

JOURNAL OF RESISTANCE STUDIES

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Special thanks to Sarah Freeman-Woolpert, Andrew Rigby, Gabrielle Jensen, Hayley Benoit, Brian Martin, Pukar Bista, and Carol Rank for help with proof-reading. And a huge thanks to all the anonymous reviewers.

Cover photo by Koustav2007: Adivasi women protest, CC BY-SA 3.0

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Published by Irene Publishing with support from Resistance Studies Initiative at **UMassAmherst**

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EDITORIAL:

Some notes on the Journal of Resistance Studies and its exploration of “resistance”

Stellan Vinthagen

Our newly launched Journal of Resistance Studies is developing well. One seasoned editor claimed that the real challenge of creating a new academic journal is to succeed with the second issue. The first is always possible, but with the second issue there is the challenge of getting enough high-quality submissions to a journal that is still not established and known in the academic community. We are pleased to say we have managed well beyond what is needed. We received 60+ submissions; our list of reviewers with different specializations grows; the editorial committee is growing, and our South American editorial sub-committee is translating high quality articles from Spanish to English; we have received several thematic suggestions for future issues. All of this demonstrates that we started the journal and persist in a period of high interest in resistance studies. This trend also helps the journal practically. It is now possible to apply a longer production line, with longer time periods between the steps of submissions, reviews, revisions and publications. This is good for everyone involved. We also have been able to decide on a combination of thematic issues and general calls for papers in the future, encouraging a maximum interdisciplinary variation of publications on resistance. In summary, the situation looks promising. However, there is a major challenge that remains, one that will be the focus for next year and onwards: the sustainable economy of the JRS. So far we have given out the journal for free, both in print, during meetings and conferences, and digitally, via our website. We cannot continue like that. All journals rely on voluntary work for much of the production, primarily the writing of articles and the review work. However, every journal also needs to cover some unavoidable costs: layout, editorial management, coordi-

nation, proofreading, administration, and (if we want more than just a digital version on the Internet): printing and postage.

Between 2008 and 2013 the RESIST group at University of Gothenburg in collaboration with the global Resistance Studies Network produced an open access journal: the Resistance Studies Magazine (www.rsmag.org). At that time we chose open access because it is something we politically support and view as the future of public academia. Several members involved in the Resistance Studies Network were activists within groups working for open access and free and open software (FOSS). But the magazine proved difficult to maintain. It was indeed possible during periods, but not with the kind of high-quality and sustained regular production that a journal needs. With only voluntary work, digital production, and on-demand printing we were dependent on individuals and their (temporary) devotion to the project. It meant we lost people's interest and attention in (unavoidable) periods of repeated change of editorship and missing issues. Therefore we decided this time to do it in a more traditional way with subscriptions, but to begin with only for the printed copies. Thus, the printed copies of JRS will be subscription-based from issue number 1, 2016. How long we will be able to keep the digital versions open access, will depend on what economic solutions we can find.

There are great needs and excellent reasons of global solidarity for expanding freedom of information and the sharing of knowledge. Open access is a necessary resistance to the pay-walls and domination of profit-making publishing houses on the academic market. This is a practice constituting our commons and a resistance movement that is growing among librarians, academics, and activists. However, as we understand it, so far there are no viable models of how to do this without relying on commercial advertisement, voluntary work, external funding, or fee-based publication in which authors or institutions pay to be published. We do not see any of these solutions as sustainable – although they might be combined to make a model that could work in the future. We are in dialogue and in cooperation with different open access initiatives and are trying to develop ways to keep the Journal of Resistance Studies as an open access source in future, at least partly. In the meantime, however, we unfortunately will have to explore the conventional way, and we

will negotiate with a publishing corporation for a deal. The risk is then that also the digital versions of JRS will become subscription-based. If you have ideas of how to solve this dilemma, please let us know. We are still looking for options.

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The interest and discussions that our first issue of the Journal of Resistance Studies created motivate a further clarification of our conceptual and theoretical standpoints. Several people – among them authors – have asked what is included within “resistance studies,” and what is not. We as editors have also struggled to explain why we are not happy with article submissions that only refer to others within the (established) field of social movement studies, and do not mention “resistance.” Our repeated statements that “we are not yet another movement journal,” is not explanatory enough. The policy statement (published in the first issue and available on our website) gives a basic orientation. But it seems that it is necessary to say more. Since our starting point for the development of “resistance studies” has been a tentative definition of resistance as a subaltern practice that might undermine power, our understanding of “power” has been questioned. Firstly, this is only one possible definition. Other definitions are welcome, as long as they are explained, critically discussed, and refer to others and their related work.

However, let us take our proposed definition as a point of departure. We as editors think this definition is indeed a workable starting point, and we want to explain why. To begin with, let us highlight some consequences of this tentative definition that is relevant to “power”: (1) resistance is always connected to power, and cannot be meaningfully understood in itself, separated from power. That means you cannot discuss “resistance” without also clarifying what kind of “power” it relates to. (2) This definition is valid for different theoretical and conceptual understandings of “power,” and the chosen form and understanding of “power” will have decisive consequences for what counts as “resistance.” Therefore, no one needs to subscribe to a particular theoretical framework in order to discuss resistance. This journal is looking for plurality and interdisciplinary approaches. (3) The definition is a general one but it can be – and should be – made contextual and specific when used in a study of power in a particular case, since power is never general,

but a particular constellation of forces, a combination of historical and contemporary techniques that are applied on concrete bodies situated in time/space, related to class, sexuality, race, gender, ability, or other decisive social categories. Thus, this definition renders both precision and pluralism for the field, or at least that is the aim of it.

The practice by a “subaltern” is included since” in our view power is about subordination, also when it is productive power we speak of. Inspired by Foucault, we from RESIST (the Resistance Studies Group at Gothenburg University) often use “power” to describe something that is an integral part of social life: relations of subordination. Thus, we use the general and relational concept of “power” to signify what some call “power over,” a force that creates subjugation and produces subjects integrated into formal or informal hierarchies, or rankings of positions. We are aware that others might use power as a more agency oriented concept of “power to” or “power with,” or even as “empowerment,” and we see no problem with the concept being used differently by people. But it then becomes necessary to explain what one means with power. For us, “power” is always a matter of relations of subordination or fixations of subjectivity or practice, i.e. a structuring of the space of possible being or behavior. And this entanglement with power is always present and cannot be escaped. Resistance, however, is also infused with power. Still power might be more or less problematic, more or less limiting, structuring, or constructing of subordination. Its effects or techniques might be reduced and undermined, and resistance is therefore potentially a liberation project, a matter of expanding the space of possible being or behavior. However, we do not think “liberation” is at all absolute. It is instead always emerging, a process of unfinished struggle. Yet we view (continuous) liberation as the potential seed of hope inhabiting resistance.

Since “power” is used in such varying ways, there might be a reason to choose an alternative concept, one that might clarify our understanding of “power” as inherently being-in-and-made-into relations of subordination. One alternative would be to instead use “domination.” Since all power relations subjectify, they also dominate. But in our understanding, Foucault uses “domination” as stable, crystallized, rigid, or frozen relations of the normal flow of power, which is a special case of power, a particular politico-ethical problem. Therefore “domination”

seems to be just an increased degree of the same power, one that is simply more of subjectification than what is practiced in the everyday and unavoidable form of negotiated flows of “power.” Thus, for those that are not as Foucaultian in their understanding of power, the definition might instead be interpreted like this: resistance is a subaltern practice that might undermine domination. We have not made up our mind here, and there might be other suitable alternative conceptualizations to use as well. We welcome submissions that explore the conceptual relations between power, resistance, and domination, which suggest alternative conceptual possibilities.

Ultimately, we need to recognize that the whole project of the Journal of Resistance Studies is to explore the field of “resistance” and its relations to “power” (or “domination”), and that no one of us yet knows what that terrain looks like, where it begins or ends, what it encompasses or does not. We attempt to forge a field at the same time as we explore it... this is not easy, but is necessary.

In the quest for clarification, conceptual relations also matter. Therefore, in mapping the area of “resistance” it seems to be useful to describe its relation to other commonly used and related concepts, such as “agency,” “protest,” “contention,” or “social movements.” We would propose that “agency” is a wider concept that captures subjects’ capacity to do things, which might involve resistance but does not have to. “Agency” is thus a broader concept than “resistance.” On the other hand we suggest that “protest” and “social movements” are more precise concepts, capturing forms of resistance that are of a particular kind. “Protest” is not necessarily sustained in the way a movement is, and it signals a public, contentious quality or political intention with its practice— “to protest against something” is to call for attention to a wrong or problem, to demonstrate dissent or disagreement with the state of affairs, thus making that critique known to others. “Resistance” – in the tradition of James Scott, Asef Bayat, Michel de Certeau, Judith Butler, and Antonio Negri – does not necessarily have to do that. It might also 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. While “protest” calls for attention, “everyday resistance” or other forms of evasion or disguised disruption does not necessarily do so. At the same time, both “protest” and “resistance” might be incidental collective events or individual eruptions of activity that are not necessarily coupled with communicative networks, collective identities, oppositional discourses, or sustained collective actions, as is often the case for definitions of “social movements.”

Another concept commonly used in the last 15 years is “contentious politics” – coined by Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly – a generic concept for all kinds of politics that are not routine processes (e.g. electoral politics in a liberal democracy) and involve struggles between groups, interests, and values (e.g. civil war, social movements, revolution, etc.). That, however, is still a concept that does not include the individual resistance or hidden and disguised forms of everyday resistance. It only recognizes resistance that is done with rational-political strategy in opposition to state power, and not desire-driven escape and circumvention, cultural discursive practices (aimed against non-state dominance), or the creation of alternative institutions, autonomous spaces, or subject formations, etc. As such it is a less encompassing concept compared to “resistance.”

Therefore, it seems that protest – as a generic term for all intentional and public resistance events – is broader than contentious politics since all contentious politics have to be a protest against something. But at the same time, protest is more limited than resistance. Thus, this is one way to model the conceptual relationships, according to how restrictive the categories are: agency > resistance > protest > contentious politics > social movement.

Naturally, we have no ambition to clarify these concepts in a final way. Settling the terms creates closed limitations of what submitting authors could write and claim. We want to demonstrate quite the opposite and open up the field for critical enquiry and debate, and yet we wish to avoid making the terms so broad that “everything and nothing” fits into “resistance” (which was a recurrent – and legitimate – critique of the field in the 1990s). Instead, we hope that our reflections will inspire and provoke further discussions, leading to more clarifications, understandings, and developments of possible conceptual toolboxes, as well

as disagreements, debates and explicit contradictions, which all healthy fields of studies need.

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Finally, on a more practical note: the Journal of Resistance Studies needs your active involvement in order to become the amazing space for exploration of resistance that it aims for. We have a need for all kinds of engagement. Although we have already a lot of submissions we want more, and especially encourage texts that take their starting point in new disciplines and theories where resistance is not normally discussed. We are excited about the thematic issue Gender, Development and Resistance (No. 2, 2016), developed by the guest editors Tiina Seppälä and Sara C. Motta (which received 30+ submissions). We also call for submissions of all kinds of relevant articles for our non-thematic issues in 2016 and onwards. We accept submissions the whole year around but do publish deadlines for coming issues on the website.

We also need more reviewers to add to our pool of experts in different fields. It is a challenge to take an interdisciplinary approach to resistance studies, which means we need people in many connecting fields. For the moment we especially need reviewers from queer studies, critical race studies, critical geography, history, pedagogics, and media and communication studies. There is also a need for additional active members in our editorial board. We are happy to already have the collaboration with our South American Editorial Committee and have an interest in developing relations with more regional editorial committees in the world. Let us know if you want be a part of our growing team. We are also looking for translators (Spanish-English primarily, but also other languages such as French, Arabic, German, etc.) as well as English-speaking proofreaders, which becomes particularly necessary when we editors are Scandinavians and Latin Americans.

Thank you for joining us in this exciting collaborative work. The Journal of Resistance Studies is only possible as a collective critical project.

Recoupling Groups Who Resist Dimensions of Difference, Opposition and Affirmation

Tristan Partridge

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Abstract

This article outlines a shift in analytical focus from the outcomes of collective action to the active processes and forms of cooperation that resistance groups create, embody and engage with. By rejecting categories of difference that are imposed upon them by agents and institutions of power, and by redefining notions of opposition in their own terms, groups who resist generate opportunities for ‘recoupling’ themselves – allowing alliances and strengthened networks of cooperation to emerge from common practice. Drawing on fieldwork experiences in Ecuador and theoretical works of Deleuze, Derrida and Haraway, I suggest these processes depend on acts of ‘affirmation’: actions that reaffirm the social, economic and ecological relations that those involved deem to be valuable or vital, or both. From the specific contexts of indigenous activism in Ecuador, organising at the national and local scales and operating across boundaries of social difference, the dynamics of collaboration described here reflect those at play within a broad range of actors and collectivities engaged in diverse forms of resistance. This prompts further forms of engagement and reflection in our attempts to understand and pursue collaborative struggles for equality, collectivity and social justice.

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Groups engaged in acts of resistance face the consequences of being categorized by other agents and institutions of power as being different, or as being the opponents of such arbiters of power. The same groups may also engage directly to challenge the hierarchies implied by such categorical distinctions, and to counteract related processes of marginalisation. This article reads Deleuze, Derrida and Haraway to (i) examine how difference and opposition function within sites of contestation,

and (ii) to explore their effects on the dynamics of cooperation. Drawing upon experiences with Indigenous activists in Ecuador, I suggest a focus on affirmation – on actions that participants deem important or valuable – which enables us to see where commonalities of practice emerge, and highlights how groups foster collectivity. In different contexts of collective action, this is to ask: what is being affirmed, how, why, and by who? Such a perspective shifts analytical focus from the outcomes of action to the active processes involved. It also urges attentiveness to how differences operate among groups and within alliances that may be singularly categorized as ‘opposition’ by those whose authority is challenged or whose legitimacy is questioned.

Donna Haraway (1991) used ‘recoupling’ to describe responses to fragmented identity politics that seek to build coalitions and affinities rather than establish an essential, or categorical, unity (Reeve 2012). Here, I focus on the ways in which groups ‘recouple’ themselves by rejecting terms and categories placed upon them and used against them, and instead develop ways to cooperate and collaborate across difference: ‘recoupling’ on their own terms, rather than being defined by terms imposed by powerful others. The phrase ‘groups who resist’ is deliberately broad in scope, to include an open range of actors and collectivities engaged in diverse struggles to resist, recover, or reorder social and economic relations. My interest here is in settings where affirmation plays a particularly important role, and where unity of vision is not a prerequisite to action – for example, in building national movements, or in contexts where cooperation stems from common practice, not necessarily from common purpose.

Time spent with the Indigenous community of San Isidro in Ecuador’s central Andes has fuelled my interest in these questions. This was a place where immediate issues (access to land, use of the landscape, access to water, the ability to practice family-scale agriculture) were addressed collectively without the collectivity having to first establish or decide upon a singular vision for the future. Processes were in place to facilitate and encourage input from as many community residents as possible, as explored below. Though I focus on examples of action among groups in one particular part of the world who identify as Indigenous (itself a term and category that has variously been imposed, challenged,

rejected and endorsed), the theoretical approaches I outline are also applicable in other contexts of collective action as means to further explore how distinct projects, or intentional sets of practices, may rely less on isolating and oppositional forms of difference, and more on those that are generative or ‘affirming.’

What follows is divided into three sections: (i) a theoretical outline of difference and opposition, drawing on Deleuze to emphasise the role of action and affirmation in establishing groups who resist as agents of change; (ii) an account of how the national indigenous movement in Ecuador operates across boundaries of social difference to confront political marginalisation, thus affirming the idea of Ecuador as a plurinational country through collective action that rejects the imposition of state-defined categories, and (iii) a more localised account of how acts of affirmation (in one highland indigenous community in Ecuador) have strengthened commonality in terms that go beyond those related to legal registration with the state as an indigenous community, effectively ‘re-coupling’ a community that has been increasingly marked by differential access to income and resources. The article concludes by reflecting on the theoretical and methodological implications of a focus on action and affirmation, and on how an attention to difference among groups and within alliances might be constructively examined in other contexts typified by conflict, opposition and contestation.

I.

Difference and Opposition / Opposition and Affirmation

Early in the discussion of ‘difference’ presented by Deleuze (1994), he suggests that the basis of an understanding of difference that rests upon static or essential qualities is a mistake. This is because ‘difference in general is distinguished from diversity or otherness’ and ‘the difference “between” two things is only empirical, and the corresponding determinations are only extrinsic’ (Deleuze 1994: 30, 28). What, then, determines the extent to which groups – particularly those engaged in resistance – are ‘different’ from the agents and institutions they oppose, and from

one another? Deleuze rejects categories that draw definitive divisions between different groups in society, especially those definitions imposed by powerful others or those that, through representation, limit active possibilities or deny the importance of action, change, and fluidity (Jun 2011): ‘representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference. Representation has only a single center... It mediates everything, but mobilises and moves nothing’ (Deleuze 1994: 55–6). He instead emphasises movement, and processes that reflect the change and fluidity individuals experience when acting within a group. In place of static, categorical qualities or characteristics, and those that are externally-defined, the basis of difference emerges within social flows and shared experiences of change – through active processes of difference-making, or what Masumi (2011) calls ‘differencings.’

