraints as well. Finally, some prisoners saw their resistance as a link to the longer timeline of Palestinian resistance. For example, Walid Dakka, a Palestinian prisoner, described prison as a 'parallel time,' writing, 'We in the parallel time… are a part of a history. History is known as something in the past, over and done with, but we are the continuing past that is never ending.'[9] For Dakka, prisoners represented the history of resistance in Palestine and they saw themselves as maintaining that tradition, even as external mobilisation waned. In these ways, prisoners situated their everyday resistance in a broader spectrum of time that extended both backwards and forwards and was not constrained to their sentences.

These dynamics extend beyond the Palestine case study as well. In other post-empirical protracted conflicts, such as South Africa and Northern Ireland, prisoners similarly subverted prison spaces and made imprisonment itself a central issue in the wider struggles. Rather than retreating to the margins, prisoners took back prison spaces as loci of resistance, forcing both state authorities and their own external parties to engage with them seriously as central political actors. This subversion of the prison space was not automatic however; as with the Palestine case study, prisoners exerted the most influence on both authorities and their own factions when they combined pragmatism and radicalism through multli-level strategies such as establishing counterorders for self-education and organising; using everyday noncompliance to challenge prison administrators; and occasionally, engaging in hunger strikes to exert boomerang pressure from solidarity networks on state authorities (Norman 2020).

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[9] Letter from prisoner Walid Dakka, addressed to 'My dear brother, Abu Omar' on the first day of his twentieth year in prison, 25 March 2005.

Conclusion: Everyday Resistance and Subversion of Prisons in Protracted Conflicts

In protracted conflicts, states use mass incarceration and detention to control the opposition and quell dissent. But prisoners have been intentional about utilising prisons as spaces of resistance, thus subverting the intended power dynamic. As this article demonstrates, prison-based resistance, though most publicly manifest in hunger strikes, relies primarily on everyday actions that are out of the public eye. In Palestine, as in similar conflicts, these included establishing counterorders, or parallel institutions, for self-governance, which gave prisoners a sense of control, purpose, and dignity; and developing political education curricula, which provided prisoners with a foundation for critical thought and collective organising. Everyday actions also included daily acts of non-cooperation or noncompliance, which challenged prison authorities over time, often leading to a gradual realisation of rights. Rights and conditions were further improved by negotiations forced by hunger strikes, which aimed to make the prison administration unworkable for authorities and presented them with dilemma actions, while also attracting external attention and pressure.

In these ways, prisoners were able to challenge the power construct of the prisons and make the carceral space one of ongoing resistance and organising rather than one of control and discipline from the state. Further, prison-based resistance made the issues of imprisonment and detention central in broader conflict dynamics over time, situating prisons as an anchor for external activism. Thus, prison-based resistance extended beyond the spatial and temporal confines of the prisons to have a much more wide-reaching effect. Indeed, both within and beyond the Palestine case study, the repertoire of everyday prison-based tactics, including but not limited to hunger strikes, facilitates the subversion of the prison space and the disruption of intended power dynamics.

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Gene Sharp: More Anarchist than Neoliberal[1]

Craig Brown, *Journal of Resistance Studies*

Abstract

In the wake of the so-called Arab Spring, early efforts to explain the events in European and US media focused on the influence of the ideas of nonviolence scholar Gene Sharp. Irrespective of the accuracy of these efforts, this led to greater engagement with his contributions to the field of nonviolent resistance. However, Marcie Smith's (2019a) appraisal of Sharp has levelled the serious accusation that he willingly contributed to US hegemony and economic neoliberalism. Alternatively, this paper presents the complex, context-specific circumstances of nonviolence in Eastern Europe, as well as the emergence of neoliberalism from Poland's Solidarity movement—a heavily working-class resistance struggle against state socialism—to show that reducing nonviolent revolution to being responsible for reinforcing repressive systems, and reducing nonviolent revolution to Sharp's pragmatic turn, is a severe oversimplification. Moreover, Gene Sharp's writings are contextualised in relation to his more Anarchistic influences, in addition to Sharp's concerted engagement with and replication of Hannah Arendt's analysis of revolution and violence. It is argued that these largely overlooked elements of Sharp's work should be drawn on to transcend the dominant 'pragmatic nonviolence' association of his work, while informing our understanding of constructive resistance during campaigns for dignity, equality, freedom and alternatives to the capitalist system.

Introduction

Marcie Smith's (2019a;2019b) recent research into Gene Sharp's life and work has levelled the serious accusation that he supported and advocated for neoliberalism through his work. Despite Smith's suggestion that this should not necessarily preclude Sharp's work from adoption by activists or practitioners, the implications of these accusations are clear in this period where resistance strategies are being urgently sought against neoliberalism and late capitalism, to avert the worst outcomes of man-made global warming, the marginalisation and precariousness of huge numbers of people around the world, as well as the host of social problems emerging in countries globally.

It is not immediately clear that Marcie Smith is necessarily denouncing nonviolence, although she launches a broader denunciation of nonviolent revolution in her second article on Sharp (Smith, 2019b), which requires the defence of nonviolent resistance more broadly in this essay, while offering an alternative take on Sharp's work. Neoliberalism has evidently been one of the most urgent problems requiring resistance for a significant period of time. In responding to broader criticisms of nonviolence that arise in Smith's work, I believe there is effective research in the nonviolence field noting the insufficient challenge to neoliberal structures and covering the potential of nonviolent social revolution (Johansen, 2007; Johansen, 2012), nonviolence's effectiveness in opposing US imperialism (Johansen, Martin & Meyer, 2012), as well as challenging some of the misrepresentations of nonviolence (Martin, 2008), all drawing on nonviolence's anarchistic-pacifistic tendencies. However, it is the more 'principled' basis in Sharp's work that I wish to return to here, because I think this is much more illuminating in revealing Sharp's position and indeed personal philosophy. My PhD thesis and other research over a seven-year period (see Brown, 2018;2019) in substantial part presented the far more diverse picture of nonviolent (and violent methods) used in Tunisia and the broader so-called Arab Spring, beyond a mere lazy replication of news reports concerning Sharp's dominant influence—although an engagement with his broader body of research presented me with a far more complex picture of the philosophy underpinning his theory of nonviolent action.

The discussion below will have five main parts. The first provides an introductory overview of Sharp's work, followed by the second section of a brief introduction to Marcie Smith's criticisms of Sharp. In dealing

with Smith's broader misrepresentations, the third section deals with the complexities of Communism's collapse in Eastern Europe, to which Smith does a significant disservice. the emergence of neoliberalism from Poland's Solidarity movement—a heavily working-class resistance struggle against state socialism—to show that reducing nonviolent revolution to being responsible for reinforcing repressive systems, and reducing nonviolent revolution to Sharp's pragmatic turn, is a severe oversimplification. Having noted the relevance of Arendt's ideas of revolution to resistance to Communism, the fourth section considers Sharp's *Social Power and Political Freedom*, given that Smith uses this text to support her position that Sharp was an advocate of neoliberalism. However, I consider this text to be most illuminating in terms of the continuation and development of his actual Anarchist adherence. In this regard, the fifth part focuses on Sharp's assessment and approval of Arendt's thought as expressed in *Social Power and Political Freedom*, particularly in relation to her analysis of the French and American revolutions. This actually situates Sharp's work far closer with the engagement with Arendt's thought in critical political theory of late. The sixth part draws on the events of the so-called Arab Spring to indicate the significance of Sharp's position via Arendt, rejecting unlike Smith his wholesale contribution but recovering the radical nature of Sharp's work for the present period.

Introductory Overview of Sharp's Work

Irrespective of one's perspective on Gene Sharp's work, the late academic's body of theory and research has left a profound legacy within the peace and nonviolence field. Very broadly, Sharp's work may be broken down into several rough phases. Sharp initially focused on analysing Gandhi's conceptualisation and practice of nonviolence in the 1950s and 1960s (Sharp, 1960). Sharp's anarchist leanings are apparent in some of his earlier writings (Sharp, 1964), which is explored further below. As a second phase, Sharp's *The Politics of Nonviolent* Action was published in 1973, which emphasised the pragmatic elements in the nonviolent action of Gandhi and others. He elaborated on this in further texts in the 1970s (Sharp, 1979;1980). The third phase relates to his concerted effort to have civilian-based defence (CBD) introduced as a serious policy in the West during the later Cold War era (Sharp, 1985), although his work on this stretched back to the mid-1960s (Sharp, 1965). A fourth phase broadly relates to Sharp's (1973) work being used as the basis of development of strategic nonviolence

since the 1990s (see Ackerman and Kruegler, 1994), with *From Dictatorship to Democracy* (Sharp, 2008**)** as more of an accessible handbook of Sharp's ideas seeing prominence in the academic field. A fifth although related phase is the considerable interest Sharp's work received in the wake of the 2010/11 WANA revolutions, given the misplaced emphasis particularly in minority world media of his purported influence on events (See Brown, 2019).

I anticipate that this provides an objective sense of the broad trends of Sharp's work for an unfamiliar reader, without entering into discussion about his affiliations and associations. Inevitably, this is quite a simplification and reduction of Sharp's varied focuses and concerns; this may be somewhat conveyed by contrasting his broad bibliographic work *Nonviolent Action: A Research Guide* (McCarthy & Sharp, 1997) and his rather obscure contribution to the field in a pamphlet on nonviolent resistance and Welsh independence (Sharp, 1958).

Smith's Criticisms of Sharp

Marcie Smith's (2019a) critical biographical analysis of Gene Sharp and his work deserves to be read closely, particularly for its emphasis on the need to tackle neoliberalism and ensure the capacity to introduce alternatives to it through the means of social change, something she believes has been lacking in nonviolent revolutions in the 'Sharpian' model. In the second part of Smith's (2019b) analysis, her critique is broadened and deepened against 'nonviolent revolution'. Although part of my response here is focused on some of the omissions that Smith in dealing with Sharp's *Social Power and Political Freedom*—the book where she states Sharp offers 'his critique of the "centralised state" most candidly and thoroughly' (Smith, 2019a)—by broadening her criticism to nonviolent revolution generally, this creates further problems for her argument that need challenging.

Ultimately, in addition to the aspects of nonviolence research outlined above concerning established connections to anarchist theory and practice and challenges to imperialism, there is also established criticism in the critical nonviolence field and among advocates of nonviolent revolution of the neoliberal outcomes and enduring structural violence following the revolutions that Marcie Smith mentions. This is specifically the case during the USSR's collapse and coloured revolutions, with Johansen (2007) advocating deeper nonviolent social revolution in this regard (157-158). Moreover, in relation to Eastern European resistance to the USSR, as well

as the concept of CBD, Smith (2019b) engages in over-simplifications that enable Sharp's influence to be misconstrued and overstated.

Smith's fundamental argument made about Sharp's theory of state transformation is that it was 'easily compatible, philosophically and practically, with neoliberal free market fantasies and programs of vast privatisation—as demonstrated by the course of the USSR's collapse and the Colour Revolutions, where Sharp's ideas were pivotal' (Smith, 2019a). The neoliberal turn was 'aided by Sharp's politics of nonviolent action [and] has produced the "State decentralisation" Sharp favoured. In practice, this has meant deregulation of industry, privatization of public assets, deep tax cuts for the wealthiest, austerity for the rest'. Smith states that Sharp 'was an undercover idealist, like many of his compatriots from the high Cold War era, and he believed that liberalism could deliver a world without violence'. Yet essentially and quite simply, the issue with Smith's portrayal of Sharp's position is that it glaringly omits certain crucial details about: resistance to communism in Eastern Europe and its collapse; commentary (albeit brief) by Sharp on economics; Sharp's more substantial engagement with Hannah Arendt's work An *Social Power and Political Freedom*.

Clearly, I cannot cover everything in Smith's (2019a;2019b) two-part article comprising nearly 50,000 words, so I have forfeited any thorough comments on Sharp's influence on the Movement for a New Society (MNS). However, notably Smith's criticisms borrow heavily from what she calls the 'sympathetic' analysis of MNS provided by Cornell (2011), while severely underplaying the robust self-criticism by the MNS relating to their neglection of class (44-45), emphasis on consensus decision making (47-49,173) and how this hindered the response to Reaganite neoliberalism (48-49). Many activists acknowledge the shortcomings of consensus decision making; I discussed this with former and present members of War Resisters' International, whose training manuals are cognisant of class-based socialist politics, and advocate for grassroots, decentralised action in the form of constructive work (Hedemann, 1986). Training in nonviolence is by no means a homogeneous field—neither is 'nonviolent revolution' comprehensively orientated around Sharp—the shortcomings Smith identifies in the MNS have been applied to the post-1968 "New Left" more broadly, too immersed in identity politics and 'lifestyle over strategic organising' (see Cornell, 2011:39-42; Fremion, 2002:207-208), thus a form of individualising 'self-improvement' amenable to easy to commodification and marketisation (Curtis, 2016).

Resistance to Communism in Eastern Europe

The Baltic States' Independence

Smith (2019c) situates Sharp at the heart of the US Cold War defence establishment, suggesting his 'nonviolent weapons system was in fact used to help achieve the ultimate Cold War goal: collapsing the Soviet Union'. Working through the CfIA at Harvard and the Albert Einstein Institute (AEI), 'Sharp and colleagues […] provided nonviolent action training directly to secessionist leadership in the Baltics and Russia, making several in-person trips to the region to provide on-the-ground consultation' (Smith, 2019c). Smith uses George Lakey's (2019) acknowledgement of Sharp's influence against him, positing elsewhere that 'Sharp offered up the art of protest to the US government for anti-communist purposes abroad' (Marcetic & Smith, 2019). Even if the latter was convincing, the actual significance of this collaboration and the use of nonviolent action for 'anti-communist purposes' must be contextualised within the legacy of resistance in Eastern Europe.

It is difficult not to see Smith's emphasis on Sharp's physical proximity to the USSR's collapse as playing fast and loose with history, overlooking broader complexities in order to emphasise Sharp's contribution. Notably, there is a well-established criticism of the Sharp-Ackerman axis of nonviolent action within the critical resistance/ nonviolent revolution literature (Jackson, 2015; Chabot, 2015; Brown, 2018), although Smith's relation of this axis' relevance to events in the Baltics is somewhat problematic:

> AEI's first dramatic success came at the end of the 1980s, when Sharp and Ackerman met and began corresponding with the leadership of nationalist separatist movements in the Soviet Union, namely those of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Here, the NED was also at work […] In March of 1990, riding on the momentum of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Lithuania became the first soviet to assert its independence from the USSR. In mid-1990, Sajudis member and director-general of the Lithuanian Department of National Defense Audrius Butkevicius "had Gene Sharp's *Civilian-based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System* translated into Lithuanian for use by government officials." In January 1991, in effort to quell the Lithuanian rebellion, Gorbachev

deployed tanks to Vilnius. The plan backfired, per Sharp's political jiu-jitsu. Eleven civilians ended up dead, and by April 1991, Estonia, Latvia, and Georgia, had also announced their secession from the Union. At the end of April, in the midst of the power struggle, Sharp and Ackerman made a personal visit to the Baltics (Smith, 2019a).

First, the Baltics' separatist and secessionist movements should be considered in historical context—as well as their country-specific circumstances and diversity of resistance (see Eglitis, 1993:2,4; Miniotaite, 2002:1-9,15-16,25-26). Importantly, in 1991, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia were not newly independent, instead seeking to re-establish their inter-war independence (Luxmoore & Babiuch, 1999:x-xi; Miniotaite, 2002:11-24,36); Smith may rightly emphasise the more problematic nationalist elements, yet Soviet imperialism is hardly the noble counterweight.

Concerning nonviolent resistance, Eglitis (1993) suggested a prominent reason for this was the futility and devastation of World War Two and subsequent guerrilla warfare (42; see Lowe, 2012).[2] While Smith (2019a) focuses on the late 1980s, it was from the mid-1980s that a renewed impetus was provided to resistance in the Baltics following Gorbachev's announcement of *perestroika* and *glasnost* (Eglitis, 1998:8; Miniotaite, 2002:25)—itself potentially informed by events such as Solidarity in Poland (Schell, 2002:211; Roberts, 1991:10; Bunce, 1999:67)—with strong resistance elements including but not limited to struggles around ecological issues (Eglitis, 1993:8-9; Miniotaite, 2002:25). Revelations in the late 80s about the secrete protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact led to further anger, and in Lithuania on November 16, 1989, it was the communists who told Moscow they intended to form their own party (Roberts, 1991:27; Petersen, 2001:257). Thus, as with the so-called Arab Spring, any impact of Sharp's work must be seen in the context of far longer running resistance.

Sharp and Jenkins' (1992) booklet published the year after the USSR's collapse is insightful, raising significant questions concerning the degree of Sharp's influence. While some of his CBD ideas were evidently incorporated into the Baltic states' defence planning in 1991 (60-62), this was in urgent circumstances where three states making significant moves towards re-establishing independence confronted Soviet troop occupations (Eglitis,

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[2] This is also pertinent to Poland's 'rejection of political violence' (Smola, 2009:129,131-132; Michnik, 1985; Miłosz, 1985:iv; Schell, 1985:xxxvi).

1993:31-35; Miniotaite, 2002:58), a genuine prospect of large-scale Soviet invasion, coups d'état and slim if any chance of military resistance (Roberts, 1991:28). The details of the January 1991 civilian resistance to Soviet occupation of important infrastructure in Vilnius is of further importance in showing limited practical application of Sharp's ideas; Petersen (2001) noted that Lithuanians had forlornly armed themselves with 'shotguns and hunting rifles' in the parliament building, awaiting a possible assault by Soviet troops, with one guard reporting: 'The intention is not to win, because we all know that is impossible; the intention is to die, but by doing so to make sure that Moscow can't tell any lies as they did in 1940' (276-277). Even with weapons aside, Sharp's CBD is not simply an unarmed formula, but one which seeks to enable victory.

While elements of Sharp's broader nonviolence corpus may have been known to Baltic activists in the late 1980s, significantly, it was only at the end of 1990, following the declaration of independence, that Lithuania's government translated *Civilian-Based Defence* (Miniotaite, 2002:58)—within a context of interest in broader nonviolent literature (Miniotaite, 2002:59)—and in 1992 that Eastern language versions were produced (vi). For a system apparently backed and funded by the US Defence establishment, this seems a severe oversight. Such retrospectivity suggests no concerted policy existed around Sharp's CBD in the late 1980s, and nonviolent resistance in Sharp's conceptualisation—and still-nascent organised forms of CBD—were actually being informed by Eastern-European resistance generally, rather than the other way round. As Sharp and Jenkins acknowledge:

> This type of defence has its roots in several improvised defence struggles in Europe, as well as in much of the resistance and liberation struggles waged in Communist-ruled nations during the decades of totalitarian domination. However, in civilian-based defence this resistance is utilised in refined and strengthened forms (vi,12).

Nevertheless, any effort at a formal CBD policy in the Baltics seems like a flash in the pan by 1992, with a turn away from non-military defence already being apparent (62; Roberts, 1991:36).

Collapse of the USSR

It is not my intention to replicate here the discussion and lack of consensus over the causes and complexities of the USSR's collapse, although it does not do to

overlook this. Beissinger (2002) effectively summed up the tension between 'agency' and 'structure' explanations (7-8) alongside his own suggestion that 'tidal influences of one nationalism on another' (36) and mobilisation around this played a substantial role (34-35,40,83; Roberts, 1991:32-34). One may also consider Beissinger's (2002) suggestion regarding a period of '"thickened history"' (36) from 1987-1991, where popular perceptions of the feasibility of the USSR's ongoing existence shifted incredibly rapidly. Based on everyday resistance in the realm of daily and cultural life through the 1970s and 1980s, longer arcs of resistance around diverse issues and manifestation of violent and nonviolent resistance (42,54,72-73,88; Petersen, 2001:236; Roberts, 1991:7)—including violent interethnic conflicts in the late 1980s (Beissinger, 2002:88-89)—the emerging field of resistance studies has much of relevance to offer here; whether in assessing the contribution of everyday resistance (Johansson & Vinthagen, 2020), constructive resistance (Sørensen, 2016), nonviolence interplay with violence (Brown, 2019), or specific dynamics such as overcoming 'the barrier of fear' (Brown, 2019).

Therefore, concerning events in Russia, Smith's (2019a) narrative of one man's impact or even Western influence—indeed narratives solely focused on the role of nonviolent action (see Roberts, 1991:3-5)—will not suffice. Far bigger processes were in motion than Smith's (2019a) emphasis on Yeltsin's team meeting with Sharp at the end of 1991. In June 1990 there had been the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Russian SFSR, which Beissinger (2002:404) noted 'borrowed heavily from the language of prior declarations about sovereignty' made by Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Armenia and Georgia (Burbulis & Berdy, 2011:72). Even Smith's (2019a) pointing to a March 1991 referendum where over 75% of Soviet citizens supported the Union's continuance is a far more complex picture of question ambiguity, rigging and abstaining republics (Beissinger, 2002:405-406,420-421). Furthermore, Gorbachev's impending signing of the Novo-Ogareo treaty would have been the death knell (Beissinger, 2002:425) and indeed directly triggered the August 20th, 1991 coup by USSR government members, which Smith fails to mention (see Schell, 2002:215; Beissinger, 2002:428). Its failure ultimately sealed the fate of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU)—its Central Committee being dissolved by Gorbachev— and the USSR, with Ukraine declaring independence, both on 24th August, and other republics following suit (Beissinger, 2002:428). Smith's (2019a) emphasis on Sharp, Ackerman and AEI wrapping up their Russia trip the day before the 8th December signing of the Belavezha Accords, 'formally

dissolving the USSR', smacks of historical negationism. Rather than guilt by proximity, it seems more likely to have been another vain attempt at promoting CBD, which makes greater sense in the context of the coup.

While the USSR's collapse can be extricated from any significant influence of Sharp's, regarding Marcie Smith's characterisation of Sharp as sympathetic to neoliberalism, the connections that she notes during the 1989-1991 period are ominous, and the milieu he and the AEI were working in should not be dismissed lightly. As Smith (2019a) states, a fundamental role in Russia's economic 'shock therapy' was played by Harvard University and the Harvard Institute for International Development (HIID), described by Eun-jung (2015:130) as 'associated with the CFIA but structurally independent'. However, the HIID (formerly the Development Advisory Services), actually split from the CfIA at Harvard back in the 1960s. Again, the HIID, US government, World Bank, right-wing think tanks and Russian economists had well-established connections, including those in Yeltsin's team (Desai & Chubais, 2006:88-90; Gaidar, 1997; Eun-jung, 2015:126-128; Randle, 1991:79). At least from the mid-1980s, negotiations were ongoing between Gorbachev and Yeltsin around economic liberalisation and marketisation (Beissinger, 2002:413-414), far in advance of Sharp's visits. Ultimately, the issue I have with Sharp's supposed central position in this is not that he necessarily could not have supported neoliberalism, but rather that he, the AEI and nonviolent action are entirely extraneous to the economic processes that occurred.

There is an outstanding question of Sharp's affiliation as an intellectual, which should actually be a broader question for academics. Sharp could be considered to have made token protestation when pointing to the problem of continued 'elite rule' (Sharp & Jenkins, 1992:1)—which is inextricable from post-Soviet neoliberalism's entrenchment—believing that CBD would 'contribute to a more decentralised, less elitist, demilitarised Europe' (66). In an interview with Flintoff (2013) which raised his funding from the US Defense Department, Sharp stated: 'Governments–and other groups–should finance and conduct research into alternatives to violence'. So there is a question of engagement and complicity here, sins of omission and commission, and naivety. However, if Smith's suggestion is that mere engagement and discussion with opponents or people you disagree with may be later considered complicity, this seems like the worst case of "echo chambers" and some manner of joint enterprise principle. Moreover, does occupation of an academic position within a faculty automatically make

you complicit? Noam Chomsky's research at a department receiving military funding (Knight, 2018); Slavoj Žižek or Henry Giroux's participation in the neoliberal university system; Marcie Smith's affiliation with the John Jay College of Criminal Justice (2020), proud of its training programmes for 'law enforcement agencies'. This should also be born in mind as we turn to discuss CBD.

