Resistance Studies as an Academic Pursuit

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ABSTRACT

Resistance is both a common and somewhat unusual concept. It appears often in political debates and the media. Members of various non-governmental organizations and social movements also frequently use resistance when they refer to their various activities. In spite of the significant growth regarding the use of resistance during recent years, the discussion about the meaning and content of the concept, the ways resistance activities can be understood, as well as their potential impact, et cetera, is still rather divided and under-developed within academia. Hence, in spite of offering a necessary addition to the earlier focus on 'power' within the social sciences, the rapidly growing field of resistance studies is still very much in its infancy. This article is an attempt to introduce some of our main ideas on researching resistance in a systematized and structured fashion. One of the main arguments put forward in the article is that what qualifies as resistance is very much dependent on context, as the aim of various resistance practices also varies very much; so, does its different articulations as well as the ability of various activities to challenge political, legal, economic, social and cultural structures in society—ultimately to achieve 'social change'.

Introduction

> … all poetics of the dispersed marginal sexual, ethnic, lifestyle, 'multitudes' (gay, the mental ill, prisoners…) 'resisting' the mysterious central (capitalized) Power. Everyone resists—from gays and lesbians to Rightist survivalists—so why not draw the logic conclusion that this discourse of 'resistance' is the norm today (…)? (Žižek 2002: 66)

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A few year ago, when Tep Vanny and her associates of the Boeung Kak 13—a group of impoverished middle-aged mothers, homemakers and a grandmother who resided around the Boeung Kak lake—did not only refuse to move from their houses and sheds, but also decided to enter the streets of Phnom Penh and express their profound and deep dissatisfaction with local politicians and businessmen, the national government, the increasing problem with land-grabbing in Cambodia and ultimately the effects of neo-liberal globalization—this could be understood as 'resistance'; resistance against a policy or practice that marginalizes them (even further) and which they are simply not willing to accept any more. In their 'doing' of resistance, the women have been very creative and have, in addition to using national legislation as well as submitting a complaint to the World Bank, also, among other things, displayed the close historical connection between the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the Khmer Rouge (KR) in their street protests as well as using humor on different occasions; for example, by donning bird's nests complete with chickens on their heads, thereby defending their role as 'mother hens', and exposing their bare breasts outside the Cambodian parliament, with the aim of demonstrating the vulnerability of being left with only their bodies (Brickell 2013). Following the protests, the World Bank stopped its payments to the Cambodian government and shortly after, some, but not all, families living around the lake were given titles for the land on which they have resided for many years. The protests—which are still ongoing—have inspired other resistance activities, not only in Phnom Penh but also in other parts of Cambodia and possibly abroad.

Tunisian street vendor Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire in December 2010 in response to the confiscation of his wares and what he experienced as harassment and deep humiliation inflicted on him by municipal officials. His act could be understood as a more dramatic form of 'resistance' than the one played out by the women of the Boeung Kak 13. Bouazizi's act of self-demolition is generally considered a catalyst for the Tunisian Revolution and, by extension, the wider Arab Spring - 'resistance encourages resistance'.

A young girl, perhaps no more than 10 years-old, detonated powerful explosives concealed under her clothes in January 2015 at a market full of people in northern Nigeria, killing some 20 people and

wounding many more. This could also be understood as 'resistance'; however, a very drastic, violent and destructive, not to say 'irrational', form of resistance. It is not certain that the girl even knew that she was carrying a bomb. Whether or not this act of resistance against perceived westernization will promote Boko Haram's goal to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria, still remains to be seen.

When right-wing extremists gather in a European capital to protest against the official immigration policy and are being disturbed and interrupted by anti-racists, this could be interpreted as two groups not only performing resistance in regard to the government and its official policy, but also as the two groups resisting one another. Whether or not the two groups that are resisting each other is best understood in terms of resistance or in terms of 'political struggle' is, however, open for discussion.