The differences we encounter between and within groups who resist, following Deleuze, are not established solely by mobilizing forces (issues or sets of issues, complaints, demands, injustices) that an individual or group engages with, nor even by a collective sense of identity within a group: ‘Deleuze replaces the foundational modern concept of identity with the concept of difference’ (Jun 2011: 95). Instead, the difference-determining factors of a group are the form and flow of ‘affirming’ actions deployed by that group: ‘in its essence, difference is the object of affirmation or affirmation itself. In its essence, affirmation is itself difference’ (Deleuze 1994: 52). The idea that action is important in constituting complex relations of difference focuses attention on events and movement (rather than categories), and complements extant work on dynamics of power, cooperation and resistance (e.g. Holloway 2002; Jordan 2002). Actions of ‘affirmation’ are those that draw particular attention to such complex relations and overlapping dimensions of difference, opposition and resistance. Reflecting these dynamics are instances and conceptions of ‘prefigurative politics,’ where the means for attaining political goals are consistent with the intended outcomes (Strasinger 2010; Polletta: 2002). If those intended outcomes are equality, nonviolence, and direct democracy, then prefigurative actions toward those ends would ‘affirm’ those same values and principles.

Refusing to submit to, operate through, or reproduce the structures and forms of domination that threaten or impinge upon the actions be-

ing undertaken (Yuen 2001), is to coordinate action by ‘creating social relations and decision-making processes that at least approximate those that might exist in the kind of society we’d like to bring about’ (Graeber 2014: 85), thus actively affirming what is important to those taking part. As Rebecca Solnit (2005: 23) points out, ‘Reclaim the Streets realized this beautifully, recognizing that if what the RTS activists opposed was privatization, alienation, and isolation, a street party was not just a protest of these conditions but a temporary triumph over them’ (cited by Holloway 2010: 45). These actions took the street as a site of both societal exclusion and enculturation and, rejecting these happenings, RTS set about reclaiming the streets via theatrical and carnivalesque interventions: a ‘revelatory and sensuous explosion’ outside of (and radically different from) established political behaviour (Jordan 2002: 353). The street party was embraced as a site of inversion and affirmation. I suggest that these actions are not fully defined by their oppositional politics, nor are they only moments of ‘temporary triumph.’ Instead, by organising, acting and relating in ways that generate and sustain the social relations that those involved wish to bring about, these interventions are actively ‘affirming’ collectivity, solidarity, and immediacy.

Taking this idea further, we see the emergence and function of difference, opposition, and affirmation in a new light by looking at formulations of ‘difference’ that go beyond notions of dualistic opposition, to those that – again following Deleuze – recognise the concept’s multiple and ‘affirming’ dynamics and implications. Dominant views on difference, particularly those designed to silence or marginalise dissent, tend to draw a normative line of distinction between authority and anything it deems to be oppositional. This characterises a political atmosphere that is all too familiar, bisecting the social world into those ‘with us’ or ‘against us’ – usually a volatile division enforced ultimately by violence or the threat of violence. Subsequently, any activity which can be categorized as opposition among groups who resist becomes viewed as an expression only of their place in a power struggle, a struggle mapped across the particular issues being fought for or discussed. To expand on (and to potentially subvert) this perspective – to consider more dimensions of a power struggle than straightforward opposition – is to interrogate assumptions regarding the exercise of authority and domination, and to examine the fluid, processual behaviour of power relations.

One such assumption is characterized as understanding ‘power to’ as the expression of force, as an individual property couched in self-belief, or as a form of interaction whose presence is limited to particular events. Such a selective view overlooks or denies the ways in which power permeates interaction. To expand this view is to consider how other forms of power might be identified and enacted, and to instead understand ‘power to’ as always social in its nature: an ever-present aspect of how ‘sociality is constituted,’ and intricately built into ‘the way in which doing is organised’ (Holloway 2002: 28). In this light, the loss of ‘power to’ is linked to the ‘power over’ of others, but not in a zero-sum game where gains and losses are locked in a shifting imbalance. Instead, this loss acts as a translation of all forms of power in continuous flux. Thus, pursuing intentional or coordinated actions – ‘affirming actions’ that participants pursue and promote as important to them – is an expression more of power to than power over. When such affirming actions are identified as ‘opposition,’ they face further suppression and the threat of being denied the capacity to pursue distinct social projects: ‘if we are deprived of our capacity-to-do, or rather, if we are deprived of our capacity to project-beyond-and-do, of our capacity to do negatively, ecstatically, then we are deprived of our humanity’ (Holloway 2002: 27-8). Opposition, however, is not only a category or relation imposed on groups by those in positions of power. As with difference, opposition can also be interrogated and reexamined as emerging from, and through, active processes.

Opposition and Affirmation

Deleuze suggests that ‘the greatest difference is always an opposition’ (1994: 30) but qualifies this statement with two further points. The first is that oppositions are not in themselves singular or definitive, but are shaped by evolving actions and emergent relations: ‘oppositions are roughly cut from a delicate milieu of overlapping perspectives, of communicating distances, divergences and disparities, of heterogeneous potentials and intensities’ (Deleuze 1994: 50). The second point qualifying Deleuze’s notion of difference and opposition is that the latter is only one way in which difference is enacted, interpreted and maintained (or ‘mediated’): ‘Difference is “mediated” to the extent that it is subjected to

the fourfold root of identity, opposition, analogy, and resemblance' (Deleuze 1994: 29). Of these, the mediation that most strongly distinguishes and determines a subject (amid its relations with others, and with other differences) – the mediation that most 'makes the difference' and tests how far difference can extend (Deleuze 1994: 30) – is opposition.

However, since oppositions from this perspective are not fixed and are instead shaped by emergent actions, difference does not necessarily entail opposition and contradiction. Difference is more extensive than contradiction; singularity and particularity can be expressed and enacted independent of any relations of opposition. As above, the zealous and 'sensuous explosion' of immediacy – within moments like those created by Reclaim The Streets – have physical, relational, and emotional impacts that are more extensive than (and cannot be defined or understood only in terms of) the systems of privatization that they oppose. Similarly, a focus on opposition as a way to understand and identify difference limits our perspective by obscuring from view the actions that contribute to positions and particularity:

It is not difference which presupposes opposition but opposition which presupposes difference, and far from resolving difference by tracing it back to a foundation, opposition betrays and distorts it. Our claim is not that difference in itself is not "already" contradiction, but that it cannot be reduced or traced back to contradiction, since the latter is not more but less profound than difference.

Deleuze 1994: 51

In this light, 'affirming actions' within resistance groups – actions which for Deleuze become 'determining factors' in establishing difference – do more than create and demarcate opposition because they derive from something other than solely a singular 'foundation' and they can, and do, change over time.

The notion of affirmation as a definitive aspect of action emphasises how multiple oppositions are generated in action – relational oppositions that occur within a multiplicity of connected differences. Multiple differences are connected, for example, between protest groups and the state, as well as between and within the social movements themselves:

‘[it is not] primarily a question of dissolving tensions in the identical, but rather of distributing the disparities in a multiplicity... everywhere, couples and polarities presuppose bundles and networks, organised opposition presupposes radiations in all directions’ (Deleuze 1994: 51). Thus, affirming actions are not limited to being acts of opposition, and at the same time are capable of, if not likely to result in, connecting diverse groups together through newly discovered or freshly formed networks and connections. Intentionally building or sustaining a group based on certain principles of organising and relating may present radical challenges to the more customary practices of any dominant sector of society, but it doesn’t necessarily follow that they are actions of opposition. Instead, they are better thought of as acts of affirmation: doing what is most desirable for, and suitable to, the people involved in the group itself.

As described in Sections II and III, below, understanding the particularity of groups is vital to deciphering the many intersecting differences that surround and constitute them. We have seen how prefigurative political action pursues the forms of organising, relating and acting that reflect how groups would like to exist and relate, or how they would choose to exist and relate were they not as constrained or marginalised as they find themselves to be now. What is being affirmed in such instances may well be very locally specific: maintaining a particular form of congregating or decision-making, or adapting inherited ideas and methods to address immediate social and economic issues. Drawing on Deleuze, making the distinction between a dualistic concept of difference and one that is manifold and affirming is critical to highlighting these locally or relationally specific aspects of a group, and to better understanding the specificities of a group’s actions and intentions.

Dualistic difference and affirming difference are distinguished by their relationship to opposition: the former is static and the latter more subject to change. Deleuze illustrates these notions of difference by drawing attention to the relations surrounding any one instance of opposition (the ‘entire space’ within which it is articulated):

As for opposition... it is as though things were spread out upon a flat surface, polarised in a single plane... what is missing is the original, intensive depth which is the matrix of the entire space and the first

affirmation of difference: here, that which only afterwards appears as linear limitation and flat opposition lives and simmers in the form of free differences.

Deleuze 1994: 50-1

The ‘depth’ to an instance or articulation of opposition is the set of relations with other differences that affirming actions both emerge from and generate. As such, recognising the multiple, mediate ways in which groups, their concerns, their members and their opponents, are linked one to another works to destabilize the static relations of difference and opposition that might be imposed upon groups who resist. The ‘depth’ of actions that oppose privatization and alienation, for example, is the complex array of aspirations and expressions that go into doing whatever is necessary to affirm mutuality and immediacy in collective processes. What initially appears as flat or linear opposition is not fixed, but is better understood as being prone to development, distortion or dilution through interaction with other relations of difference – a multiplicity that disrupts attempts to ‘pin down’ and suppress opposition.

Another way to conceptualise the distinction between oppositional and affirming notions of difference is found in discussions that contrast ‘monocentrism’ with ‘acentred’ accounts of systems and collective activity. Deborah Rose draws on David Turner (1987: 99-106) outlining the code of ‘monism’ that unifies elements around the recognition of ‘one ultimate principle’: ‘things (groups, individuals, ideas) defined as being different are brought together in sets of relationships which achieve a unity; parts are subsumed within a common code or organisation’ (Rose 2000: 219). Such a singular conception of group formation (and of the development of resistance trajectories, defined by unitary opposition) obscures the manifold relations of difference that Deleuze draws attention to. It is a ‘monist’ approach that ‘denies plurality [and] totalizes structure’ (Rose 2000: 219). It also fails to engage fully with the complexity of decentred and decentering mobilizations seen in recent years, for example in global social forums, indigenous resistance across Latin America and elsewhere, anti-summit actions and innumerable campaigns to oppose or redirect development projects (Maeckelbergh 2009).

Where a dualistic interpretation of difference has been contrasted

with one which recognizes the manifold and affirming nature of surrounding interlinked and interlinking differences, here Rose contrasts ‘monocentrism’ with the model of an ‘acentred system.’ This presents us with an additional device for understanding the nature of difference beyond schismatic opposition. It also establishes a model for the acentred society which ‘rejects any centralizing, unifying automaton as “an asocial intrusion”’ (Rosenstiehl & Petitot 1974, at Deleuze & Guattari 2005: 17, 519) – and which rejects the exercise of ‘power over’ that breaks mutual recognition and denies the pursuit of social projects (Holloway 2002: 29). This, in turn, leads us ‘to a position profoundly removed from notions of centralization, hierarchy, privilege, and external frames of reference’ (Rose 2000: 220). Work on social movements and direct action resistance groups¹ has given significant focus to the forms of horizontal organisation currently utilized in many (global) social movements, and to the inclusivity and strength that such ‘acentred’ approaches deliver within those groups.

Relationality and Experience

As noted above, Deleuze’s emphasis on affirmation highlights the contingency and fluidity of relations of difference in sites of contestation and oppositional action. It also highlights how a dualistic or schismatic perspective on difference fails to capture, or deliberately conceals, the complexity of networks and relations that constitute groups engaged in resistance. In Henry’s (2010) analytical terms, the contrast derived from Deleuze is between static ‘categorical differences’ and those that are affirmed through action, so-called ‘generative differences.’ Generative differences do not depend on contradiction or opposition and are instead ‘intensive, relational, productive and multiple’ in that they (i) are identified by ‘intensities’ (rather than fixed qualities), (ii) ‘resonate’ in relations of difference across boundaries within or between groups and individuals, (iii) actualise and produce the ‘form and expression’ of a collective by allowing internal differences to be articulated, and (iv) exist on multiple planes and are affirmed in action through ‘processes of questioning’ (Henry 2010: 6-8). It is through these intensities, resonances, relations

¹ Examples include: Maeckelbergh 2009; Graeber 2007; Graeber 2009; Nash 2001; Colloredo-Mansfeld 2009; Jordan 2002.

and processes of 'generative' affirmation that action emerges: 'the particularity of things and the relations between them arise on the basis of difference' (Henry 2010: 7). In broader terms, we could gloss generative difference as reflecting a relational (rather than categorical) approach to and understanding of the world – a contrast that is not limited to theoretical propositions.

There are cosmological realities embodied by indigenous populations of the Global South and North that articulate such relational views regarding not only the identification of individuals and groups, but also of other entities and relations. Some Amazonian models of the self 'presume a spiritual unity and a corporeal diversity' among all living things (de Castro 2004). This is comparable to notions of Cree personhood that view the natural world by assuming connections and exploring differences, rather than assuming difference and examining relations (Scott 1996). Understanding the nature of differences, and how they connect, relate to one another, and morph over time, becomes vital to understanding interaction of all different kinds. In this, difference is a critical component in establishing particularity. For the current task of examining how cooperative groups differentiate and 'recouple' themselves – both done through actions of affirmation and the rejection of categories of difference imposed upon them – we need to look at how categorical divisions are avoided or overcome. If particularity is established in part by difference, and difference is emergent within affirming actions and relations, we are led to ask what kinds of action might be considered 'affirming' in this way.

One approach is to look at the relationship between oppositional (political) action and what is being proposed, promoted, expressed or tangibly created within processes of collective action (Maeckelbergh 2009). That is to ask, What is being affirmed in the actions and lived experience of those taking part? There is an unfinished history that situates apparently oppositional action within streams of resistance from Bakhtinian street carnivals (with their unpredictable and inversionary drive) to the spatial politics of the Occupy Movement (Kerton 2012; Shiffman et al. 2012), all building toward a creative point: an experiential model of the culture being fought for and desired (Duncombe 2002: 347). In actions like these, as with Reclaim The Streets' street parties, the

critical moment is not defined by destruction, but by production. Thus not all apparent opposition can be understood simply as negation, since acts of opposition are co-constituted with other relations of difference, other creative priorities and experiences.

Derrida illustrates this co-constitution with the idea of a ‘playing movement’ that produces distinct actors and experiences. In echoes of the contrast drawn between ‘dualistic’ and ‘manifold and affirming’ difference, his concept of *différance* refers to a realm of relations beyond that of category or opposition: ‘What is written as *différance*, then, will be the playing movement that “produces” – by means of something that is not simply an activity – these differences, these effects of difference... We will designate as *différance* the movement according to which language, or any code, any system of referral in general is constituted “historically” as a weave of differences’ (Derrida 1982: 11-12, at Plotnitsky 2004: 23). Following Brogan (1988: 31), we can read in this the idea that *différance* transcends the opposition of oppositional politics, and is generative in the sense of drawing together diverse systems and codes within a collectivity, moving beyond the ‘binding together and separating’ that comparisons and categorizations involve.

To illustrate this view on (political) opposition, Derrida refers to the creation of the ‘theatre of cruelty’ as a (collective) act that both sought to reinvent its own purpose and identity, and to recast its relation to the body of thought and action it opposes. Crucially, this is done through an expression of ‘affirming difference’ rather than through a categorical negation or opposition:

the theatre of cruelty is defined as “the affirmation / of a terrible / and, moreover, implacable necessity” (Antonin Artaud [1948] *Le théâtre de la cruauté*, p.84)... Artaud, therefore, does not call for destruction, for a new manifestation of negativity. Despite everything that it must ravage in its wake, “the theatre of cruelty / is not the symbol of an absent void.” It *affirms*, it produces affirmation itself in its full and necessary rigor.

Derrida 1978: 292-3, italics original

The terms and purposes of what is being produced are not defined by what is being opposed or negated, but by the needs and intentions being affirmed. This describes a basis of opposition, then, that is a processual mixing of action, intention, reflection and experience, rather than a singular event or instance of conflict.

Thus far, we have reviewed diverging interpretations of difference in the work of Deleuze and Derrida that contrast those based on fixed categories and impositions with those that emerge as a consequence of ‘affirming’ actions. The former – categorical difference – is associated with static notions of opposition; the latter – generative or affirming difference – is, by contrast, associated with actions of opposition that express power *to* (in the pursuit of intentional social projects) rather than power *over* (which typifies the exercise of authority and control). In this light, affirming actions are recognized as moving beyond opposition to create new networks and relations, and to develop an active model of the kinds of organization and interaction that are being actively fought for and constructed. The following section offers an overview and account of indigenous politics at the national level in Ecuador, in order to show how difference may be articulated with these dynamics of collaboration and political contestation.

II.

National Indigenous Politics in Ecuador:

Macrotropes, Managing Alterity and Affirming Plurinationality

A wide variety of forms of resistance and collective action fall under the term ‘indigenous politics’ in Ecuador. Acts and expressions range across direct action, mass mobilizations, and popular protest, through to electoral politics and engagement with institutions of authority, most notably the national government (Becker 2011b). This involves interactions (and tensions) that connect groups from different parts of the country, foregrounding a variety of class-based concerns, identity politics, and campaigns for particular rights. Here, I focus on how two contrasting

‘macrotropes,’ or paradigms, of difference and diversity within national politics have fuelled indigenous action from the post-independence era and first half the twentieth century, up to the present day (Whitten 2003). The first are racialised policies of *mestizaje* (lit. blending) that sought to create a category of inclusion redrawing boundaries of social and cultural difference – imposing an artificial homogeneity that denied divisions between Indigenous, Black, *Mestizo* and White populations (and ignored the diversity that characterised each of those groups, especially within the different that identify as Indigenous). The second paradigm is that of *plurinacionalidad* (pluri- or multi-nationalism; pluri/multinationality) that reflected the call from indigenous groups in Ecuador for more meaningful social and political inclusion, equality and the acknowledgement of territorial rights (Becker 2011b: 143). The means to achieve this kind of political recognition required diverse groups to act collaboratively², to create and affirm the political spaces that plurinationality would require.

