Kurt Schock; Civil Resistance Today, Polity Press, 2015

Since the largely nonviolent revolutions of 1989, subsequent popular resistance to autocratic rulers in Serbia and the Ukraine, and the Arab uprisings in 2011, media and academic interest in civil resistance has grown. The 2008 banking crisis and economic recession also led to new popular movements using militant nonviolent tactics, including the Occupy Movement. Kurt Schock's book, *Civil Resistance Today,* which covers all these movements and provides an introductory and up to date analytical overview, is therefore very timely.

In the last few years, there has also been a rapid growth in the literature on civil resistance, as Schock notes in his Preface, listing 'important' publications since 2009. He draws on most of these within his text, as well as surveying the historical evolution of the literature and the key role of Gandhi's campaigns and ideas in the development of civil resistance. Schock summarises Gene Sharp's central contribution to understanding the theory, methods and dynamics of how civil resistance works, but also queries (sometimes citing other contributors to the literature) the adequacy of some of Sharp's formulations, for example his 'consent theory' of power.

One well-known problem in discussing this field is that of terminology. Schock's own 2005 contribution to the literature was entitled *Unarmed Insurrections* and had 'people power' in the subtitle. A number of recent publications still use 'nonviolent action.' 'Civil resistance' has however become more widely adopted in recent years, partly because (as Schock notes) it avoids the 'moral and religious implications and misconceptions often associated with the term "nonviolence"' (p.2.) and because it covers struggles where commitment to avoid violence is pragmatic and sabotage may be used. However, Schock uses 'nonviolent resistance' and 'nonviolent struggle' interchangeably with civil resistance in the text. He implicitly avoids 'people power' as a general label because (as in his earlier book) it is especially associated with popular resistance to dictatorial or authoritarian regimes. This has been the major focus of most recent civil resistance literature, but Schock argues here for incorporating social movements within liberal democracies, especially resistance to economic forms of repression (which he has recently studied), into examination of civil resistance.

The inclusion of movements within parliamentary regimes in civil resistance ties into Schock's emphasis on linking civil resistance literature with the flourishing field of social movement studies, which tends to focus on movements within liberal democracies. Schock also explores briefly the relevance of civil resistance to the study of revolution (noting a shift in the emphasis on the centrality of violence in revolution from Samuel Huntington writing in 1968 to Jack Goldstone writing in 2001). He argues that both the study of social movements and of revolution have tended to give priority to structural explanations, whereas the civil resistance literature has emphasized

collective action, though recent studies of nonviolent action sometimes give more weight to cultural factors. His Chapter Four, 'How Resistance Happens,' skillfully utilizes the wider literatures of social movements and revolution to explore the development of resistance campaigns.

Because of his chosen focus, Schock does not give much attention to links with the literature on democratisation (especially relevant to movements to overthrow authoritarian governments or resist rigging of elections), although he does note reasons given within the civil resistance literature suggesting why a nonviolent strategy is more likely to produce democratic outcomes. As part of this argument, Schock notes how civil resistance is linked to civil society.

The introductory chapter helpfully highlights a number of key debates related to civil resistance, for example the distinction between 'pragmatic' and 'principled' nonviolence, and whether the threat of serious violence (a 'radical flank' effect) encourages major concessions by a regime. Schock also tackles the standard but important question: whether nonviolent methods can work against very repressive regimes. He starts from the classics of the civil resistance literature, and notes Ralph Summy's examination of this specific problem. He then cites the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1978-79 and of the 'very repressive' East German regime in 1989 as examples where civil resistance has succeeded. The Iranian examples raise questions about the links between civil resistance and violence, which Schock discusses as a separate key issue. The East German example suggests the importance of external international pressures - in particular the role of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev; this is touched upon in the next section on the role of structural factors.

One important problem that Schock raises in a later chapter, 'Processes, Dynamics and Outcomes,' is how to evaluate success. Immediate success - as in Ukraine 2004 or Egypt 2011 - may be followed by serious reversals. He also suggests that campaigns which have failed to reach their immediate goals may have an impact in promoting the bases of opposition which can be revived later, citing the initial widespread resistance inside Czechoslovakia to the Soviet invasion of 1968, which (together with the wider experience of the Prague Spring) had repercussions of reviving mass defiance in late

1989. His second example of apparent failure, 'challenges to communist rule in Poland in the 1970s' (p. 158), is more problematic, since the major worker protests of 1970 and 1976 were sparked by rises in the price of food and (despite shooting of demonstrators in 1970) met with immediate concessions by the regime; the 1970 protests also helped to oust the longstanding General Secretary of the Party, Gomulka. However, it is certainly possible to argue that the experiences of the 1970s proved the potential of strike action and informal organisation, provided important tactical lessons and fostered a desire for genuine trade union rights, which surfaced again in 1980 in Solidarity. Moreover, in 1976 the growing intellectual opposition began to forge links with the workers.

In general Schock provides a very clear, balanced and informative overview of issues related to civil resistance, highlighting key arguments in the literature. There are chapters on relations between resisters and the state, on the role of transnational diffusion and activism, and on the crucial issue of mechanisms of change. He is careful to include and reference a wide range of relevant studies of civil resistance, and also provides a lengthy and useful bibliography. One gap, however, is lack of any reference to East European theorists such as Vaclav Havel, Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik, who are very relevant to the relationship between resistance and civil society, and discussion of whether principled and pragmatic nonviolence are necessarily distinct.

Although I have a number of caveats about particular arguments, claims and examples, for example Schock's assessment of whether civil disobedience is justified in a democracy, the book succeeds in its aim to provide a systematic and readable introduction to civil resistance. It also encourages further reflection, debate and research on contentious questions. It is directed particularly to students of politics and sociology, but can be highly recommended for a more general audience, and scholars of civil resistance and social movements will find it very useful to have on their shelves.

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