Civilian-Based Defence

Smith (2019b) seeks to create guilt by association for Sharp by pointing to his attendance with George Lakey at a 1964 conference on CBD, emphasising the co-attendees—renowned British military strategist B.H. Liddell Hart and Thomas Schelling—thus insinuating Sharp's and CBD's long-standing connection to the Western defence establishment. This is eminently unreasonable. First, numerous respected nonviolence theorists and practitioners attended (Roberts, 1967:14; see Mahadevan et al., 1967:255-256 for a more comprehensive list). Second, discussing a potential shift in state-based defence policy necessitates engagement with establishment figures who understand military defence (Roberts, 1967:14). Liddell-Hart's (1969) engagement was highly warranted given his insights into nonviolent resistance's effectiveness against Nazi Germany, gleaned from interrogating Wehrmacht generals (240,236-237). Schelling's (1969) offering does include a problematic suggestion of weaponizing civilian defence against Communist regimes through supporting 'civilian offence' (354); even if this was pursued and Sharp contributed to its exploration, as explained above the practical effect seems minimal.

Importantly, CBD theorists derived far more lessons from the historical grassroots and 'spontaneous' cases of civil resistance against Communist regimes in Easter Europe than they ever taught, including the 1956 Hungarian revolution and 1968 Prague Spring that were central to a long arc of resistance to Communist regimes (Roberts, 1969:7-16; 1991:18-19,34; Sharp, 1985:4-5,78,181). This recalls the relationship of Sharp's ideas to the 2010/11 WANA events. The edited texts that were an outcome of the 1964 conference (Roberts, 1967:13; 1969) repeatedly stressed the nascent stage of CBD's development as policy, something reiterated by Sharp in 1985 (viii-ix,xi,4-5). Although Smith (2019b) is quick to dismiss Lakey's (2019) suggestion that Sharp was driven by his pacifist concerns, abolishing war was a clear priority and something Sharp (1965) linked to early socialist doctrine's anti-militarism, 'to abolish capitalism and tyranny as well as the

state itself' (63,5,61-63; Sharp, 1985:178-179). Combined with a Gandhian decentralisation of society and 'active participating democracy' (Sharp, 1967:44-45), this anti-militarism is important because it informed and fed into Sharp's (1965:43-45) clear position that it is Western states, specifically Europe, that should adopt civilian defence—with the emphasis clearly on self-defence (66; Sharp, 1969:119; Sharp, 1985:vii,1-2), thus removing US influence (Sharp, 1985:vii). Unless Sharp was engaging in some cunning on the part of the defence establishment, the kindest thing we can say is that he was both naïve in terms of his belief in influence, and largely overtaken by events in Eastern Europe.

It is also somewhat ironic that Smith, having emphasised the common nonviolent weapon of class struggle as being the strike, finds a mirror in most of the examples compiled by Sharp and others of civil resistance that could inform CBD being strike actions (Roberts, 1967:9; Sharp, 1969:110,116-117). Indeed, Sharp (1965:53; 1985:113-115) goes so far as to call the strategy of a general strike (in self-defence) a 'nonviolent blitzkrieg'. Of Sharp's (1969) 84 examples of nonviolent action listen, at least a quarter involved some manner of strike or general strike action; of the ten specifically listed as strikes and boycotts, he suggests 'many other cases of strikes and boycotts could be included' (122-124). Drawing on Ebert's (1969a) analysis, Roberts (1969) stresses that the 1953 East German uprising, 1956 Hungarian revolution and 1968 in Czechoslovakia used 'a means of action which effectively communicates to a Communist opponent *the genuinely proletarian nature* of the opposition he faces', catching them 'ideologically off balance' (16-17; Arendt, 1969:218-219). Acknowledgement of workers' militant action and economic activities such as strikes underpins understanding of nonviolent action in what proved a significant coagulation of research into the nascent nonviolence field (see Carter, Hoggett & Adams, 1970).

A further aspect of the discussion in Roberts' (1967;1969) edited volume also relates to the establishment of citizens' councils and workers' councils during civil resistance and revolution (Ebert, 1969; Carter, 1969:323-324), as a form of direct democracy with potential relevance to CBD. This is actually a further link to Sharp's (1980:141-159) replication of Arendt's (1969) work around this—explored in greater detail later, yet significant here as a strand of research in nonviolent revolution. Mindful of Smith's scepticism, Carter's (1969) contribution is notable in clearly acknowledging the potential problems of decentralisation of political and economic power not leading to 'the diffusion of power and responsibility'

(327), yet she clearly situates nonviolence as concerned with: 'opposition to economic inequality, discrimination and political oppression, and favours personal freedom and democratic forms of organisation in industry as well as politics' (331). This concerted bottom-up approach to CBD has continued in the form of 'social defence' (see Martin, 1993; Johansen & Martin, 2019).

Indeed, for Smith's critique of Sharp to stand up, one must accept that he was lying and deceiving in his stated position during the 1980s. He placed a clear onus on Western Europe to deescalate through CBD and thus encourage Eastern European Resistance, rather than some form of CBD being directly supported there (Sharp, 1985:8,83-84). Sharp (1985) points specifically to long-running resistance against Communist rule (93-94), suggesting that Solidarity in Poland 'and later resistance have done more to dismantle dictatorial Communist rule than anything the Pentagon has accomplished' (94,166). If one was splitting hairs, the Pentagon is not synonymous with the CIA.[3] Yet ultimately, although Smith tries to identify a clear 'Sharpian model' in the form of CBD, its significance is entirely misrepresented in the history of Eastern European resistance.

Resistance in Poland and the Emergence of Neo-Liberalism

Through considering Poland's Solidarity movement, significant evidence can be provided relating to how class struggle, or workers' struggle—as Smith (2019) rightly advocates reintroducing into resistance—does not guarantee an avoidance of neoliberalism. The vanguardism of political party elites seems to have been significantly responsible for the economic and political shift to the right. It is further apparent that with the critical resistance field's emerging focus on everyday resistance and constructive resistance, opposition to state socialism takes on an even more diverse and complex form.

Assessing the influences informing resistance to communism in Poland, no substantial detail can be replicated here, although context is obviously necessary to avoid gross simplifications (see Sørensen, 2017; Brown, 2018). Ultimately, nonviolent resistance and workers' struggle was

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[3] Concerning the CIA's financial and material support for Solidarity, Jones (2018) suggests it was highly obfuscated and indirect (164-165), requires contextualisation within broader support and notably, one-third was given only in 1989 (309).

intimately connected (Osa, 2003:171-172; Michnik, 1985:45-51; Randle, 1991:48; Cirtautas, 1997:155). Both were fundamental to the principles of the Workers' Defence Committee (Komitet Obrony Robotników–KOR), founded in 1976 by dissident intellectuals and worker-intellectuals, rooted in strike action and workers' councils and whose members contributed prominently to Solidarity (Roberts, 1991:15; Cirtautas, 1997:172,180; Miłosz, 1985:xiii; Jones, 2018:17-18,29-31,48). The endogenous roots of nonviolence should also be emphasised. The Catholic Church's role in resistance was considerable, being intimately connected with the formation of the Polish state and a historical symbol of unity (Luxmoore & Babiuch, 1999:xiii; Milewski et al., 1985:348-349; Monticone, 1986:1,7-8,119-200). Polish Pope John Paul II's June 1979 visit to Poland provided spiritual and moral championing and galvanisation of existing discontent during the 1980-81 events (Luxmoore & Babiuch, 1999:29,196,205-207,213-214,221; Michnik, 1985:168). The KOR and Catholic Church both informed and continued to reaffirm the principles around nonviolence, as well as 'dignity, freedom, tolerance and inclusiveness' that shaped Solidarity from 1980-81 (Cirtautas, 1997:164,168,172,180; Michnik, 1985:168; Miłosz, 1985:ix,xi; Schell, 1985:xxvii-xxix; Smola, 2009:129).

Turning to the complexities of the class conflict and workers' struggle encapsulated in Solidarity, Solidarity's programme was very inclusive and its breadth of societal support considerable—a manifestation of 'anger, solidarity and democracy' (Ost, 2005:1)—leading Ash (1999) to suggest 'class struggle' is too simplistic to describe events (297,320). However, Cirtautas (1997) termed it fundamentally a 'class-based revolt from below', ironically a 'largely working-class revolt against a workers state' (7). This was 'very unskilled and poorly educated workers and peasants' against the party members and *nomenklatura*, the 'small "economic other"' (163; Ost, 2005:1). However, crucially the KOR also manifested a "new middle class", 'young, self-confident, educated, skilled workers who were demanding greater control over production processes' (Cirtautas, 1997:8; Ost, 2005:1; Luxmoore & Babiuch, 1999:181). Cirtautas (1997) observes that since 1989, 'the class that made the revolution' became: 'embattled as free market reforms and changes in property relations designed to produce a capitalist middle class threaten its socioeconomic standing'. Moreover, they were seen to threaten 'the viability of liberal capitalist socioeconomic and political transformation' (8). Nevertheless, one may perceive the seeds of an opposition elite that were able to easily shift away from socialism during the 1980s to embody the

capitalist class themselves, thus entrenching neoliberalism from 1989 (Ost, 2005:38).

Clearly, this elite did not hold entirely uniform perspectives advocating capitalism and forsaking workers (Ost, 2005:57)—as evidenced by the substantial volume of underground publications expressing myriad perspectives—although the post-martial law period and discussion over underground Solidarity's direction illuminates the coalescence of ideas around a market economy, criticism of labour and active discouragement of underground and grassroots labour activities (Ost, 2005:44-46). Ost (2005) explains that there was a 'wave of pro-Solidarity writing embracing property rights and the move to a market economy' as underpinning democracy, engaging with the ideas of neoliberal economists such as Hayek (42,57). The complexity of the discussion is emphasised by, for example, Michnik (1985) rejecting the need to establish a parallel state (54), while emphasising the contribution of an intellectual movement and organised labour action rooted in factories, 'not merely in an apparatus made up of professional conspirators […while remaining attached to] those who are living the everyday life of martial law' (54; Milewski et al., 1985:346). Yet Gebert's (1990) experience was that this was undermined by resistance practices being elitist and losing their mass character: 'underground publishing, education, and culture—very gratifying for immediate participants but more and more inaccessible for the rest' (363-364,370-371).

The notion of "elite pacting" (Marzouki & Meddeb, 2015; Brown, 2019:295) sums up the relationship between certain Solidarity leaders and the Communist party particularly from 1987, when both the Communist party and the USSR increasingly acknowledged the need for reform and liberalisation and Lech Wałesa's team within that, culminating in the 1989 Polish round table talks agreeing 'a four-year transition to liberal democracy' (Bunce, 1999:67; Gebert, 1990:370; Roberts, 1991:16). Ost (2005) characterised this as the coalescence of class interest (43), suggesting 'Solidarity was not just a labour movement. It also served as the vehicle for the technical intelligentsia in its drive to become the new dominant class', with the labour movement 'totally separate from those emerging new elites' (16). While Wałesa established the Civic Committee in 1988, with Solidarity's 1989 election campaign supported by 'reemerging union cells and particularly by nascent local Civic Committee part structures, that actually organised the campaign and triumphed' (35), subsequently the Committees were disbanded at the provincial level (Cirtautas, 1997:214).

Political parties emerged 'that proudly boasted a middle-class, pro-business orientation' (Ost, 2005:35; Cirtautas, 1997:219), with labour being recast as an enemy of national renewal along 'politically liberal capitalis[t]' lines (Ost, 2005:10,38).

It seems pertinent to note that even if nonviolence was one aspect of the elite's ideology, it was neither exclusively so nor *exclusive to them*, with the major issue being their foregoing and abandonment of working-class struggle. Thus, the political developments are important to understanding neoliberalism's emergence in Poland, particularly in light of the direct coalescence of the Solidarity elite and state/party elite's thinking on Poland's 'Western-style market economic reforms' (Ash, 1999:376-377). This did not suddenly emerge; the Communist regime in 1980 was already indebted to Western governments for billions of dollars, and severe austerity was a policy 'Solidarity was increasingly pressured by the government to back […] while the corrupt and inefficient Communist ruling class [were] unwilling to give up their perks' (Ash, 1999:306-307). Through the 1980s, this is something Solidarity leaders increasingly acknowledged, concurring with the necessity of market reforms and IMF assistance (Milewski, 1985:337,344,357; Ash, 1990:340-344). These already established economic problems and ties, after a decade of Reagan's neoliberal economic policies and general move in the West towards this model, would have had an impact on a newly independent Poland and the conditions on assistance.

When the Solidarity-led coalition government from 1989 introduced the 'shock therapy' of the Balcerowicz Plan (Ash, 1999:373), lack of opposition among the working classes was perhaps due to the sense that 'to rise up against a government so clearly born of Solidarity would be to rise against themselves' (Ash, 1999:373; Ost, 2005:192-193). Moreover, as Luxmoore and Babiuch (1999) observed, while national renewal was tied up with Catholic nationalism, the Catholic Church's position was ambivalent on the market economy (237,302,309-310,311), although more significantly the Pope's encyclicals emphasised work as providing dignity, fundamental to human liberation and control of one's destiny (237-238,287). Evidently, in post-1989 circumstances, this religious dogma reminiscent of the 'Protestant work ethic' could have enforced the capitalist system as national renewal (See Cirtautas, 1996:111,167), while 'anger of the economic "losers" [was organised] along non-economic lines' (Ost, 2005:2,35-36,53). Meanwhile, the former communist *nomenklatura* exploited 'the unclear legal conditions

of privatisation to take over as capitalists the enterprises they had formerly commanded as communists' (Ash, 1999:373), with many new bosses including former Solidarity workers prohibiting the formation of unions (Ash, 1999:379-380). Thus, Ost's (2005) conclusion that class must be reintroduced 'as a cleavage around which social conflicts can be organised and economic anger mobilised' (185) predates Smith by some way.

While class conflict and struggle—nor nonviolent action—did not itself negate the emergence of neoliberalism, both these elements were present in Solidarity; it is precisely the decentralised structures that Marcie Smith rejects which seem to hold prospects for nonviolence in the pursuit of socialist aims to come to the fore. Solidarity's 1980-81 commitment to dignity, collective freedom, the 'all-encompassing nature of citizenship […and] form of community-based self-government in which a plurality of different organisations and groupings can participate' (Cirtautas, 1997:211), was entirely abandoned through implementation of the Balcerowicz Plan (Cirtautas, 1997:213-214). Much has been made of Solidarity's civil society character, its 'self-limiting' nature and rejection of the capture of political power in the state and the state's own mechanisms of violence (Ash, 1999:288; Schell, 2002:191). However, the breadth, depth and significance of this alternative approach should be emphasised.

In this regard, Solidarity marked the pursuit of a comprehensive social revolution (Schell 1985:xviii; Gebert, 1990:355), which including under martial law saw efforts to effectively remove and then defend an entire society from the communist state's control (Schell, 2002:194). Sharp and Jenkins (1992) noted the evocative description of this 'as the Communist military dictatorship bobbing around on the surface of the society, able to thrust damaging blows on occasion down into it, but never able to change or control the society fundamentally' (27; Gebert, 1990:355; Sharman, 2003:138-139). Rather than strategic nonviolence, it is far more fruitful to perceive such dynamics feeding into and informing Solidarity in relation to emerging work on everyday resistance and dispersed resistance, comprising of 'counter-repressive resistance' which challenges sovereign power and 'productive' resistance, challenging disciplinary power and biopower (Lilja & Vinthagen, 2014). Prior to 1980, Schell (1985) describes the KOR as tapping into 'certain realms of life' which:

Might be considered social [but] was considered by the government definitely political, for in a totalitarian system every aspect of collective

existence is supposed to originate with the government and be under its management […] daily life becomes a vast terrain on which totalitarianism can be opposed (xxvii).

This gives such resistance in daily life tremendous resonance, and the same may be said following martial law, although with Solidarity being an umbrella under which multiple forms of underground resistance were pursued (Gebert, 1990:360,361-362,368-369; Michnik, 1985:39-41).

Constructive resistance elements also require analysis, overlapping with 'everyday' resistance elements to a certain extent. Polish workers' councils and indeed peasants' rural self-defence committees that formed Solidarity's 'organisational precedent' (Cirtautas, 1997:155,162; Schell, 2002:194-195) also appeared to inform the October 1981 first Solidarity Congress's programme emphasising worker self-management (Cirtautas, 1997:183; Schell, 1985:xxx). Concerning the relationship to nonviolent means, Schell (2002) is most explicit in drawing a parallel between the philosophy and action of Havel, Konrad and Michnik and Gandhi's conceptualisation of constructive work; in the Eastern European context as the notion of 'parallel structures' and alternative culture; spontaneous strikes combined with workers' committees (192-193,199-200). The only connection to Sharp's work of such an approach would be highly abstruse, via his approving comments on Arendt (explored below)—who Michnik does acknowledge (quoted in Schell, 2002:202; also Miłosz, 1985).

Nevertheless, there is a substantial over-simplification in Schell's (2002) suggestion this was in pursuit of 'the kind of parliamentary democracies and free-market economies already functioning in much of the world' (202). If Schell was correct, Smith's (2019a) criticism of decentralisation would stand, in leading to libertarianism. Yet with the constructive elements of Solidarity's programme recalling Arendt's (1969) characterisation of such initiatives as the authentic extension of revolutions (124), Ash (1999) notes the 'paucity of small-scale, constructive economic initiatives in individual work-places or towns', largely due to structural constraints, and which should be considered a missed opportunity for 'organic work' (310-311). During 1980-81 there were those workers embodying a significant radical element in continuing the 'demand for free trade unions' (364-365). Thus the tension in the movement between an emerging elite and the bottom-up pressures seems little to do with nonviolence.

Sharp's Anarchist Affinities

The lack of economic analysis in Sharp's work is rightly emphasised by Marcie Smith, as well as being acknowledged by Sharp himself in *Social Power and Political Freedom* (1980:401). While this may have left Sharp's work vulnerable to co-optation if read superficially, his own position is clearer than Smith suggests. Appendix F 'Economics and Technology' is a brief but illuminating exploration of his own position. Avoiding centralisation in the process of resolving—or as a direct solution to—economic problems is rejected by Sharp (401), in accordance with his political analysis, with a need to avoid 'the disempowerment of the population' (401). Sharp advocates economic sanctions to replace 'State takeovers, State regulation, and dependence on legal prosecutions and court-imposed fines and imprisonments for violations of laws and regulations' (402). Alone this indicates libertarian and indeed neoliberal ambitions, yet the steps Sharp envisages as 'both ends and means' reveals something else:

> Expansion of both consumers' and workers' ownership and control; establishment of new firms to provide alternatives to existing ones whose size and practices are viewed as undesirable; maintenance of the independence of small privately-owned firms from takeovers by massive corporations; changing specific practices and products of existing firms when they are deemed to be of poor quality or otherwise harmful; and promotion of economic decentralisation to enhance the population's economic well-being, independence, and ability to withstand crises. To the degree that a society transarms from military means of defence to civilian-based defence, the freeing from military use of resources, production capacity, labour, and expertise for civilian needs could have highly beneficial economic results (402)

This is distinctly anti-neoliberal—including opposition to the military-industrial complex that has perpetuated US neo-imperialism—and is more reminiscent of the anarchist tradition from which Sharp (1964) actually emerged, in terms of bottom-up economic organisation. Smith acknowledges the 'long anarchist tradition in the US with compelling critiques of the state' (Marcetic & Smith, 2019). Given the evidence posited by Smith for Sharp' neoliberal mentality, it is worth quoting Sharp (1980) at length again:

> People need to have a sense of participation and control in the running of their own economic lives, that they will not be determined by some distant board of directors, government decision, or impersonal forces perceived variously as beneficent or malevolent. This requires explorations of new very different ways to structure and own our economic institutions. We need to bypass both the models of massive investor-owned corporations and of State ownership, and instead explore seriously and experiment with different forms of ownership and management. These include ownership and management by consumers, workers, and technicians, and by small-scale private incorporated groups or individuals (402).

The dismantlement of the state is a means of increasing popular, organised and communal economic control, not distant and obscurantist control by a detached elite. Moreover, it is essential for those critiquing neoliberalism to understand that the contracting out of (economic, political and social) power by states to corporations leaves the state's role intact, in that the state retains its position as enforcer and retainer of 'legitimate' violence in supporting neoliberal practices, arguably giving renewed resonance to the urgency of Sharp's denunciation of the state on a political level. This is of further importance in discussing Sharp's engagement with Arendt's work.

A further significant aspect of this brief appendix is Sharp's comments regarding ecologically sustainable economic practices. Smith (2019a) makes a point of pinning the growth in neoliberal economic thought in the USA in the 70s and 80s to the rise of Sharp's influence, yet at the turn of the two decades here is Sharp (1980) arguing in terms of communal ownership and management:

> Could not some combination of consumers, workers, technicians, and perhaps others, establish jointly-owned democratically-operated non-profit companies to build newly designed quality vehicles developed from the first conception to be safe, lasting and fuel efficient, and do so on a smaller scale than present companies, and with internal democracy and social responsibility? The impact of success with such a venture might exceed all of the government regulations ever issued in that field. Unless alternative means of ownership and control are developed in most fields of production and distribution, we are likely to face continued

massive growth of uncontrolled huge corporations, and, in response, State ownership (403).

Thus, at the turn of the two decades Sharp was arguing along ecological lines that one would still struggle to find espoused in mainstream thought in terms of coupling ecological sustainability with a challenge to the fundamental tenets of modern capitalism—for profit, continued growth, market expansion and Fordism in his questioning of large-scale technology (Sharp, 1980: 403). When one looks to these ideas in accompanying Sharp's focus on avoiding state regulation, ownership and centralisation, it is puzzling what makes his position one to 'Echo [Friedrich] Hayek's' (Smith, 2019), rather than a more radical tradition. Indeed, the only economist Sharp (1980) directly references in this appendix is Schumacher's (2010) *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered.* Originally an economist of Keynesian persuasion, this text was influenced by Gandhian economics and Buddhist economics; Sharp's drawing on Schumacher's text at this point in US history aligns him with President Carter's condemnation of materialism and incessant growth, rather than Reaganism (see McKibben, 2010:xiii-xiv). Roszak (2010) observed that Schumacher's work aligns with that of Peter Kropotkin, Tolstoy, Gandhi and Murray Bookchin among others from the anarchist tradition (4)—one may also note the influence of Arendt on Bookchin's work (Leezenberg, 2016:675). It is unfortunate then that Sharp did not elaborate on the links between nonviolent action and decentralised nonviolent systems.

Sharp and Arendt

Perhaps Sharp's economic commentary is too slight to rebut the practical outcomes of his ideas' application, according to the evidence Marcie Smith poses. However, there are further aspects to Sharp's political analysis—again in *Social Power and Political Freedom*—that Smith problematically omits, yet these aspects reveal more about the alternatives to state centralisation posited by Sharp than a mere advocating of deregulated liberal democratic states. These omitted aspects concern Sharp's (1980) engagement with Hannah Arendt's work dealing with the nature of power, revolution and action, which the entirety of chapter 6 is concerned with. I believe that Sharp's further excavation of the relationship of Arendt's work with nonviolent theory and practice could have been more ground-breaking had he pursued it onwards, indicated further by Schell's (2005) suggestion that the 'commonalities

between Arendt and Gandhi' in terms of the nature of violence, the importance of action and the potential of revolutionary nonviolence are shared, 'as far as I'm aware, by them alone among twentieth-century analysts of political power' (223)—thus overlooking Sharp's work.