The needs, sources of conflict, and livelihoods for those involved in the Indigenous Movement vary considerably across different groups and regional members – consistently testing the alliances that the movement both generates and depends upon. Ecuador is said to host Latin America’s strongest indigenous movement, fronted by CONAIE [Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador] which was formed in 1986 from previous organisations of indigenous nationalities from

² The account offered here, necessarily brief for reasons of space, is not intended to overlook the divisions and conflicts among Indigenous groups that occurred around plurinationalism: ‘Even among Indigenous activists the significance of plurinationalism was hotly debated, with those allied with the CONAIE most interested in pressing the issue. Pedro de la Cruz, [then president of another, more class-based Indigenous coalition: FENOCIN, the National Federation of Campesino, Indigenous and Black Organisations in Ecuador] remained skeptical of the practicality of the concept of plurinationality, stressing interculturality instead (El Comercio, March 23, 2008). In contrast, for Ecuarrunari [the regional federation of highland Kichwa peoples], “plurinationalism means building a strong and sovereign state that recognizes and makes possible the full exercise of collective and individual rights and promotes equal development for all of Ecuador and not only for certain regions or sectors” (Ecuarrunari 2007: 4). It denied that plurinationalism meant creating a state within a state’ (Becker 2011a: 54).

the Sierra (highland) and Amazonian regions (Yashar 2005). This was just two years before graffiti reading ‘500 años de resistencia’ [‘500 years of resistance’] began appearing across the country, in opposition to the celebrations planned to mark the quincentennial of Columbus’ arrival in the Americas, dated to October 12, 1492 (Meisch 1992; Lucas 2000). CONAIE came to national and international prominence through the 1990 *levantamiento* (uprising), followed by other mobilizations in 1992, 1994, 1997, 2000, and 2001 (Martínez Novo 2009). CONAIE and other organisations within the Movement have since influenced development policy and the drafting of the national constitution in 1998 (Yashar 2005) and again in 2008.

These hard-won gains and ongoing rifts and shifts in Ecuadorian politics have roots in recent histories of interacting economic policies, racism, marginalisation and strengthened identity politics across Latin America. Preceding decades that saw neoliberal policies being imposed and adopted across the region also saw many states and elites respond systematically to political opposition by ‘encouraging people to express discontent through the idiom of identity’ (Hale 1997: 575). Through such strategies, expressions of discontent are theoretically more easily contained (by more powerful agents) due to the fact that the medium of communication is unitary (and centred around the will of those who have a monopoly on the use of force in order to further the governmental project)³ – the idiom of identity or indigeneity as defined by the state. Meanwhile the subject groups (encouraged to participate in both political dialogues and governmental projects) span across numerous cultural planes and ethnicities – a diversity denied by state-defined categories (Blaser 2004).

One result of such limited definitions is that the particularity of groups expressing discontent is also denied, the ‘culture of cultures’ of a diverse country is negated, and various forms of (cultural, political, ethical, economic) difference are collapsed into a unitary category of

³ Following Max Weber’s formulation: ‘a compulsory political association with continuous organisation will be called a “state” if and insofar as its administrative staff successfully upholds a claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order’ (Graeber 2007: 162).

‘other’ or ‘opponent’ (Whitten 2003). This is a process of ‘managing alterity’ and the extent to which it affects the freedom and interpretation of protest groups acts as a measure of repression. It structures political relations on similar principles to earlier policies of *mestizaje* – which sought to homogenize a nation divided by distinctions between White, Mestizo, Indigenous and Black populations (Latta 2011) – leaving structural relations of inequality intact behind a rhetorical facade of equality and inclusion (de la Torre 2006). Rather than cultivating a platform for identity politics, *mestizaje* policies sought to neutralise the particularity of claims coming from diverse groups and populations. As such, the Ecuadorian government’s current efforts to stifle opposition reflect what many indigenous and activist groups regard as the latest in an historical series of measures designed to enforce the will of elites (Zamosc 2007).

For Whitten, within a nation of different languages, ecologies, cultural and social systems, there have been two paradigms that ‘compete for salience in the politics and poetics of identity and representation... One is that of *el mestizaje* [the blending]... and the other is that of *multinacionalidad* (multinationalism, multinationality), subsuming multiculturalism. The first emanates from the elite; the second swells up from *el pueblo* [the people]... Who is to be identified as *el pueblo* in any given context, in any specific arena, during any particular crisis, depends, in part, on the ways by which the macrotropes of *el mestizaje* and *multinacionalidad* play out on [national] stages’ (Whitten 2003: 12). *Multinacionalidad* is more frequently referred to as *plurinacionalidad* or plurinationality which, as Whitten highlighted, subsumes the nominal or purely theoretical respect for cultural diversity associated with top-down multiculturalism, and builds on the demands of indigenous and grassroots groups. This pushes further, calling for radical structural change and the transformation of democratic and participatory processes within the post-colonial state in ways that reflect the needs and experiences of all indigenous nationalities and peoples, demanding full equality across diversity (Huanacuni 2010; Lang 2013: 6). The two macrotropes/paradigms have followed very different trajectories of implementation and resistance.

The deeply racialised policies of *mestizaje* set political parameters that limited opposing demands and voices, and it was in that context that Ecuadorian indigenous organising grew, became formalised at the

national level throughout the twentieth century, and ultimately led to uprisings in the 1990s and actions that have followed (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2009). Forced into a unitary category of ‘citizen’ that denied particularity, diverse indigenous groups pushed against imposed understandings of national unity, the diminishing of ‘disparate social and cultural worlds’ and the falsehood of a ‘shared deontic and epistemic horizon (Foucault 1997)’ (Povinelli 2001: 326). Those who set the agenda for what was tolerable variety rather than unacceptable deviance from deontological norms had sought to group together and thus contain diverse movements and indigenous nationalities, as unification in the form of an imposition. However, other methods of building collaboration across difference have since emerged and taken shape within indigenous action in Ecuador. Processes of creating, negotiating, and achieving a more positive form of unity or solidarity – recoupling different groups on their own terms, through collaborative action – have since confronted dominant forces that seek to limit and control resistance.

Recoupling: opposing universal visions

The universalising drive of *mestizaje* policies – subsuming difference – reflects the threat of powerful agents ‘dissolving’ opponents that Haraway (1991) describes. Haraway outlines the need for ‘unity’ across diverse communicative struggles as a means for combatting structures of marginalisation, expressing a hope for finding ‘more potent myths for resistance and recoupling’ among a diverse range of actors (Haraway 1991: 154). Underlying this view on resistance are not just myths, but also critical analyses of the very forms of domination being resisted. This highlights how acts of opposition involve both a range of all-too-real material struggles as well as a battle that is largely communicative – a contested terrain involving definitions as much as specific demands or rights.

The model of domination Haraway describes is said to operate through new networks of ‘informatics’ rather than the ‘comfortable old hierarchical dominations,’ where social phenomena are recast according to its own logic: cooperation as ‘communications enhancement,’ the Family Wage as ‘Comparable worth,’ and even ‘Nature/Culture’ as identifiable ‘Fields of Difference’ (Haraway 1991: 161-2). Although this

model depicts forms of systematic control that seek to subsume more than ethnic diversity within a singular vision – to go beyond the strategies and intent of *mestizaje* policies – it illustrates some of the effects of political universalisation and its consequences for oppositional groups. The context outlined is one where collective action confronts *totalising* structures seeking to reduce all difference to an aspect of its own machinery – to dissolve opponents within its own explanatory language, or within its own ‘code’: translating the world through a singular, common language in which ‘all resistance to instrumental control disappears and all heterogeneity can be submitted to disassembly, reassembly, investment, and exchange’ (Haraway 1991: 164). This equates to ‘dissolving tensions in the identical’ in Deleuze’s terms (Deleuze 1994: 51).

Actions fighting this ‘disassembly’ and dissolution, and using difference to political advantage while building a movement on ‘connected heterogeneity’ (Joas 1996), were central to the ‘500 years of resistance’ mobilisations, and for the formation of the 1990 indigenous *levantamiento*/uprising in Ecuador. The achievements of indigenous movements regarding nominal recognition of multiple nationalities and the protection of collective rights, appeared first in the 1998 Constitution (Yashar 2005), but were only fully realised through the movements’ influence on the 2008 Constituent Assembly and the formation of that document:

The 1998 constitution had defined Ecuador as “pluricultural and multiethnic,” but stopped short of the more politically charged term ‘plurinational.’ When the 1998 constitution failed to deliver on its promises, indigenous movements returned to pressing their long-standing and key central demand of plurinationalism... for the first time the 2008 constitution incorporated this contentious word into its text. Article 1 now declared that Ecuador was a “constitutional state of rights and justice, social, democratic, sovereign, independent, unitary, intercultural, plurinational and secular”

Becker 2011b: 143

Constitutional change has marked a stage in the unfinished process of fighting for realised equality, rather than an end in itself. Achieving this stage, however, has meant negating the kinds of totalising structures

that Haraway described above. Within the strictures of state-defined notions of inclusion/exclusion and categories of cultural/social difference, the indigenous movement brought together diverse concerns to tackle the rhetoric and policies that otherwise limited political participation. In de Certeau's terms, the diversity of groups and actions within such a movement reflect a 'polytheism of scattered practices' pitted against the 'monotheistic privilege [of] panoptic apparatuses' (de Certeau 1984: 48, cited by Mitchell 2007: 93). However, as in other social movements for change dependent on the contributions of diverse agents, such practices are not only scattered in space and time. They can also be *polytheistic* in their creation and instigation, drawing on different beliefs, priorities and realities, and occasionally finding expression through coordinated campaigns, developing collaborations between different groups at the local, regional and national levels. We can think about actions that tackle totalising attempts to deny difference among their opponents – actions that are constituted by the contributions of diverse groups – as 'tactics' in the sense that their diverse, often discordant, basis disrupts the imposition of categories defined by the state and its institutions.

Resisting state-imposed categories

Typically, de Certeau's tactics are acts that agents use to unsettle dominant scripts and power relations, and which (unlike Ecuador's Indigenous Movement) are scattered in the sense that they operate within isolated spheres, avoiding (or being unsuitable for) direct engagement with state politics. However, the 'space' of the tactic, also derived from de Certeau, is a concept useful in highlighting how any such disruptive action tends to take place within a discursive realm – or space – defined by powerful others (Mitchell 2007: 99). As an 'art of the weak' a tactic 'must play on, and with, a terrain imposed on it' since 'the space of a tactic is the space of the other' (de Certeau 1984: 37). Those deemed different, or identified as opponents of state policies and visions, are thus marked, forced to operate within this 'other' realm and its related categories

As examples, de Certeau looks at historical colonial contexts where the relatively powerless developed ways 'of using imposed systems' to 'create at least a certain play in that order, a space for manoeuvres [sic] of unequal forces and for utopian points of reference' (de Certeau 1984:

18). Yet tactics are not only discursive responses to dominant discourses (of difference): ‘Rather than cultural symbolic or linguistic systems, de Certeau appears to see them more as speech acts – tactical deployments of symbolism’⁴ (Mitchell 2007: 100). These are acts of affirmation in the sense that they find ways to restate and rearticulate the kinds of social relations that groups and individuals would choose to initiate and depend upon were they not as restricted as they are by the ‘imposed systems’ and the limited ‘space of the tactic’ that de Certeau describes. To the extent that they are acts that reaffirm locally specific ways of relating and being, such tactics ‘encourage heterogeneity’ and serve to counteract dominant dictations (or narratives) of difference and powerlessness (Napolitano & Pratten 2007: 4)⁵. In this light, coordinated political action of the kind that led to constitutional change in Ecuador in 1998 and 2008 (drawing on diverse indigenous groups from across the country and their struggles) embodies resistance to the imposition by the state of categories of difference and inclusion. This was done by restating, rearticulating, and reclaiming – by affirming – cultural and ethico-political differences that policies of *mestizaje* sought to stifle and deny, and using those differences to expand the range of potential collaborative alliances (Colloredo-Mansfeld 2009).

⁴ ‘A North African living in Paris or Roubaix . . . insinuates into the system imposed on him by the construction of a low-income housing development or of the French language the ways of “dwelling” (in a house or language) peculiar to his native Kabylia. He superimposes them and, by that combination, creates for himself a space in which he can find ways of using the constraining order of the place or of the language. Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of plurality and creativity. By an art of being in between, he draws unexpected results from his situation’ (de Certeau 1984: 30, as at Mitchell 2007: 100).

⁵ ‘The coherent thread of de Certeau’s diverse range is not a “high” theoretical theme, but a method, a way of operating which encourages heterogeneity and allows alterity to proliferate. . . . He provides a methodology, it is argued, to grasp subjectivity in its fragmented forms, since he unsettles models of internalised subjectivity (and therefore its confinement to a cognitive/psychological level) by constantly connecting internalisation to modes of political, historical critique and the production of narratives. More than ever, this applies to the emergence of fragmented selves in an age of late capitalism, both as sense of loss and as sense of (ironic dis-) connection’ (Napolitano & Pratten 2007: 4).

Against a ‘totalising universalism’ (Mitchell 2007: 93) these struggles emphasised their particularity and respective differences, counteracting strategies pursued by institutions of power that were ‘derived from and oriented toward the realisation of an abstract model’ (de Certeau 1984: 29) – the model of *mestizaje* – in favour of opening and maintaining a political space that would recognise indigenous plurinationality. Both the dynamics of resistance, and the focus of subsequent studies tasked with understanding them, have distinguished between dominant definitions of difference or inclusion, and those that are actively created by groups engaged in resistance, ‘making a distinction between objective [as in externally-defined] definitions of class, race, and ethnicity and the subjective processes through which these are constructed’ (Pallares 2002: 222).

Constitutional rights: coopted, defended, challenged

Some of the changes introduced in Ecuador’s most recent (2008) Constitution further complicate the dynamics of difference and opposition, making the contested terrain between state politics, indigenous groups and grassroots mobilizations one that is bound up in processes of cooption. That document proposed radical amendments, for example incorporating Food Sovereignty into national agricultural policy – a concept initially articulated by the transnational autonomous activist group, La Via Campesina, and later adopted in ethos by numerous rural social movements in Ecuador. The constitution also adopted elements of Kichwa indigenous thought. ‘Buen Vivir’ (or ‘Harmonious Living,’ from the Kichwa concept of *Sumak Kawsay*) became a framework development policy, and the Nature itself (from the Kichwa understanding of *Pachamama*, or Mother Nature) was granted the collective right to ‘exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, structure, functions and its processes in evolution’⁶. The national Indigenous Movement and numerous ecological campaign groups were instrumental in the constituent

⁶ Excerpts from the 2008 Constitution (in English) are available here: <http://therightsofnature.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/Rights-for-Nature-Articles-in-Ecuadors-Constitution.pdf>, accessed: 18 October 2015.

assembly responsible for these changes (Acosta 2012). Subsequent reactions among activist groups have involved ongoing efforts to maintain the intention of the Constitution – attempts to articulate the complexities of what such wide-ranging revisions to national political and development strategies would mean for the populations concerned, and to engage both state institutions and those affected populations in establishing systems to implement them.

These coopting political shifts in Ecuador have affected the perceived need for protest groups to distinguish themselves (and to maintain ideological distance from) state institutions, but to do so in a political atmosphere increasingly hostile toward voices of dissent. Questions raised by these relatively unprecedented political transitions concern how difference and opposition are identified and governed, which in turn affects how separate, oppositional groups have been treated, and the conditions within which they can forge alliances and respond – calling for revised forms of theoretical engagement and analysis. Some of the government’s reactions have, however, followed patterns that are all too familiar – despite the hopes rooted in political changes achieved by indigenous groups and activist movements in the 1990s: ‘Ecuador has achieved what most Latin American societies have been dreaming of for decades: a stable leftist government. Yet things did not turn out the way social movements had imagined them. In particular, the list of people accused of terrorism expands each day... Ecuador’s legal crackdown against all forms of political dissidence is so systematic that “lawfare,” the abuse of law as a weapon of war, is becoming a new style of governance’ (Picq 2013). At the time of writing, Manuela Picq – the author of that article on ‘lawfare’ – is one among a number of prominent activists, scholars and journalists threatened with imprisonment or deportation, amidst a new indigenous uprising in the country (Becker 2015b).

Before these recent escalations in the use of administrative and physical violence, the character of political opposition in Ecuador had itself changed. Leftist political gains made in the years and decades running up to Rafael Correa’s first election in 2006 ended decades of national political instability, and effectively defeated the traditional conservative opposition – meaning that the social-movement and indigenous left became the most significant political challenge to the Correa administration

(Becker 2013). Any challenge to Correa's government (and to various demands of the 'Citizen's Revolution' he has declared as being in process) faced increasingly severe repercussions: official narratives turned the president's 'democratic adversaries' into 'irreconcilable enemies,' among them leaders and activists from indigenous groups and other social movements (de la Torre 2011). Correa has already denounced the latest indigenous uprising as an attempt to 'destabilize' the government driven by covert right-wing interests, but organisers and activists maintain that their focus is on implementing the 'promises' of the 2008 Constitution (against the demands of conservatives), calling for a government that engages in dialogue and is 'more responsive' to indigenous and social movement demands (Becker 2015a).