Less obvious, but no less important than the examples above, is the resistance performed by thousands of women in Teheran, who on an 'individual' and 'non-organized' basis are wearing sandals (and hereby showing skin), colored hijab and/or makeup. By this, the women are, in a rather subtle way, challenging local Islamic moral codes as interpreted by the influential clergy and implemented by the morality police in the country. Conversely, the insistence of female French Muslims wearing hijab in schools could be considered as resistance against the legal ban of wearing conspicuous religious symbols in French public primary and secondary schools. The practical effects of these acts of resistance still remain unclear. It is, however, quite clear that the action per se is creating a lot of emotions and, by this, functioning as a catalyst in a heated debate.

Even more subtle forms of resistance than the examples from Iran and France can be identified. One example is when organizations that work against gender-based violence (GBV) in Cambodia, change their programs to focus primarily on men; both in the capacity of 'trainers' and 'participants'. In these men's groups, resistance practices against violent gender norms are played out. Different gendered images of identity and men's understanding of a violent masculinity, which previously resulted in GBV, are being questioned and, by extension, 'renegotiated'. By this, the male trainers turn into agents of resistance, carrying out resistance on behalf of the Cambodian women.

Yet another example from Cambodia is the resistance performed by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in relation to the KR Tribunal (formally known as the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, ECCC), who by re-categorizing the earlier practice of 'arranged marriages' into 'forced marriages' and by this, are transforming a local practice from a 'tradition' into a 'crime'—'the crime of forced marriage'. Also, when speaking about the ECCC, the resistance carried out by the lawyers defending the ones prosecuted at the Tribunal should also be mentioned. In the ECCC, a number of lawyers following the late Jacques Vergès' 'strategy of legal rupture' seek to reverse the legal process, by turning the prosecutors into the ones who are being prosecuted and hereby resisting the entire process of transitional justice that is currently taking place in Cambodia. This resistance activity— which was applied by Vergès for the first time when he was defending different FLN activists struggling for national independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s and taken to never seen heights when he defended former SS Officer Klaus Barbie in 1987—aims at revealing the hypocrisy of different (international) criminal courts as well as the interests of power establishing and supporting them. In doing so, the lawyers potentially relativize, as well as other things, the suffering of the victims of the KR period. What then are the ethical implications of this type of resistance, which ultimately challenges not only the victims' claim to seeking justice, but also the legal process and, by extension the entire liberal post-Cold War order and the current politics of global governance? In Japan, various civil society-based organizations are working with very subtle means by seeking to 'queer' time in order to resist worldwide environmental degradation. Resistance activities have many faces and are connected to one another in complex webs.

In New York City in October 1998, Reclaim the Streets, displayed an example of 'constructive resistance', suggesting alternatives rather than just 'being against' as demonstrating. Stephen Duncombe, author of the path-breaking volume, *Cultural Resistance Reader* (2002), described the event in the following way:

Instead of the exhausted march, chant, and civil disobedience protest model that we (and the police, media, and the public) were used to, we had created our own liberatory culture—at least for a little while—

had demonstrated it to the world. In place of the sour Lefty cry of 'No! We're against it', we yelled triumphantly: 'Yes! This is what we're for' (p. 3).

From the examples above follows that what qualifies as resistance is very much dependent on context, as the aim of various resistance practices also varies very much; so, does its different articulations as well as the ability of various activities to challenge political, legal, economic, social and cultural structures in society—ultimately to achieve 'social change'. As indicated above, resistance does not per se mean being against something, but could also be constructive—establishing 'creative' and 'constructive' alternatives to existing institutions and practices. A very good example in latter this regard of this is the Landless Workers' Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra,* MST), a social movement in Brazil with more than 1.5 million 'members', who fight not only for general access to land, but also for an 'alternative social covenant' that would provide a self-sustainable way of life, characterized by equal income distribution, non-racism and non-sexism. Put somewhat differently, previously there has been a tendency to address resistance primarily in terms of organized protests, demonstrations or as violent revolts. Resistance is, however, better understood as multidimensional, unstable and a complex social construction in dynamic relations that are related to differences of context. Resistance thereby displays an impressive variation; it can be anything from violent to non-violent, confrontational to circumventing, deconstructing to reconstructing, productive to hindering, individual to collective, accommodating to enforcing, and materialistic to virtual. Needless to say, other continuums could be used to catch the manifoldness of resistance and resistance activities. The examples above are just a few.