Drawing heavily on Arendt's (1963) criticism of liberal democratic structures originating within the French and American revolutions, Sharp (1980) advocates constructive programmes, as well as parallel and alternative forms of government in the shape of council systems as the spontaneous tendency emerging from revolutions as a 'system of direct popular political participation' (156,152,369; Sharp, 1973:5,430-431). Given that Sharp reiterates and reflects Arendt's views so closely, this offers an overlooked dynamic to Sharp's emphasis on action, situating it emphatically as a manner of reinsertion of the individual into the political sphere, in opposition to the people's disempowerment that Arendt saw inherent in the North Atlantic and European conception of liberal democratic systems (Arendt, 1963:239,247-248,272; Sharp, 1979:78-79; 1980:146-147,152-154,220).

One of the main threats to such council systems has been identified as the actions of revolutionary parties, as in the context of the French revolutionary Terror as a form of counter-revolution (Arendt, 1963; Sharp, 1980:150,154; Agamben, 1998:100-101; Wahnich, 2012). In Sharp's (1980) consideration of Arendt's four main reasons for violence (terror) arising in revolution and thus a revolution's 'doom', the fundamental point he reiterates is that it is due to, 'the introduction of the "social question" (especially poverty) into the attempt to establish political freedom' (147,148), for the very reason that its resolution is usually considered as demanding violent action. The only real divergence Sharp expresses is his belief that nonviolent action is the only means to defend a council system—although Arendt does not overlook the detrimental potential of collective violence (Arendt, 1969:166,176-177)—as 'the strong centralising tendencies of such violence would weaken or destroy the council system itself' (Sharp, 1980:158).

What I relate above in terms of the implications of Sharp's engagement with Arendt's assessment of power and violence I have dealt with elsewhere (Brown, 2019). What is important to note based on the Arendt-Sharp connection is that a substantial radical critique has emerged out of this element of Arendt's work, in the form of a biopolitical analysis (see Agamben, 1998:101; Wahnich, 2012:10-13; Arendt, 1969:172; 1990:79), while Arendt's work has substantially informed critical inquiry into violence

(see Evans & Lennard, 2018). Sharp did not reiterate or expand on his engagement with Arendt's work, although this does help to situate his theory of practical nonviolent action as relevant to the 'principled' concerns of the critical theory and critical resistance fields. There have been robust criticisms of Sharp's work from within the critical nonviolence/resistance field already, particularly in terms of its inability to transcend the pragmatic/principled, reformist/revolutionary binaries in nonviolent theory (if not practice) (Chabot & Vinthagen, 2007:96; Chabot, 2015:230; Vinthagen, 2015b:260-261). This criticism also includes the suggestion that the 'instrumentalist and strategic nonviolence' stemming from Sharp's work leaves 'global neoliberal capitalism' unchallenged (Chabot & Sharifi, 2013:4).

Given that Sharp reiterated his claim that nonviolence can be used for good and bad ends (Sharp, 1980:367; 2005:11), while never directly qualifying or questioning the rigidly strategic-pragmatic literature and organisations such as the ICNC invoking his texts, perhaps this criticism suffices. However, it is notable that Sharp (1979) suggested the 'pragmatic-principled' split in nonviolence is overstated, seeing the dynamics of both being mutually reinforcing (222,252-253) and advocating a 'mixed motivation' of 'practical considerations' and '*relative* moral preference [original emphasis]' (Sharp, 1973:68; 1979:267,269-270). This is not a case of principled and pragmatic nonviolence being compatible, but actually conflated (Sharp, 1979:269). Thus, Sharp (1979) was not so much shunning the 'moral imperative to nonviolence' (257), but the inaction moral positions sometimes imply (253; Schell, 2005:223). The extreme pragmatic-strategic and indeed quantitative research approach has misplaced this criticism over the ensuing five decades. Of course, the priority now should be 'to find ways of moving beyond the [pragmatic/technique approach's] limitations inherent in its assumptions on nonviolent action' (Vinthagen, 2015b:262).

The So-called Arab Spring

The 2010/11 West Asia North Africa (WANA) revolutions saw a significant focus on Sharp's apparent influence on the events (Brown, 2019:42-48), an influence that Marcie Smith (2019a) has suggested points to a continuation of US-backed Sharpian overthrow of dictators, followed by installation of neoliberal regimes. The first counter point here concerns the USA's well-established preference for stability (authoritarianism) in the region, which essentially continued during the 2010/11 revolutions; while the Obama

administration ultimately accepted the need for Egypt's President Mubarak to step down (Lynch, 2012:93-95), this was done with considerable reluctance (Migdal, 2014:12-13,291-292), while leverage over the Egyptian military continued to be a significant focus (Atlas, 2012:365-366). It has been suggested that this might have been because of the appreciation that any overt statements of support could have undermined the protests given the USA's less-than-favourable reputation (Lynch, 2012: 26). Even if this is the case, the Obama administration's tacit approval of Saudi Arabia's intervention in Bahrain (Atlas, 2012:376-377; Lynch, 2012:140; Migdal, 2014:13) is further support for the stability over 'democracy' thesis.

Regardless of the complexities and divergences in the USA's interests, in directly appraising Sharp's impact, my research, which included interviews with activists in Tunisia over a five-year period, has shown that Sharp's purported influence was overblown and overstated. This was particularly so in the quest for early explanations of the events within the media (Brown, 2019:42-44), to promote the pragmatic/strategic nonviolence approach (Brown, 2019:44-46) or indeed being invoked to actually reject this Sharpian narrative as flawed (Chabot & Sharifi, 2013:251). The picture those actually involved on the ground paint is a far more bottom-up, indigenously inspired series of events (Brown, 2019:313), with a complex interplay of nonviolent and violent dynamics (Brown, 2019:310-313) that warrants further investigation for a comprehensive picture.

Nevertheless, Sharp's research has relevance to exploring the 2010/11 WANA events, more so through the Arendtian strand that Marcie Smith overlooks in Sharp's work. One of the most prominent resurfacings in the past decade of Arendt's advocating of decentralised council systems has in fact been directly in relation to the 2010/11 WANA revolutions, via Dabashi's (2012) seminal appraisal of those events. The regulation and control of power—more helpfully perhaps, 'power over' (Holloway, 2002:42)—through political freedom as engagement and action, counters processes of sovereign power and biopower, perceived as ultimately undermining politics as liberty: 'a reality of the world that existed in a common space that men inserted themselves into by action and speech' (Arendt, 1998, quoted in Wahnich, 2012:12; Bilgic, 2015:277). Similarly, Dabashi (2012a) invoked Arendt as positing, 'the public domain as the *nexus classicus* of the political—a space in which freedom from fear and the liberty to exercise democratic rights is realised' (246), with politics 'a domain that protects the citizen against state violence' (246; Arendt, 1969:179-180). Rightly I think,

Dabashi perceived the 2010/11 WANA revolutions as also being a challenge to "the West's" 'predatory capitalism' (Dabashi, 2012:245), a challenge that was realised through nonviolent action and may be fulfilled through a new cosmopolitanism (216,246). Thus, through Arendt we come full circle between nonviolence and some of the deeper implications of the change sought during the 2010/11 WANA revolution.

If we return to the idea that parallel structures of organisation such as the council systems are, as Arendt (1969) posited, the 'authentic extension' of revolutionary processes (124), it is significant that such councils also emerged in various countries during the 2010/11 WANA revolutions. This includes the early Councils for the Protection of the Revolution that I researched in the Tunisian context (Brown, 2019:194-199). As Sharp (1980:194) stated about nonviolent action itself, council systems may not be a panacea—particularly as fixed and unchanging entities or 'loci of power' in Sharp's parlance (Sharp, 1980:359)—with significant research still required into such structures and organisations' effectiveness and resilience as nonviolent entities. Sharp tied parallel structures' endurance directly to nonviolent action (Sharp, 1980:32-33,58,153; Sharp, 1973:423,433,800-801,805; Naess, 1974:146; Martin, 1993:125-126), although how local committees could cooperate at higher levels of decision making (see Gandhi, 1949:379-381; Sharp, 1980:156; Arendt, 1963:291; Martin, 1993:125), while avoiding problems of concentration of greater political influence therein (Martin, 1993:125-126), invokes the internal and external tensions that emerged during the Tunisian revolution (Brown, 2019:232-238). Ultimately, this indicates the significance of investigating further the means of greater direct participation of people for 'deliberation, joint decision, and action' (Sharp, 1980:149-150,165,369) in 'nonhierarchical systems' in the political, economic and social sphere (Martin, 1993:130-131,135-140; Sharp, 1980:156), mindful of the potential appropriateness of different means in varied contexts (Vinthagen, 2015a:73).

Finally, it is worth mentioning some of the other recent manifestations of direct democracy that reflect the significance Arendt placed upon them. Akçalı (2018) has analysed the shortcomings yet potential of Popular Assemblies in Turkey following the June Uprising 2013, suggesting that to be effective 'direct democracy models […] need to be spread to the neighbourhoods and workplaces' (336). A foremost contemporary case of bottom-up political structures and direct democracy in practice has been the implementation of Democratic Confederalism by the Kurdistan Worker's

Party (PKK) in Turkey (Fadaee & Brancolini, 2019:3), a case that has been explored within the nonviolent resistance field in relation to the pursuit of 'democratic autonomy' (Koefoed, 2018) through 'constructive resistance' (Sørensen, 2016). Democratic Confederalism's implementation in Western Kurdistan or Rojava has been suggested as being to an even greater extent and effectiveness, including a move to broad-based engagement away from the PKK (Fadaee & Brancolini, 2019:9,14; Cemgil, 2016; Knapp et al., 2016). Fadaee and Brancolini (2019) related PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan's conceptualisation of Democratic Confederalism as having three pillars, namely direct democracy, women's liberation and ecologically oriented human–environment interactions (3; Daudén, 2016:243). Democratic Confederalism has been significantly influenced by Murray Bookchin's (1993) libertarian municipalism, 'building a network of administrative councils whose members are elected from democratic assemblies, in the villages, towns, and neighbourhoods' (Fadaee & Brancolini, 2019:8). Central to this system is anti-capitalism and anti-neoliberalism, with the centralised state considered as playing a key role in the capitalist economic system and hence rejected (Fadaee & Brancolini, 2019:8).

The Rojava project should not be romanticised or idealised; the cult of personality around Öcalan may be perceived as problematic (Leezenberg, 2016:673,683)—perhaps not as much of an issue for Marcie Smith anyway who does not seem to reject top-down change through the state—as well as accusations of breaches of international humanitarian law (Leezenberg, 2016:682). Furthermore, for proponents of nonviolence there needs to be an acknowledgement of statements from Rojava emphatically defending the right to defend the territory with arms (Daudén, 2016; although see Leezenberg, 2016:678). However, rather than diminishing in relevance, Sharp's advocating of constructive programmes and council systems defended through nonviolence as a means of avoiding abuse and centralisation of power may have greater pertinence to the long-term durability of inclusive direct democratic structures, especially if Leezenberg's (2016) concerns over Rojava are taken seriously (685-686).

Conclusion

It is not my intention to claim that Sharp or indeed Arendt's work has directly and practically influenced the examples broadly pointed to above. Nevertheless, through Sharp's connection and engagement with the work

of Arendt, E.F. Schumacher and its invocation by others such as Murray Bookchin, it seems eminently reasonable to situate Sharp's nonviolence within more anarchistic thought, which after all was where Sharp's formative sympathies lay. Moreover, Sharp's advocating of constructive resistance efforts is an underexplored connection to Gandhi's conceptualisation of nonviolence. Marcie Smith suggests that Sharp's work must be added to that of 'other key intellectuals' to avoid the simplistic equation that 'dictators in the centralized state are bad; we want to get rid of those and protest helps us do that; and if we do that, then nonviolence, peace, harmony, justice will prevail', which results in 'very moralistic categories that don't offer much in the way of specifics about what kind of world we want, what kinds of productive relations we want, and what would it actually take to achieve them' (Marcetic & Smith, 2019). Quite simply, I would suggest that Sharp's (1980) *Social Power and Political Freedom* does point to some key intellectuals and the kind of world we want which—even if he did not pursue his line of inquiry into Arendt or Schumacher's work—is aligned with some of the most radical alternatives to neoliberalism modern humanity has yet been able to devise. Moreover, the development of Solidarity in Poland shows that, while class is crucial to resistance, the structures that emerge, capturing of state power and revolutionary vanguardism are serious concerns beyond the means adopted.

Alternatively, based on Marcie Smith's investigation of Gene Sharp's affiliations, he was intellectually dishonest and disingenuous. Aside from the debate between Lakey (2019) and Smith (2019c), I do think the extent and impact of Sharp's influence must be contextualised in certain instances, as my research (Brown, 2019) has sought to do in the case of the WANA revolutions. Indeed, in terms of understanding nonviolent resistance and resistance broadly, including the 'constructive' elements, the multifarious influences and inspirations behind manifestations in their specific context are important to consider (Chabot & Vinthagen, 2007:94; Vinthagen, 2015a:111-112; Leezenberg, 2016:678). An emphasis on Sharp does nothing for understanding bottom-up processes of change and people's agency, while risking Orientalising perspectives of white saviours. A further notable point is that Sharp's ideas were not necessary for installing neoliberal economic systems in Eastern Europe during the Soviet collapse, following the 'colour revolutions' or in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring; the US, UK, other European countries and international financial institutions support for dictators and ruling elites was and has been premised on their

continued adoption of neoliberal reforms anyway (Honwana, 2013:22; Murphy, 2013:36-37).

One aspect of Marcie Smith's (2019a;2019b) analysis that should be emphasised is the problem of 'instrumentalization of protests', whereby they get 'elevated way above other skills, like organising, political education, intellectual labour, debate, the skills of alliance building, i.e. diplomacy, etc' (Marcetic & Smith, 2019). The 'pragmatic' strand of nonviolence research that has developed particularly around Ackerman and the ICNC suffers from this instrumentalization and simplification of resistance dynamics, something that is increasingly challenged in the critical nonviolent resistance literature (Jackson, 2015:31-37; Sørensen, 2017). Arguments in the literature for, say, strict nonviolent discipline (Bamyeh, 2012:56; Ettang, 2014:418) on a practical rather than moral ground leaves less room for solidarity and support for activists and movements incorporating violent elements, for example in Rojava, yet which are clearly in the strain of projects for dignity, equality, freedom and alternatives to the capitalist system. This is unfortunate if they are then overlooked in terms of the elements of direct democracy, 'constructive resistance' and the potential of nonviolence.

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Levelling the Political Playing Field: How Nonviolent Resistance Influences Power Relations After Democratic Transition[1]

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Abstract

Nonviolent resistance (NVR) is being used successfully as a strategy to depose dictators and achieve political change around the globe. This study explores how NVR not only advances democratic transition but also has a long-term effect on political power relations after transition. Bringing together the literatures on nonviolent resistance and political regimes we develop a framework to analyze the effects of different modes of resistance on post-transition power relations in four different aspects: cabinet politics, party politics, peaceful turnover of power, and the political influence of civil society. Based on the in-depth analysis of two African democracies (Namibia and Benin), each resulting from a different mode of transition, we show that NVR levels the political playing field by fostering frequent elite replacement among government ministers, increasing the chances for peaceful political turnovers, inducing a more competitive and diverse party system, and creating a more inclusive environment for civil society organizations.

Introduction

Nonviolent resistance is being used successfully as a strategy to depose dictators and achieve political change around the globe. The most recent example is Sudan, where on 11 April 2019, the Sudanese people nonviolently deposed the long-standing regime of Omar Al-Bashir, following the blueprint of many other successful nonviolent movements like the Arab

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[1] We thank the two reviewers whose comments helped improve and clarify this manuscript.

rebellions in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011, Serbia's Otpor movement in 2001, or the Polish Solidarity Campaign of the 1980s. Contrary to the sobering outcomes of most armed rebellions and coups d'état (Lyons 2016), recent research has shown the remarkable potential of such nonviolent campaigns. Nonviolent campaigns generally have been more successful in reaching their goals (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011), even under unfavorable conditions (Chenoweth and Ulfelder 2017).

This is also clearly visible when it comes to democratization. Within the so-called 'third wave of democratization' starting in 1974 (Huntington 1991), there are many instances of nonviolent struggle leading to democratic transitions. Compared to violent movements, NVR not only proved to be more effective in inducing regime change and democratic transition (e.g. Kim and Kroeger 2019; Pinckney 2018; Celestino and Gleditsch 2013; Chenoweth and Stephen 2011; Ackerman and Karatnycky 2005), but also in fostering the subsequent stability of democracy (Bethke 2017; Bayer, Bethke and Lambach 2016) and its quality (Bethke and Pinckney 2019; Edgell and Bernhard 2019; Pinckney 2018; Kadivar, Usmani and Bradlow 2020).

However, while these studies offer a wealth of theoretical speculation about the causal mechanisms linking NVR and democratization, empirical research on how these mechanisms work is relatively scarce. Some pioneering work was done by Pinckney (2018). Based on case studies of Brazil, Zambia and Nepal and supplementary quantitative analysis, he shows that the influence of NVR on democratization and democratic consolidation is a mainly indirect one consisting of three mechanisms (Pickney 2018: 44). First, NVR induces elite circulation that brings new leaders with democratic preferences into positions of power. Second, it fosters the spread of skills and attitudes of civic engagement within the broader population, and third, it establishes an accountability mechanism for the new political leaders. In a similar way Kadivar et al. (2020) explore how NVR contributed to 'substantive democratization' in Brazil through three mechanisms. First, during the struggle practices of self-organizing become deeply internalized and enable democratic reforms. Second, 'movement veterans' go into politics and subsequently use state offices to deepen democracy while, third, the process of democratic deepening is further supported by a capable civil society resulting from the intense struggle.

In sum, existing empirical studies on causal mechanisms focus either on spaces for and empowerment of civil society or forms of elite and

leadership change. They thereby build on the pioneering work of Gene Sharp, who argues that nonviolent struggle has 'lasting effects both on the nonviolent struggle group itself and on the distribution of power between the contenders in the conflict and within the wider system' (Sharp 2005: 424). Consequentially, Sharp argues that nonviolent action and political violence 'may contribute to quite different types of societies' (2005: 430). In other words, the means determine the ends and 'how one chooses to fight' shapes 'what one wins' (Ackerman and Rodal 2008: 119).

In this article we investigate Sharp's assertion that the mode of resistance has a big influence on post-conflict power relations. We expect that political power is more dispersed in cases of NVR-induced democratization than in other democracies. We further build on Dorman's argument that the impact of (mostly violent) liberation struggles cannot be found so much 'in post-liberation institution-building, but in the relationships and alliances formed during those difficult years' (2006: 1092). We focus on two kinds of power relations: first, power relations among political elites, specifically political parties and government ministers, and how this influences the occurrence of peaceful political turnovers; second, the freedom and autonomy of citizens and civil society to participate in politics. We hypothesize that there is a higher degree of multipartyism, more elite circulation, better chances for peaceful political turnovers, and higher levels of civic participation in democracies induced through NVR and that such democracies see less concentration and personalization of power overall. In order to test this assumption, we analyze the post-transition power structures in two African democracies, Namibia and Benin, which resulted from an armed liberation struggle and a nonviolent resistance campaign respectively.

The paper proceeds as follows: In a first step we bring together the literature on political regimes and nonviolent resistance, and develop a relational approach to explain the effects of different modes of resistance on post-transition power structures. In this section we also develop our hypotheses about how NVR contributes to a levelled political playing field and consequently a more stable democracy. In section two we present our criteria for case selection and our methodology to assess post-transition power structures. Section three contains the empirical analysis. The results from the analysis are critically discussed in the fourth section of this paper. Finally, section five concludes the paper and highlights some avenues for further research.

A relational approach towards nonviolent transitions

Our theoretical model builds upon the literatures on democratic transitions and regime types on the one hand and on nonviolent resistance on the other. We define a political regime as an 'institutionalized set of fundamental formal and informal rules structuring the interaction in the political power center (horizontal relation) and its relationship with the broader society (vertical relation)' (Skaaning 2006: 13). Following Ulfelder (2010), we identify four crucial stakeholders for the stability and persistence of a regime: the government, the opposition, the security forces, and citizens. The key horizontal relationships are (1) civil-military relations between government and the security forces, and (2) competition between government and opposition (see Fig. 1).[2] Vertical relationships are those between citizens and the government (3), the security forces (4) and the opposition (5). In this paper, we focus on the relations between government and opposition and the relations between the government and the citizenry.[3] We omit the entire field of civil-military relations whose role in democratization is extensively covered elsewhere (see e.g. Tusalem 2014; Kuehn 2017).
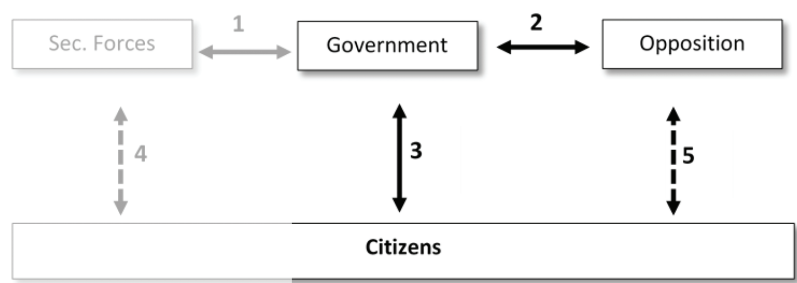

Figure 1: Democratic Regimes: A Relational Model

The key distinction between democratic and non-democratic regimes is mainly based on the question how these vertical and horizontal relations

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[2] 'Opposition' is not limited to 'formal' opposition parties that can typically be found in parliamentary democracies but should be understood as all political parties that are outside the regime coalition.

[3] The model is described in more detail in our upcoming volume, 'Nonviolent resistance and democratic consolidation' (Lambach et al. 2020).

are structured. According to Boix, Miller, and Rosato (2013: 9) a regime can generally be described as democratic if political relations are marked by contestation (horizontal dimension) and participation (vertical dimension). Contestation is given if the executive is directly or indirectly elected in popular elections and is responsible either directly to voters or to a legislature and if the legislature is directly chosen in free and fair elections. Participation is further understood as a minimal level of suffrage (i.e. the right to vote). We assume that from this admittedly low benchmark, democracies can vary to great degrees in terms of quality and chances for participation. Thus, we see this minimal definition as the starting point from which democratic deepening (e.g. Fung and Wright 2003) is possible. Deep and radical forms of democracy are far more demanding and thus require ongoing contestation, struggle and reform.

In our less maximalist reading of democracy, the relationship between government and opposition is one of the defining differences between democracies and autocracies. Liberal democracies rely on political pluralism that is reflected in multi-party systems. However, we cannot infer anything from the simple fact that multiple parties exist about the quality or the specific relations between government and political opposition within a multi-party system. The relation is determined, first, by the relative strength of the opposition versus the ruling party and, second, by the degree of polarization between the two. To capture both, scholars of party systems distinguish dominant-authoritarian, dominant, non-dominant, and pulverized systems (Sartori 1976). All of these are multi-party systems, but they vary greatly in the degree of dominance and oppositional checks of the government and thus in the quality of democracy.