Affirming support for the equality- and justice-focused components of the 2008 Constitution has thus become a central plank in contemporary struggle. It also locates mobilisations on a technical and legal plane that engages directly with governmental strategies of dismissing or denouncing opposition, or implementing modes of 'lawfare.' Oppositional political subjects are frequently caught in this political terrain, however, contesting the terms of multiple claims for justice. The predicament of 'maintaining power, but losing authority' may affect both the state and oppositional groups, but differentially so since the state (having more resources to do so) tends toward increased surveillance and 'new networks of domination,' narrowing the terms of opposition, and creating 'more complex mechanisms for maintaining control' (Mitchell 2007: 93). Discursive use of 'with us or against us' politics may also appear in both state and oppositional, or activist, rhetoric (Abu-Lughod 2002), but again the state has primary access to modes of communication and influence and is thus better equipped to marshal opposition according to its own needs. By denying differences between various left- and right-wing groups deemed to be opponents, the Correa administration denies plurality – and thus obscures the particularity of separate claims for change and for justice – pursuing a 'monocentrism' (Rose 2000) that articulates 'one idea as the only idea' (Said 1979): in this case, the notion of the 'Citizen's Revolution.'

Affirming plurality and particularity

These are established tools of governance – mapping the territory of what is and what is not deemed acceptable, and shaping (or seeking to shape) societal understandings of ‘the good, the tolerable, the abhorrent, and the just’ (Povinelli 1998). The limits set by these understandings impact the breadth, scope, and conditions of possibility that the actions of oppositional groups both maintain and operate within: ‘political subjects and their modes of resistance are formed within rather than beyond the organisational terrain of the state (Mitchell 1991). Modes of collective action operate within the contours and fault lines of this landscape, not outside it’ (Napolitano & Pratten 2007: 9). Correa’s dismissive insistence on a single plane of opposition is a particular affront to indigenous groups, who have fought for official recognition of Ecuador’s different Indigenous Nationalities as part of a ‘plurinational state’ – long-standing demands that Correa initially endorsed (Becker 2011b) – and who have, over time, accommodated competing claims and transitions among its members between class-based and identity-based mobilization, between ‘peasant struggles’ and ‘Indian resistance’ (Pallares 2002). As we have seen, by affirming plurinationality and rejecting the terms of opposition imposed by state agencies, indigenous uprisings in the 1990s and since foregrounded plurality, embraced particularity and, to some extent, overcame the fault lines of a political landscape that had denied difference between voices of dissent.

The focus here on national level politics in Ecuador, the macro-tropes of *mestizaje* and *plurinacionalidad*, and indigenous mobilizations that have continued to build momentum over many decades highlights contrasting practices regarding difference and opposition pursued by the government and by indigenous movements. While policies have variously denied categories of difference (creating universal categories) or have imposed them (as part of strategies to discredit dissent and opposition), resistance movements have foregrounded affirmation, thus affirming both the plurality and particularity of a diverse range of calls for social justice (‘recoupled’ in their support for plurinationality), as well as the content of a constitution that has reached further than most in expanding the rights of marginalised groups and entities. These struggles are ongoing, and new hurdles continually challenge social movements in Ec-

cuador. Such affirming actions, however, continue to reflect how groups forge political subjectivities and, crucially, form political alliances across boundaries of social and cultural difference, doing so within a political terrain whose dimensions have been imposed by elites whose interests and positions are directly threatened by the actions of those alliances.

I have made frequent reference to the diversity of Ecuador's indigenous groups and nationalities, and the range of livelihoods, interests, and realities that emerge in the country's very different social and geographical regions. On a more localized scale, difference and diversity create other challenges for groups acting collaboratively, and the next section examines this in the context of one Andean indigenous community in particular.

III.

San Isidro: Indigenous Community Organising and Affirming Collectivity

Alliances formed within CONAIE and the indigenous movement have mobilised against changes proposed by Correa to the 2008 constitution, and continue to be particularly strong in defence of land and water (thus against the 'neo-extractivism' of new gold mines and expanded oil operations in Amazon regions), by including calls for water justice and more meaningful land reform (Becker 2015a). Issues around land and water are acute in Ecuador's central Andes, and opposing the expansion of export-oriented agricultural enterprises, mobilising to stop the expansion of water-mining activities, and campaigning to reverse historic water rights that favour large farm estates at the expense of indigenous communities have all been oppositional efforts in which people in the community of San Isidro have played an active role in recent years (Partridge, forthcoming). Above, I looked at how indigenous action at the national level dealt with dynamics of difference and opposition in efforts to affirm the goal of fashioning Ecuador as a plurinational state. Here, I focus on how a community has dealt with difference in particular while strengthening communal ties and supporting collaborative action.

San Isidro is a community that has become increasingly diverse in terms of the resources people have access to. Some of the 92 households there in 2011 depended entirely on agriculture for their income. For them, contributing time and effort to a community irrigation project sustained their ability to raise and harvest food on diminutive plots of land. Others, meanwhile, had relatively lucrative manual jobs in the Amazon's oil industry. Though less dependent on irrigation and on agriculture, many migrant labourers continued to participate in community projects, such as the pipeline, as a way to renew ties with friends and family during the one-week-in-three they were usually able to spend at home. Differences in income levels, understandings of identity and purpose, or disputes and conflicts, were neither denied nor necessarily overcome within different forms of coordinated action. Common concerns could overlap sufficiently for action to continue, amidst a diverging range of personal motivations for participation. In this this sense, cooperation required shared practices not identical purposes.

Similarly, communal undertakings required varying levels of commitment and sacrifice. In some instances, the forms of action had a deliberate aim – campaigns, construction, conflict-resolution. Collaborating to counteract land inequalities and the effects of histories of dispossession were ways to assert – or to affirm – a ‘capacity and intent to remake a badly crafted social world’ (Whitten & Whitten 2011). At other times, the outcomes and consequences of communal action were more elusive. New connections, relationships, perspectives were the diffuse implications of such collective attempts to bring about what people deemed vital or desirable – or both (Holloway 2010: 4).

Concerns and conflicts in San Isidro stemmed from issues of land, water, resources, and livelihoods – the basis of material needs and value. Since 2009, San Isidro has been legally recognised as a registered indigenous community. This makes the community legible to both the state, and to other communities operating within the national Indigenous Movement (Partridge, forthcoming). Legibility in this context brings with it potential benefits. In relations with the state, certain collective rights (over land use and community organising) are theoretically protected by law (Becker 2011a); in engagement with members of regional and national indigenous groups, forming coalitions and scaling-up local

mobilisations is facilitated through established networks and channels of communication (Collredo-Mansfeld 2009). In this sense, San Isidro is operating within a category of difference defined by the state.

Registering as a community and achieving this status is, nonetheless, insufficient to generate and sustain the relations necessary to keep communal action thriving in San Isidro. Community status is, at root, an imposed category defined by the state agencies that govern registration, and brings with it expectations and requirements of a community in terms of local political leadership, structures of representation and communication, and terms of participation within regional- and national-level Indigenous organisations (Bretón 2003) – Andean communities do not ‘exist outside the state to be intruded upon by it’ (Collredo-Mansfeld 2009: 206). To address how acts of affirmation interact with difference in this context, the focus here is on how residents in San Isidro, operating within the expectations and limitations of community status, have strengthened collectivity through practice rather than through formal membership or registration, ‘recoupling’ a community experiencing divisive shifts and pressures. Central to these efforts has been the use of the *minga* or ‘collective work day’ – a process and practice that both facilitates and enforces participation by the majority of community residents⁷.

The irrigation pipeline project had transformed *minga* practice in San Isidro. Since its construction began in 2009, widespread participation in *mingas* were vital both to the pipeline’s original completion, and

⁷ A lot of regional literature has focused on *mingas* (collective work-parties) in the different forms they take in collective life across Andean regions. Some paint a picture I do not recognize of unproblematic harmony and cooperation, seemingly without the tensions that tend to emerge in any collective endeavour. In the necessarily brief reflections here, however, the primary emphasis is on how *mingas* are used to engage with some of the immediate realities of life in San Isidro and how, within these processes, they affirm relations, histories and interactions that are specific to this community. Further work would relate these experiences to those documented elsewhere, which variously interpret *mingas* as cultural expressions, symbols of community, or as a source of free labour for governmental development programmes (Latta 2011; Bretón 2003), or else detail their importance in contemporary forms of community organising, and within Indigenous political action (Pallares 2002; Collredo-Mansfeld 2009).

to its ongoing use. *Mingas* involved physical labour contributed by representatives from member-households (people who had access to the water for use in their smallholdings), for anywhere from a few hours to a few days at a time, and they took place usually at least once a month. Though their practice had long been a recognized feature of communal life, their frequency and intensity had increased since the pipeline project began, and each event typically involved around 50-100 people. In terms of maintaining a supply of fresh water from the páramo directly into the village, for the purpose of supporting and encouraging family-scale agriculture, *mingas* were undoubtedly productive. The work required (in terms of upkeep and organising) was extensive and significant: demanding equal, shared, physical and financial contributions from its use-members, the pipeline both depended on and generated a sense of cooperation centred around resources held in common.

Mingas were undertaken by different people for different reasons. Residents who depended financially on the agricultural produce they could grow and sell were likely to place more emphasis on the productive benefits of the pipeline project, whilst a migrant worker returning home for a week, say, might (equally) have been keen to share in the affective exchanges offered by *mingas* as social events. Differences were not obscured or ‘dissolved in the identical’ (Deleuze 1994: 51) as with what happens when diverse groups are forced to subscribe to homogenising practices and policies. Instead, shared and affirming practices provided a basis for cooperation. What participants shared is a relationship with an administrative system (community status and its organisational requirements) that enables and governs the ongoing practice of *mingas*, doing so through a series of lists, accounts and community meetings. *Mingas* emerged out of the coordination of people feeling variously drawn, motivated, coerced, or compelled to participate to their practice.

Shared work and repeated acts: strengthening connections

What are the resonances with collective action undertaken in other contexts, and how might dynamics of collectivity in San Isidro be reflected or recreated in such contexts? Durkheim (1995 [1912]) famously described ‘collective effervescence’ to explore the idea of social ‘force,’ when peo-

ple experience mental, physical or emotional influences and transformations, with the result that they become more tightly bound ‘to the ideals valued by their social group’ (Shilling & Mellor 1998: 196). Durkheim’s focus, however, dealt more with ritual than collective work (Harris 2007: 160), and the relationship between *minga* practices and formalized community expectations and requirements is of central importance. Another reading of *minga* practices would highlight their role in affirmation and generative difference

In section I, we saw how Deleuze’s emphasis on practices of affirmation highlight the particularity of groups and networks who are engaged in resistance and collective action. Rather than being defined by the categories and impositions that state structures use to make groups legible (or to denounce them as opponents), such groups can define their values and intentions through affirming actions, generating the connections and relations that subsequently foster support for furthering their social projects. ‘Recoupling’ is achieved through action, rather than being imposed. In place of ‘categorical difference’ we have ‘generative difference’ which emerges from particular intensities, resonances, relations and active processes (Henry 2010: 7). At the heart of such intensities and relations are repeated acts – a form of repetition that does not necessarily involve imitation or replication, but which nonetheless contributes to processes of affirmation.

For Deleuze there are processes of repetition that refer to the ‘re-appearance of identical’ events and phenomena, and there are those by which ‘difference can be translated from one situation to another’ through so-called *synthetic repetition*, which is sub-divided into processes of *active synthesis* and *passive synthesis* (Henry 2010: 8). The latter, though not active, is still considered to be ‘constitutive’ (Deleuze 1994: 71)⁸. An example of *passive synthesis* (linked to group formation) would be collective learning processes that, over time, generate organisational forms and collective subjectivities within a group (Henry 2010: 8). In the case of San Isidro, this would be the inherited structures of community gov-

⁸ Here Deleuze has followed Hume’s idea that: ‘*Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it*’ and adds that *passive synthesis* ‘is not carried out by the mind, but occurs in the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and all reflection’ (Deleuze 1994: 70, 71).

ernance. Meanwhile, active synthesis (expression/activity within a movement) is reflected in a group's outward-looking and explicit political assertions, both physical and verbal, whether as a manifesto, mobilisation, or organised meeting (Henry 2010: 9). In this case, the outward focus of active synthesis is toward the pipeline project, demonstrating through organisation and activity the value and purpose of collaborative undertakings.

DeLanda applies a similar process of repetition to the maintenance and perpetuation of the work of organisations, including governments, most notably in repeated combinations of 'technical and ceremonial expressions' of legitimacy: 'the daily following of commands by members of an organisation is itself a direct expression of legitimacy. In other words, displays of obedience, when observed by other members, directly assert the legitimacy of authority, while acts of disobedience directly challenge it' (DeLanda 2006: 71, *italics original*). The interplay and mutually reinforcing nature of repeated actions in formal settings can thus encourage either obedience, or dissent; in the setting of collective work, they move toward recoupling and affirmation.

Active syntheses can also become processes by which collective action gains political agency: 'collective agency may be expressed internally, in relation to individuals who are members of the collective, as in the case of consensus and affinity. Or it may be expressed in relation to external actors, as in the case of direct action and networking' (Henry 2010: 10). In this reading, Henry also argues that instances of 'generative differences' are found where resonant intensities (of experience) produce and relate to multiple other differences and actions, especially within the deliberate setting of a social movement (or, here, within shared work):

The collective expressions of joy [and satisfaction], the feelings of triumph and of the unexpected, the feelings of possibility... these intensities of experience are [generative differences]... These differences combine to repeat the effects of the action in ways which are both immediately expressive (active synthesis) and formative of collective politics (passive synthesis)

Henry 2010: 11

It was through intensities of experience, and their requirements of physical, temporal, and social investment that *mingas* played an increasingly important part in sustaining collaborative action at the community-level, and ‘recoupling’ the community on its own terms (related to, but not dependent on, its state-endorsed registered status). There remained a tension between fostering and encouraging participation on the one hand, and the conflicting demands and priorities of diverse family arrangements and economic concerns on the other. Despite these differences, however, the combined aspects of *mingas* as social event and as a practical (maintenance) exercise had perpetuated their practice, and reaffirmed a sense of purpose and viability for collaborative action within San Isidro.

IV.

Conclusions

Diverse social actors, particularly groups who resist, find themselves operating within and against structures that deny their needs, claims and priorities. Such groups – mobilized to confront the ventures or existence of powerful agents that benefit from those limiting structural relations – are driven to engage in communicative and physical struggles against and within those imposed limitations. The consequences of being categorized as ‘other,’ ‘different,’ or as ‘opponents’ of institutions of power include facing the enforcement of boundaries of difference, and resultant processes of marginalisation. Policies that uphold such ‘categorical differences’ curtail possibilities for the pursuit of intentional social projects. By contrast, particularity and difference that emerges through affirming actions performed by resistance groups tends to work in the other direction, establishing and strengthening the basis for collaborative efforts to continue and grow. Reestablishing a basis to commonality and collectivity is the ‘recoupling’ that Haraway describes among groups who build alliances and connections rather than constructing collectivity on a unity of vision, identity, or purpose.

At both the national and local levels of indigenous political action in Ecuador, we saw how affirming actions not only brought groups together on their own terms, but also worked toward a functioning, ex-

periential model of the kinds of relations and interactions that were being fought for, sustained, or strengthened (Duncombe 2002: 347). At the national level, this involves diverse indigenous groups organising across social, cultural and geographical differences in order to simultaneously reclaim and reassert their particularity whilst also achieving state recognition of plurinationality within Ecuador's borders. Networks and alliances were formed in order to further these collective aims and to establish a commonality rooted in what was being affirmed, rather than in state-defined political categories of difference. At the local level, the government-administered status of being a registered indigenous community had become the backdrop – rather than the framework – for reinvigorated cooperative action in San Isidro. Commonalities of practice brought residents together in shared, affirming action: the practical, productive outcomes of *mingas* intertwined with renewed relationships and 'intensities' of experience generated in processes of communal labour. Despite growing differences within the community, these synthetic, repeated actions had furthered the project of redoubling collectivity.

Action among indigenous groups operating at the national level also complicate the basis of political opposition in Ecuador, highlighting the conflicting consequences of imposed categories of difference: the injustices of their perpetuation or negation (carried out by the state), and the merits of them being actively opposed (by resistance groups and indigenous movements) – reshaping the nation's political terrain in the process. Deleuze emphasised that apparent oppositions should be examined not as neat divisions, but as 'a delicate milieu' of 'overlapping perspectives, divergences, disparities, potentials and intensities' (Deleuze 1994: 50). Recent histories of indigenous action in Ecuador reflect how the same can be critically applied to the alliances that have been formed in order to engage and overcome political oppositions. In San Isidro, divergences and disparities were linked to broader trends of social change in the highlands and in rural communities across the world, rather than being borne of oppositional action (though local campaigns for land rights and water justice are ongoing). In Derrida's (1982) terms, both cases of collective action show how a 'weave of differences' overlap in a 'playing movement' that produces the kinds of outcomes and experiences that those involved had fought for. Crucially, though, the relations and

connections being generated were not defined by relations of opposition or negation, but by the intentions and desires being actively affirmed.

Many of the underlying ideas discussed here also relate to other settings typified by conflict and contestation. For example, reexamining ‘opposition’ through theories of difference and affirmation speaks to analytical work on constructed distinctions between sources of knowledge in environmental conflicts (Willow & Wylie 2014), or the disputed authority of rationalised accounts of risk and acceptable or unacceptable expertise (Jasanoff 2012). In other spheres, this approach develops analytical tools for use in research where we might investigate how agency and value emerge in emancipatory collective action, or amidst social struggles for autonomy, legitimacy, and recognition (Maekkelbergh 2009; Strasinger 2010). Issues of public understanding and identification are also considered in combination with specific demands, via links between differences of opinion or definition on one hand, and the rejection of particular policies and protocols on the other.