Resistance is both a common and somewhat unusual concept. It appears often in political debates and the media. Members of various non-governmental organizations and social movements also frequently use resistance when they refer to their various activities. In spite of the significant growth regarding the use of resistance during recent years, the discussion about the meaning and content of the concept, the ways resistance activities can be understood, as well as their potential impact, et cetera, is still rather divided and under-developed within *academia.* Hence, in spite of offering a necessary addition to the earlier focus on

'power' within the social sciences, the rapidly growing field of resistance studies is still very much in its infancy.

There are multiple reasons for the current growth of resistance studies. One important reason is the so-called 'post-structural turn' within the social sciences. In this regard, David Couzens Hoy (2004: 11) writes:

> … from the poststructuralist perspective, a society without resistance would either be a harmless daydream or a terrifying nightmare. Dreaming of a society without resistance is harmless as long as the theorist does not have the power to enforce the dream. However, the poststructuralist concern is that, when backed by force, the dream could become nightmare.

Over and above anything, it is the focus by various post-structuralist scholars on the different ways that discourses constitute subjects—i.e. the ways in which our established manner of speaking also shape who we become as individuals—that has made concepts such as agency and resistance popular in current social science research. Generally speaking, post-structuralist scholars focus on the possibility for the subject to relate critically to various discursive 'truths'; they look after possible 'escape routes' from determinism and discursive power over individuals.

The study of resistance is not limited to the post-structural turn in social sciences, and scholars other than post-structuralist ones carry out interesting research on resistance. But, the post-structural turn has been very important for the development of resistance studies and in spite of several other interesting 'turns' in social sciences—for example, 'cultural', 'historical' and 'material' turns—the post-structural perspective still plays a key role in the development of resistance studies. The perspective is still very much in development and 'interacts' and 'integrates' in interesting ways with later 'turns' in the social sciences, not least the 'affective' turn.

Mapping and Situating Resistance (Studies)

Resistance Studies combines several theoretical traditions, including, for example, the state-oriented, structuralist and public scope of 'contentious politics' (which itself is a combination of social movement studies,

revolution studies, and studies on guerrilla warfare, civil warfare, and terrorism). But it also includes informal 'everyday forms of resistance' within subaltern studies, the history-from-below movement and 'autonomist' approaches to radical politics within post-Marxist and post-structuralist studies. Resistance studies could and sometimes do also draw on the many specialist fields that at least tangentially engage with it: gender studies and feminism, queer studies, peace studies, political science, sociology, critical race studies, anthropology, pedagogics, psychology, media and communication studies, (critical) legal studies, heritage studies, design and crafts, et cetera.

The many disciplines, models, theories and discussions relate because 'resistance' challenges all forms of 'domination'—not just the particular territorial configuration of power relations that we call the 'state', but also the exploitative practices, commodification, fetishism, alienation, and economic injustices of capitalism, the discursive truth-regimes and normative orders of status quo, as well as the gender, race, status, caste and taste hierarchies of the sociocultural sector.

Historically, studies of resistance have gone through the same stages as the studies of power; an early focus on the more obvious and dramatic forms of resistance, and later a recognition of subtle and diffused articulations. Early studies focused on the public, collectively organized, confrontational and violent forms of resistance to state power, capitalism and dominance (by scholars such as Tedd Gurr and Charles Tilly). Typical examples are revolution studies with its strong focus on armed revolutionary groups, as well as social movement studies with its attention to massive demonstrations, protests or riots. The contemporary field is more diversified, yet still dominated by a focus on public and collective confrontations. Still, 'resistance'—in the tradition of, for example, James Scott, Asef Bayat, Michel de Certeau, Judith Butler, and Antonio Negri—takes another turn. This kind of resistance might be hidden or disguised, or a subtle change of everyday repetitions, or it might be driven by a desire for escape and survival that is not framed as 'political' at all, in which the recognition by others of what one does is not wished for, and might even be something one actively tries to avoid.