Similarly, the vertical relation between the government and citizens is of central importance for a democracy, since democratic governments are legitimized through elections. Thus, a democratic government has to show sufficient levels of responsiveness and accountability for a credible claim to represent the people who are the 'sovereign' (Bardi, Bartolini and Trechsel 2015). Free, fair and regular elections are one way to influence the government and to hold it accountable. Lobbying, petitioning and protest are other options that are used by citizens to influence the course of government outside of election times (e.g. Costain and McFarland 1998). These mainly relate to notions of empowerment and inclusion of all major sectors of society – in short, to have a well-functioning democracy, societies need to create a leveled political playing field. This ties back to Tilly's

argument that polities can be regarded as democratic if 'relations between the state and its citizens feature broad, equal, protected and mutually binding consultation' (Tilly 2007: 13-14). In a similar way, Mahatma Gandhi distinguished western 'nominal' democracy from his ideal of 'purna swaraj' or 'integrative' democracy (Pantham 1983: 165), with the latter marked by substantial individual empowerment and requiring not only political equality and freedom but also economic and cultural independence (Chabot and Vinthagen 2015: 520). In other words, more substantial direct forms of democracy, such as Barbers 'strong democracy' (2004), forms of 'radical' (e.g. Mouffe 1992) or 'deliberative' democracy (e.g. Fishkin 2011) would need an even playing field not just in political but also in economic and cultural terms.

Minimal understandings of democracy often focus on procedural political equality such as general suffrage (Beitz 1983), but downplay the importance of other factors like education and political efficacy that determine if citizens feel capable of making political decisions and exercising their right to participate. In order to level the political playing field, democracies need institutions and office-holders that allow for such participation and ordinary citizens who are capable of using these opportunities (Levitsky and Way 2010).

We believe that NVR can help level the broader political playing field, not only the electoral one. In terms of our relational model, NVR changes the relations between government and opposition and between political elites and the ordinary citizen. It works through both of its semantic components: nonviolence, which can minimally be defined as 'the lack of an intent to harm or injure another' (Bond 1988: 81), and resistance, i.e. acts of defiance and opposition. This double feature is often depicted by the metaphor of 'two hands of nonviolence' by Barbara Demings (1971): While the one hand is raised in a 'stop gesture', the other is still stretched out. In essence, the first ends cooperation under the given circumstances and disrupts the life of the wrongdoer, while the second offers cooperation in future and symbolizes the faith that both adversaries, as humans, are capable of finding constructive solutions. According to Vinthagen (2015), NVR further has the ability to enact utopias. In other words, creative and constructive resistance can contribute to the realization of formerly unthinkable solutions. Specifically, we expect that NVR affects horizontal and vertical regime relations in four ways that are conducive to democratic quality: elite replacement, political turnover, multipartyism, and the empowerment of civil society.

Horizontal relations

NVR movements have to be large to achieve their goals. Consequently, they are more politically heterogeneous than their armed counterparts (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011; Schock 2005). To achieve the support they need, most NVR movements rally around a single issue and the lowest common goal. Since these movements show highly diverse preferences on most issues but are united primarily by a single goal that is based on a rejection of the status quo, such movements are also called 'negative coalitions' (e.g. Beissinger 2013). Due to their decentralized, less hierarchical structures, NVR movements tend to produce a variety of political leaders with modest influence and power and thus counter the emergence of singular authority figures who are able to centralize power in election campaigns. Similarly, since the movement is more diverse, it is difficult for single activists or factions turning into political candidates or parties after the transition to monopolize the revolutionary credentials. Last but not least, NVR movements do not possess the coercive means to suppress rivals and to prevent defection. Taking this into consideration, NVR movements often tend to be ill-prepared and sometimes even unwilling to fill the political power vacuum they created through their actions. This means that they level the democratic playing field by ousting the autocratic leadership and delegitimizing former elites. Since NVR movements lack the means and the will to monopolize power, these movements often disintegrate and become fertile soil for new parties.

Contrary to NVR movements, armed movements often establish hierarchical structures that replicate state institutions and are therefore better prepared and more willing to take over power. Due to the smaller numbers involved in armed struggle and the higher risks associated with it, participants in armed insurrections tend to develop an 'ethos of a secret elite vanguard' (Zunes 1994: 419) and feelings of being entitled to rule due to past deeds (Bayer and Pabst 2018). While the former typically leads to group closure amongst the veterans and mistrust against the outgroup, the latter undermines the democratic principle of equal citizenship. Garton describes the feelings of entitlement of Australian World War I veterans in drastic terms. Driven by war propaganda, these veterans were encouraged to think that they had achieved a special citizen status above those who had not served. In their eyes 'it was the turn of (implicitly lesser) citizens to bear the brunt of hardship' (Garton 1996: 64).

Violent struggles can seriously influence horizontal regime relations by limiting elite turnover in several ways. First, veterans of armed struggles

tend to appoint their confidants and former comrades and thus put past merits before actual qualifications. Second, by relegating non-participants in the armed struggle to second-class citizens democratic debate and political competition are stunted. Third, armed struggle typically leads to political polarization between the former enemies which is hard to overcome and requires reconciliation and confidence-building measures. Fourth, former armed movements often possess a de facto veto power in the form of coercive means which allow them to suppress rival movements and political opponents if necessary. As Deonandan (2007: 238) concludes, 'most of the revolutionaries who gained power, be it by insurrection or negotiation, tend towards one-party dominance'.'

In contrast, NVR avoids the worst excesses of polarization. According to Gandhi the political adversary has to be seen as someone 'whose sense of humanity could be awakened through the use of non-violence' (Dalton 2012: 96). Consequentially, Gandhi saw it as a duty of the resister to 'liquidate the antagonism, not the antagonist' (Bose 1948: 221). Gandhi therefore understood democracy as a program of 'transformation of relationship ending in peaceful transfer of power' (cited by Johnson 2006: 27) rather than merely about seizing power. For Galtung, Gandhi's theory of nonviolence is therefore 'based on the idea of recognizing the human being in the other, appealing to that human being not only for compassion with one's own plight, but also for self-interest in a better future, to be enjoyed together' (Galtung 1989: 3). In other words, NVR, as a 'reversible action' (Galtung 1996: 271), works by ending cooperation on unequal terms but provides the ability to renew cooperation on more equal terms without having to go through the process of post-conflict reconciliation. In this sense, NVR has the ability to decrease social distance (Schock 2013: 284) and to facilitate dialogue on more equal terms (Vinthagen 2015).

We therefore assume that transitions induced by NVR lead to a more pluralistic political system by levelling the horizontal relations between a) political parties and b) government and opposition.

These leveled horizontal relations should be observable in three aspects:

Hypothesis 1: Elite circulation and replacement are more frequent in NVR-induced democracies than in democracies evolving from violent resistance.

Hypothesis 2: NVR-induced democracies are better able to achieve peaceful turnovers of power than democracies resulting from armed resistance.

Hypothesis 3: NVR-induced transitions foster political systems that feature

a higher number of political parties relative to transitions brought about by violent rebellion.

Vertical relations

Starting with Etienne de la Boétie's 'Voluntary Servitude' (1997 [1553]) the concept of NVR has always contained the idea of countering the duality of domination and submission. It is therefore no surprise that Sharp's strategic approach (1973a, 1973b, 1973c) begins with a part on 'Power and Struggle', where Sharp articulates his critique of assumptions that power is intrinsic to the powerholder. In contrast, Sharp articulates a pluralistic concept of power by claiming that 'obedience is at the heart of political power' (1973: 16). Subordinates can undermine power if they 'reject passivity and submission' (Sharp 1973a: 64). Acts of disobedience against authority engender a process of personal empowerment (Sharp 1973b) and a redistribution of power. Other authors similarly state that NVR can be used to challenge power asymmetries (Dudouet 2008) and be employed as a 'counterpower' (Gee 2011). According to Sharp (2009), every resistance campaign has constructive and lasting elements. Campaigns create or take over organizations like civic associations or trade unions to support the struggle. These institutions become so-called 'loci of power' which become important 'places' in the post-transition geography of power. These loci of power contain the power wrested from the authoritarian regime and oppose any attempt to shift the balance of power back to ruling elites, building a first line of defense against any authoritarian backlash.

Focusing on the Habermasian 'ideal speech situation' as a prerequisite for democracy, Vinthagen argues that NVR can tackle the problem of a 'lack of interest in dialogue shown by those in dominant positions of power' (Vinthagen 2015: 165), by forcing the powerful to the negotiating table and approximating the ideal speech situation through levelling the political playing field (Vinthagen 2015: 135). Finally, successful NVR campaigns can influence vertical relations between political elites and ordinary people by serving as 'history lessons' (Hilton and Liu 2017), which illustrate that peaceful political change is possible even if it seems to be against great odds. Narratives of successful resistance can become 'mnemonic resources' (Della Porta et al. 2018: 3) for renewed mobilization and thus constitute a culture of resistance and participation.

Against this background, we argue that NVR helps to create a more even playing field between political elites (be it the government or the

opposition) and ordinary citizens by breaking or undermining hierarchies. Specifically, we expect that:

Hypothesis 4: Civil society organizations enjoy more autonomy and have more political influence in democracies induced by NVR compared to democracies that came about by violent resistance.

Methodology and case selection

To test our assertion that NVR leads to a more even political playing field, we use a comparative case study design. According to George and Bennett (2005: 5, 17) case studies are suitable for a 'detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode' and allow us to 'develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events.' The case studies serve two purposes. First, they explore and test how average effects identified by quantitative studies work in individual cases. Second, they highlight if and how quantitative measurement strategies miss important nuances of complex case-specific political developments.

We use the cases of Benin and Namibia. Benin's *Rénouveau Démocratique* (democratic renewal) in 1990 represents a paradigmatic case of an NVR movement leading to a democratic transition. In contrast, Namibia's double transition towards independence and democracy in 1990 serves as a representative case for an armed struggle leading to a political transition. Beyond the different modes of resistance, both cases share many similarities. Both are 'third wave' transitions in Sub-Saharan Africa at the same time. In addition, both cases also score similarly on indicators of economic and human development.[4]

In Benin, pro-democracy protests emerged in 1988 and intensified in 1989. The country was then ruled by Mathieu Kérékou and his *Parti de la Révolution Populaire du Bénin* (PRPB, Socialist Unitary Party). Although the regime had first brought some stability to a country 'famous for successive military coups' (Koko 2008: 4), it had since antagonized ever growing proportions of the population. With the regime making feeble attempts at political reforms, the opposition finally rallied under the call to 'Rise up to get rid of Kérékou and his clique' (Houngnikpo and Decalo 2013: 12). The year 1989 began with work slowdowns (Seely 2009: 39) and later

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[4] In 2018 Benin was ranked 163rd on the Human Development Index, while Namibia was ranked 130th.

saw a general strike of 'overwhelming national proportions' (Koko 2008: 44). In July 1989, employees from 13 out of 16 state ministries were on strike (Bierschenk 2009: 3). The mainly urban protests in Porto Novo and Cotonou were complemented by tax boycotts (Akindes 2015: 54).

Lacking popular support, Kérékou officially announced the end of Marxism-Leninism as a state doctrine and called for the appointment of an *Assemblée Nationale des Forces Vives de la Nation* – the National Assembly of the Active Forces of the Nation – by the end of 1989. What was originally meant as a symbolic act to introduce some minor reforms was hijacked by the opposition and developed its own dynamic. The opposition successfully coordinated their actions and gained the upper hand in the National Conference, whose delegates finally declared themselves to be a constituent assembly, worked out a new constitution, put into place a provisional government and set the terms for democratic elections (Seely 2009: 42). The transition ended with the first peaceful electoral turnover on the African mainland, making Benin the first of the new democracies in Africa (Decalo 1997) and up to now one of Africa's most advanced and stable ones. So far, Benin witnessed six presidential and eight parliamentary elections which have all been rated as mostly free and fair (Houngnikpo and Decalo 2013: 14). The polls resulted in four peaceful political turnovers. Since large segments of the society participated in these acts of nonviolent resistance, Benin's peaceful campaign for democracy is frequently referred to as the 'People's Revolution' (Koko 2008: 43) or a 'revolutionary constructive resistance' (Vinthagen and Johansen 2019), and became a role model for democratization in the region (Seely 2009).

Our second case is Namibia's double transition which also occurred in 1990. The former German colony of South-West Africa had been placed under South African trusteeship by the League of Nations after South African troops occupied the territory during the First World War. However, resistance against what was perceived as renewed colonialism – this time by South Africa – soon began to emerge (Dedering 2009). The contract labor system introduced by South Africa led to new labor organizations and coordinated resistance (Cooper 1999). The resistance movement gained broader support and became more violent when international lobbying for independence failed at the United Nations and South Africa began implementing its Apartheid policy in Namibia. In 1959 riots broke out in Windhoek, and 68 people were killed in an incident that later was called

'Namibia's Sharpeville' (Rocha 2018). This brutal act of oppression further radicalized the Namibian resistance.

Several members of the resistance movements went into exile (Katjavivi 1988), and in 1960 the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) was founded. In 1966 it began its armed struggle for the independence of what later became known as Namibia. The struggle lasted for over two decades and resulted in the loss of some 20,000 lives. The conflict finally ended in 1990 with Namibia's independence and transition to democracy under United Nations supervision. The case of Namibia is one of the few successful democratic transitions after armed struggle. Due to the heavy international involvement in the peace settlement and the following democratic transition, some speak of democracy as the byproduct of independence (Hartmann 2009). Nevertheless, Namibia today counts as one of the most stable democracies in Sub-Sahara Africa. Since 1989 Namibia has held seven parliamentary and six presidential elections. All of these were won by the former National Resistance Movement SWAPO which had transformed itself into a regular party just prior to the elections for the Constituent Assembly in 1989. Given this astonishing electoral dominance, Namibia is sometimes critically labeled as a form of democratic authoritarianism (Melber 2015).

Empirical Analysis

Horizontal Relations

To explore how modes of resistance shaped subsequent horizontal power relations in the newly established democracies of Benin and Namibia, we analyze post-transition cabinet politics, party politics and political turnover of power.

Cabinet Politics

Cabinet politics are a microcosm of how democratically elected presidents in Benin and Namibia manage elite relations. This concerns the frequency of cabinet changes, but also whether appointments are based on merit and qualification of candidates or determined by clientelist ties. To analyze cabinet politics, we rely on detailed data on cabinet changes, which covers the time period from democratic transition in the respective country until

December 2019.[5] Specifically, our cabinet data records the tenure of all ministers, including their appointments, reassignments and dismissals.[6]
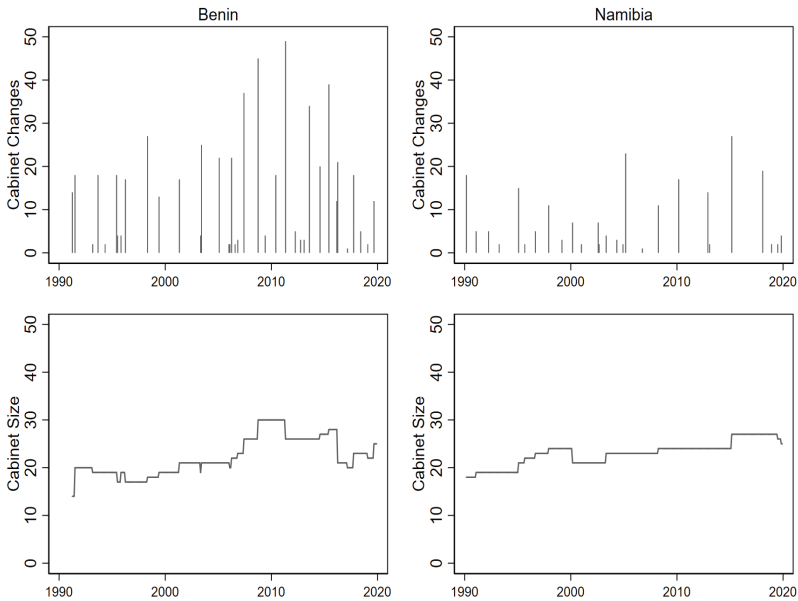

Figure 2: Cabinet Changes and Cabinet Size in Benin and Namibia

Generally, Namibia and Benin show different patterns of cabinet politics. The first difference is in the total number of ministers that served for the respective countries. Between March 1990 and December 2019, a total of

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[5] The main sources used to code the cabinet changes were the Africa Research Bulletin, Keesing's Record of World Events and the British Broadcasting Corporation World Broadcast Information Service. The data collection focused on ministers with full cabinet rank. Thus, deputy ministers, regional ministers or minister of the state were not recorded, unless reliable sources indicated that they held a full minister rank in the cabinet. For biographical data of Namibian ministers, we also draw on Melber et al. (2016).

[6] An appointment refers to a person gaining a cabinet position and becoming a minister, with their respective portfolio specified in the appointment. Reassignment refers to the relocation of a person from one portfolio to another. Dismissal refers to the removal of a minister from the cabinet.

70 different individuals served as ministers in Namibia. By contrast, overall 264 different individuals served as ministers in Benin between April 1991 and December 2019. This difference cannot be explained by variation in the size of the government. As shown in Fig. 2, despite some fluctuation, there is no substantial difference in cabinet size between the two countries. Instead, cabinet changes occurred much more frequently in Benin than in Namibia. Whereas governments in Benin implemented 564 changes to their cabinet (285 appointments, 193 dismissals, and 86 reassignments), only 215 of such changes occurred in Namibia (107 appointments, 35 dismissals, and 73 reassignments).

Another way to look at this pattern is to compare the time in office of ministers in Benin and Namibia. To account for 'censoring' of the data (i.e. some ministers are still in office at the end of December 2019 and thus their tenure fate is unknown), we calculate the median survival time of ministers. This measure describes how many months 50% of all appointed ministers stay in the cabinet. After democratic transition, the median survival time of ministers in Benin is 25 months, i.e. little more than two years. In Namibia, the median time in office for ministers is 59 months, or almost five years. Again, this indicates a much higher frequency of elite circulation in Benin relative to Namibia.

Such a pattern can also be observed when we look at the political careers of the members of the first post-transition governments in Benin and Namibia. As analyzed in detail by Melber, Lakromrey, and Welz (2016), the first democratic government of Namibia appointed by President Sam Nujoma on 22 March 1990, was dominated by leading figures from the armed resistance movement. Of the 18 ministers appointed in the first government, only two did not have a background in the armed movement. Moreover, half of these 16 SWAPO ministers went on to serve for 15 years in the government until the end of the administration of President Nujoma in 2005. Some of them, such as Marco Hausiku or Nickey Iyambo, continued in a ministerial capacity under later presidents Hifikepunye Pohamba and Hage Geingob.

In Benin, we can see a different pattern of elite replacement during and after transition to democracy. In the transition government that took office March 1990, with the single exception of Robert Dossou who had briefly served as minister under Kérékou, none of the newly appointed ministers had ever held a ministerial position, although some individuals

had worked in junior positions in the government or the bureaucracy. The cabinet mostly consisted of highly qualified civilians without any political background, such as Nicéphore Soglo, the former deputy director of the West African Central Bank, who became Prime Minister of the transitional government and later defeated Kérékou in the presidential elections in 1991. Similarly, the former banker Idelphonse Lemon became minister of finance and Paulin Hountoudji, an internationally known philosopher and professor at the national university of Benin, became minister of education. Most members of the transition government also appeared in the first government appointed by Soglo after he became President. However, only three months later Soglo implemented his first cabinet reshuffle, increasing the size of the cabinet from 14 to 19 ministers, changing numerous portfolios, bringing in new and dismissing old ministers. The practice of conducting cabinet shuffles on a regular basis was adopted by all subsequent presidents of Benin.

These differences in elite management appear to be influenced by the different modes of resistance that occurred in Benin and Namibia. In Benin the successful NVR movement used the opportunity of the National Conference to establish a political culture of regular elite turnover and infuse 'fresh blood' into the political system. In Namibia, by contrast, the transition induced by successful violent revolution created a generation of SWAPO cadres who felt entitled to fill political office (Bayer and Pabst 2018). Correspondingly, the 'struggle credentials' (Malaba and Melber 2018: 230) of individuals evolved as the most important factor in cabinet appointments.

Party politics

Regarding party politics, we are interested in how the different modes of resistance in Benin and Namibia affected the playing field of post-transition competition between government and opposition and among political parties. Specifically, we explore political turnover of power and the seat shares of parties in the legislature.

Party politics are very different between the two cases. While the Namibian party system is dominated by SWAPO, Benin has a very diverse and pluralistic party system. SWAPO uses references to the armed struggle to entrench its dominant position, creating a polarized political landscape which is divided between the ruling SWAPO and the former Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA, rebranded as the Popular Democratic Movement in 2017). The DTA took a moderate stance towards the South African occupation and thus was often denounced as collaborators. Most prominently, this shows

when SWAPO politicians use the rhetorical question 'where were you while we fought in the trenches?' to silence criticism from the opposition, especially the DTA/PDM, or even younger generations of SWAPO members (Bayer and Pabst 2018: 12). In contrast, Beninese parties often form alliances prior to parliamentary elections. Furthermore, 'floor-crossing', i.e. leaving one's own party after elections to join another party, happens frequently in Benin, while leaving SWAPO is generally perceived as betrayal and sanctioned by the party. As former Minister of Trade Hidipo Hamutenya once famously said, 'it's cold outside Swapo', meaning that everybody leaving the party will be faced with social and political exclusion (Bayer 2017: 35).

Most importantly, there are crucial differences between Benin and Namibia in terms of how elections generate political turnovers of power. The stability of the new democratic system crucially depends on government and opposition complying with the rules and outcome of the electoral competition. Therefore, Huntington (1991) proposed the so called two-turnover test to assess if political regimes managed to achieve democratic consolidation. The first peaceful turnover occurs when the incumbent party that won the founding election of a new democracy loses a subsequent election and peacefully hands over power to the opposition. The second turnover occurs if the new incumbent party repeats this process again after losing another subsequent election.

In Benin, post-transition elections produced three peaceful political turnovers after the founding election, which had itself already deposed the former single-party government. After finishing his first term as democratically elected President of Benin, Nicéphore Soglo lost power in the 1996 presidential election to the former president Kérékou, marking the first peaceful turnover. Benin passed the two-turnover test in 2006 when Kérékou handed over power to Thomas Boni Yayi. After two terms in office, Boni Yayi stepped down in 2016 for another peaceful turnover to Patrice Talon, the winner of the presidential elections. In Namibia, by contrast, no turnover of power has occurred since transition. Elections are dominated by SWAPO and other parties are not capable of mobilize sufficient support for their candidates to win elections.

As we show elsewhere (Lambach et al. 2020), when comparing a large number of cases that also include elite-led transitions along with violent and nonviolent ones, there appears to be a substantial effect of NVR on a regime's ability to pass the two-turnover test. Although there is only weak

evidence that NVR advances the probability of a first peaceful turnover, the probability of subsequently achieving a second peaceful turnover is substantially improved if democracy came about by means of NVR.