In terms of further studies of social organising and collective action, a critical focus on dimensions of difference, opposition, and affirmation can cast new light on the active processes that constitute and sustain groups who resist. Rather than studying only, or primarily, the outcomes of particular actions, by paying attention to the kinds of activity that participants consider most crucial – by scrutinizing what is being affirmed, by what means, for what purposes, and by which actors – we’re led to reconsider how the success, symbolism, and significance of resistance can be interpreted and understood. In this light, we see that many distinct forms of intentional action rely less on isolating and oppositional forms of difference, and more on those that stem from reflection, connection, and affirmation.

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Repertoires of Resistance: How Agency Fuelled Rhetoric, Resistance and Rebellion During Mao's Housing Revolution.

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Abstract

Little published research highlights how Chinese residents sought to resist state imposed housing policies when Mao Zedong was Communist Party leader (1949 - 1976) of the People's Republic of China. By using extracts from previously unpublished eye witness accounts, this paper bridges that gap in existing scholarship. The paper shows how Burke's (1966; 1969) dramaturgically informed method of narrative analysis may be instrumental in revealing agency as resistance. Analysis of three previously unpublished vignettes, contextualised within metaphorical representations of resistance, reveals a new tripartite typology of agency whereby resistance is characterized as: agency through deferment; agency through acquiescence and agency through protest. The potential of hidden transcripts, discourses of rightful resistance and the donning of the metaphorical perruque to reveal sub-cultures of power at the neighbourhood level in Mao's China are exposed. The extent to which the eclectic mix of both resistance strategies and tactics enabled the residents and other stakeholders to improve their social, cultural and material capital over space, place and time is reviewed. In its concluding comments, the paper reflects on the new typology. The methodological challenges present when using eye witness accounts in reviews of agency as resistance both in the Maoist era and mainland China as a whole are considered. Implications for future research and resistance theory are also explored.

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Introduction

Existing accounts of Maoist housing policy tend to be canonical, positivist and deductive in nature, reflecting the extent to which Maoist hegemony continues to dominate scholarship (Huang, 2004; Wu, 2015). Furthermore, published scholarship suggests that Beijing residents had negligible discretion when moving home. Such reviews *ipso facto* design out the individual voices of those who have experienced the radical social, economic and political reforms imposed by the early Communist regime (Xing, 1999; Zhang, 1997a). Several scholars have challenged the dearth of qualitative, humanist and inductive research regarding Chinese residents' experiences during the collective period by using the oral history method to reveal previously undocumented events. These writings include the work of Western researchers who have applied a modified version of the Western oral testimony paradigm to the mainland Chinese context (Hinton, 1966; Stave, 1985) and Chinese authors who seek to capture the essence of the Maoist era (Li-Wen, 1987). The work of a new generation of Chinese researchers, although not yet mainstream, has also made a valuable contribution. Here, writers have used the first person narrative form to document China's rich, complex and, at times, turbulent history (Chang, 2008; Xinxin and Sang Ye, 1986).

With two notable exceptions (see Jiang, 2006; Zweig, 1989), the distinct modes of resistance deployed by residents during the Communist revolution have seldom featured in published scholarship. Moreover, existing scholarship does not draw on transcribed, detailed verbatim accounts of Beijing residents' housing histories. The oral history extracts which inform this paper are taken from a wider collection comprising detailed sixteen oral testimonies of men and women born during the Nationalist (Kuomintang) era when Chiang Kai-shek was party leader. The interviewees therefore bore witness to Mao's far-reaching housing reforms. This paper explores the research collaboration between the paper's author (an Irish academic who has worked in England for nearly thirty years), a team of Chinese social scientists based in Beijing and a native Chinese speaker in shaping the research methodology. It is noteworthy at this juncture that this study applied Kwong's flexible definition of oral testimony, as 'a deliberate effort to collect and use oral information for the purpose of historical reconstruction' (Kwong, 1992, p 26)

in facilitating the research collaboration. Furthermore, previous studies have also overlooked opportunities afforded by narrative analysis to reveal agency as an instrument of resistance when negotiating housing pathways (Clapham, 2002) in the Chinese context. This paper seeks to redress these deficits in existing knowledge.

The paper builds on Jean-François Lyotard's proposition that *petites histories* (micro histories) form an integral element of the post-modern condition when applied to knowledge advancement. Lyotard's position regarding resistance, however, is not without controversy. His reluctance to define 'resistance' itself alongside his questioning of whether Marxist principles support those facing tyranny are noteworthy (Silverman, 2002). Moreover the ambiguities, not to say limitations, of Lyotard's postmodernist thesis when placed in the Chinese context must also be acknowledged. Of particular significance in this regard is the transferability of the Western notion of the sublime (Huajun, 2010), China's complicity in the advancement of global capitalism and the dialectical relationships between internal and external modes of resistance (Dirlik and Zhang, 1997).

Nonetheless, the analysis here shows how micro histories, as part of wider narrative accounts, expose resistance during an unprecedented era of political and social reform which penetrated to the very heart of everyday Chinese life. Significantly, the findings suggest that the interviewees' housing pathways were by no means determined by a monolithic, totalitarian Communist regime. Rather, the transition from Nationalist to Communist rule was tentative, iterative and exploratory, thus enabling the residents to negotiate and, at times, exploit weaknesses in the emergent Communist Party line. Significantly, the residents' accounts also show the inextricable link between the ineffectiveness of power and the resilience of the human spirit (Abdu-Lughod, 1990) thus reinforcing Davies' proposition that 'agency is synonymous with being a person' (Davies, 1991, p. 42).

The research undertaken to inform this paper had four aims. Firstly, the study set out to review the capacity of oral testimony to highlight three residents' resistance strategies in Maoist China when moving home. Secondly, the study intended to examine how degrees of agency may be construed as continuums of resistance when examining residents' re-

constructions of their housing pathways. Thirdly, the study intended to assess the benefits and limitations of applying one dramaturgically informed method of narrative analysis to three Chinese residents' detailed oral accounts of their housing pathways during the Mao era. Finally, the research sought to explore the conceptual utility of the residents' repertoires of resistance when negotiating their relationships with key stakeholders during this period of radical political transition in China.

Arguably, the ability to recount one's life story freely without prescription, interruption or agenda may be construed an act of agency. Indeed, the Western oral history movement has become synonymous with representing politically, socially and economically disenfranchised groups whose voices traditionally have been hidden from history (Passerini, 1987; Seider, 1985). For those interested in oral history, the claim that the interview process itself, when conducted skilfully, generates what Frisch (1990) has described as a 'shared authority' between interviewer and interviewee is no revelation. Through dialogicality, new interpretations of history, gaps in existing chronologies and previously undisclosed facts emerge. When viewed in this way, as Bourdieu (1998) implies, research is a cognitive, re-interpretive and unconscious process which may potentially liberate both interviewer and interviewee. Indeed, untold stories potentially possess a self-affirming quality, a latent power which, if unleashed, has the capacity to subvert political control by creating *les lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) and *les lieux d'oubli* (forgotten spaces) (Wood, 1999). Such stories provide a rhetorical framework which allow us to review our motives for action as well examine the motives of others. As Gusfield (1989, p 17) suggests, 'when we speak, act, dress, eat, and generally conduct our lives, we communicate and, in doing so, persuade others, including ourselves.' Yet as the findings reveal, the capacity of personal testimony to empower unequivocally is relative to context and verbal reconstructions of events coded by temporality.

Three Stories of Resistance

The first vignette features Liu Xia-hui¹, a former apprentice tailor whose welfare had been provided by a guild from when he was 15 years old.

¹ In keeping with research ethics protocols, all names have been changed to protect the identity of interviewees.

Finding himself at a residential crossroads, Liu Xia-hui deployed both strategic and tactical resistance when negotiating his spatial constraints. His prevailing personal strategy of agency through deferment enabled him to critically review the local housing options available to him. By maintaining a ‘contained underlife’ (Brook, 1987), Liu Xia-hui deferred with impunity his ultimate housing decision. This strategy allowed him to reject accommodation offered to him by a regime intent on used housing stock to realise political and economic goals. The extent to which agency through deferment helped to restore the symbolic capital eroded during his years as one of Beijing’s many thousand apprentice tailors is considered. The way in which self-internalisation of hegemonic views of inferiority shapes resistance is also examined (Prilleltensky and Gonick, 1996).

Fan Zhang, mother of seven children born in the Chong Wen district of Beijing in 1929, is the focus of the second vignette. Her housing pathway analysis 1929 – 1997 reveals a spectrum of agency through acquiescence, a strategy which encompassed strategic empathy, compliance and ultimately submission to the state’s rule of law as she prioritised providing food and shelter for her family during the Maoist era. The extent to which prevailing government narratives and mass property appropriation neutralised any potential for her to protest directly is considered. The analysis reveals parallel discourses of dignity and hidden transcripts (Scott, 2008) embedded in discussions between Fan Zhang and local government officials regarding the nature of Mao’s Four Olds - *po si jiu* - old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits (Gao, 2002 and others).

The third vignette focuses on Qing Hong, a mother of two children born in 1931 in the Chaoyangmen district. Defying the cultural stereotype of a submissive lower class Chinese woman, she defended her family against state enforced eviction when ordered by government officials to move to the remote province of Ningxia some 1,000 kilometres west of Beijing during the Cultural Revolution (1966 - 1976). She remained resolved to protect her family home despite being publicly humiliated at a ‘mass struggle meeting’ (Bridgham, 1967) where party officials verbally and physically abused resisters. The ambiguous position of her landlady as both tenant advocate and landowner are explored. The extent to which the landlady encouraged Qing Hong to adopt a discourse of rightful resistance (O’Brien, 1996) is also examined.

Metaphors of Resistance, Agency and Negotiating Identity

Resistance scholarship frequently defers to Foucauldian claims that 'where there is power, there is resistance' (Foucault, 1978, p 95) and that agency may be characterised as 'forms of resistance against different forms of power...a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and their methods used' (Foucault, 1982, p 211). Given the deference to Foucault documented in the literature, it is perhaps surprising how ill-defined the term 'resistance' is in existing scholarship. Current definitions range from Proffitt's assertion that it is 'active efforts to oppose, fight and refuse to co-operate with or submit to...abusive behaviour and control' (Proffitt, 1996, p. 25) to Carr's proposition that it involves 'engaging in behaviours despite opposition' (Carr, 1998, p. 543).

Yet, as this paper will show, resistance does not always result in a reallocation of power. Rather, it is nuanced in nature and may be manifested by a dynamic interplay between resisters, key stakeholders and other actors over space, place and time. Indeed, as Vinthagen and Johansson (2013) contend, not every agentic act may be construed as resistance. Rather, resistance is heterogenic and may be an unconscious practice which is contingent on historical context and which engages with power intersectionally. When counteracting oppressive macro political forces, resisters may challenge authority by using flexible, complex and latent labyrinthine networks of micro strategies designed to empower, challenge and capacity build. Furthermore, as Vinthagen and Johansson (*ibid*) also posit, research must ensure that non-political practices are also considered in resistance studies, a call to which this paper has responded. Vinthagen and Johansson (*ibid*). Therefore far from being a dichotomy between romantic and pragmatic, passive and non-passive or overt and covert, resistance is multi-layered, complex and speculative. In characterising these more subtle acts of rebellion, several writers have adopted tropes, metaphors and other rhetorical devices to explore manifestations of resistance in everyday life. As a collective, Scott's concepts of 'hidden transcripts', 'disguised discourses of dignity' and 'words as weapons of the weak' (Scott, 2008) all serve to highlight the importance of covert

tactics such as engaging in gossip or speaking in euphemisms when framing acts of insubordination. Complex and self-choreographed in nature, these recalcitrant acts bear little resemblance to more visible direct acts of protest. Such agentic speech and apparently autonomous behaviour create discourses of rebellion in their own right from which resisters may harness strength. Levi-Strauss (1966) characterizes these eclectic and more localized resistance tactics as bricolage (translated literally as ‘handiwork’). By employing bricolage, people may speak through what may occur (by speculating) or what has occurred (by reflecting). As a collective, bricolage creates an infrapolitical domain which simultaneously captures and subverts real life power relations. The net result is thus both conformity and resistance.

Moreover, as Bourdieu (1998) suggests, inaudible resistance equally warrants consideration. This distinct mode of resistance may occur when people share a common social identity, not least when the capacity to express verbal dissent may be stifled by distinct political, social and cultural contexts. Such manifestations of resistance are evocative of Michel de Certeau’s proposition that when facing forms of tyranny, people exploit existing institutional structures to suit their own ends. Thus rather than engaging in direct protest, people disguise their acts of resistance by assuming the metaphorical *perruque* (translated literally as a ‘wig’). The *perruque* wearers hoodwink those in power into thinking they are knuckling down to their demands when, in reality, they are self-servicing at their employers’ expense. (de Certeau, 1984). Jiang’s research demonstrates how donning the metaphorical *perruque* enabled Chinese farmers to ‘poach’ state politics during Uxin Ju’s Grassland Campaign (1958 – 1966), a strategy which subsequently empowered resisters to meet their own individual objectives (Jiang, 2006).

O’Brien’s concepts of ‘rightful resisters’ or ‘policy based resisters’ is also relevant. Here, when political promises have been violated, rightful resisters exploit weak and localised links in the leadership hierarchy to realise their own strategic objectives (O’Brien, 1996). Yet the right to deploy rightful resistance tactics is clearly far from universal. Most significantly, it is noteworthy that the discourse surrounding ‘rights’ in China varies significantly from the Anglo-American equivalent. One important distinction here is that ‘rights’ in the Chinese context are gener-

ally viewed as a state of conferred privilege intended to reinforce, rather than challenge, prevailing political ideology. Perry's research highlights the way in which Chinese rights discourse is enmeshed with a morality which reinforces the collective good (Perry, 2008). Rightful resistance measures used by villagers during the disastrous Great Leap Forward's famine period (1958 – 1962) to out manoeuvre corrupt government officials have been highlighted by Thaxton (2008). Thus, at times of political transition, resisters may find themselves negotiating and suppressing their self-identity to safeguard their very survival. Yet crucially agency still rises to the fore. In such scenarios, as Foucault (1984: p. 420) asserts, 'the individual is still an individual, he or she is forced to not only juggle multiple, contradictory forms of subjugation from various and, at times, competing social institutions, but is also forced to construct some sort of seemingly coherent self-identity from these multiple subjugations as well.'

For some, confronting head-on those who exploit their position of power may prove altogether too challenging. When feeling the effects of oppression acutely, some may turn to an advocate to represent their cause. But advocates are not immune from the doctrine of social egoism which decrees that all forms of interaction seek to promote self-interest. The temptation for an advocate to graft their own personal and/or strategic objectives onto a given cause may prove too great. As a result, those who seek counsel may find themselves being manipulated by advocates and other stakeholders who seize the chance to service their own opaque agendas.

With this multi-faceted review of resistance in mind, the paper will now focus on housing context in which the three interviewees found themselves immediately following the 1949 revolution.

From Dynasty to Danwei - Mao's Housing Revolution

Prior to the Communist era, most Beijingers lived in the city's *sibeyuan* the capital's vernacular architecture located in the elaborate network of alleyways known as *hutong*. The first *sibeyuan* was reportedly built during the Han Dynasty (206 BC - AD 220). China's urban housing stock was

in dire need of state investment and regulation. Centuries of neglect under dynastic rule meant that the new Communist regime inherited a national residential housing stock which, if based on physical condition alone, was arguably more a liability than an asset. Land reforms had been mooted during the Nationalist era, evidenced by the publication of the draft the Civic Code 1929 and the Land Law Act 1930. But the combined distractions of the threat of Japanese invasion, civil war, warlord tyranny, government corruption and soaring inflation sabotaged these proposed legislative measures. Consequently, neither the Code nor the Act was implemented.

The dearth of urban governance provided the perfect breeding ground for unscrupulous landlords to extort high rents from tenants for whom alternative housing options were negligible (Zhang, 1997a and 1997b). Although landlords were expected to assume responsibility for their tenants' housing maintenance and repair, these responsibilities were not enforced by the state. Tenants were therefore often compelled to undertake costly maintenance work at their own expense, thereby unwittingly investing in their landlord's property interests (Zhang, 1997b).

There were some alternatives to private rented housing. As Bray and Rankin independently posit, accommodation provided by artisans and merchants guilds (unions) formed a modest part of the country's housing stock (Bray, 2005; Rankin, 1993). Introduced after the formation of the first People's Republic in 1912 and managed at neighbourhood level, guild housing (known colloquially as 'housing associations') provided accommodation for designated workers and their families. On the one hand, these interdependent relationships reflected the enduring Confucian social hierarchies that had formed the bedrock of Chinese morality. On the other hand, the guilds perpetuated the feudal infrastructure exploited by merchant traders for commercial gain.

But the power of guild housing was soon to be eclipsed by the implementation of large-scale state housing measures. With victory in sight in the late 1940s, the Communist regime began to expedite its housing vision with vim and vigor. In December 1948, the Party's first housing policy statement entitled 'Issues About Housing Property in Cities' provided the rationale for appropriation of private property. On the eve of the Communist victory in August 1949, a further housing policy was

announced which confiscated anti-revolutionaries homes and large property companies owned by the Nationalist government. Crucially, rather than prioritizing investment in existing or new stock, the new regime introduced three major housing policy instruments to realise the collective vision: seizure of private property and mass eviction; the branding of landlords as counter revolutionaries; and the creation of *danwei* (work units). These three policy measures are considered in the following section.