In mapping and situating (the field) of 'resistance' it seems to be useful to describe its relation to other commonly used and related

concepts, such as 'agency' or 'social movements'. In what follows we consider 'agency' as a wide concept that captures subjects' capacity to do things, which might involve resistance, but it does not have to. Agency reveals processes of self-reflection and studying these processes demands targeting dominant subject formations from 'within'. The subject is a product of matter and discourses, and as such it is never decided. Instead the subject is constantly reconstituted in a process that might include an active and reflecting attitude, and the possibility of resistance by identifying and questioning the discourses that hails us into certain positions (Lenz Taguchi 2004: 16). Thus, even though the prevailing material and discursive contexts of a society frame our room for maneuver, the concept of agency displays the possibility of resistance towards the pressure of hegemonic discourses.

Resistance is also closely entangled in subject-positions and affects. Affects and emotions, however, have not been the core of resistance studies. Still, they have played a silent but fundamental role in many theories of resistance. James Scott, for example, brings in fear of reprisals and repressive actions as an important aspect, without emphasizing 'emotions' as an important aspect (Scott 1977, 1990). Affects become an engine that creates emotions, motivations and various resisting practices. This is because to hate, desire or love are relational and embedded in social contexts that create the possibility for us to communicate and share affects/emotions, while we still have an individual attachment to the emotion.

Overall, we understand 'resistance' as a practice that might be played out by organized larger groups and movements as well as subcultures and individuals, based on everyday relations. It might be articulated through or against power-relations, nonviolent or violent practices or be inspired by other resisters (copy-cat resistance). Resistance is an act or patterns of actions, which might undermine or negotiate different power-relations, but sometimes ends up reproducing and strengthening relations of dominance (Lilja and Vinthagen 2009). For example, the latter is a pattern often seen as power holders mobilize their forces to suppress resistance, creating 'irrationality' within resistance.

As underscored several times above, resistance is a complex and broad umbrella concept, which needs to be elaborated in specific

contexts with specific aims and ways of acting. We therefore should not limit our understanding of resistance to particular forms of resistance, such as: riots, protests, sabotage, strikes, social movements, revolutions, mimicry, 'talk-back', slander, work-slow and the like. The still emerging field of resistance studies needs to take on the whole range of resistance articulations. We need to consider the subject in all of its manifestations, mechanisms, actors, techniques, and dynamics, and in all of their historical, cultural, and political contexts.

Resistance Studies as an Academic Pursuit

Taking the above into consideration, it appears timely to seek to systematize and investigate, in a more concrete manner, different forms of resistance, the relations between power and resistance and, by extension, the dynamics of resistance as well as the role and impact of various resistance activities in (understanding) social change. Our point of departure is simply that today there are certain individuals who work in *academia* and describe what they are doing as resistance studies. We are interested in discussing and problematizing not only what the individuals who are studying resistance are actually doing, but also what they should be doing. In particular: what is and what should be the subject matter with which students and researchers of resistance studies are concerned? What approaches and methodologies are helpful in studying resistance and how should the student of resistance studies choose among them? What are the necessary ethical concerns of studying resistance? Is it possible to chisel out some guidelines that an academic specialist in resistance studies should follow in pursuing his/her work in academia and society at large? If yes, what would such guidelines look like? (Cf. Bull 1972).

The Subject Matter of Resistance Studies

In spite of what has been argued so far, research on resistance does have some common features. First of all, resistance studies, generally speaking, focuses on some sort of practice or activity, most often performed by an agent in opposition. The oppositional dimension of resistance seems to vary, however, since constructive resistance or resistance owed to self-loyalty (Arvidson and Axelsson 2017) are less concerned with the 'against'

part of the resistance-power relation. Resistance is often productive, plural and fluid as well as integrated into everyday social life.

Secondly, the *lingua franca* of the field includes concepts such as: rejection, challenge, struggle, change, subversiveness and constructiveness (cf. Hollander and Einwohner 2004). In spite of these similarities, in particular the focus on various practices, resistance studies is, however, as already indicated, not a homogeneous field, with common concepts, definitions, methodological approaches, methods and normative consensus, but rather it is a research interest that moves between established disciplines and fields, uses various concepts and methodologies, and has very different aims. Sometimes researchers direct their focus on resistance against various discourses. At other times, the focus might be directed on resistance as an organized practice against certain individuals or a collective of individuals, such as decision makers or decision-making organizations (Lilja and Vinthagen 2009; Holland and Einwohner 2004). To conclude, the field is wide and so it should be.