Differences in party politics also show with regard to the representation of parties in the legislatures of the two countries.[7] In Fig. 3, we compare data on the seat share that the largest and the second largest party acquired in five post-transition legislative elections in Benin and Namibia.
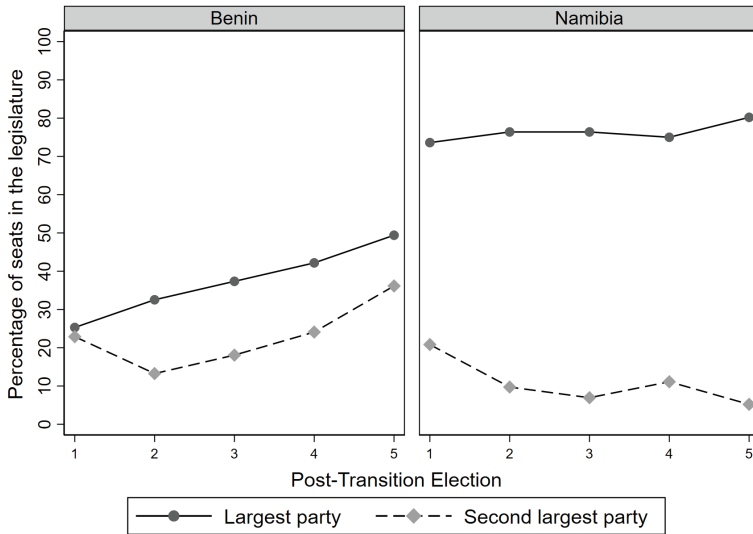

Figure 3: Percentage Share of Seats in the Legislatures of Benin and Namibia

Fig. 3 shows substantial differences in party competition in Benin and Namibia. Both the absolute seat share of the largest party and also the difference between the seat share of the largest and the second largest party are substantially lower in Benin than in Namibia. In Benin, the seat share of the largest party ranges from 25% in the first legislative election after transition in 1995 to almost 50% in the fifth election after transition in 2011. The

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[7] Data on legislative elections in Benin and Namibia was collected from Adam Carr's archive, the African Elections Database; and the Inter-Parliamentary Union database.

seat share of the second largest party in these elections often comes close to these numbers, indicating real competition and parliamentary influence. By contrast, in Namibia, SWAPO attains a seat share of more than 70% in every legislative election, peaking at more than 80% in the fifth election in 2014. The second largest parties in each legislative election reported attaining only minimal seat shares, ranging from five to at most 20%.

To provide further details and more systematically compare the party systems that evolved from the different modes of resistance, we calculated the effective number of parties (Laakso and Taagepera 1979) in the legislatures of Benin and Namibia, for five post-transition elections. This measure is calculated as:

$$\frac{1}{\sum s_i^2},$$

where si is the percentage of legislative seats won by the ith party. Accordingly, the measure accounts for the number of parties in a legislature but also for their relative strength. It captures diversity of the party politics in a country and can also identify situations that 'in effect' mimic a single-party system. The results are described in Fig. 4.
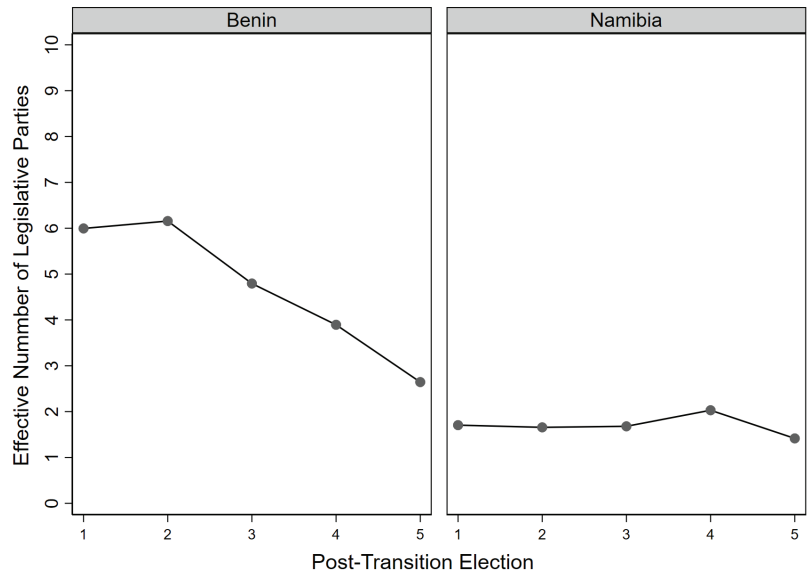

Figure 4: Effective Number of Parties in Benin and Namibia

As shown in Fig. 4, Benin and Namibia substantially differ regarding the development of the effective number of parties in the legislature. In Benin, the legislature resulting from elections in 1995 had six effective parties, i.e. a fragmented legislature. Over subsequent elections, this measure decreased to 2.6, a more moderate level, in 2011. By contrast, the effective number of parties in Namibia hardly reached a comparable level. For the first three legislative elections after transition, it stayed constant at about 1.7, then increased to two in the fourth legislature but fell back to 1.4 in the fifth legislature in 2014.

In sum, these results underscore the difference in party politics between Benin in Namibia, with a more competitive party system induced by the NVR movement in Benin and a dominant party system evolving from the violent transition in Namibia. In Benin, the legislature is diverse and opposition parties acquire real influence. In Namibia, none of the political parties pose a real electoral threat to SWAPO's dominance and their legislative influence is limited. These factors also contribute to the different capabilities of democracy in Benin and Namibia to produce peaceful turnovers of power.

Vertical power relations

To explore how the mode of resistance shapes vertical power relations between the government and citizens, we analyze measures that capture the autonomy of civil society organizations (CSOs) and their ability to influence policymaking. Specifically, we use data from the Varieties of Democracy (VDEM) database, which provides expert ratings of the CSO sector in countries over time.[8] The data captures the time period from democratic transition of the respective country until 2019. The results for Benin and Namibia are displayed in Fig. 5.

The first indicator captures the extent to which the governments controls the CSO sector, i.e. their foundation and dissolution. The measure ranges from zero to four. A score of zero indicates monopolistic control of the CSO sector by the government. A score of four means that CSOs are unconstrained, i.e. the government does not impede their formation or operation unless CSOs engage in violent rebellion. As shown in the upper-

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[8] In the following analysis, we use the indicators 'CSO entry and exit (v2cseeorgs)', 'CSO repression (v2csreprss)', 'CSO consultation (v2cscnsult)', and 'CSO participatory environment (v2csprtcpt)' from version 9 of the VDEM database (Coppedge et al. 2019).

left panel of Fig. 5, Benin and Namibia do not differ much on this measure. After transition, both countries attain the highest level of an unconstrained CSO sector, although it took a little longer to achieve this in Namibia.

The second indicator captures the amount of targeted repression that CSOs are exposed to. Again, the measure ranges from zero to four. A score of zero indicates severe repression, where the government pursues violent measures against members of CSOs. A score of four means that CSOs can operate without any form of repression. As shown in the upper-right panel of Fig. 5, political developments of CSO repression were similar in Benin and Namibia. After transition, both countries attain the highest rating, which indicates that CSOs do not face repression by the government. However, while Namibia manages to sustain this level through the whole time-series, political developments in Benin led to weak repression of CSOs between 2013 and 2015.
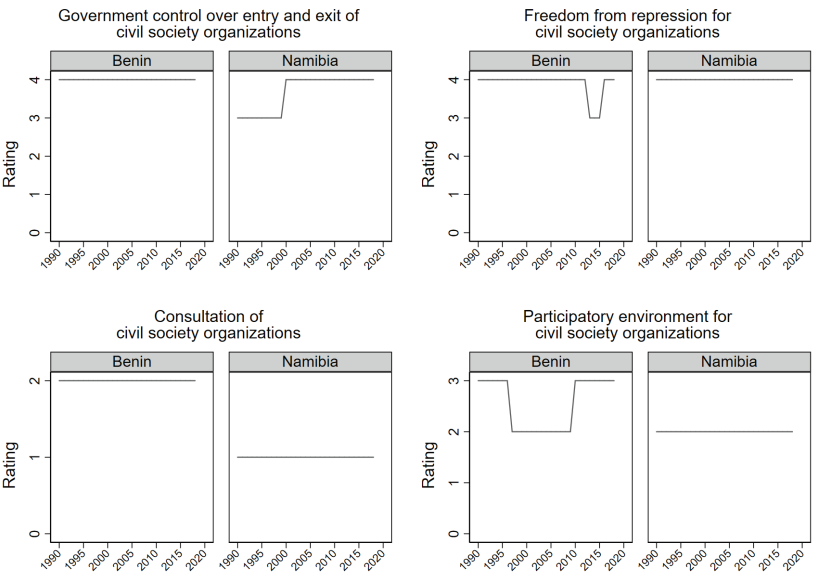

Figure 5: Indicators of Autonomy and Political Influence of Civil Society Organizations

As our third indicator of vertical power relations, we explore the process of CSO consultation. The indicator is scaled from zero to two and measures the extent to which CSOs are consulted in policymaking. A score of zero

indicates that CSOs are not consulted at all and a score of two means that CSOs are recognized as important stakeholders. As shown in the lower-left panel of Fig. 5, Benin and Namibia differ substantially regarding this indicator. While Benin achieves the highest rating of two directly after transition, Namibia attains only a rating of one, which means that CSOs are only occasionally consulted in policymaking.

Finally, as our fourth indicator, we look at the participatory environment for CSOs. This measure captures how citizens are involved in CSOs. The indicator is scaled from zero to three. As shown in the lower-right panel of Fig. 5, Benin achieves the highest rating, which indicates a diverse CSO landscape with broad participation of citizens. Namibia only attains a constant rating of two, which means that a diverse CSO landscape exists, but participation of citizens is weak. However, Benin achieved a rating of two between 1997 and 2009 as well.

In sum, the results highlight an important difference between Benin and Namibia regarding the capabilities of CSOs to influence policymaking. These capabilities appear to be higher in Benin than in Namibia. This finding also corresponds well with qualitative accounts highlighting the involvement of CSO in policymaking in Benin (Heilbrunn 1993: 298) and a corresponding lack of involvement in Namibia (Melber 2015: 51). One particular mechanism that produced this difference is the concept of the 'Estates-General', a consultation process which evolved from the National Conference in Benin (Fomunyoh 2001: 40). The preparatory committee of the National Conference under Robert Dossou fostered the involvement of civil society in the political process by asking the public to send in ideas and proposals to set the agenda for the conference. After transition, this form of public consultation became a routinized practice of governments to attain public approval for their policies. Subsequently, Estates-General were held by different presidents on education reforms, modernization policies of public service, civil-military relations, judicial, health and economic reforms as well as religious matters. Accordingly, Estates-General are a key quality of civil society involvement in policymaking in Benin, which directly evolved out of the NVR-induced transition. By contrast, in Namibia such procedures are not only missing, but instead the ruling party is actively impeding CSO consultation for policymaking. SWAPO subsumes political activity such that many CSO have direct or indirect ties to the ruling party (e.g. veteran associations, and most trade unions like the National Union of Namibian Workers). In consequence, most CSOs are more supportive than critical of

SWAPO. Independent political influence of CSOs is considered as a threat to the ruling party's legitimacy as the sole representative of the people.

Discussion

Revisiting our initial assumption, we find support for all four hypotheses, albeit to different extents. Regarding horizontal power relations, we expected, first, a higher frequency of elite turnover in NVR-induced democracies relative to democracies that came about by violent rebellion. This was clearly supported by our analysis of cabinet politics. Post-transition cabinet politics in Benin featured more cabinet changes, involving substantially more individuals, who stayed in office for a much shorter time than in Namibia. The causal influence of NVR is somewhat indirect here. In Benin, the peaceful transition created a political framework that, first, made a substantial elite replacement possible and, second, entrenched a culture of not allowing elites to arrogate too much power in political institutions. In contrast, Namibia only saw the first of these effects when transition swept SWAPO veterans into political office where they used their revolutionary credentials to stay in power. Our analysis, however, does not clearly offer a direct causal link of cabinet reshuffles and elite replacement in the democratic period to public protests and NVR.

According to the second hypothesis, NVR-induced democracies should be more likely to create peaceful turnovers of power through elections relative to democracies resulting from violent transitions. Again, our cases conformed to this expectation, with Benin passing the two-turnover test in 2006. Following the country's tradition of civic activism that was inaugurated by the NVR movement, democracy survived because civil society mobilized against attempts to subvert it from the top. In contrast, Namibia did not even have a first turnover after the founding elections due to the dominant position of SWAPO. However, we have to acknowledge that comparative research on this topic has shown that this positive effect of NVR on peaceful turnovers is not uniform (Bethke 2017; Lambach et al. 2020). Moreover, one-party dominance is not a phenomenon that is exclusive to cases of violent transition.

The third hypothesis on horizontal power relations was that NVR-induced democracies should have a more competitive party-system with a higher number of political parties compared to democracies installed by violent rebellion. This was borne out for our comparison of Benin

and Namibia. Post-transition multi-party elections in Benin resulted in a higher number of effective parties in the legislature compared to Namibia. Moreover, elections in Benin featured a smaller difference in vote share between the winning party and the second largest party in post-transition national elections. However, some of these differences between Benin and Namibia decrease over time due to the consolidation of the party system in Benin, whereas Namibian politics remains dominated by SWAPO.

Finally, our fourth hypothesis about vertical power relations, that CSOs have more autonomy and more opportunities for participation in NVR-induced democracies, finds partial support. CSOs have similar freedoms to operate in both countries but more opportunities to be involved in policymaking in Benin. We argue that this is the result of a civil society that had been energized and mobilized through its participation in NVR, and a political system that was built after NVR-induced transition that highly valued civil society participation. In contrast, CSO involvement in Namibia is limited and/or closely tied to the ruling party.

While the case comparison generally supports our hypotheses, we should not overinterpret these findings, suggestive as they are. The democratic reality is more complex than our relatively straightforward assumptions suggest. For instance, it is not clear whether a higher number of effective parties really does translate into a more democratic politics. Compared to violent transitions, NVR-induced transitions seem to have a levelling effect on the party system by not leaving behind a dominant political actor with the capabilities and the opportunity to monopolize the historical achievement. But NVR-induced transitions may instead foster a volatile and fragmented party system which may also impede democratic development. Moreover, we should be cautious about generalizing these results beyond the individual cases of Benin and Namibia. When we look at a larger sample of post-transition elections, we do not find a substantial difference of the effective number of parties across modes of resistance.[9] In a similar way, too frequent cabinet changes can also be interpreted as indicator of political instability, which is usually detrimental for democratic consolidation.

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[9] For the analysis, we only used data on the effective number of parties in the first election after transition and also include top-down transitions. The results indicate that the average effective number of parties is 3.1 with top-down transitions and 3.6 for both violent and nonviolent transitions, respectively (Lambach et al. 2020, chapter 5).

As this discussion shows, this pairwise comparison cannot be used to answer the larger question about the impact of NVR on democratic quality (Lambach et al. 2020), even though the evidence presented here fits with this assumption. Instead, our results suggest that the four mechanisms we posited have some merit and deserve closer attention in further research.

Conclusion

Our findings provide empirical backing for the causal theories of Sharp and others who argue that nonviolent mobilization for democracy contributes to a levelling of the political playing field. Our analysis demonstrated this effect for four aspects of horizontal and vertical regime relations: elite replacement, political turnover, multipartyism, and the empowerment of civil society.

However, generalization of these results beyond our cases of Benin and Namibia is difficult, as some of the findings might be idiosyncratic and products of our case selection. Explaining power relations, political arrangements and institutions in post-transition societies is a complex endeavor. It would be disingenuous to suggest that a single factor – the mode of resistance – explains them completely. Obviously, there are also other factors at work, such as a history of political parties, a legacy of independent civil organizations, previous experiences with democracy, and political culture. As similar as the cases of Benin and Namibia are in terms of structural factors, like human development and economic capacity, comparing a liberation struggle with an anti-regime movement might be nevertheless a comparison of apples and oranges. We thus view our results as a starting point for future research, rather than providing a concluding statement to this line of inquiry.

Nevertheless, our findings have some important implications for research on NVR and democratization. Our analysis underlines the importance of translating theoretical assumptions about the effects of NVR into observable implications about causal processes. The results for Benin and Namibia indicate that the assertations by Sharp and others about NVR having an empowering effect for society, and creating lasting changes in power relations, play out differently depending on the type of power relations that are investigated. This also underscores the importance of disaggregating the empirical analysis about the effects of NVR on democratization. As of now, especially quantitative empirical studies rely too much on crudely measured macro indicators to analyze complex power relations and political

developments. Such indicators may not be appropriate to capture the heterogenous, complex and dynamic effects of NVR.

Specifically related to the literature on NVR, our results highlight that more research is needed on the long-term effect of NVR on political (re-) mobilization. As described above, our own analysis was not always able to clearly establish the causal link between NVR and some aspects of cabinet and party politics because of missing systematic evidence, e.g. how resistance campaigns create settings favorable for a remobilization of civil society. Thus, NVR research can gain from investigating the responsiveness of elites to mass mobilization. Our findings also speak more specifically to the comparative literature on democratization, which often focuses too much on elite interactions. Haggard and Kaufman (2016) have recently offered a novel approach to the study of transition that pays closer attention to the role of citizens, and argues that there are distinct types of transition (elite-led and mass-driven). Our findings can help illuminate the causal mechanisms behind mass-driven transitions.

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The Journal of Resistance Studies' Interview with James C Scott

Stellan Vinthagen, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*
Dec 17, 2017, in Durham, CT

Introduction to the interview

In my capacity as the editor of Journal of Resistance Studies, I travelled to an old New England homestead in Durham, Connecticut, USA, and conducted an interview with one of the founding fathers of resistance studies: James C. Scott. In a rural, traditional white wooden house, among some chickens and two cows, a vegetable garden, and with a library and writing desk in a barn, lives this Sterling Professor of Political Science, Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Agrarian Studies Program at Yale University.

In 1985, "everyday resistance" was introduced by James C. Scott as a theoretical concept, in order to cover a different kind of resistance; one that is not as dramatic or visible as rebellions, riots, demonstrations, revolutions, civil war and other such organized, collective or confrontational articulations of resistance. According to Scott, everyday resistance is quiet, dispersed, disguised or otherwise seemingly invisible to elites, the state or mainstream society; something he sometimes also calls "infrapolitics". Over the years, Scott has shown through his research how certain common behaviour of subordinated groups, for example, foot-dragging, escape, sarcasm, passivity, laziness, repeated misunderstandings, disloyalty, slander, avoidance or theft, is not always what it seems to be, but that it instead can productively be understood as "resistance". Scott argues these activities are tactics that exploited people use in order to survive by gaining small and material advantages and simultaneously, temporarily undermine repressive domination, especially in contexts when rebellion is too risky. As such, this is the preferred "weapons of the weak".

According to Scott, the form of resistance depends on the form of power. Resistance always needs to adapt to the context, and the situation of the people that use it. Those who claim that "real resistance" 'is organized, principled, and has revolutionary implications . . . overlook entirely the vital role of power relations in constraining forms of resistance' (Scott 1989, 51). They overlook the fact that they prefer a form of resistance that is suitable to

their own context, while it might be ineffective and even a suicide for others, living in a very different context. If we only look for "real resistance", then 'all that is being measured may be the level of repression that structures the available options' (Scott 1989, 51). Contrary to others before him, Scott suggests how the primary resistance activity in history, at least among the repressed classes, is instead happening through a form of micro politics of a small class war in the everyday. As such, contrary to the conventional perception, the main form of political engagement by the ordinary people (the repressed classes) in any given society in history, is through such infrapolitics.

During the last four decades Scott has published extensively on the topic, over time clarifying his arguments and novel perspective on the political activism of common people. He laid out the foundation in a book called The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia (1976). Here Scott argues that the peasant society is only possible to understand if we recognize their key challenge: maintaining subsistence. Emanating from this focus on survival by avoiding risks—not maximizing gain—a 'moral economy' emerges, which guides the logic of peasant communities; the practical decisions on agricultural techniques, the relationships with each other, the state, as well as to formations of political interests and the (occasionally) revolutionary behaviour. Scott argues in a forceful way how this moral economy logic explains both the well-known conservatism and repeated rebellions of peasants. And then, ten years later, Scott gives a name to this (peasant) political logic: everyday resistance.

This naming of everyday resistance was possible through his ground-breaking work in Weapons of the Weak (1985), a book that details his anthropological study of a small peasant village in Malaysia. In this village he developed enough trust over time among the subsistence peasants to realize that despite them never openly challenging their big landlords, the tax collectors of the state or the forced introduction of modern agricultural technology, they in fact effectively undermined the tax system, and mitigated the domination of elites and the effects of modernization. In this study Scott was able to map in detail a whole range of tactics of hidden and disguised forms of resistance, virtually an underground world of everyday resistance. From then on, Scott showed in new books how not only peasants, but a vast range of different subordinated groups, have applied forms of everyday resistance, always in relation to their particular circumstances, but with the same logic.

In the immediate follow-up of Everyday Forms of Resistance in South East Asia (Kerkvliet and Scott 1986), the focus is on how peasants use everyday resistance in the regional context of South East Asia. Some years later, Scott takes a bold new step, and develops a coherent theoretical framework in the now classic work of Domination and the Arts of Resistance (1992), which today is regarded as fundamental for the understanding of everyday resistance. Here the locally developed concepts in Scott's classic ethnographic study among peasants in Malaysia is made into a more general framework, shown to be applicable to serfs as well as slaves and other particular subaltern groups. Through this fourth book, Scott takes a step away from the narrower field of Peasant Studies, arguing the case of everyday resistance among subaltern groups in general.

True to his view that domination determines the space of manoeuvre for resistance, he then goes on to analyse the main source of domination: the state. In Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (1998), Scott develops a theory of the state in which it becomes clear that its universalizing attempt to dominate the society is failing in large part due to subordinated citizens that undermine its schemes through everyday resistance. As such, it can be seen as an anarchist approach to the fundamental failure of the state. Therefore, it becomes logical that Scott's next step is to take a closer look at anarchist communities, but not the ones we normally associate with anarchism: the urban, young radicals that are full of ideological commitment who reject the state. Instead, in 2010 Scott released a fascinating book, The Art of Not Being Governed— An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia, where he argues that what anthropologists up until now have viewed as "Indigenous" people in the hill areas of Southeast Asia ("Zoomia") are in reality a post-state mix of ethnic groups that in waves over several centuries fled up into the hill areas to avoid various state coercions and urban problems, like taxes, slavery, conscription, epidemics and wars. Over a long history this mix of groups merged into a fully-fledged culture of everyday resistance, where their way of organizing their religion, communities, agriculture and political institutions were all designed to avoid state control. Obviously, Scott upset a lot of traditionalist anthropologists, but his interpretation has withstood the critical attacks, and now represents an alternative and possible view of these hill people. Among the striking circumstances that others have not been able to explain, but that makes total sense in his novel interpretation, is the fact that the "Indigenous" are ethnically very mixed, and prefer mobile agricultural practices, and

nurture myths of a time of pre-history when they were able to read and write, while they (for some reason) decided to unlearn that practice. However, this culture of everyday resistance seems to be endangered now in late modern times, when finally, states indeed are able to climb hills.

In later years, Scott claims to have left the theme of resistance, roaming into other areas of greater interest (for the historical emergence of states, see his latest book Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States (2017)). However, before he felt really done with the study of resistance, he published Decoding Subaltern Politics: Ideology, Disguise, and Resistance in Agrarian Politics (2013), a smaller book in which he is summarizing his main arguments in a condensed way.

Through his many years of work on everyday resistance, Scott fundamentally transformed our understanding of politics, literally making the ordinary life of subordinated groups part of political affairs. He also directly played an inspirational role in the international establishment of Subaltern Studies as a distinct school that reformulated a 'history from below' of India and South Asia (Kelly 1992, note 1, 297; Ludden 2002, 7–11; Sivaramakrishnan 2005), and he has inspired numerous empirical studies on everyday resistance, largely building on his framework (see an extensive overview in Johansson and Vinthagen 2020).

Since the Journal of Resistance Studies is one expression of this emerging field of resistance studies, inspired to a high degree by the work of James C Scott, and since over the years we have published several articles that discuss Scott's concepts and theories, we felt it made sense to interview him, and take a closer look at some of his research and topics, asking him some of the questions that arise from it.