The first policy measure began to take hold in the early 1950s when the state seized private residential stock, thus transforming family homes into a public welfare good. The eviction campaign gathered further momentum during the Cultural Revolution when the Red Guards posted signs on the doors of resistors which read: 'Order. Private homeowners should submit their deeds. Those who disobey this order will be killed without exception' (Hsing, and Lee. 2009, p. 19). Although precise figures are not available, one source suggests that around a third of Beijingers were evicted outright by the state during this period.

During the second policy phase, the new regime resolved to eradicate profiteering landlordism. Private rented properties were treated with the same contempt as commercial enterprises. Landlords were deemed 'counter revolutionaries' as they were perceived to run counter to Mao's mission to eradicate the Four Olds. Stringent rent controls were designed to curb profiteering landlordism (Zhang, 1997a). But as rental revenue income decreased, so too did capital for investment in the deteriorating housing stock. Consequently, private housing stock languished even further into advancing states of disrepair. Overcrowding became commonplace. Street homelessness or 'squatting by open drains' hitherto unheard of in China, reached unprecedented levels (Jung, 2003 p. 114).

The third policy stream created *danwei* (work units) which replaced the guild housing during the 1950s and 60s, creating co-dependency between residency, housing, employment and the state. Neighbourhood committees were established as surveillance units to scrutinise local residents' movements. The housing revolution had begun.

Research Methodology

This paper's author is a social scientist specialising in oral history, housing and social history, urban planning and comparative research methodologies. Previous research collaboration with four Chinese universities alongside other fieldwork had highlighted the lack of published qualitative research on the housing pathways of the urban Chinese population before and after the Communist revolution. Drawing on both the Western and Chinese oral history paradigms, the research methodology was co-produced by this paper's author and three social scientists based at Beijing's China Agricultural University (CAU). The initial oral history interviews from which extracts contained in this paper are taken were conducted in Mandarin. The study conformed to both research ethics guidelines advocated by Sheffield Hallam University the British Oral History Society. Interviewees were recruited using the snowballing method, mainly comprising family, friends and acquaintances known to the interviewers. Research participants were invited to relay their personal housing histories freely from birth to the present day. Interview prompts were minimal. When prompts were used, they were open ended and designed to support the interviewee in the reconstruction of his/her housing pathways e.g. where and when s/he was born; first memory of home; what triggered each house move or what kind of property s/he lived in and with whom. In all cases, interviewees provided detailed accounts of their housing history. Each interview lasted two hours or more. The social constructionist housing pathway approach was then applied to the accounts to reveal the dynamic between the individual and institutional when negotiating house moves over space, place and time (Clapham, 2002).

To preserve the integrity of each interview, verbatim interview transcripts were produced for each interview in both English and Mandarin. The Mandarin translation was also 'backwards' translated from English for additional rigor. The preliminary textual analysis pointed to a diversity of resistance measures deployed by the residents when negotiating the Maoist housing era, an area neglected by existing scholarship. Three accounts were then selected ultimately for a more micro level textual analysis. Burke's dramaturgically informed method of narrative analysis that allows for a review of how processual, action orientation

agency may be construed as an instrument of resistance, was applied to the textual segments (Burke, 1969). Each testimony was then parsed into the five principal categories deemed as comprising the narrative act. The first two elements provide the context in which motive may be examined, namely the act itself (what occurred) and the scene (the social, political and cultural context in which the act took place) (Burke, *ibid*). Detailed textual analyses of the three remaining narrative elements facilitated a focus on sub- and supra-agency, namely: the agent(s) (who or what facilitated the act of resistance); the form of agency (what resources were deployed in performing the act, including any material or rhetorical instruments used by the narrator) and finally, the purpose (why resistance ensued thus highlighting motive).

Agency Through Deferment - Liu Xia-hui's Story:

Liu Xia-hui was born in 1933 in Tong County, around seven and a half kilometres south east of Beijing city centre. Two years before the Communist victory at the age of 14, he moved from his family's ancestral home to Qianmen in Beijing to take up a tailor's apprenticeship. Deferring to the Communist public liberation narrative, he explains how he came to Qianmen 'in 1947 before the Chinese Liberation. In 1949, my apprenticeship was completed. It took me 3 years to learn the skills.'

In pre-Communist China, Qianmen was regarded as Beijing's most strategically important craft and merchant guild neighbourhood reportedly going back as early as the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644). For working class Chinese, apprenticeships in the textile, shoe making, printing or metal work industries were commonplace. More affluent classes gravitated towards apprenticeships in commerce and trading. Liu Xia-hui joined thousands of young men from lower-class Chinese families who travelled to the capital from far across China in the hope of securing an apprenticeship. Liu Xia-hui highlights the prevailing cultural expectation of the time that lower class young men would train to be a tailor: '... when it came to my generation, I moved out and worked as an apprentice, learning craftsmanship and practical skills.'

The dormitories in which the apprentice tailors slept became communities in their own right. Liu Xia-hui's initial reconstruction of his living accommodation suggests low expectations regarding his employer's responsibility to provide adequate shelter:

At that time, all the apprentices were staying under one roof, some of them left after the end of the apprenticeship... It was the workshop of the capitalists... I worked there during the day and slept on a mattress on the floor at night. Normally there were three or four people. We couldn't ask for more... At that time, we were happy enough as long as there was a place to sleep.

In the absence of remuneration, the Qianmen apprentices were entirely dependent on their employer for food and shelter. When invited to elaborate on his apprentice quarters, Liu Xia-hui reiterates the minimalist nature the accommodation:

'It wasn't much of a room, we worked there during the day and just slept on the floor during the night...just somewhere to sleep. We didn't get paid, we just worked for the capitalists. The capitalists provided us with food and accommodation'.

The guild mentality perpetuated the class consciousness which had fuelled the 1949 revolution. The apprentice tailors were ruthlessly exploited by the capitalist classes. Strict hierarchies existed between servant and master. Apprentices were reportedly forced to light incense then kow tow daily in front of the factory owner to express gratitude. As degrading as this was, more horrifying ordeals have been documented. Rumours ran rife about apprentices being incinerated in factory chimneys and dismembered by unregulated machinery. Consequently, factory owners were forced to source new recruits from across China to fill skills shortages (Perry, 1993).

Isolated from their families with recourse to neither financial nor cultural capital, opportunities for the Beijing apprentices to resist using direct protest were few and far between. As Prilleltensky and Gonick have noted, a self-internalisation of the hegemony which perpetuates political and psychological oppression (Prilleltensky and Gonick 1996). This sense of inadequacy is achieved by distorting peoples' views of what

constitutes distributive justice at specific points in time. Consequently, any concerns regarding equality are subsequently usurped by strategies of survival. Moreover, as Gardner et al (2000) contend, the need for social acceptance may result in self-stereotyping of identity whereby dominant behaviours, customs and practices common within the oppressed group rise to the fore. Such actions create sub-cultures in their own right. Significantly, Liu Xia-hui's testimony evidences the symbolic importance of hegemonic dress in denoting the lowly status of apprentices relative to the merchant traders. He recalls:

The richer people would learn about trading. I was a trainee tailor near Qianmen. In the past, nobody paid much respect to a tailor...In the past, if your family was poor, you would come here to learn craftsmanship. For example, the shoemaker, tailor, hairdresser, all in the service industry, without much culture. For the richer families, they tended to learn about trading, business, so that they would be dressed in a presentable manner. If you were a craftsman, you could just wear whatever you liked and no one would care or pay much respect to you.

Adopting an interrelated strategy of invisibility and assimilation, Liu Xia-hui negotiated his three years as an apprentice tailor to the extent that he remained faithful to the profession until his retirement. Having finished his apprenticeship aged 16, he married in 1956 (aged 23) and moved into a property owned by the tailors guild on Exhibition Road, north west of Beijing city centre. He describes the property as being around 'around 13-14m' in size. At that time, he was earning 56 RMB a month and his rent was 5 RMB, just under ten per cent of his household income. He lived in this property for 'about 7-8 years' with his wife and their four children (two boys and two girls). The first of his children was born in 1957. He explains the role of guild housing associations and its links to the workers co-operative movement:

The institution was established in 1956, when I completed my apprenticeship. In 1956, co-operatives of the craftsman were formed and institution was then established.

The analysis of Liu Xia-hui oral testimony suggests an enduring interdependency between employees and the guild replicated at neigh-

bourhood level. As the extract below reveals, household size and length of guild service were key criteria in the guild housing allocations process:

At that time, house allocation was either based on the number of the people in your family, or the length you had been working with the institution. Whoever got the better qualification would get the house first.

Like many of his peers, Liu Xia-hui and his family found themselves occupying a guild property that had fallen into serious disrepair. In the extract below, he describes how the guild association opted to transfer tenants within its existing stock rather than undertaking essential property repair and maintenance tasks:

The house was leaking after 7-8 years. We then spoke to the housing association. They didn't fix it. At that time, if the leak was bad and too dangerous to live in, they would put in an application for you to transfer to somewhere else.

Significantly, guild housing was one of the few alternatives to state controlled accommodation at a time when the new Communist regime favoured property appropriation over new build. Guild housing was absorbed into the *danwei* system from the mid 1950s onwards. But Liu Xia-hui and his family benefited from the small window of opportunity in the very early years of Communist rule, which enabled them to reject state housing in favour of guild-managed accommodation. Furthermore, agency by deferment evokes what Brooke (1987) has termed living a 'contained underlife,' whereby people seek to resist within existing institutional structures without necessarily pressing immediately or overtly for radical change. Liu Xia-hui's testimony suggests he had local knowledge that enabled him to defer his housing decision:

The other option was to rent a house from the state, the terrace houses built by the government. When the government demolished the terrace/ bungalow houses and built the multi-story apartments, you could then be transferred to the new apartment building.

Knowledge of the government's prevailing strategy shaped Liu Xia-hui's tactics on the ground. De Certeau's (1984; 2004) distinction

between strategic and tactical resistance is also noteworthy both here and in respect of the analyses of the two vignettes which follow. De Certeau (2004, p.222) defines strategic resistance as: ‘the calculation or manipulation of power relationships that become possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated’. Significantly, the distinct tactics deployed in realising the strategy are under the radar and therefore opportunistic, speculative and serendipitous. As de Certeau (1984, p.37) asserts, ‘tactics derive their power from their invisibility and opportunistic versatility. It (the tactic) takes advantage of ‘opportunities’ and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own position, and plan raids.’

Monitoring the guild’s local housing development activities, Liu Xia-hui noted how ‘the institution I worked with built some new apartments in year 1984.’ Further assessing what accommodation would be available at the local level, he opted to defer moving into the first property offered to him by the guild association. Overall, he perceived no net gain in accepting the state property: ‘I was only given a roughly 60m², 3 bedroom apartment. Also, I would have had to return the old house in exchange for a new apartment.’

Significantly, as his recollection below suggests, his motivation for deferring on the house move was based on prioritising his children’s anticipated housing needs. Upon marriage, women in early Communist China were expected to live with their in-laws. Liu Xia-hui’s testimony reveals how he rejected the guild’s first transfer offer accommodation, despite the property being larger than his existing home. He recalls:

The one built by the institution...at that time we didn’t take it. I was thinking about my four children. If my two sons got married then the three bedroom apartment would be too small for all of us, so I decided not to take the first offer...I was willing to wait for the next offer, a bigger house, or a house waiting to be improved.

Local housing knowledge became capital which enhanced Liu Xia-hui’s ability to defer on the state imposed house move. His reconstruction of why he rejected the first offer foregrounds the importance of hope in cultivating resistance (Snyder et al, 1991).

Another reason was, if you didn't take the new apartment, there would be some old vacant houses when the families moved out, then you could ask for the vacant old houses, you might even get one or two of them.

Ultimately, Liu Xia-hui ended up with two properties thus restoring, albeit modestly, elements of the symbolic capital which had been eroded during his apprenticeship years. His ultimate deference to guild housing evokes the donning of the metaphorical 'perruque' in preserving housing for his family whilst simultaneously assessing the local options available. Equally, his continued dependence on the guild for shelter suggests a tolerance, if not a willingness, to allow his identity to be re-subsumed by his former employers.

Agency Through Acquiescence: Fan Zhang's Story.

Fan Zhang, a mother of seven children, was born in 1929. Her childhood home was a *sibeyuan* built by her grandparents located in the Chong Wen District south west of Beijing city centre. She lived there with her husband, seven children and eleven members of her extended family for nearly seventy years. As a lower class married Chinese mother in the early Communist era, Fan Zhang had no property rights as only male children were allowed to perpetuate the family line. Moreover, with no rights initiate divorce, women were frequently reduced to the status of a living widow trapped in the domestic sphere. In 1997, the *sibeyuan* was demolished by the government as part of mass clearance. She was then allocated a state flat in the Fengtai District, around twenty kilometres south west of her childhood *sibeyuan*.

The analysis of Fan Zhang's housing pathways 1929 - 1997 reveals a wide spectrum of agency as resistance encompassing strategic empathy, acquiescence and ultimately submission. She recalls how 'during the mid 50s, the government was calling. With the increasing population in Beijing, the government was calling the wealthy families to give up some of their rooms for the homeless.'

Government seizure of residential housing involved the mass eviction of residential occupiers and the appropriation of property deeds and

blueprints. People were required to sign a new housing contract which identified the state as landlord. Fan Zhang described how, following submission of the property's blueprint, she and her family were 'then issued a new housing permit from the government'. In the more substantial extract below, she describes how all property was seized by the government during the chaotic and controversial decade of the Cultural Revolution, reducing homeowners to leaseholders in one fell swoop:

During the Cultural Revolution, all the properties, no matter how many you owned, even just for one, you needed to have a housing contract. The contract was given to you by the country. The original ownership certificate of the property, it needed to be handed to the housing authority, whether it was a private ancestral property or rental property. Every month you would have to submit your payment to the housing authority.

Mass public protest against government seizure of private property in the Mao era was very rare. Pye's (1991) thesis that the Chinese cultural propensity to frame expressions of identity by relationship dominated by social groups (namely family members, work colleagues and neighbours) is noteworthy here. Thus Fan Zhang's recollection of performing obeisance to suppress 'self' is not entirely surprising. She recounts:

At that time, we gave away the rooms in the South. The rooms were given to a pharmaceutical factory to use as a workshop. We were still living in the East courtyard.

Lack of recourse to independent legal counsel and fear of government persecution may well have neutralised many potential acts of resistance in early Communist China. However, acquiescence must not be confused with consent. Van Rooij et al's (2014) analysis of intergenerational local environmental activism in one Chinese village during Mao's reign highlights the distinction between acquiescence and compliance. Specifically, their research highlights how local Party officials, industry representatives and community groups rationed residents' access to instruments of justice when seeking to challenge government waste disposal strategies. When it became apparent that personal agency ceased to stimulate a fair hearing, submission rather than resistance ensued. In short,

the villagers became reconciled to their powerlessness and subsequently behaved compliantly.

That said, Mitchell (1990) postulates a more nuanced distinction between acquiescence and assent, whereby any conscious deliberation undertaken independently of everyday practice becomes a form of coercion in its own right. Hence subscription to any given political orthodoxy becomes, in effect, an act of surrender as people allow their independent thoughts to be eclipsed by a ruling force's strategic objectives. Residual personal agency is thus diverted to more pressing concerns, namely the provision of essentials such as shelter and sustenance which form the basis of a self-preservation strategy. For thousands of Beijingers during the early years of Communist rule, the need to preserve residual agency was heightened as threat of homelessness by state eviction became a daily reality. As a mother of seven children, it is hardly surprising that the analysis of Fan Zhang's testimony reveals how her vestigial agency was diverted into preserving the essentials of life. She recalls:

At that time, the authorities would make the (housing) allocation and changes to the houses as they wished. We would just obey whatever they said and wouldn't complain much. We were just busy working for our living, hoping to get paid for food...since I have so many children.

Further analysis of Fan Zhang's testimony reveals the relevance of the Chinese concept of *zheren* (Ku, 2003), which places reciprocity at the core of individual and state relations. As state housing controller, the government was deemed responsible for completing essential repairs and maintenance in exchange for the property's deeds and payment of rent. She recalls:

The property you owned, once you had submitted your housing contract, you too needed to pay. That's it, it was considered living in the property of the housing authority, they would do the repair works for you.

If taken at face value, Fan Zhang's reflections imply a form of emancipatory resistance. After all, the Chinese concept of *zheren* implies reciprocity between individual and state. Yet further analysis highlights the speculative exchanges behind closed doors between herself, her fa-

mily members and local state-appointed housing officials in an attempt to understand the rationale behind Mao's 'the Four Olds' (po si jiu - old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits). Such discussions are reminiscent of Scott's (1987) concept of 'hidden transcripts'. Through symbolic inversion, these veiled discourses of resistance produce a further sub-culture of power stimulated by the covert discussions of less powerful stakeholders. By implication, any policy ambiguity, if further legitimised, has the potential to create an alternative political ideology. Speculating on the rationale for the 'Four Olds,' Fan Zhang recollects:

Why did we need to submit our housing contract to the housing authority? It was for the "po si jiu". Who knew what that meant at the time? We didn't know.

Fan Zhang's testimony suggests that local government officers had only a partial, if not distorted, view of the political ideology adopted by the central state at the time. She recounts:

There was this person in charge from the housing authority, he didn't know what the Four Olds was either. He was saying, if one family lived in a detached family house, then that was one of the Four Olds. The family would have to give up a room and let a stranger move in.