Even though resistance is perhaps best described as a multi-dimensional and floating phenomenon, performed by different agents, it is still possible to identify a number of analytical dividing lines between various traditions within the field in order to establish some kind of overview. One such dividing line is between those doing research on organized and more concretely politically articulated forms of resistance (for example, the practices of various social movements, forms of organization and discourse) and those focusing on the more hidden and less visible resistance performed more or less on a daily basis (everyday resistance). Organized resistance most often aims at obtaining public attention, to confront and articulate demands. For those performing everyday resistance, the aim is rather to achieve various effects without being visible (in public) and achieve various goals in a more non-confrontational manner. Other markers, dividers or fields should also be mentioned. Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner (2004), for example, speak about a division between intentional and non-intentional resistance, between those researchers who claim that actions without intention cannot qualify as resistance, as well as those who argue that practices that are not clearly expressed by those performing the practice as resistance do not qualify as resistance.

Another contested issue within resistance studies is if an act needs to be acknowledged or recognized as an act of resistance in order to qualify as resistance. One voice in this debate is James C. Scott, who argues that certain resistance practices, especially in relations characterized by strong domination, are purposively hidden by those performing the acts and that this quality of the act does not disqualify it as being a resistance act (Scott 1985). The point is to hide the practice, in order to not be discovered or acknowledged as an act of resistance. At certain times, it is a matter of survival where resistance is disguised as ignorance, loyalty or inefficiency. Other scholars, claiming the opposite, needless to say, contest this opinion (See further Hollander and Einwohner 2004).

Research on resistance is thus a broad church. Some 100 year ago, William James wrote, when he was trying to describe the approach of 'philosophical pragmatism', as follows: 'the tower of Babel [is] monotony in comparison'. This image accurately captures the state of the art within resistance (studies) today. Resistance studies does not have a coherent, easy to digest and agglomerated edifice. Over and above this, the term 'resistance' invites misunderstandings by those who are accustomed to its common use in everyday language where it simply means opposition, which is a meaning that disguises the complexity of the concept.

Approaches to Resistance Studies

In the study of resistance, it is crucial as to how power is understood and defined, since resistance always exists in relation to power. Different understandings of power give various spaces for resistance and, by extension, make different forms of resistance relevant or necessary to understand. The concept of power, just as resistance, is contested within the social sciences and it is literally impossible to find a generally agreed upon definition. In a historical perspective, it is possible to speak about an expanded understanding of power, and today the concept includes not only a formal order and capacity by an elite, but also various social (informal) processes and constructions of identities.

By tradition power has been associated with the military power of the state or the ability by someone to make someone else act in accordance with his or her will. Foucault, along with other scholars such as Steven Lukes and Pierre Bourdieu, contributed to revolutionizing this traditional

understanding of power in the 1970s by analyzing power in relation to various practices—moving the focus of research from what is power to how is power performed. Foucault, as argued above, introduced concepts such as disciplinary and capillary power to the discussion. Given that our understanding of what power is has turned more complex and nuanced, our theories and understandings of resistance need to follow since where we find power, we also find resistance. More on the relation between power and resistance follows below, particularly in chapter 3.

While resistance studies has a rather distinctive subject matter—resistance practices—it is not in the full sense a subject. We cannot say, as we can of, for example, mathematics or economics, that it not only has its own distinctive field of inquiry, but also its own recognizable point of departure, methodologies, methods and techniques. Resistance studies, just like other multi-, inter- and/or or trans-disciplinary attempts, is the scene of contending points of departure, methodologies, methods and techniques (cf. Bull 1972: 255).

Multi-, Inter- and Trans-Disciplinary Research

By tradition, most fields of inquiry within the social sciences, like politics, law and sociology, are intra-disciplinary; i.e. they work within their own distinctive field of inquiry. Multi-disciplinary research is characterized by people from different disciplines working together, each drawing on their disciplinary knowledge; interdisciplinary research, seeking to integrate approaches and knowledge from different disciplines, using a real synthesis of approaches; and trans-disciplinary research that seeks to create a unity of intellectual frameworks beyond disciplinary perspectives.