The interview with James C. Scott

Stellan Vinthagen: Could you say what is your most important intellectual inspirations for understanding resistance?

James C Scott: I grew up during the Vietnam War, I started teaching during the Vietnam War, and I was a South-East Asia specialist. I was one of those left-wing people in love with the wars of national liberation, and of course that's why I did this book called The Moral Economy of the Peasant, to try and understand how peasant revolutions happened. So, two things impressed me. The first thing is that peasants ideologically are not revolutionary. Peasants make revolutions because they want a little piece of land. They want

to get out from under, let's say debt, sharecropping debt, and so on. And so their aspirations are not very expansive. They will fight like crazy and die for tiny little gains which are actually important because they live at the edge. So, it struck me that the people who made revolutions, like artisans, weavers, shoemakers, and so on, that they ended up making revolutions in order to achieve what we consider non-revolutionary gains, but gains that make all the difference between living and dying, comfort and dignity, and so on. And then I, at the same time—that brought me a little to anarchism—I realized that Sékou Touré, Kwame Nkrumah, Ho Chi Minh, not to mention Lenin and Trotsky, and Mao, that when there was an actual revolution it was often the case that they created a stronger state that was able to fasten itself on its people and, and govern their lives more brutally in many ways than the ancien regime that they had, there was usually this moment with let's say land reform and possibilities, and then a stronger state. Especially in the socialist bloc, one has to admit, I think. And so, I realised that my hopes for revolution were, if I was honest with myself, that they ended up not actually improving the freedom and autonomy of much of the population. It didn't—the one thing that communist revolutions did actually, I think, you could say almost everywhere, was increase literacy. They actually did a good job at making a more literate population, and in some cases improving the distribution of healthcare. But I became disillusioned by the way in which revolutions produced a stronger state that was more oppressive than the one it replaced.

And then I guess, I found myself in Malaysia in a village for two years in which there was all kinds of class struggle, but it was not a revolutionary situation. It wasn't a democratic setting either, there were elections but they were fake elections. Nobody imagined that the ruling party, the United Malay nationalist organisation, could be replaced. So, all of the classes that I saw were these everyday struggles in order to stop the mechanisation of the harvest, in order to keep one's job, in order to shame and humiliate the rich, in order to make small gains, things like small-scale theft from the rich people, and efforts to make sure that the Islamic tithe [tax] that was essentially collected by rich people in the capital city, that they paid as little of that as possible, and if they paid it, it was with bad rice, with dirt and stones and things like that. So, that got me to thinking that for most of history, people have been operating in non-democratic settings in which given their local perspective their chances of changing the world, they imagine are extremely small. Sometime there's a cascade of these events when the world is changed.

But they're unlikely to realise it until it actually happens. And it seems to me that what we underestimate radically, and I mean radically, is how these, the aggregation of these small acts of resistance, whether it was desertion from armies, or whether it was poaching, from asserting claims to land and property, or whether it's land squatting, the occupation of land, these are struggles over food and life and property, and game and so on. And it seems to me that these are class struggles and they take place in a cautious, everyday way that doesn't result in what my asshole discipline political science sees as political activity. That is to say, there are no organisations, there are no banners, there are no petitions, there are no marches, there are no public demonstrations and so on. All of this kind of takes place with a subterranean understanding and collusion among people in the same situation, and they help one another and don't betray one another generally. And I realised that if you were to take a kind of world history of class struggle, this would be, I don't know, 75% of it. And we were, I make this point in Domination and the Arts of Resistance, we concentrate—political scientists and social scientists—concentrate on the visible patch of the spectrum of resistance. And I came to realise that this form of struggle below the radar on purpose, right, has probably constituted most of history's class struggle, and that's why it's important.

SV: But in understanding this, where did you draw then the intellectual inspiration from others? I mean partly you're saying Marxist thinking. But I guess also, rebels like Hobsbawm and Anarchists?

JCS: Hobsbawm was really important to me, partly because what Hobsbawm did in Primitive Rebels is to understand things that were not seen as political as being political. You know, Jesse James, Robin Hood, taking from the rich and giving to the poor, right. This act for the poor. The problem with Hobsbawm of course is that, he calls them primitive rebels, and the only rebels who are really revolutionary are, as I understand it, Millenarian rebels who have a revolutionary view in mind. It's just that they think the change is going to be magical, while all they lack is the Leninist party that will give them the directions and make it secular. So, my problem with Hobsbawm is that all of this leads finally to the Leninist party as the only vehicle which can make the proletariat revolutionary. But what he does, which I think is a magnificent achievement, is to understand the way in which things we don't see as political are political. And somewhere he says, something I've always remembered, that 'peasants seek to work the system to their minimum disadvantage'. This expresses exactly what I was saying

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before. It's not revolutionary aspiration, they just want to minimise the terrible things that can happen to them. And the idea of working the system to their minimum disadvantage was important to me. And then, about the time I was reading that, I of course had read E.P. Thompson on poaching. And also Peter Linebaugh. And so, I realised that a lot of the sort of English struggle over land and property, game and so on, and fish and firewood, took the same form of not being open politics. And then, to finish off, there was a wonderful—I forget the person's name, he died—and his book was published posthumously. And he was a black scholar historian and actually did this wonderful book on how the Confederacy collapsed because of two things that were not sufficiently recognised. One of them is that the Scots-Irish, which I am one of, who lived in the hills of Appalachia, they were not abolitionists, but they were not going to die to defend the property of the rich lowland people. So, once the war got really tough, they went home. They took their weapons and went home, they went to the hills and they could not be re-conscripted for the rest, for the duration of the war. And of course the blacks, on the plantations, there was something called the 20 Negro law, and it meant that if you had a plantation with 20 slaves, one of your sons could stay at home in order to keep order on the plantation and didn't have to serve in the Confederate army. So the poor white people in the south called this a rich man's war and a poor man's fight. And the blacks of course, they either when the frontlines got close, fled to the Union lines, or they sabotaged the southern plantation economy. So, between the flight of blacks and poor whites, and none of this—that's the important thing—none of this was seen as politics, right. And yet it brought down the Confederacy. So, I somehow thought, I wanted to dignify and understand how worthy this was of studying, even though—and I wanted people to understand that, that it was important that it not be open politics. That is its disguise. Its invisibility was part of why it was sometimes relatively successful.

SV: Right. And at this early time when you were getting inspiration to understand everyday resistance, you were not yet in contact with the people of the Subaltern Studies in India, like Guha, or?

JCS: I was, I think it was when I was writing Weapons of the Weak that I was reading Ranajit Guha, and I mean, the nice thing about Subaltern Studies is that it is a very eclectic group. I mean there are lots of differences within Subaltern Studies. And I think The Prose of Counterinsurgency by Ranajit Guha is terrific. Although his great book is A Rule of Property for Bengal, his first book—I wrote this letter to Ranajit telling him how much

his work meant to me and how much I liked him. We spent 6 weeks together in Australia, and saw Antigone, we spent every night talking to one another. And I loved the man—During the Czech Spring, the Prague Spring, he was working as a kind of official of the Communist Daily in Kolkata. And he, when he heard about the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the crushing of Dubcek from the Prague Spring, he typed a letter of resignation on his typewriter, left it in the typewriter and never came back. That's his story. Better than Hobsbawm, who remained a Communist until the end of his life.

SV: I wonder, why have you not connected explicitly to Foucault. Because in my mind, it seems like his writings about how power is dispersed into a network within the everyday in all kinds of relations in society, fit terribly well with your elaboration of everyday resistance as being a kind of micro-struggle of the everyday, in a form of class war in all kinds of relations.

JCS: So, there are two answers to that question. First of all, I am deeply influenced by Foucault. I have read almost everything that Foucault has written. I am deeply influenced by him. This is a question of—it may just be a question of style that I have rationalised intellectually—but what I do not want to do is to write my books as if they were internal conversations between what my relationship is to Foucault, what my relationship is to Bourdieu, what my relationship is to de Certeau, and so on. I've learnt a lot from all these people. And yet I don't want this to be an internal conversation between different theorists. Secondly, I have criticisms of Foucault, I'm sure Foucault would have a billion criticisms of me as well. Discipline and Punish and his lectures at the Collège de France I found enormously useful. My major problem with Foucault is that he promises to do a study of resistance, and never does. What he does is to show the kind of power, of power as dispersed, and deployed in a way that kind of creates the case for hegemony that seems to be unbreakable, right. And so, I think he delivers on his, I mean magnificently, on how power is deployed and dispersed and has been made scientific and clinical, and exact, and permeates everything. But if you believe all of that, then there's no place to stand to resist. And so, I think, that's the sort of thing that he promises to do and he probably could've. But he never did deliver on that particular promise, so I think of myself as providing a kind of, at least partially delivering on what he promised but didn't deliver on. And accepting the things that he did deliver, I mean, I couldn't have written Seeing Like a State without Foucault. But do I spend a lot of time mentioning Foucault, no? So, it's a question of audience. If you

want people to read you who are spending all of their time saying X said this, Y said this, you know. There's a lot of literature that says, here's my relation to the following 10 thinkers. I don't wanna do that.

SV: No, I understand. Thank you. Let's move to another topic. In your definition of everyday resistance, class stands out as being very important, the intention of a class antagonistic ambition among those who do everyday resistance. But why is class and not domination or power key? Because we could imagine gender, race, or other things that could be key here.

JCS: Well I mean in Domination and the Arts of Resistance I spend a fair amount of time talking about slaves, slave resistance, right? So that's race and class together. That is a subordinated class of people who aren't free. So it's not that I ignore race, ethnicity and so on. Although I'm dealing with it in the context of people who are oppressed. For lack of a better word. Where were you headed with your question?

SV: Yes, but why do you then highlight class in your definition?

JCS: Well I guess, as a matter of fact it seems to me that the worst instances of class in, in most societies that we're familiar with over the last two centuries, people recognised that people who were not of the same class were nonetheless homo sapiens and entitled to some consideration as homo sapiens, right. They felt that they shouldn't be degraded etcetera etcetera. If you get historically, as you often had, the idea that untouchables and Adivasis in India are less than fully human, the Jews are less than fully human, the blacks are less than fully human, then you combine a kind of class oppression with a dehumanisation that allows a kind of exploitation to take on a kind of extra power in which these people's lives are not worth much. And so it seems to me that that combination of class plus race has produced more horrors than pure class has. Don't you think? I don't know.

SV: That makes sense. But then it seems like you are using class in a broader sense than the Marxist understanding of class as "the workers"?

JCS: Well I'm thinking of people whose surplus product is extracted. I mean if we're talking about slaves, or serfs and so on, the Marxist calculus of the appropriation of surplus production follows, I think. I mean thinking about this with respect to, I have my students read this book by Nash, anyway, it's this argument that —it's a very optimistic argument—that people we do not consider to be humans have in the past couple of centuries come to be human after all. So you know, women, and children, and serfs and blacks, and now in Germany primates have certain rights, right, almost

like human beings. There's this argument that there is this growing circle of compassion, of sentient beings that are entitled to rights that are comparable to human rights, who before were outside, in the dark, were not fully human and could neither be treated as human, and could also be abused because they weren't fully human. They didn't have rights. And so, if you're an optimist in all of these things, then you can imagine, you know, why stop at primates? Why don't we know a lot about the intelligence of octopus, of ravens and crows and certain kinds of birds, and so, I mean I actually think that the great thing about indigenous peoples historically is that they didn't believe in monotheism. And they believe that the whole world was enchanted, that everything, you know, the streams and forests and hills and animals, and tigers and elephants, all had a kind of agency of their own and were entitled to a kind of respect for their agency. And I think that if you're an environmentalist then you're very fond of this enchanted world where natural objects are entitled to some respect just because they're not seen to be inert, dead things but to have a kind of agency. I mean it's a little romantic, I guess.

SV: *Your connection here would be then that there is an expanded circle of those being counted as humans, as having rights?*

JCS: That's the argument. That's the optimistic argument. I'm not sure I believe it, I'm just sort of saying that, that the idea of the circle of things worthy of our respect, things that would have rights, that we could imagine as having rights has expanded. I don't think there is any doubt about that.

SV: *And then there would not be a class in that meaning of being possible to exploit, or?*

JCS: No, you can still exploit them but, I guess I'm arguing that the worst Russian feudal landowners who had whole villages who were enserfed to them were able to exploit those people, but they recognised their humanity nonetheless, even if they exploited them. And so I'm saying that if, once, once you admit the humanity of people you're oppressing, that they are at some level the same kind of sentient being as you are. Then I guess—I'm thinking off the top of my head—there are certain things that you may not do to them without degrading yourself, OK. You may do them, but you understand that you are degrading yourself. So in a sense, the trick of certain kinds of racism and discrimination is to convince people that these people are not human. The gypsies, the blacks, the Jews and so on, you can treat them like objects.

SV: So, in that way, racism or sexism is used to increase the possibilities of class exploitation?

JCS: Correct. Then you have to then see them not just as a class but kind of, as a separate species. The only good Jew is a dead Jew, that kind of thing that people believe.

SV: Or the only good Indian is a dead Indian. So, you would maintain then that for you in the definition, class would still be central?

JCS: Yes. I'm reminded of the, wasn't it historically true that in early modern Europe, that to kill one's wife was a lesser crime than to kill a man of the same status, and a wife who killed her husband, I think the French term for this was petit regicide, that you killed your king.

SV: Right, it was treason. A small treason.

JCS: So, there you can see the way in which the difference in levels of humanity play into this.

SV: To continue with the definition here, or your core understanding of what is everyday resistance [JCS: I'm making this up as I go along]. That's fine, you have some basis to make it up [laughing]. So, I'm thinking about how you put such a strong emphasis on that everyday resistance has to be hidden or disguised. In my understanding it makes total sense that, in certain repressive situations, to be hidden and disguised, is part of the genius of everyday resistance, to pretend to be loyal but find ways of doing resistance anyway. And through that, avoid the often-devastating consequences of punishment when you are detected. However, in other circumstances, like for example in the liberal America or Sweden, much of everyday resistance is happening very publicly, like when people are vegans. Or when people do everyday resistance although employers know that they work slow, or don't work very well when there is no supervisor present. So, then the everyday resistance is known. There seems to be an aspect of everyday resistance that is not really disguised or hidden very much. So, my question is, does it have to be hidden or disguised to count as everyday resistance, or are there forms of everyday resistance that are not hidden or disguised?

JCS: By my definition, no, because then it's not hidden, or it's not everyday. That which I understand as everyday resistance can't speak its name, or which decides not to speak its name. So there are two things. When you have the possibility in the sort of post-French revolution in which every citizen has legal rights to expression and so on. Then the importance and rationale of everyday resistance declines, because you can speak your mind and the consequences are not quite so severe as they were. It is in a sense less

honourable to hide in a system in which you are not gonna be imprisoned or shot once you express your opinion. It's also true that even when in the situations I understand to be typical of everyday forms of resistance, let's say slavery, the pressure and the degradation and humiliations are such that a certain portion of these people explode. And this results in the expression in America: 'He's a bad nigger'. Which means he'll just fight the master or he will tell the master to go fuck himself. And all the blacks love this bad nigger because he's saying what they want to say most of the time. They understand that he endangers everybody, and that everybody's going to pay the price and that's why he's killed, or thrashed, or put in jail and so on. So, there's that combination of 'yes, he speaks for us, oh my god'. That's why, let's say a slave mother, does the job of the ruling class by teaching her child to be polite, to not lose his temper. I was very impressed with this thing called "The Dozens". It precedes hip-hop and rap, it's trading of insults among blacks, The Dozens, like: 'oh, your mother fucks the mayor', 'your mother wears army boots', right. And then the other person would insult your mother. 'yo momma' was the way it was. Anyway, I understood by other people who understood this, that this was a way of self-training to absorb insults without fighting, just giving back with insults rather than become violent. And the idea is that to grow up black was to be able to absorb insults and not break down. And this insulting one another was a part of the training. You show you're really a tough fucker by just keep receiving and giving insults and never losing your temper. It's an emotional control which I think is required. And you could say, I think that we're getting on a different territory, but it seems to me that's something that lots of women learnt as well. How to control their temper and how to placate the angry husband or man. Because I actually believe that the fact is that the average man can physically dominate the average woman, I think this physical fact permeates gender relations. It's just there in the background. And that most women adapt accordingly, and make allowances for this because they don't wanna get hurt, right. It would be really nice actually if one could go from that starting point and acknowledge it, where a part of the marriage ceremonial commitment would be, 'I understand I could beat the shit out of you, but I promise to never to do it. I promise never to use my physical force', right. If that makes sense. I was criticised in Domination and the Arts of Resistance for not dealing with women. And I didn't, partly because I didn't have anything particularly original to say that feminists were not already saying. But I also didn't deal with women because it's different to class, in the sense that—I will criticise

myself in a second—but I thought then that the difference between women and men's relationships and class relationships are that you can imagine a class or an ethnic group being a complete society all by itself. Although, you can't really imagine women or men being complete societies in themselves. They need one another. And in the course of needing one another, they produce an interest that they have in common, namely children, right. And so it seems to me that it has to be treated as, the relationship is radically different in some ways, right. Now, to criticise myself I guess I've been convinced that in much of the world, women and men actually do live in completely different spheres and come together just to procreate. And they spend their days completely apart, it's just a purely procreational relationship, right. So it looks more like ethnic groups, except they do produce children.

SV: But just to return to what we were talking about before; you would still count it as everyday resistance if women were doing hidden and disguised resistance?

JCS: All the time. Yes, it seems to me that women, being physically weaker and oppressed historically, have learned to work around the egos of men, just the way the slave did. It matters a lot for the slave to be able to read the mood of their master. Their day depends a lot on being able to work around the mood of their master, and for the master it doesn't matter. They don't have to read the mood of the slave. And I think for women, they've had to read the mood of their man in order to avoid problems, survive, manipulate, right, get what they need etcetera. So, all of those things we think of feminine wiles are a product of placating I think, right.

SV: Just to continue on a similar line, when you describe everyday resistance in your different texts, it is very clear how it can be creative and innovative when it comes to finding ways of cutting corners and undermining when it's possible, when you're not being detected by work slow and pretending to misunderstand and all that, sabotage and whatever. But you don't describe as much the possibility of everyday resistance to create more proactive, self-governing autonomous institutions that can strengthen the subaltern group. Do you see that as part of everyday resistance, or is that something completely different for you?

*JCS: Y*es. Except that it can't declare itself. So, for example, let's say with poaching, how do you know poaching isn't just the desire of someone to have rabbit stew, because it tastes good? And why should we treat this as a kind of class thing, rather than just theft. Well, first of all, because you

don't. Theft from the people of the same class is not tolerated, you'll get beaten to shit if you do. And if you're poaching on aristocratic land, none of your village neighbours will ever go to court and give witness against you. And we know in general from folk sayings, that god created the commons for everybody, right, that there's an atmosphere of solidarity that is acted in practice by game wardens never being able to get a villager to testify against another villager. So, there you have evidence of complicity and a kind of tacit coordination, and agreement—it never has to take a formal form—but it actually protects everybody. Because they know that if they take a rabbit from aristocratic land their neighbours are not gonna screw them. So that idea, it can create a climate of opinion, and maybe it's whispered at the tavern and so on. And heroes like Robin Hood and so on are celebrated. It's a kind of culture, it's a kind of solidarity. But it's not formalised. So, I think, you see, I think that when you get what you would think of as a sort of public display of solidarity, what you're seeing is one of those rare moments in which this complicity which is generalised suddenly bursts to the surface, right, in a crisis, and it displays itself. But it wouldn't exist if there wasn't the other nine-tenths of the iceberg that had been created by practical acts of solidarity.

If people go on strike in a factory they go on strike because they have the relations of solidarity with the people on the next machine, the people they go drinking with. They are talking all the time about how they hate the fucking bosses, how they're not well-paid, how the factory is dirty and dangerous and so on. So when you get an uprising and an actual strike, you're seeing the kind of visible poking through of the quiet fabric that this creates, I think. You don't get the things you're interested in without the things that are left unspoken.

SV: So, you're saying that the fabric of solidarity that is tacit is kind of the culture from where [JCS: the foundation], the foundation which makes the eruptions of the mass mobilisations and public protest possible?

JCS: And it's created every day in non-crisis situations. Now what's missing from this as people have pointed out to me, it's just a criticism of my work I think, that these kinds of techniques are the techniques of power as well. So, a friend of mine has this thing what he calls street-level bureaucracy. In Massachusetts for example, this was like 15 years ago, they wanted to diminish the welfare expenditure. But they didn't want to change the law, because that would have created a public crisis, a lot of opposition.

So instead of actually changing the law and changing the entitlements, they made sure that the forms were as long as possible, they made sure that the hours the offices were open were most inconvenient for women and children and so on. They made it that if you failed one step you had to go back and start from zero, they tightened the requirements and so on. And so they, in a sense, they fiddled with the details of applying for welfare, so that they could guarantee that only 2 out of 10 would ever make it to the candy store. And the rest would sort of quit and drop out and so on, but they would never formally deny them benefits. So that's the way in which power actually uses these same kinds of techniques of subversion. In which your rights are not taken away but your use of them, you know. I have this experience in a little small way, I was fucked over by the flight from Adelaide to Sydney, I had to stay an extra day because although I moved quickly the flight I'd booked had already gone by the time I got to the international desk at Sydney. So I had to stay in a hotel. If I want to collect the money for that hotel stay, United Airlines is gonna require two hours of my time describing all the details, the arrival times and so on. And they do this in order to make sure that almost nobody gets to the candy store. I know they've designed an application form for hotel fees in order to make it almost impossible.

SV: Publicly having the right but in practice not having the right.

JCS: Exactly.

SV: But if I understand you correct, you're saying that in the process of doing everyday resistance there is the creation of some kind of culture of self-rule, autonomy, that it becomes like a resource?

JCS: It's absolutely essential. It wouldn't exist without it. It wouldn't exist without it. So, this kind of everyday resistance, the desertion that I talk of, the squatting on the land and so on. All of this requires a sort of complicity and tacit cooperation that's not sort of public but, which is the tissue, binding all these people together.

SV: Would it be to go too far to say that that kind of tissue, that kind of fundament is then the basis of what everyone else is talking about when it comes to strikes, protests and mobilisations, but they don't see it, that this everyday resistance is behind this but they are focusing on the public articulations of it.

JCS: Sure, you could say that. In the sense that every strike, when the strike arrives and you decide whether you're gonna stay at your machine or you're gonna go out on strike, you've got to do one thing or another. Your

decision depends, I think, in a fundamental way on how your social relations are with the people who are going out on strike, as opposed to the boss or the foreman or so on. Maybe if you need the money and your children are starving you're not gonna go out on strike. But the point is, whether you go out on strike or not is dependent on all these other things, these social network ties and loyalties that get paraded along the way.

SV: But it seems to me, I don't know if you would agree on that, that different places in the world although the repression is severe, we find not the same amount or the same level of everyday resistance everywhere, right? Or is it just that we haven't found it yet? Because it seems like in some places there is a very high level of everyday resistance, like for example among the Palestinians who call their everyday resistance sumud, there is a whole culture of everyday resistance, people relate to it very explicitly, whereas in other places it seems like it's more difficult to actually detect it. Or? I think I'm saying, is this variation only a matter of degrees of power?