The dearth of knowledge amongst local state officials regarding Party ideology evokes Goffman's (1971) theory of 'impression management' which argues we create impressions by expressions. When encountering an authoritarian regime, actors assume a different identity that services their self-preservation or even advancement. Less visible communities of discourse during the Maoist era became off-stage performances that enabled the residents and low level bureaucrats to debate Party policy away from the ruling elite's gaze. These hidden transcripts create communities of discourse that construct a further sub-culture of latent resistance in their own right.

Significantly, the power of the public Communist narrative seems also to have been instrumental in securing Fan Zhang's compliance with state property appropriation strategy. One source suggests that between 1949 – 1976, the population increased by 154 million, the equivalent of 4.7 million a year (Chan and Xu, 1985). Fan Zhang's reconstruction of

how her family surrendered further rooms to the state is imbued with elements of this dominant national narrative:

By the end of the 1950s, again, the government called for more rooms because of the growth of population. Therefore in our East courtyard, we gave away our rooms in the East and West.

During the Cultural Revolution the epicentre of Chinese family life, which for centuries had been anchored by harmony, hierarchy and cohesion, was thrown in chaos. Fan Zhang recalls the impact on herself and her family when more state-appointed tenants moved into the ancestral *sibeyuan*:

Me and my husband along with my two daughters were then moved to the two rooms in the North where there used to be the living rooms. The lobby area of the North then became the dining area. That was the second time we gave our rooms away, renting out to some new tenants. Our housing situation remained the same until the mid 60s.

Although forced to surrender her family home to the government, Fan Zhang's testimony highlights how resistance through acquiescence enabled her to navigate these unprecedented political, economic and social changes instigated under Maoism by focusing on her family's basic needs.

Agency Through Protest - Qing Hong's Story

Qing Hong was born in 1931, the year the Japanese invaded Manchuria. She married at age 15. The analysis of her housing pathways highlights how manipulative discursive tactics were used by key stakeholders, namely her landlady and government officials, to stimulate agency through protest. Unlike thousands of Beijing residents at the time, she successfully defended herself and her family against forced state eviction. Ultimately, she secured a job with the local housing department. She was subsequently offered state housing but rejected it in favour of a mutual exchange.

Qing Hong's first house move took place shortly after her marriage when she moved out of her Beijing childhood home, a *sibeyuan* in the

Chaoyangmen district she shared with ten other family members. With her husband, she took up occupation of a private rented property in Deshengmen. She recalls how they ‘moved there after the liberation of Beijing in 1949 and rented a house near the old hospital.’

In pre-Communist China, the traditional family model was highly patriarchal. Women were expected to obey their fathers, husbands and, in the event of being widowed, their sons. As a lower class, illiterate Chinese mother with negligible social, cultural or financial capital, Qing Hong’s employment options were limited to unskilled labour. She recalls:

Life was pretty tough at that time....do you know what did we do for living? We washed black cotton and made things out of it to sell for living. For example we made cotton trousers and blankets.

But their occupation of the property was disturbed when, in 1956, government officials ordered the family to move to the sparsely populated desert region of Ningxia Province, a journey of over 1,000 kilometres west of Beijing. She recounts:

In 1956, the private houses were made into public housing by the authorities. We were told to move to Ningxia province... It would have been difficult for us to travel that far with all my children.

The analysis highlights how Qing Hong’s landlady deployed a discourse of rightful resistance to coerce her tenant into fighting the proposed state eviction. The enduring Confucian values of hierarchal family relationships underpinned by harmony, stability and respect both inside and outside the home were not entirely eclipsed by the new Communist order (Shapiro, 2001). Indeed, it was to precisely these values which Qing Hong’s landlady appealed when urging her tenant to fight the state eviction. Qing Hong recalls how: ‘...our landlady didn’t think it (the forced move) was a good idea. It would have been difficult for us to travel that far with all my children’.

Pressure from authorities mounted on Qing Hong to surrender her rented family home, culminating in her being summoned to a mass struggle meeting. In Mao’s China, mass struggle meetings were very public affairs. Those identified by authorities as deviating from the party line were verbally and often physically abused in full view of relatives, friends

and neighbours. Qing Hong recollects how ‘we were treated badly after a public meeting with the authorities - they insisted that we move away.’ Despite multiple government attempts to oust her, Qing Hong resolved to remain in occupation of the rented family home. She recalls how ‘we were threatened with eviction from the house on three occasions but we fought to stay. I told them that we will never give in and please don’t come anymore. They didn’t come again.’

Having both endured public humiliation at the mass criticism meeting and successfully defended her family against the threat of forced eviction at the hands of the state, Qing Hong then faced another menace – the prospect of living in decrepit accommodation. The analysis reveals how her landlady failed to fulfill her repairing obligations, despite legitimate protestations from her aggrieved tenant. Qing Hong recollects how:

We had some problems with the electricity in the house and the roof was leaking. Yet our landlady had no intention of fixing the problems. We were so upset. We went to see her and discuss the problems with her. I said to her, “with customary respect we will call you “aunty”...so my aunty...why would you be reluctant to fix the house for us?

In China, it is commonplace to address middle-aged female acquaintances or neighbours in the community as ‘aunty,’ a title which suggests formality, respect and amiability. Moreover, ‘aunty’ figures were often seen working at grass roots level within neighbourhoods, frequently accumulating intimate knowledge of residents’ behaviour and actions. Indeed, Pye (1991) has gone as far as to suggest that some ‘aunties’ acted as informants during the Cultural Revolution by reporting recalcitrant residents to local Party officials. By implication, private sector tenants were, out of necessity, obliged to maintain healthy relations with their landlords.

As the extract below indicates, Qing Hong’s landlady urged her tenant to deploy a discourse of rightful resistance (O’Brien, 1996) when negotiating with the state housing provider. If successful, this maneuver would have served to fulfill the dual goals of discharging the landlady’s repairing obligations and placating her aggrieved tenant. Qing Hong recounts how her landlady encouraged her to remain in occupation of

the dilapidated dwelling but to use her housing circumstances to exert pressure on the authorities:

Our landlady heard what I said and came up with an idea. She said, you have so many children and you are living in a run down house. Based on these conditions you should be given a house by the authorities.

Significantly, it was at this juncture that Qing Hong resolved to secure employment with the state. On face value, her resolution to work for the government would suggest that the panoptic power of the Communist regime coerced her into adopting a dialectical mode of resistance as part of a survival strategy. Indeed, as the excerpt below suggests, her decision to secure employment with the housing authority evokes the Foucauldian concept of 'disciplinary power' (Foucault, 1979) whereby people negotiate oppressive regimes by moderating their own behaviour.

At that time, the housing office, which was not far from where I lived, was recruiting and I signed up for it. The wages I earned every month helped to feed the family. My children were very well behaved and didn't give any trouble.

Relative to laundering black cotton to be turned into trousers and blankets, working for the state provided better security and pay, including a pension for lower class Chinese women. Qing Hong recalls how she 'became a permanent member of staff after working for three years. It wasn't bad at all for illiterate people like us to have a job.'

Moreover, Qing Hong's testimony challenges the orthodox view that the Communist housing regime was a highly rigid, inflexible institution. Rather, her account evokes an evolving organisation that required party officials and workers to be flexible, resulting in mutual gain:

The housing office at the time was not a very formal organisation. I cooked for them. I carried water and did whatever I was asked to do. I was not educated and was employed to use my capacity for manual labour and practical tasks.

Her decision to work at the housing office suggests she survived by living a 'contained underlife' (Brooke, 1987), a mode of being which

enables people who seek to resist within existing institutional structures without necessarily pressing for radical change. Furthermore, the way in which her decision to work for the state housing provider represents a form of strategic resistance is noteworthy. For instance, to what extent might the informality of the organisation have allowed for opportunities to lobby for housing on behalf of herself, her husband and her children? Interestingly, the state did offer her housing despite her earlier refusal to submit her family home to government officials. But she refused the offer. Significantly, her spatial constraints were finally resolved independent of the state. Her representation of how her spatial needs were ultimately met suggests a sustained belief in the landlady's prophetic qualities, testimony to the landlady's enduring influence on her tenant:

In the end, just like the landlady had said, we qualified to be allocated some rooms in Hunglou. But we didn't move in because we were only given one and a half rooms. It was too crowded for the whole family. The rooms were exchanged with the house we are staying in now.

Significantly, Qing Hong's account of how her housing needs were ultimately resolved by a non-state housing provider illustrates the importance of reciprocity through *quanxi* in Chinese culture (Ku, 2003). In 1976, the year of Mao's death and the Tangshan earthquake, Qing Hong and the Hui family arranged to exchange properties, thereby resolving both families' housing dilemmas.

Some Hui (Muslim) families were living in Honglou. One of the Muslim men remarried following the death of his wife and his second wife gave birth to a baby girl. The family became ostracised by neighbours when it became known that 'the mother couldn't produce enough breast milk to feed the baby...she had to eat some pig's trotter which the family believed would help to stimulate more milk (see Holroyd et al, 2005).

Despite being adequately housed, Qing Hong found herself still having to protect her interests in the family home she had fought so hard to defend from state seizure. On this occasion, however, the threat did not come for the government but from her son-in-law:

I moved here in 1976, the year when the earthquake happened, and settled here since then. I have married twice. My brother introduced me to my second husband... We were together for thirteen and a half years. The son of my second husband asked if I could give him my house. I said no. Why? When we got married, we had a mutual agreement that we will not take each other's house. Why would his son be asking me for a house then?

Qing Hong's account demonstrates the power of agency through protest in defending the family home at a time when lower class Chinese women had negligible cultural, financial or social capital. By directly challenging state eviction, she safeguarded both her family and landlady's property interests. Moreover, by finding work with the local housing provider, she maneuvered herself into a position whereby she could obtain intelligence regarding local housing resources. Her housing resolution via a mutual house exchange demonstrated the power of networking during the Maoist era.

Conclusion and Reflections

The paper has revealed how oral testimony extracts examined through the lens of Burke's (1969) dramaturgically informed method of narrative analysis may be used to further existing knowledge on agency as resistance during the years when Mao Zedong led the Communist Party (1949 – 1976). This analysis suggests that the interview process allowed the narrator to negotiate hegemonically selected antithetical elements of the past, a phenomena characterised by Ryan (2011, p. 2) as 'mnemonic resistance'.

Secondly, the study intended to review how agency, in its different guises, may be construed as an instrument of resistance when applied to the residents' reconstructions of their housing pathways under Maoism. A particular ambition of the paper was to identify more nuanced, multi-layered and self-choreographed everyday acts of resistance neglected by previous research. These multi-layered discourses of resistance warrant further examination in their own right. The paper has shown the potential of hidden transcripts, discourses of rightful resistance, and the donning of the metaphorical perruque to improve social, cultural and

material capital. The findings suggest that a form of relational resistance was at work in Maoist China that shifted over space, place and time. Significantly, diffidence, ambiguity and ignorance on the part of key actors have also been shown to foster resistance. Social egotism, the doctrine which decrees that self-interest drives all human action and interaction, has emerged significant in shaping the actions of resisters and other stakeholders. The paper's review of motive (the 'why' embedded within the narrative form) in shaping the residents' housing pathways shows the value in conducting a more detailed review of self-interest in resistance studies.

The new tripartite typology proposed here, derived inductively from eyewitness statements, argues that agency may be construed in specific contexts as protest, acquiescence and deferment. Each interviewee's account of his/her resistance is framed by one of these forms of agency as resistance to accentuate its application in that specific context. The analysis contained in each of the three vignettes has elected to frame each vignette by using one of the three discrete themes from this typology.

The paper is also a call for resistance studies to consider the application of the typology to other political, social and historical contexts, not least the merits in exploring how these latent discourses of power may be unleashed. Multiple stakeholders have been shown in this paper to shape acts of resistance at a critical juncture of political reform. A future focus on how resistance may be revealed using stakeholder analysis would therefore help facilitate a more critical, systematic and temporal orientated review of motives, means and relative power bases. The universal nature of agency in enabling the human spirit to triumph even in the most adverse sets of circumstances suggests that the typology may be applied to other international contexts. For example, how might the new typology provide fresh insights into how residents negotiated their housing during the rise of fascism in Europe during the first part of twentieth century?

A further theme of reflection is the extent to which the three elements of this new typology are closely interrelated across a continuum of space, place and time. For example, strategic resistance through long-term acquiescence may prove unsustainable, counterproductive and undesirable. In such scenarios, direct protest may become the resistor's

principal route to restorative justice. Furthermore, resisters' tactics may be underpinned by a discrete strategy based on partial local knowledge of state policy implementation. Political upheaval is then negotiated tactically and covertly by the resistor, allowing him/her to suspend crucial decision-making. The case of apprentice tailor Liu Xia-hui is indicative of this approach. Additionally, sustained acquiescence may give the external impression of strategic compliance with authority. But it may also enable the resistor to focus on immediate priorities from which personal power ultimately may be derived and consolidated. Fan Zhang's narrative highlights this nuance. Similarly, a critical incident may occur or an opportunity may present itself from another stakeholder, which may lead to direct protest when this outcome was perhaps neither envisaged nor intended. In such scenarios, motives of resisters and stakeholders may be opaque, differ or even conflict with one another. Yet challenges to authority may, in the fullness of time, generate mutually beneficial outcomes for all involved. Qing Hong's account evokes this aspect of the resistance continuum.

Thirdly, the study considered how one dramaturgically informed method of narrative analysis may be applied to three Chinese residents' accounts of their housing pathways to reveal agency as resistance. When analysing qualitative oral accounts of housing pathways, the extent to which the narrator deems the house move to be liberating or constricting lies in the foreground. In this respect, this paper sought to provide an alternative to the analyses more frequently found in oral history research, notably grounded theory and, to a lesser extent, analytical induction. Further research, analysis and debate is needed to assess the benefits and limitations of such an approach.

However, caution must be exercised when applying Western methods of narrative analysis to interviews conducted in Mandarin. Wang's review of cross-national autobiographical accounts concludes that when reporting childhood memories, Western adults tended self-reference more frequently than their Chinese counterparts (Chen, 2007). Furthermore, there is evidence that Mandarin speakers are more likely than their English-speaking interviewees to use vertical, spatial metaphors, notably 'shang' and 'xia' when discussing abstract concepts of time (Chen, 2001). As the closest English translations of these terms are 'next' and 'earlier/'

later’ respectively, this implies that Mandarin speakers may have a more ‘vertical’ representation of time whereby the previous month is referred to as ‘the month above’ and thus creating a culturally specific view of temporality when framed in the narrative turn.

Fourthly, the research intended to explore the utility of the residents’ distinct repertoires of resistance when negotiating their spatial constraints with housing providers, notably the state and but also local private sector landlords and one guild housing association during this period of political transformation. Written documentation of these events as recounted through the eyes of those who have witnessed such radical change is one way of ensuring that resistance measures in Mao’s China are preserved in years to come.

But any simplistic claims that manifestations of residents’ agency had the capacity to neutralise the power vested in the state in early Communist China are highly misplaced. In the tripartite relationship that existed between the state, residents and other stakeholders in Mao’s China, the state unquestionably reigned supreme.

Acknowledgements

My sincerest thanks to Grace Wong, architect and photographer, who transcribed and translated the original oral history interviews. I am very grateful indeed to the social science team at CAU, notably Zhang Meizhu, Sheng Yan and Sun Jintao for collaborating with me on this research and particularly for their input in shaping the research methodology and for conducting the original interviews. I also owe a debt of gratitude to the three anonymous reviewers for their insightful, detailed and constructive comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

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Securitization of civil resistance: Thailand's military junta and beyond

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Abstract

On May 22, 2014, Thailand witnessed its twelfth military coup. Despite deficiency in democratic legitimacy, the junta has thus far sustained mass support, while challengers to its rule are denounced as a threat to the restoration of national order. This article seeks to demonstrate the way in which security discourses in Thailand are manufactured and employed to undermine civil resistance to the military junta. It relies on the securitization concept to analyse the discursive depth of repression which potentially undermines the effect of 'Political Jiu-jitsu' and 'Backfire' examined in civil resistance literature. The Thai case shows that four discursive components consolidate the framing of dissidents as a security threat. These are: 1) A security narrative creating fear of national order breakdown due to polarising conflicts caused by representative democracy; 2) A security narrative promising the reintroduction of political stability through military dictatorship; 3) The identification of anti-junta protests as acts that threaten to sabotage this order-restoration process; 4) The portrayal of the army-led junta as the national savior protecting Thailand from internal threats, including protests demanding democracy. The article concludes by suggesting that in order to combat the securitization strategy of the junta, pro-democracy activists need to develop de-securitization strategies in order to enhance the effectiveness of their campaigns.

**

Introduction

Subsequent to the 2014 coup in Thailand street protests that had been a common occurrence over past decades were labelled as a threat to peace and order. Coup makers explained that their intervention was legitimate because during the 2013-14 protests by the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC), Thailand was on the verge of civil war.

They claimed that by their intervention they saved the country from the protracted conflicts that pitted people from different political affiliations against each other. Such protests threatened chaos and national disintegration and hence needed to be eliminated so that peace and order might be restored. Consequently, pro-democracy campaigns and activities came to be identified as acts of sabotage, threatening the junta's project of re-establishing stability in Thailand. These security discourses were generated to ensure public support for a crackdown on dissidents.

In this paper, I seek to examine the nexus between security discourses and repression of nonviolent movements by specifically looking at the way in which nonviolent anti-military government activism in Thailand was framed as a threat to national security in the period from May 2014 to June 2015. I will attempt to demonstrate how the security narratives were developed as part of an effort to suppress dissent and legitimize the junta's repression.. The analysis of the security discourse employed by the junta is based on examination of the weekly broadcasts of the Prime Minister, published official statements, and material derived from interviews with junta leaders reported in the media.. These sources of information were supplemented by material relating to anti-junta activism which came from personal communications with students involved with anti-junta protests, my own experience as an academic being harassed by the authorities, news reports, journalistic and academic articles, and NGO reports. e.