Considering the multidimensional character of resistance studies, the field is probably best understood as an academic pursuit located on the edge between multi- and inter-disciplinarity. It integrates knowledge and methods from different disciplines, fields and approaches (for example politics, law, sociology, but also, other multi- and/or inter-disciplinary fields of inquiry, such as peace and conflict/development studies, revolutionary studies, social movement studies, terrorism studies and subaltern studies) and most often seeks to understand various resistance activities based on this. As it stands today, resistance studies does not qualify as a trans-disciplinary field of inquiry and it is questionable if

should strive to become one, since many interesting resistance practices are most likely best understood based on the 'friction' between different disciplines. Considering this, we seek to, as much as possible, benefit from our wide collective disciplinary background and the integration of our various perspectives.

Qualitative vs. Quantitative Approaches

Even though we focus on resistance from a post-structural point of departure, it should be emphasized that there is nothing *per se* that disqualifies the application of quantitative methodologies and methods in researching resistance and social change. Qualitative and quantitative methods could of course also be combined. A very good example in this regard is the book, *Why Civil Resistance Work: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (2011), written by Erica Chenowth and Maria J. Stephan. Until the publication of this book, few scholars had attempted to empirically examine the relative effectiveness of violent and nonviolent resistance, respectively, in a systematic way by comparing them with a historical perspective. Chenoweth and Stephan are, in fact, the first to develop a unique dataset of global reach (comprising no less than 323 campaigns between 1900 and 2006) to compare and test the outcomes of these two strategic choices over time. In addition to using their unique dataset, the two authors also draw on qualitative evidence from four case studies (the Iranian revolution between 1977 and 1979, the people power movement in the Philippines, between 1983 and 1986, the First Palestinian Intifada, between 1987 and 1992, and the Burmese civil resistance, between 1988 and 1990) in developing their key arguments: (i) power depends on the consent of the civilian population; consent, which far from being fixed, can be withdrawn and reassigned through collective action; and (ii) strategies other than violence are the most effective ones in creating political and social change (Masullo J. 2013). This book is a fine example of empirical research on resistance, which highlights some important dimensions of resistance, but, due to the chosen perspective, ignores others.

Detachment vs. Commitment in Resistance Studies

The origins and character of resistance studies—in particular regarding the discussion on commitment vs. detachment or, put somewhat differently, the tension between, on the one hand, the academic goal of value-free analysis and, on the other hand, advocacy—is in several regards reminiscent of for example peace studies (including peace and conflict studies, peace and development studies and conflict resolution). Peace studies has, since its inception after the end of the Second World War, struggled to be accepted as a full member of the social sciences. On occasions, it has been rejected and criticized by other fields for crossing the line between neutral analysis and advocacy, and turning research on peace and conflicts into 'peace activism' disguised as critical theory. By imposing particular definitions of not only what defines peace and a peaceful society but also how different conflicts should be interpreted as well as who should be empowered and excluded, respectively, the scientific legitimacy of peace studies is, it has been argued, compromised. The critics argue that political laden and biased approaches have produced ideologically distorted *curricula*; models and analyses that have damaged the integrity of peace studies as an academic pursuit (Steinberg 2004).

The opposite criticism has, however, also been put forward, namely that peace studies is not at all or at least not sufficiently critical, but quite unreflectively sets out to solve various conflicts and, among other things, rejects the constructive potential of conflicts. Put somewhat differently, peace studies:

> … takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organized, as the given framework for action. The general aim of problem-solving is to make these relationships and institutions work smoothly by dealing effectively with particular sources of trouble (Cox 1981: 128–29).

It is argued that critical theory is, in contrast to problem-solving theory, holistic rather than analytic. 'It does not', Robert Cox (1981: 129) writes:

> … take institutions and social power for granted but calls them into question by concerning itself with their origins and how and whether

> they might be in the processes of changing --- Critical theory is directed to the social and political complex as a whole rather than to the separate parts.

Problem-solving theory could then be considered to be conservative, while critical theory could be considered to be utopian, or at least in favor of social change, and to questioning established power structures. The observations above—the difference between critical and problem-solving theory, the line between neutral analysis and advocacy, as well as researching utopia—are also highly relevant for the emerging field of resistance studies.