JCS: Again, I haven't thought seriously about this, but my guess is that, let's say to take the Palestinian case, these people have been living with the daily presence of surveillance, oppression, danger and so on, for the last 40 or 50 years. And so they have always had to work around these situations. So, what I think I'm avoiding, and I may be wrong, but my guess is that there are not any strong cultural influences in terms of how people respond to oppression. I do not believe that the Buddhists are more long-suffering than the Tamils, or the Muslims, or the Christians, or the Hindus are more long-suffering than the Japanese, or Chinese and so on. I don't think so, at least I would have to have that demonstrated to me. I think it's a question of practice and experience. And there are people who are oppressed at a distance, where the actual presence of the oppression is less personalised, is less immediate, is less oppressive in a daily sense. I mean, if yyou're a slave working in the fields and you have a foreman on a horse with a whip next to you the whole day, that's a different situation to if you're a sharecropper who controls your own working day, but at the end of the year you have to give half your harvest to that man. It seems to me that the first one is a situation that is perceived as more degrading and more repulsive.

SV: So basically, that decides the basis of practice, how things evolve more or less? It is the form of domination or power that will determine how everyday resistance will be articulated?

JCS: That's my guess.

SV: I'm interested to know, what's your take on the development of what could today be called a field of "resistance studies", as an academic field? You coined the concept in the mid-80s and many people have taken it up out of inspiration in the studies about everyday resistance. And now there is a Journal of Resistance Studies, and there are people who are referring to the field and are relating to it. Of course, it's still a very emerging, small field. But what's your take on it? Is it a positive development that we're getting a field that is referring to resistance studies, or should we be cautious about that, are there dangers?

JCS: Well, there must be a hundred books called "resistance" and "revolution". And it's interesting that they're treated as separate nouns. Resistance is not the same as revolution, resistance already in a semiotic way assumes that there is some pressure, right, that you are resisting being pushed or being moved in a certain direction. So, resistance implies a kind of relation of opposing forces, in an important way. Revolution is the magical evaporation of the other term, of resistance. Which is defeated, right. And then you make a new order. And that's fair enough. So I think that, in a sense the understanding of resistance is probably more important than the understanding of revolution. That's why I think it's a worthy theme. And then you have people whom I think have very capable analyses of resistance studies, like Gene Sharp, who tries to sort of describe every species of resistance and its tactics and its advantages and disadvantages, the circumstances under which it arose, and from those taxonomies it seems to me that there's a lot of theory that could possible flow. I know all this stuff about how the Bavarian Germans resisted Nazism by keeping the crosses in the schools, you know, and Hitler finally gave up and allowed them to keep the crosses in the schools. It's seen as a resistance to Nazism. So from the taxonomies of different kinds of resistance, one can say well, what sort of symbolic resistance, to what extent does it encourage people, to what extent does it encourage the moral high ground, to what extent does it help to mobilise people who suddenly feel as if they can have an influence on their situation, when they are not doing it publicly.

SV: Are there certain things that you feel like are particularly important for a field like this to put focus on, that we don't know yet that has been ignored or not been studied enough?

JCS: The things that for me seem potentially theoretically, analytically rich, are the detailed descriptions of practical resistance. What people were saying and doing and so on. For example, you know the, what is it,

I cite this work in Two Cheers for Anarchism, but I can't remember the author's, Francois [Rochat]. Anyway, they did the study of Stanley Milgram, the Milgram experiments done at Yale. Because there's an archive, so they came for the archive, and they studied this village of Le Chambon. You know they saved 4000–6000 Jews. I'll describe what they describe and tell you why I think it's theoretically important. So it was a Huguenot village, and the pastors were Huguenot, and they had saved a few people from Mussolini's Italy and some people from Franco's Spain. And the Huguenots know something about persecution, so they were sympathetic in general. So the Huguenot pastors and their wives went around from house to house to house and said, Jews are going to be coming this way, would you help to hide Jews in your barn, feed them etcetera etcetera. And almost all of the people said 'I'd like to, but I have a family, I have children, if they discover that I'm hiding Jews they'll kill me and kill my family. And I can't risk my family. So I'm sorry I can't do it.' And then the Huguenot pastors were taken off to the camps—they survived actually. Then the Jews just started arriving, and the wives of the pastors went back to the same houses where they were turned down. But this time they went with, let's say a Jewish family, and said 'Would you feed these people and hide them overnight and give them warm coats?' Now they had to look someone in the eye and say no. And most of them said yes. Reluctantly, but they did it. And after they did it once, they were committed to helping Jews for the rest of the war. So, that was interesting to me. I found that extraordinarily powerful in the sense that, it's a little like what EP Thompson says about class consciousness. It's not as if people become conscious and then do things with bad consciousness. It's like the practical struggles over ships biscuits, and food and so on, in the end it develops into a class consciousness. In this case having to turn down an actual human being and deny them the solidarity that might save their life, people were unwilling to do that. And they then drew the conclusions of their act and became committed to helping Jews. They didn't become convinced that they should help Jews and then helped Jews, they helped Jews and drew the conclusions from their act of solidarity. You see what I mean? That teaches us something about how the human heart works and how solidarity works, and it doesn't work the way most intellectuals think it works, which is by the head before the heart.

SV: And this is an example of what is needed to be studied, right? It's showing as you say then, something that would only be detected in a detailed study?

JCS: Correct. And it seems to me you know, half the Trump voters if you ask them would they like to murder all the people wearing hijabs or Muslims, they'd say 'yes, sure, burn them all, send them all away, put them all in prison', whatever. You actually bring a little Islamic family shaking with fear and so on to their door and half of them are going to say, 'Oh maybe I'll give you some soup'. It seems to me that it's easier to hate abstractly than it is to hate in concrete.

SV: And in an equivalent way then, we learn resistance in a practical way, not in an abstract way?

JCS: Exactly, exactly.

SV: Great. So, when it comes to the study of resistance, how would you— if you allow me to ask this in a more personal way—over the years have you changed your mind and learnt something quite different over the years about resistance? Could you give an example, if that's the case?

JCS: It's a good question. And I'm not sure I have an adequate answer. But I guess the thing that impresses me, and maybe this is because of the ecological crisis that we're in, is that homo sapiens is incapable of thinking much beyond a single lifespan. That's to say their time horizon is very short, it is limited to at best, at the most expansive, children, parents and grandparents, three generations. So, it seems to me that when you think of ecological time, or river time, or forest time and so on, I guess I'm impressed that everything is moving even though it doesn't seem as if it's moving. So, after the last glacial maximum, as everything warmed and the glaciers melted, if you had one of these time lapse photographs of every decade or every hundred years, you'd see beech trees and oak trees marching north from the Mediterranean, conquering new territories, bringing all their new animals, and the soil with them and so on. I mean that's the problem with economists right, they're even worse because they think you're maximising transaction by transaction. People don't do that, but if they're maximising, they're maximising probably for a single lifetime and so on. So why shouldn't I get my savings and investments and have a good retirement, even though it's fucking up the forests in Indonesia and Mozambique? And taking gold and silver, and ores and destroying rivers, and so on. It's both invisible and it's at a distance and it takes a long time. And I don't think we're very good at moral reasoning over the short run.

Well you asked me how my attitude for resistance has changed, and I guess I'm more depressed by the fact that the time horizon and human

maximisation is so short sighted, all right. And that's what's gotten us into our fix, right. Yes, I win this struggle, but what are its consequences for the long run future of lots of other people, and different classes of different people? I mean it's too bad in the sense that you know, you know when I think of Yale. What is Yale doing in the world? It thinks it's just of course educating a new elite. But the fact is it's got a 22 fucking billion-dollar endowment that it's maximising the return over. And it probably is having negative effects on the world of a massive kind. And are the undergraduates up in arms about it, are the faculty up in arms about it, is there resistance to that? No, they want to make sure that their scholarship is good for next year.

SV: So, the kind of resistance that we engage in, be that everyday resistance or something else, it's very short sighted?

JCS: Yeah. You know, I think it's really hard to get people to think, it requires that you think on behalf of rivers and forests and salmon, and all kinds of life forms which are not directly in any immediate way strapped to your outcomes.

And I see a connection here, and that is also to what we talked about before, indigenous people. Because I mean, they are people that have been doing resistance over hundreds of years, and they tend to think more in longer terms. I mean I know that native Americans talk about the seven-generation principle.

What's interesting of course is how much of that is a romantic self-presentation and how much of it is deeply experienced. I have a student—she's not entirely my student—but she's a Malay woman from Singapore. And she wears a hijab. And she's interested in how it changed the Batak world view, people in Sumatra and Malaysia. She's interested in the shift from Paganism, pre-modern indigenous religions, to monotheism, Islam in her case, and what it does for your view of nature and your relationship to the environment. It's a very brave thing to be doing because her conclusions are quite negative about what monotheism does, in terms of your idea of the domination of nature and your relationship to the natural forces around you. And so, I find it interesting that even someone like that is conscious of and admiring of the fact that for indigenous people the world is enchanted. I mean at least for traditionally indigenous people; each tree and each mountain and stream have its own kind of spirit. And so, it's more respectful of the natural world, at least in theory.

SV: At least for those who still value that tradition. Which is not everyone as we know.

JCS: Well, how can you expect anything else from a generation that spends 90% of its time looking at a screen and their iPhone and so on, and not even when they're walking along a sidewalk, they pay attention to nature. No, they've got their earphones and they're walking, right on forward.

SV: [Laughing] That's a good point to end. Thank you for giving so generously of your time.

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CLASSICAL BOOK REVIEW

Peter Kropotkin: Mutual Aid

Reviewed by Craig Brown, *Journal of Resistance Studies*

The intention behind the classical book review section of *JRS* is for contributors to give a more personal account of a book that has influenced their own ideas. For me, Peter Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* provided a synthesis for various ideas relating to a scientific and philosophical basis of anarchism and nonviolence; latterly, it has informed my thoughts around constructive resistance. The notion of mutual aid as a 'spontaneous' societal response in solidarity with our fellow humans has suddenly gained far wider international relevance with the global spread of coronavirus; although I began writing this review at the end of 2019—and I am wary of making any claims over what could nevertheless potentially be the tremendous implications of the global pandemic—it is worth considering the present situation for showing the continued relevance of Kropotkin's ideas of mutual aid.

Mutual Aid

One of the enduring appeals of Kroptokin's *Mutual Aid* is that it is rooted in natural science, embedded particularly in Darwin's (1874) assessment of human evolution in *Descent of Man*, while also developing the concept of mutual aid as a 'law of nature' previously proposed by Karl Kessler (Kropotkin, 1902:6). Kropotkin explains that, in engaging with Darwin's work:

> I failed to find—although I was eagerly looking for it—that bitter struggle for the means of existence […] which was considered by most Darwinists (though not always by Darwin himself) as the dominant characteristic of struggle for life, and the man factor of evolution (5).

Rather, 'mutual aid and mutual support carried on to an extent which made me suspect it a feature of the greatest importance for the maintenance of life, the preservation of each species, and its further evolution' (6). While Kropotkin acknowledges Alfred Russel Wallace (1914) and Darwin's separate formulation of the theory of evolution, in *Mutual Aid* Kropotkin (1902) is more concerned with the misapplication and over-emphasis of Darwin's

ideas of the 'struggle for existence' (12) by proponents of what we know as 'social Darwinism'.

As Kropotkin explains, he does not propose mutual aid simply 'as an argument in favour of a pre-human origin of moral instincts, but also as a law of Nature and a factor of evolution'. In this regard, he posits an 'instinct' of human solidarity as the recognition of 'the close dependency of every one's happiness upon the happiness of all; and of the sense of justice, or equity, which brings the individual to consider the rights of every other individual as equal to his own', which transcends 'love, sympathy and self-sacrifice' as an albeit 'immense part in the progressive development of our moral feelings'. This results in far broader solidarity among individuals in communities throughout history, which Kropotkin traces.

In this regard, the wealth of examples Kropotkin provides is fascinating in itself, through chapters concerning 'mutual aid among animals', as well as two inappropriately titled to modern standards—'mutual aid among savages' and 'mutual aid among the barbarians'. However, unlike Social Darwinists, Kropotkin evidently still acknowledges tribal peoples' humanity, indeed admiring many of their moral principles through mutual aid (64-72) as surpassing those in the 19th Century state (147). Chapters V and VI on 'mutual aid in the mediaeval city' chart the formation of guilds and their basis of independent city states (109-113). How these resisted the development of feudalism and ultimately the development of the state is again enlightening; I find something powerful about Kropotkin's examples:

> The coutoume of Bayonne, written about 1273, contains such passages as these: "The people is anterior to the lords. It is the people, more numerous than all others, who, desirous of peace, has made the lords for bridling and knocking down the powerful ones" (129).

More than a precursor to the establishment of principles such as consent in power, this is a clear precedence of the people and their externality to structures upholding 'power over'. If not more crucially, Kropotkin explains how the guilds and city states—originally a counter to merchant power and feudal lords (124)—ultimately came to feed into the centralisation of power, growth of individualism and privilege through the concept of mutual aid and support being realised to an insufficient degree, as they 'cannot be limited to a small association; they must spread to its surroundings, or else the surroundings will absorb the association' (137). This balanced assessment

clarifies that mutual aid is not a utopian aspiration based on a romanticised historical analysis, rather it is an idea that requires concerted thought in its appropriate application in order to be conducive to solidarity, happiness, justice and equity.

This became clearer to me when reading traditionalist conservative philosopher Roger Scruton's (2017) *Where We Are*, where he draws on some of the same examples as Kropotkin of natural 'networks of self-help' (29,35; Kropotkin, 1902:170-174) to show how Britain developed its entrepreneurial individualism. While a more libertarian form of decentralisation can emerge, it is perhaps the instinct for solidarity, that requires ever-broadening and reassertion during the decentralisation processes. Moreover, Kropotkin (1902) was evidently tracing the history of ideas of mutual aid, but not calling for a return to these past formulations. In the face of the state's monopolisation of violence and power over, mutual aid:

> Flows still even now, and it seeks its way to find out a new expression which would not be the State, nor the medieval city, nor the village community of the barbarians, nor the savage clan, but would proceed from all of them, and yet be superior to them in its wider and more deeply human conceptions (139).

Moving towards this, the varied activities of communal solidarity that Kropotkin details can provide inspiration and practical guidance, an entire complementary human history (188), which is built on in further texts such as *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (Kropotkin, 1909). Further than this, Kropotkin (1902) clearly alludes to what has been explored as everyday resistance:

> In our mutual relations every one of us has his moments of revolt against the fashionable individualistic creed of the day, and actions in which men are guided by their mutual aid inclinations constitute so great a part of our daily intercourse that if a stop to such actions could be put all further ethical progress would be stopped at once (148).

Here he also gives the suggestion that this everyday activity provides the impetus to 'constructive' resistance, both a reservoir of latent tendencies and direct contribution to mutual aid initiatives for 'new economic and social institutions […] new ethical systems, and new religions' (145). While

individualism seems even more pervasive over a century after Kropotkin was writing, this activity 'below the radar' may mark an even more significant aspect of ongoing human evolution in maintaining and advancing ethical development and dignity. Moreover, mutual aid in evolution gives a universal grounding to constructive and everyday resistance as a shared experience, despite diverse manifestations across time and space.

Mutual Aid and Mutual Struggle in Evolution

In reviewing *Mutual Aid,* it is not just the aspects of social organisation in the text which are relevant to our time but the natural science underpinnings, particularly in considering the broader implications of the global coronavirus pandemic and mutual aid initiatives emerging in response. Darwin's (1990) *Descent of Man*, originally published in 1871, provides little if anything of direct practical utility to resistance. Indeed, scientifically and philosophically it contains a number of broad tropes that were commonly held at the time, yet which would largely be considered severely problematic today. Examples are the tacit approval of imperialism as a means of extending civilised races' transplanting of 'the lower races' (324), or men's superior cognitive abilities over women (562). Some of Darwin's language regarding 'savages' (303,314-315) and an apparent disdain and indeed disgust at certain practices, is evidently problematic to contemporary readers, and it is not difficult to see how this portrayal played into the colonial mentalities of the time and indeed the most heinous outcomes of social Darwinism in the 20th Century. There is the shadow of the eugenics movement as he discusses those of weak mind and body who ideally should not marry or bear children (323,596)—although Darwin only ever suggests 'ought not' at the level of individual discretion rather than collective sanction, with any action against such individuals on the basis of scientific distinction already rejected as callous behaviour under 'an overwhelming present evil' (323).

Indeed, this 'individual discretion' hints at the broader humanism of Darwin's position:

> The aid which we feel impelled to give to the helpless is mainly an incidental result of the instinct of sympathy, which was originally acquired as part of the social instincts, but subsequently rendered, in the manner previously indicated, more tender and more widely diffused. Nor could we check our sympathy, even at the urging of hard reason,

without deterioration in the noblest part of our nature […] if we were intentionally to neglect the weak and helpless, it could only be for a contingent benefit, with an overwhelming present evil. We must therefore bear the undoubtedly bad effects of the weak surviving and propagating their kind (323).

Evidently this remains a brutal statement in its language, although Darwin's fundamental argument is that ultimately, what makes us human in our noblest sense, our moral virtues, would be lost through neglect of those who are different. Moreover, Kropotkin (1902) challenges that brutal language about the weak directly:

As if thousands of weak-bodied and infirm poets, scientists, inventors, and reformers, together with other thousands of so-called "fools" and "weak-minded enthusiasts", were not the most precious weapons used by humanity in its struggle for existence by intellectual and moral arms, which Darwin himself emphasised (13).

However, personally I have remained intrigued by Darwin's direct statement on matters presented above—which have evidently been comprehensively discussed since the 19th Century, although I think adequately situate Darwin on the right side of history in terms of rejecting 'social Darwinism', as Kropotkin (1902) himself concluded (12-13).

The Politics of Survival

Analysis of biopolitics and biopower is well-established in critical theory and indeed the field of resistance studies, and it is worth connecting to Kropotkin. Evans (2020) has recently cautioned how outbreaks such as the coronavirus can easily incite racism, with the modern state founded on the concept of delineating populations into 'infected versus non-infected, healthy versus unhealthy'. More broadly, Agamben (1998) explored such notions under the concept of 'bare life', where every individual under the 'new biopolitical horizon of states with national sovereignty' (82) is potentially expendable in the interests of the health of that state. Kropotkin (1902) himself provides a glimpse of such analysis as he charts the undermining of mutual aid from the 11th Century, by 'the students of Roman law and the prelates of the Church', who:

Taught from the pulpit, the University chair, and the judges' bench, that salvation must be sought for in a strongly-centralised State, placed under a semi-divine authority; that one man can and must be the saviour of society, and that in the name of public salvation he can commit any violence; burn men and women at the stake, make them perish under indescribable tortures, plunge whole provinces into the most abject misery […] They began to find no authority too extensive, no killing by degrees too cruel, once it was 'for public safety' (138).

This critique has re-emerged of an excessive focus on risk and the definition of indeterminate and interminable threats by the state leading to ever greater securitisation (Dillon, 2008).

Such a politics centred on 'survival' has been considered cautiously in the critical theory literature (Evans & Reid, 2015:4-5)—with the global coronavirus pandemic having seen a reappraisal and reassertion of the state's significance in relation to Hobbes' conception of the state of nature (Runciman, 2020). Rather than a constant state of insecurity, I have found that Kropotkin and a closer reading of Darwin show how what we mean by survival could be reorientated if mutual aid is considered to underpin so much of human endurance and evolution. Even those 'pastime', interest and hobby groups, the arts which may seem extraneous to survival and that are not necessarily concerned with resistance but still invite exploration of the human condition, have as Kropotkin notes maintained humanity's mutual aid tendencies in the face of individualisation (176-177) and what is their devaluation under neoliberalism. While we may ultimately wish to reject the language of 'survival' as excessively problematic, it may be countered and subsumed under our understanding of mutual aid.

Mutual Aid as a Response to Coronavirus

If we consider the mutual aid position as one of solidarity and dignity, this is not necessarily reflected in state responses to the coronavirus. In the UK, the British government's initial response was for the population to acquire herd immunity, necessarily sacrificing the 'weakest'—later realised to mean as many as 500,000 people. One wants to find the human concern in this at least from a utilitarian perspective, although the significance of adequately healthy bodies to enable continued economic vigour seems more reflective of the dominant neoliberal model. This becomes more disconcerting when

one considers any bearing that social Darwinism might have had on this position; the British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's unelected Chief Adviser Dominic Cummings' dalliance with eugenics, and his call for 'misfits and weirdos' to join the civil service recently led to the employment of an open advocate of eugenics (Mason & Sample, 2020; Raw, 2020). Again it is not just Kropotkin's practical assessment of mutual aid, but also his appraisal of evolutionary theory that becomes important in light of this. Kropotkin's (1902) cautioned that:

> It happened with Darwin's theory as it always happens with theories having any bearing upon human relations. Instead of widening it according to his own hints, his followers narrowed it still more (13).

There is significant work to do in challenging the mutually reinforcing tropes of social Darwinism and the state of nature that still dominate presentation of human history, and which Kropotkin warned against (56).

Grassroots mutual aid initiatives have quickly emerged in response to Coronavirus (for example Covidmutualaid.org, 2020; Mutualaiddistasterrelief.org, 2020). In my own small town with a population of 2600, one aspect of mutual aid has been to establish an informal food bank in the town hall for those in dire need. This would seem to bear out Kropotkin's assessment that such inclinations are latent within communities (while also enduring in 'normal' community life in various guises). Moreover, there is now considerable discussion of the implications of coronavirus for our societies and the capitalist system, including (but certainly not limited to) those disadvantaged for years by the gig economy (see Gordon, Gurley, Ongweso Jr & Pearson, 2020; Mason, 2020; Smith, 2020). The more overtly political tool of a general strike among gig economy workers is something Gorden et al. (2020) suggest could be supported through mutual aid activities. This situation and any analysis of it is of course in extreme flux, although when the UK's Financial Times (2020) is advocating 'ideas until recently considered eccentric, such as basic income and wealth taxes', either eyes have been opened to the situation of many precarious workers now that middle classes are also suffering, or there is a desperate attempt to maintain 'liddism' (see Rogers, 2002:10) in the face of a potentially revolutionary situation. For me, the message from Kropotkin (1902) is no quarter; that the state's centralisation of power and misuse of violence is at risk of increasing in response to coronavirus in the name of population security, and open

mutual aid principles and initiatives will ultimately be quashed. However, it is through the decentralised, mutual aid initiatives that Kropotkin's text detailed over a century ago that energy may be directed to establish a more dignified and just society for all.

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REVIEWS

Tsering Woeser: Tibet on Fire

Verso Books, 2016

Reviewed by **Chris Agripino Kennedy**, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Tsering Woeser's book, *Tibet on Fire*, covers the topic of Tibetan self-immolations in response to Chinese occupation. Woeser discusses self-immolation as acts of nonviolent resistance, arguing that they embody the practice of nonviolence and actively work as a form of resistance for the Tibetan people. Woeser argues that self-immolation is consistent with Buddhist nonviolence in that it brings no harm to other living beings and therefore is not violent.

Self-immolation is recognized by Woeser as a valid form of resistance, one that is actively serving the resistance movement in Tibet. Woeser notes 'In such a stifling environment, there is no longer any space for popular protests to develop,' leaving self-immolation as the drastic measure that is being taken to continue protests in the face of the Chinese Communist Party's repression. Woeser argues that the increase in surveillance, restrictions, repression, and violence against the Tibetan people leads directly to an increase in self-immolation as people are pushed to seek any outlet of protest.

Woeser seeks to answer the question of why Tibetan people are self-immolating, and offers several points of possible reasoning. Religious repression and the removal of spiritual leadership is a major influence, as argued by Woeser, on the resistance movement. The CCP conversely spins this argument by blaming the religious leadership in exile for self-immolations, claiming conspiracy. Other reasons cited by Woeser include ecological destruction, language replacement/erasure of culture, settlement and militant policing, and surveillance and control.

A potential point of weakness which could be argued for the book is the heavy bias of the author toward the resistance movement in Tibet and her highly critical view of the CCP. However, I would argue that this is a strength instead. With the significant level of surveillance currently seen in Tibet, there has been extremely limited media coverage of the resistance effort and daily repression of the people. Woeser's closeness to the movement

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and personal stake in the success of it offers the kind of close up view that is lacking in the general media. While reading the book, the passionate care Woeser has for her country and its people is ever present and clearly has a strong influence on her writing. While it is a factual account of the state of affairs in Tibet presently as well as in the past, many parts of the book read easily in an almost poetic way. This emotional and beautifully crafted style of writing makes reading about such a dire and intense topic much more digestible and accessible for non-academic readers.

Though Woeser's passion is encouraging and mostly beneficial, it does occasionally translate into a more negative tone of voice. Some of the text can sound commanding and even defensive of itself. The commanding tone of certain opinionated parts can lead to readers feeling as if they are being talked at, rather than brought into the discussion of the topic. The defensiveness of the tone can leave readers feeling put-off as well. At some points, the text seems as if it is defending itself from an unlabeled source of attack. The result is a feeling of misdirected aggression rather than passionate rage toward the oppressive CCP.

Overall, the book is an excellent account of data and narratives regarding acts of self-immolations and general repression in Tibet. It is not difficult to read as many academic texts can be, while it is also inviting and informational for readers who are otherwise unfamiliar with Tibet. The book is suitable for both academic and non-academic audiences and provides a complete scope of the current situation facing the Tibetan people.

Ather Zia: Resisting Disappearance: Military Occupation & Women's Activism in Kashmir

University of Washington Press, 2019

Reviewed by **Emily Parker,** *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

In her debut book, *Resisting Disappearance: Military Occupation & Women's Activism in Kashmir*, anthropologist Ather Zia surveyed the deployment of government-sanctioned forced disappearance by the occupational forces of India in Kashmir. The focal point of her research centers around the utilization of grief-based resistance strategies by the families of those who

have been disappeared. Through this lens, Zia constructs for her audience a narrative that is often overlooked in the study of resistance movements; those voices of the mothers, wives, and daughters left behind to deal with the aftermath of these policies. It is through these kinships that the reader is introduced to the human side of occupation not hindered by the cold logic of statistics.

For this purpose, Zia conducted an ethnographic investigation of multiple case studies to highlight both the similarities and differences in experience for these groups. From the perspective of a mother losing her son to a wife losing her husband the gendered implications of the occupation of Kashmir become pivotal to comprehending the situation. This approach is spearheaded by these activists' individual and collective organizing methods. First and foremost, the employment of their bodies at the center of their protests grants these women the ability to reappear those who were disappeared. In their performance, they successfully provoke the counter-memory of remembrance in the face of erasure.

Concurrent to this Zia provides insight into the paradoxical structure of these women's organizing. In their quest to speak truth to power these women find themselves occupying a new space in the public sphere that is closed to them in Kashmir. This is done through the traditional framework of presenting oneself as a good woman (*asal zanan*). In this process the mothers and wives of those disappeared foster a revolutionary atmosphere within the traditional culture of their society.

Throughout my reading of *Resisting Disappearance*, I found myself quietly admiring Zia's incorporation of each individual's story in a way that allowed for the emergence of a compelling narrative. In this work, Zia took the time to provide context through the inclusion of helpful definitions of useful words and key concepts. This was further strengthened by the addition of other contemporary examples of civil resistance to foreign military occupation.

The true strength of this work, however, lies in the immense level of respect evident in her telling of each woman's story. Each account included was written in a way that shows the reader the importance of the similarities that can be drawn between each experience but does not diminish any of the subject's autonomy as individuals in this movement. Zia, throughout the text, did not allow the significance of illustrating those corresponding features found within each story to diminish the very personal associations

of unique grief and anger felt by each woman. One of the best ways this was accomplished was through the inclusion of poetry at the beginning of each chapter. This granted the text the ability to provide a more humane perspective of this ongoing tragedy.

Despite this, there was, in my opinion, one small weakness present in this work. In chapter six the story of Jabbar Sharief's twenty-year search for his younger brother alongside his mother provided an insight into grief as experienced by siblings. Although the focus of this work was on the gendered implications of mothers and wives resisting in the public sphere, I believe a further look at the effects of this on siblings could provide additional nuance to the text's argument. Nevertheless, *Resisting Disappearance: Military Occupation & Women's Activism in Kashmir* by Ather Zia provides a fascinating look into the system of forced disappearance sponsored in the Indian government's occupation of Kashmir.

Baconi, Tareq: Hamas Contained: The Rise and Pacification of Palestinian Resistance

Stanford University Press, 2018

Reviewed by **Yara Akkeh**, *University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Summary

In *Hamas Contained: The Rise and Pacification of Palestinian Resistance*, Tareq Baconi discusses Hamas' role throughout its existence within the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Not only does Baconi provide an in depth and detailed timeline of Hamas' interactions with Israel, the Palestinian Authority, the PLO, and other factions and actors throughout the occupation, but he does so while explaining the strategic reasoning behind each actor's decision. He strives to describe Hamas' actions not as individual acts from a terrorist organization, but as acts of resistance and self-defense against an all-encompassing occupation that has threatened every facet of Palestinians' way of life.

Baconi begins his explanation of Hamas' pacification by providing context to the occupation, and elaborates on the British Mandate and Israel's seizure of 78% of historic Palestine in 1948. Baconi then discusses the

establishment of Hamas as a resistance organization that, at its core, stood for the liberation of historic Palestine against a brutal and crushing occupation. By describing the countless ploys, calculated attacks, operations, and diplomatic attempts throughout the occupation, Baconi illustrates Hamas' often violent resistance in Gaza and Israel's attempts to expand its occupation through extensive and deadly military intervention, while simultaneously explaining the strategy and effects of each decision. Ultimately, the occupation has used cycles of extreme violence and calm along with strategic political moves to steadily pacify Hamas, whose unwavering resistance to the occupation has continued to threaten Israeli security.

Analytical Comparison with Shock's Civil Resistance

When reading *Hamas Contained*, I noted a number of connections to *Civil Resistance Today* by Kurt Schock. The armed nature of Hamas' resistance and the numerous attempts at diplomacy between Hamas, Israel, and Palestinian government made me consider Schock's discussion of violence in relation to power and the use of mediators in conflicts, and how Schock's perspective on nonviolent resistance applied to the Israeli occupation.

Civil Resistance Today discussed separating violence from power, and what it says about one's power when they resort to violence. Schock references Hannah Arendt, a political theorist who 'suggests that rather than being an extreme manifestation of power, violence is the antithesis of power… [which] may destroy power, but cannot create it' (Shock 6). This seemingly clear statement certainly becomes more nuanced when applied to the Israeli occupation. Firing rockets into Gaza did not give Hamas any more authority or power, but instead worked to invalidate Israeli power by establishing fear in Israeli citizens, and therefore doubt in the Israeli government's ability to keep them safe. Additionally, Israel's operations in Gaza were extremely deadly and dealt blows to Hamas' power as Palestinian civilians faced enormous casualties. Although Hamas' resistance and dedication to the liberation of historic Palestine and its people were steadfast, it is true that Hamas has been steadily pacified throughout the years. This destruction of Hamas' power has certainly elevated Israel's influence, making it hard to believe that Israel's violence did not provide it with more power. Additionally, in Chapter 7 Schock states that mediators can often help different sides of a conflict to reach resolutions; however, Hamas has had numerous mediators between itself, Israel, Fateh, and others, and the agreements reached with these mediators all eventually fell apart as Israel resumed violence against

Palestinians in Gaza. Are mediators genuinely effective in resolving conflict, or is it situation dependent?

Critical Reflection

Hamas Contained was certainly emotionally difficult to read due to its honesty and clarity in describing the atrocities committed throughout the Israeli occupation. However, it was also incredibly informative, methodical, and educational as the book provided a refreshingly new perspective on Hamas and its role as a resistance organization, rather than immediately casting it as a terrorist organization. By organizing the book chronologically, I was able to follow along relatively easily considering the complexity of the events, which maximized my understanding of the material and genuinely helped me learn more about the major players within the occupation, as well as the occupation's effects on Gaza throughout its duration. Baconi was honest in his intentions with the book from the beginning, stating in the preface that *Hamas Contained'*s purpose is to 'cover the major milestones that Hamas went through…[and] contextualize these developments within the broader arc of Palestinian nationalism as it explores Hamas's role within the Palestinian struggle for self-determination' (Baconi xxiii). Baconi additionally states that the text, as a counternarrative, is inherently from Hamas' perspective (xx); while this is true, he successfully acknowledges Hamas' weaknesses and presents as many facts as possible. While I wanted to read more about the effects of the occupation on the Palestinian civilians in Gaza, I understand that providing more detail perhaps would have gone beyond the scope of this book. Baconi's straightforwardness in his intentions with this book contributed to this understanding, as it provides the reader with clear expectations of what the text entails. He is direct in his explanations, and recounts the history with enough detail for the reader to gain understanding of the situation without overwhelming them with the facts. Overall, *Hamas Contained* contributes a new perspective on Hamas to the West, and allows readers to adopt a more nuanced view of Palestinian resistance against the Israeli occupation.

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Rhodes Must Fall Movement, Oxford: Rhodes Must Fall: The Struggle to Decolonize the Racist Heart of an Empire

Zed Books, 2018

Review by **Benjamin S. Case**, *University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh*

The past several years have seen an explosion of activism ostensibly aimed at the removal of statues, namesakes, or other public memorials dedicated to racist historical figures. A catalyst for this recent wave was the #RhodesMustFall movement in South Africa, which mobilized around a statue of Cecil Rhodes at the University of Cape Town, and quickly went global.

These movements generated sharp pushback and repression, indicating that activists were touching a nerve. Some campaigns have succeeded in removing their target monuments, such as the Rhodes Must Fall movement at the University of Cape Town, while others have not, such as the movement by the same name at the University of Oxford, Rhodes' main benefactor institution and the focus of this book. However, underneath these fights over physical markers is a much deeper fight over the legacies, histories, and logics of colonialism in higher education—a fight to decolonize the university. This book confronts us with ways colonial and racist legacies are baked into the university system and the very construction of higher education as we know it.

Rhodes Must Fall: The Struggle to Decolonize the Racist Heart of an Empire exposes the myth that modern higher education is a place for everyone via the experiences of black and brown students whose experiences tell another story, a story of colonial legacies painted over with façades of 'diversity,' 'equality,' and 'free speech.' Multiple chapters document how the rhetoric of fairness and open debate often function in an Orwellian inversion as their very opposites—to perpetuate imbalance, defend the political speech and acts of some in order to deny it to others, and ultimately to maintain white supremacist norms.

This volume is a collection of pieces by participants, allies, and stakeholders in the global movement to decolonize higher education,

focused on Rhodes Must Fall, Oxford (RMFO). The 32 chapters are by different contributors and take widely varying forms, from essays and articles to transcribed speeches and interviews, to song lyrics. Aspects of contributions are inward-looking, analyzing the politics and dynamics of the RMFO and elsewhere, while others are outward-looking, formulating a politics of decolonization for a new generation, and still others are experiences or analyses generally related to the legacies of colonialism in educational institutions. There is a preface written by Kehinde Andrews and a brief introduction by the editors, but other than that the editors, who are themselves movement participants, offer no overarching commentary, analysis, or conclusion, letting the assemblage of pieces speak for themselves.

If few movement books attempt to decentralize the explication of a struggle from within, even fewer attempt to do so by including the voices of sister movements. In this case, it was essential to include the voices of student activists at the University of Cape Town, which birthed the Rhodes Must Fall movement, but also included are voices from struggles at other universities geographically located elsewhere in Britain, South Africa, Ghana, India and the US. These situate the struggle at Oxford within a broader decolonial movement, and expand on the questions raised in Oxford in terms of breadth and depth. The result is a book that is part contemporary movement history, part archive, and part political-social theory. There is no narrative flow, which results in some redundancy and left me with questions. But as the reader is forced to explore the RMFO and other movements through differing views and experiences of individuals and groups, the collection extends perhaps a better sense of the overall movement than could be offered by an individual or small group authoring the book themselves.

Nevertheless, some of the chapters appear to fit together better than others in terms of content and tone. For example, the essay by Obádélé Kambon[1] at the University of Ghana, relating to a now-removed statue of Gandhi on that campus, stands out from the rest in its caustic tone, especially combined with being one of only three chapters in the volume in which the direct target is not European-based (there is also a chapter by Palestine solidarity activists in the US relating to Israel and a chapter by an exiled West Papuan activist in the UK relating to Indonesia). However, this too gives the reader a sense of the movement's scope and diversity of positions.

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[1] In the book, this contributor's first name is spelled 'Odádélé'; I opted for the spelling Dr. Kambon uses.

Beyond its theoretical and historical contributions, this book unavoidably confronts the fallacy of the 'single-issue' movement. One cannot read this book and come away thinking that the Rhodes Must Fall movement is an anti-colonial or a Black movement without also understanding that it is a queer feminist and anti-capitalist movement. Intra-movement tensions and conflicts do not appear to be whitewashed, and we get accounts from multiple angles of both the messiness and power of a radical movement working through internal anti-Blackness, misogyny, transphobia, and class contradictions. This transparent and self-critical quality is consistent with several (excellent) student-written publications relating to 'Fallist' movements in South Africa,[2] formulating a picture of a radical decolonial movement that struggles to incorporate the politics and praxis of intersectional theory from the outset.

In this book, RMFO movement leaders, participants, defenders, and allies offer a nuanced look back at a seemingly short-lived yet widely influential movement. This book gives us both a theoretical and an on-the-ground exposition of such complex and heady issues as decolonization, the legacies of imperialism, structural racism, intersectionality, social movement dynamics, and multi-racial organizing. This is an important work for social movement scholars, university administrators and students of all kinds—particularly those from backgrounds directly connected to slavery and colonialism—activists, and anyone interested in the developing politics of decolonization.

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[2] See Chinguno et al. (2017) and Naidoo et al. (2017).

Gandhi: The Decolonisation of British India, 1917-1947.

GMT Games, 2019[3]

Reviewed by **Craig S. Brown,** *Journal of Resistance Studies*

As a longstanding enthusiast of boardgames and a scholar of nonviolence, I have heavily anticipated the release of *Gandhi*, as a rare if not unique focus on nonviolence in this genre. As with the boardgame *Bloc by Bloc* reviewed in *JRS* (Volume 5 Number 1)*,* such a treatment of resistance and all the risks it entails could easily convey commodification and reductivity. However, the development of *Gandhi* has clearly been undertaken with significant research and respect for its themes—both the Indian independence struggle and nonviolent resistance generally—and effectively reflects the spirit, strengths and shortcomings of broader resistance in the specific context. As with my other boardgame reviews in *JRS*, the discussion below will focus on the educational and training potential of *Gandhi* with regard to resistance.

A real strength of the developers' approach with *Gandhi* is the introductory material provided in the playbook, concerning the designer Bruce Mansfield's rationale for the game, an introduction to the Indian independence struggle and, most significantly for the uninitiated, nonviolence. The game's development was evidently not entered into lightly, with Mansfield explaining in the playbook (p.46) that the game began as 'an attempt to answer a question that I had long been thinking about: *Many games model violent conflict but few model nonviolent resistance; how could you model nonviolence in a board game?* [original emphasis]'. A selected bibliography is provided in the playbook, comprising of key texts on the British Raj in India, Gandhi, as well as 'strategic' or 'pragmatic' nonviolence in the main. Some of this material on nonviolence could be considered basic given the ongoing developments in the resistance field, although it is clearly intended as an introduction and may lead to players engaging more with theory and cases of nonviolent resistance.

As a researcher who has tried to expand knowledge and appeal of nonviolence among a wider audience, it was a pleasure to see information on nonviolence provided directly in *Gandhi*'s playbook (pp.49-50), in the

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[3] Currently available.

form of questioning three common myths about nonviolence: Myth 1: 'Nonviolence is just passive resistance. It is just the absence of violence. It is submission to oppression through inaction'; Myth 2: "Nonviolence is only for committed pacifists who adopt nonviolence solely for principled or moral reasons"; Myth 3: "Nonviolence only rarely works". Moreover, the event cards that can influence the game's progress—and that relate to actual historical occurrences in India significant to the independence struggle—are expounded in the playbook's 'event text and notes' section. This provides more information on British, Muslim League, 'revolutionary' and Indian National Congress-related activities, sometimes relating to nonviolent activity. This is interesting for the casual player and academic alike, as some of the events are somewhat obscure.

Significantly, GMT's boardgames are rather specialised and have a limited audience, so the likely impact of this game in terms of expanding knowledge of nonviolent resistance is probably restricted. This is all the more the case because of the rather prohibitive cost of the game. Thus, the majority of purchasers are likely to be experienced wargamers who often play through games focusing on violent conflicts, including others in GMT's COIN (counterinsurgency) series, which *Gandhi* is the 9th instalment of. Nevertheless, the US military has adopted some of GMT's games for military simulation purposes; as well as conveying the advantages of nonviolence to possible sceptics then, it remains that more experienced nonviolence academics and practitioners could use the game as an engaging educational tool.

Turning to some of the specific aspects of nonviolent resistance that are represented in *Gandhi*, firstly, it is notable that there is little precedent the game's dynamics can be compared to because of the scant portrayal of such resistance currently in the boardgame format. In the *Gandhi* playbook (p.46), Mansfield explains some of the prominent characteristics of the nonviolent factions (Congress and the Muslim League) developed for the game: 1) the factions needed to be distinct from insurgent forces; 2) they should act collectively; 3) they should not 'hide in the shadows', with protests being clearly marked; 4) they should be difficult for the government to counter other than when participating in resistance; 5) the factions' options should reflective political conditions (faction 'unity' and Raj 'restraint' trackers on the board); 6) nonviolent resistance activities should disrupt and thwart government activity and control; 7) nonviolent resistance's effects should endure across turns, compared to insurgent or revolutionary operations after

which the 'guerrilla' counter must go 'underground' before re-emerging in another game turn. This may mean little to a reader who has not played the game, while the characteristics of the nonviolent factions and resistance are not limited to the above. However, they show the attempts to reflect some of the more current developments in understanding nonviolent resistance, whether the advantage of mass support, unity and cohesion, as well as limitations of violent counter-activity in the risk of it backfiring.

Moreover, the contrast of nonviolent resistance with violent resistance in *Gandhi* is welcome—given the presence of the 'revolutionaries' faction in the game[4]—because this offers the opportunity to explore and play through some of the contrasts and indeed interactions of such resistance. Stephan and Chenoweth's (2008) work over the past decade on the effectiveness of nonviolent resistance clearly influenced Mansfield, when he suggests in the *Gandhi* playbook (p.49) that, 'Not only are historical nonviolent struggles underrepresented in gaming, existing games on violent resistance movements tend to cherry pick the most successful examples as models despite the limited successes of violent insurrection'. However, the Congress, Muslim League and Raj player all have the opportunity to collaborate and assist the revolutionaries, using revolutionary unrest for their own ends. This is an astute element to present given that it concerns the potential backfire of violence and complexities of resistance, because a shrewd revolutionaries player is likely to take advantage of any unrest for their own ends.

Alongside the relationship of nonviolent and violent resistance factions, *Gandhi* cleverly captures the intricacies of the specific context of India during the independence struggle, as well as the relationship of the Indian National Congress and Muslim League. The relationship between these two parties had an effect on the course of various resistance campaigns and ultimately the outcome of India's independence, thus being crucial to convey and highlighting the importance of context-specific variables affecting nonviolent resistance. Within the game, the number of actions the Muslim League can perform per turn is governed by the 'unity' tracker, whereas the Congress are governed by the 'restraint' tracker; the Congress player can assist the Muslim League player and vice versa, which increases unity and hence the combined potential of the nonviolence player. Yet paradoxically

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[4] The revolutionaries are intended to represent various groups active in India between 1917-1947, including the Indian National Army, while acknowledging they were hardly a cohesive force.

for the Congress player, increasing unity ultimately facilitates the Muslim League player's 'victory', the establishment of Pakistan. It is very illuminating for players to have the inherent tension in the Congress-led nonviolence campaigns represented in this manner. Meanwhile, to infer that the Muslim League were inevitably working towards disunity in the form of partition, or that in-game the Congress player could eschew unity and cooperation with the Muslim League in the pursuit of their own aims, goes to the heart of some controversial aspects of the Indian independence struggle and Gandhi-led campaigns during it. This expands the educational value of *Gandhi*, as players consider the diplomatic and strategic elements of resistance.

Without giving excessive information on my several play-throughs of *Gandhi*, adhering to the traditional roles or doctrines of certain factions and building a strategy for a long game seemed to draw out more of the variables being portrayed in terms of resistance. Thus, as an 'insurgent' faction, the revolutionaries were able to establish themselves more effectively in remote provinces further from Raj-controlled cities, stretching the Raj player's commitments, then exploiting protests and unrest as they arose in cities. For the Congress player, the combined level of opposition to the Raj in each province, city and state governs their victory condition. The most effective way of enhancing such opposition includes the game's representation of Gandhi's 'constructive programme', which is an oft-overlooked yet crucial aspect of Gandhian nonviolence. There is a specific counter representing Gandhi in the game, who can move flexibly and establish activists in locations as he moves around India, usually through the combination of the 'non-cooperation' operation and satyagraha. If this is combined with strikes and occupations on the railway network to hinder Raj movement to counter activist presence, during the game's campaign round, the dedicated 'constructive programme' stage for Congress allows opposition to be built very easily. Modelling such constructive resistance is novel, however abstracted, and could certainly act as a basis of introducing such ideas during an educational application of the game.

Although it is not possible to cover all of *Gandhi*'s intricacies, considering the Raj's representation through the game is illuminating in terms of resistance dynamics. The Raj player does seem to face an insurmountable task of maintaining support (counter to Congress building opposition) in the face of a united nonviolent opposition. Maintaining their resources to enable a strong troop and sepoy presence on the board and judicious use of 'martial law' is likely the best strategy, although the almost inevitable backfire

of this violence is modelled into the game. The other possibility it that 'divide and rule' comes into play and the other factions' conflicts go some way to removing the Raj's burden of control. Additionally, in the game Gandhi is able to remove unrest and protests; this is beneficial if there is a shortage of protest counters to place in more strategically important locations, while removing unrest can prevent the revolutionaries from gaining the upper hand. This invokes Gandhi's individual control historically over Congress campaigns, attempts to maintain nonviolent discipline, and perhaps his efforts to counter communal rioting particularly in the run up to India's partition. However, there is plenty of scope to critically assess Gandhi's role in this regard. Moreover, despite the potential for *Gandhi* to have had an excessive focus on his role, the game's exploration is of nonviolence generally to a greater extent and the broader independence struggle, which is helped by the varied event cards.

Concluding remarks

It must be acknowledged that overall, *Gandhi* is a complex game, both in terms of the rules and play dynamics. On the latter point, this lends itself to a very insightful and illuminating experience—something that I would suggest would expand with each play through—particularly if *Gandhi* was used as an engaging foundation for a broader seminar or informal discussion on nonviolence during the Indian independence struggle. On the former point, the complexity may be an obstacle to its use in an educational context, although this might be mitigated if individuals familiar with the game could guide others. Having not played any other games in GMT's COIN series, but having played the similarly initially complex *Twilight Struggle*, I can confidently say that gameplay gets easier and quicker with familiarity.

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