As we know, resistance studies focuses on resistance, and in particular on resistance activities and social change. Even though the chief study objects, the resisters and their resistance activities or practices, often, but not always, are critical, not to say radical, resistance studies is not, any more than peace studies equaling peace activism, a critical undertaking *per se*. Resistance studies can be critical as well as normative, but it does not have to be.

As a researcher, however, it is of great importance to be aware of when the focus of the research is 'empirical'—that is when the aim is to describe, explain and/or understand particular resistance activities and their role in achieving social change—and when the focus is normative or constructive and ultimately directed towards giving (policy) recommendations, regardless if these recommendations are 'problem-solving' (conservative) or 'critical' (radical). Put somewhat differently, in order not to undermine the legitimacy of resistance studies, it is essential that scholars pay attention to the difference between analysis and advocacy. A resistance studies scholar can also be an activist, but (s) he does not have to be one. There is nothing that contradicts this. There is, however, nothing that automatically makes an activist a better scholar of resistance.

Medicine is mainly about educating doctors who can cure diseases, and law, as conventionally understood, is more about educating legal practitioners, such as judges, prosecutors and (defense) lawyers, rather than scholars who are (critically) seeking to understand and change the law or the role of law in society. Exceptions to this general rule exist.

Resistance studies is ultimately about seeking to understand various resistance practices and, by extension, their role in social change rather than educating activists. Resistance studies could, but does not have to, provide guidelines of how a desired social change can be achieved.

Considering the above, resistance studies can, analytically speaking, be studied in three different categories: 'empirically', 'normatively' and 'constructively'. Each category of problem and type of theory deals with different questions. If the focus is *empirical*, *normative*, the spotlight is directed towards which resistance activities are preferable or most effective, and also what is the desired outcome of a resistance activity—what type of social change that the resistance practice should result in—and how all this can be justified. Finally, if we as scholars are interested in what the future social order could look like and what role resistance can play in achieving this utopia, then our focus is *constructive*; i.e. we are interested in giving recommendations of how we can achieve as much as possible of what we desire, given the circumstances of the world, or, perhaps more correctly, how we think it is socially constructed (cf. Lundquist 1993: 1998).

If we are going to be able to say something about the future, how the future ought to be and how this can be achieved, both 'ought' and 'can' questions need be dealt with. It is, we think, meaningless to discuss the characteristics of the future without addressing what it actually can be. Furthermore, it is highly inappropriate, not to say unethical, to seek answers to questions about what the future could look like without considering if this is also desirable. The idea that it would be possible to go directly from normative to constructive theory is, at best, meaningless and, at worst, dangerous. It is neither possible, we believe, to go directly from empirical to constructive theory, because then we exclude the human ability of self-reflection and to act differently. Hence, constructive theory, which can serve as a foundation for various (policy) recommendations on resistance, resistance practices and social change should be based on empirical as well as normative theory; practical advice—recommendations and guidelines—should be constructively founded (cf. Baaz 2002; Lundquist 1993: 85; 1998: 28; Rothstein 1994).

Normative Points of Departure

The 'ideal type' of researcher, which has guided us when writing this book, could be labeled 'the critic of power'. This type of researcher is essential in any democratic society, since (s)he strives to take a critical position (it can be positive or negative) to those in power, as well as the exercise of power and seeks to challenge all manifestations thereof. This role requires that we as scholars of resistance studies have a credo that invites us to seek alternatives to the currently dominating power structures, rather than to act as 'servants of the power' or 'useful idiots' (unconscious problem-solving). We truly believe that autonomous and critical social science research, including resistance studies, is essential for any democratic society (as well as any other type of society) (cf. Lundquist 2001: 37–9). This is not activism, but rather to be taken seriously in the role of a scholar.

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This article is a lightly edited version of the introduction chapter of our monograph, *Researching Resistance: A Critical Approach to Theory and Practice,* which will be published by Rowman and Littlefield International during the end of 2017. The book is a first attempt to bring together some of our main ideas on researching resistance in a systematized and structured fashion. It is also the first volume in a book series on resistance that will also be published by Rowman and Littlefield International. The three of us are members of the editorial board of the book series. In addition to introducing our views on resistance studies as an academic activity, we see this article as an appetizer for not only the forthcoming book but also for the entire book series