Civil Resistance, Repression and Securitization

Understanding repression through the theoretical lens of securitization has so far attracted little attention in civil resistance literature, although it has informed work in other disciplines such as the study of social movements. Scholars of civil resistance/nonviolent struggle have typically focused on democratization campaigns within authoritarian regimes. Scholars such as Richard Gregg, Gene Sharp and Brian Martin have argued that repression applied by authoritarian regimes can play into the hands of activists who do not resort to retaliation, and carefully plan communications with the wider public regarding the opponent's repression. Concepts such as *moral and political ju-jitsu* and *backfire dynamics* posit that repression can actually enhance a movement's mobilization

capacity mobilization and help them create leverage among domestic and international third parties, and security forces (Gregg 1935, Sharp 1973, 2005, Martin 2007, 2015, Nikolayenko 2007, Sørensen 2008, Roberts and Ash 2009, Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, Erickson Nepstad 2011). Scholars such as Sharon Erickson Nepstad (2015) have analyzed how regimes attempt to undermine nonviolent movements by dividing the opposition, encouraging troop loyalty, and neutralizing international sanctions. However, in her analysis Nepstad failed to explore the manner in which regimes can attempt to sustain domestic popular support through discursive manipulation. Kurt Schock (2015: 118) has addressed this aspect by reference to the practice of counter-framing, whereby “the frames of challengers are critiqued and challengers are delegitimized and deprecated through drawing on hegemonic ideology that supports the elite interests.” However, Schock did not identify the specific features of framing and counter-framing activities oriented to mobilizing support for the elites. A key element of such projects has been the portrayal of nonviolent activists as a national security threat, a strategy that has been adopted most recently in Thailand and Egypt (after 2013) where military governments have gained power and sought to engender popular support for the repression of pro-democracy activists.

If we want to understand how authoritarian regimes can legitimize their political repression of nonviolent pro-democracy protestors, it is imperative that we examine the manner in which such regimes can define nonviolent activists as a threat to national security and succeed in getting such a securitized definition (or frame) publicly accepted.

Social Movement scholars have lately drawn attention to the production of security framing in undermining social movements. Framing process can work for the benefit of both social movements and the ruling elites. Movements may make use of existing cultural elements, collective emotion and identity to create an interpretative guideline that influences the general public to join their struggle (Snow et al. 1986, Johnston 1995, Jasper 1997, Steinberg 1998, Benford and Snow 2000, Williams 2004, Johnston and Noakes 2005). At the same time, ruling elites may rely on the same components to uphold their legitimacy (Noakes 2000, Björk 2005, Roscigno et al. 2015). In this regard, Social Movements researchers such as Opp and Roehl (1990), Rasler (1996), and Earl (2004) have point-

ed out that repression can be legitimized if oppositional movements are framed as a threat to the well-being of society and the stability of the existing political order. Examples of such processes include the cases of South Korea under the Park Chung-hee regime (Chang and Kim 2007: 332) and Turkey under the Erdogan administration (Dimirsu 2014).. However, social movement theorists have not explored the manner in which security discourses are framed by authoritarian state agencies to bolster and reproduce public acceptance of repression..

The securitization framework serves as a useful analytical lens through which to explore the relationship between security discourses and repression. Developed in the field of International Relations and Critical Security Studies, securitization refers to the process through which an issue is labelled as a 'security' issue by an elite actor (Buzan et al. 1998: vii). In such a process the issue is removed from the the normal political domain and into the 'security sphere' where policies to tackle issues of national security are put forward and implemented. Once labelled as 'security issues' the process of policy-making and implementation by-passes normal democratic procedure. (Wæver 1995: 55). Three key conditions facilitate this process: 1) The speech act (such as propagated rhetoric and the borrowing of existing nationalist discourses) following the grammar of security emphasizing priority, urgency, defense, and survival; 2) The securitizing actor being in a 'position of authority to maximize audience acceptance; and 3) The features of the alleged threat(s) (Buzan et al. 1998: 33). The emphasis on existential danger is routinely repeated through different agencies until public opinion is shaped in such a way that it is deemed acceptable and legitimate for such securitized issues to be deliberated outside of the normal political terrain in a sphere where citizens' participation in policy making is not appropriate or necessary.(see Balzacq 2011, McDonald 2008, Taureck 2006). At the core of this securitization process is the creation of a publicly perceived threat, with the associated fear for collective safety and public order. In such circumstances the state can reaffirm its central role in protecting the established order and the safety of its citizens by declaring a state of emergency, claiming . absolute executive power to define potential threats and deal with them (see Agamben 2005).

To be effective the securitization of civil resistance to authoritarian regimes requires the incorporation of existing cultural and historical memories into the security discourse. In this way the public perception of fear and threat can resonate with collective memory and identity. Protesters’ demands can be accordingly downplayed, popular agreement with governmental repression induced, and the efficacy of a movement undermined. Vânia Carvalho Pinto (2014) analyses precisely this effect of securitization on the Bahraini protests in 2011 when pro-democracy activists were accused of being the ‘fifth column’ of Iran, whose influence over the Shi’ite communities in the Gulf States has long been a target of suspicion and fear for the rulers. By spreading this fear related to the historic ‘threat’ the Bahraini monarchy succeeded in convincing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – consisting of Oman, the Arab Emirates, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar – to deploy troops in Bahrain to crush the opposition. .. Pinto (2014: 265) concludes that securitizing social movements is complete when credible elites and opinion leaders articulate the problem of threats by attributing its origin to a social movement, while basing this association on the value systems, worldview and cultural milieu of the target group. In this manner the securitization of an issue (and an oppositional movement) makes possible the public acceptance of repressive policies, even when targeted against nonviolent movements. The diagram below illustrates this type of process, one which has characterised the the crackdown on anti-junta protesters in Thailand during 2014-15.

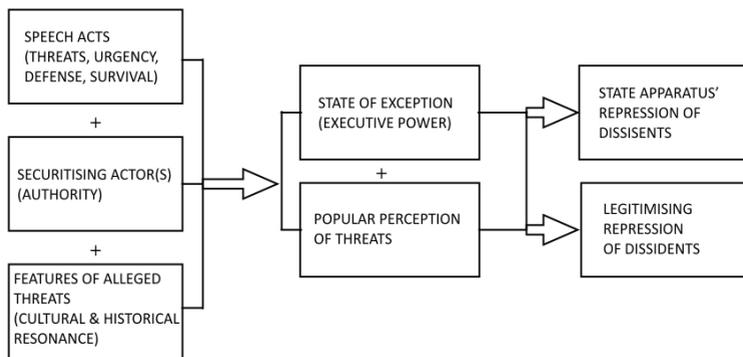


Diagram adapted by the author from Buzan et al. (1998)

Thailand's conflicts and the 2014 military coup

Thailand's 2014 military coup was a symptom of a decade long-governmental crisis, reflecting the fears of traditional elites and Bangkok middle class whose power had been challenged by new political elites and their grassroots mass supporters. Thai traditional elites, comprising the monarchy, army and certain business groups, have upheld their political and economic domination since the early days of Thailand's breakaway from absolutist monarchy. Military coups have often been staged when this network of domination is under threat (McCargo 2005, MacGregor 2014). The 1992 nonviolent uprising overthrew the military dictatorship which many anticipated would be the last one (Callahan 1998, Chaiwat 1999, Kurt 2005: 120-41). The 1997 constitution gave rise to new political elites from the provinces – led by the media tycoon Thaksin Shinawatra – who were elected by their rural constituents, especially in the impoverished North and Northeast of Thailand. Despite some successes in coopting old elites, Thaksin's relationship with them turned sour when there were signs of his creeping monopoly of the media, politics and economy. More importantly, his welfare policies empowering grassroots communities, together with the fast growing economic development in Thailand, began to shift grassroots loyalty away from the establishment elites and toward his party and cronies (Phasuk and Baker 2008, Hewison 2010).

As conflicts between Thaksin and traditional elites deepened, mass demonstrations were orchestrated by the parties to the struggle. In 2005, the threatened elites mobilized supporters mainly from Bangkok in joining anti-Thaksin protests. This paved the way for the 2006 coup that ousted Thaksin's elected government (Pye and Schaffer 2008, Kasian 2006, Connors and Hewison 2008, Chairat 2012). When the old elites managed to restore their power through the manipulation of the 2007 constitution, Thaksin and his allies opted for an electoral strategy, while organizing mass demonstrations to defy the junta (Uchane 2010). This development kicked off the tit-for-tat overthrow of governments representing Thaksin and the old elites through mass mobilizations in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2014 (Hewison 2014). While both new and old elites were struggling to defend their vested interest, Thais found themselves divided into Red (Thaksin supporters together with pro-democ-

racy activists and academics) and Yellow camps (ultra-royalists, technocrats and Bangkok middle class). The 2014 coup reflected the old elites' attempt to restore the Yellow camp's status quo and weaken the Red. . Despite pro-democracy activists' efforts to distance themselves from Thaksin, the junta's actions to weaken the Red camp also encompassed those fighting for democracy. Portraying them as constituting a national security threat was one of their ways of pursuing this goal.

There were three elements to the the junta's claim that Red Shirts and democracy advocates threatened the Thai nation. Firstly, the 2009-10 protests by Red Shirts showed traditional elites that Red Shirts could threaten them physically and symbolically. Using the feudal discourse of *Prai* (commoner) against *Ammat* (aristocrat), Red Shirts took to the street in early 2009 and mid-2010, demanding the resignation of the Yellow camp-backed government. After an exchange of insults by Red Shirts and security forces, and failed negotiations, the army helped the government by clamping down on Red Shirt protesters (Wassana 2010). The crackdown resulted in more than 90 deaths and around 2,000 injuries (Truth for Reconciliation Commission of Thailand 2011, The Center for Information about the Crackdown between April and May 2010 2012). Sporadic attacks by unknown assailants and alleged arson by Red Shirts during the protests convinced the elites that their status quo was threatened by Red Shirts. For Bangkok middle class the rural Red Shirts – derogatorily known as *kwai daeng* ('red buffalo' which conveys the cultural denotation of 'stupidity' and 'backwardness') – represented an intrusion of the uncivilized poor who burned down their highly worshipped shopping malls. Red Shirts were defined as a 'red threat' who were threatening to burn down the city (*phoa barn phao meung*) (Saxer 2014).

Secondly, when Yellow Shirts took to the street in 2013-14, a series of armed assaults on demonstrators generated the fear of Thailand being on the brink of civil war, which convinced the army to step in. The Red Shirts' political party had won the election in 2011, but their government was short-lived. The party's political naivety, alleged corruption and lack of accountability gave ground for Yellow Shirts' protests. The Red Shirts-supported government resorted to forcible dispersion of protesters, but their responses were seen as limited by some Red Shirt extremists who took matter into their own hands. From January 29 to May

11, 2014, there were reportedly 32 bombing attacks in and around the PDRC¹ protest venues, causing 25 deaths and almost 800 injuries (INN News 2014a). It seemed to some observers that civil war threatened. (Bangkokbiz News 2014). Meanwhile, the PDRC leadership sent signals encouraging military intervention (MThai News 2014a). The army was at first reluctant. But as violence escalated, General Prayuth Chan-Ocha, then army chief, declared Martial Law and eventually seized power. He claimed that Thailand was on the brink of civil war (Nation TV 2014).

The third element was the military's long-standing fear of a breakdown of the national order which would threaten its own vested interests and the monopoly of political power enjoyed by its allies. Traditional elites have sustained their domination through the reproduction of a conservative version of national identity. Being a Thai is to be a subject, rather than a citizen, of the Kingdom. A subject has a moral duty to preserve his or her loyalty to the head of the polity, the King. This polity's survival depends on national harmony and as such can harbor no tolerance for disrespect towards higher authority and open disagreement (see, for example, Barmé 1993, Thongchai 1994, Connors 2003, Reynolds 2004). The Thai army has played a pivotal role in safeguarding this national order. (Pavin 2014). Whenever the established order has been challenged, such as by the communists in the 1970s or the contemporary movement for democracy, they have staged a coup in order to 'cleanse' the polity of those elements that would corrupt it. (Streckfuss 2011: 87-122).²

The rise of the Red Shirts reflected the changing economic and political landscape in Thailand with the emergence of the rural working class from the feudal yoke (Naruemon and McCargo 2012). It also opened up a space for increased criticisms of the army's and royal family's interventions in politics – something that was unacceptable to the

¹ People's Democratic Reform Committee

² It should be noted that factions within the army also have vested interest in preserving the existing order such as prestige and lucrative military expenditure. See *The Economist* (2014).

military establishment (Uchane 2012, Ünalı 2014).³ Right after taking power the junta declared its plan to restore national order.

It is an extremely important duty of the Government to defend the monarchy. Legal, psychological, and telecommunication measures will be employed to deal with those having malicious intent against the monarchy. The Government will also disseminate accurate information, knowledge, understanding, and facts about the Royal Family and royal duties, with an aim to create awareness and foster humble gratefulness towards the monarchy, the Father and the Mother of the land, and spiritually create unity among the people of Thailand (Thailand Today 2014).

The restoration of order would require sacrifices from all Thai subjects. The army had made its sacrifice by stepping in to de-escalate the conflict and ensure stability for the country. In a similar spirit the Thai people should play their part by not disturbing the process of restoring order. There could be no place for anti-junta protests both on the street and in social media space because Thailand was going through such an abnormal time when national unity was needed more than ever (*Khaosod* 2014a). This was the rhetoric of the junta in its securitization of pro-democracy activists.

Anti-junta activism

Three main groups that have criticized the junta are; 1) Red Shirt politicians and supporters; 2) Pro-democracy students, academics, journalists and other citizens; and 3) Marginalized rural communities.

For the junta, the threat from the Red Shirts was the possible overthrow of their rule by means of a counter-coup. Accordingly, it moved to seize weapons believed to belong to Red Shirt activists, while arresting around 2,000 of them with serious charges (*INN News* 2014b, *Khaosod* 2014b).. In addition, by imposing Martial Law and other draconian mea-

³ The 2008-2010 uprising perhaps presented an unprecedented open defiance of monarchy that was organized and mobilized by a powerful opposition force. A telling Red Shirt campaign is 'Enlightenment,' (Ta Swang) which indicates their critical awareness of the monarchy's role in shaping Thai politics.

tures, the junta thwarted any attempt by Red Shirt politicians to mobilize their supporters for mass protest.

The junta, however, has found it hard to control symbolic protests by individuals whose democratic stance has driven them to defy its authority, and consequently has relied on security discourses to publicly delegitimize this group of opponents. University students have been amongst the most outspoken. A prominent action has been eating sandwiches. According to Sirawit Serithiwat from Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, the initial idea was that he and his friends would disseminate leaflets, but the police prohibited them from doing so due to the imposed Martial Law. They had brought sandwiches with them to snack so, unable to distribute their leaflets, they gave out sandwiches instead (Sirawit Serithiwat, pers. diss. May 6, 2015). Later on, students from Kasetsart University repeated this action by organizing a ‘sandwich party’ (*BBC News* 2014a).

Another symbolic protest has been the use of a three-finger salute – inspired by the film *The Hunger Games*. A few months after protesters adopted this blockbuster’s symbol, the second episode of the film was scheduled for screening in Thai cinemas. Students organized an event distributing free tickets at a cinema in downtown Bangkok. However, on the first screening date the cinema manager denied students entry to the designated venue. A transgender student decided to flash the *Hunger Games* salute in front of a large publicity poster of the film. In Khon Kaen province, northeast of Thailand, five students calling themselves ‘Daodin’⁴ flashed the three finger salute during a speech by the junta PM (*Aljazeera* 2014, *Prachatai* 2014b).

Other activities have included symbolic use of the arts. When a pro-democracy historian at Thammasat University was forced to resign, eight students distributed leaflets featuring a poem by the late Chit Phumisak, the Thai poet and communist rebel. The poem reads: ‘In an era of darkness, rule is by the gun, but people will still be people’ (*Prachatai* 2014b). On another occasion students formed a coalition with human rights lawyers, artists and writers, called ‘Citizen Resistant’ (*Pholameung Tob Glab*). On Valentine’s Day they staged a street performance entitled

⁴ A student group.

'My Dear/Stolen Election' (*Leunk Tang Tee Rak/Lak*). A performer carried a ballot box, while dancing. He later placed it down on the street. As expected, a secret police unit stationed in that area took it away, thereby highlighting the junta's hyper-anxiety about anything related to democracy (*Siam Intelligence* 2015). After being charged for staging this nonviolent activity, members of 'Citizen Resistant' marched to a police station, giving themselves in, and at the same time filing a lawsuit against the coup-makers for their unconstitutional seizure of power (*Maticchon* 2015a). A group of citizens came up with the idea of reading George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984* at monorail stations to demonstrate the current state of censorship and surveillance in Thailand (Bagenal 2014). On other occasions protestors have donned t-shirts emblazoned with the slogan 'Peace Please,' or worn masks printed with the message 'People.' They have also covered their eyes, mouth and ears with their hands, symbolizing the junta censorship (*Prachatai* 2014b)

The junta has been particularly wary of journalists and the media, especially those with the temerity to expose military abuses. A prime example was a TV show run by the Thai Public Broadcasting Service, in which activists and villagers were invited to discuss their concerns about the junta's policies that promised to reform Thailand. The government interpreted this show as a form of defiance.

Another source of resistance to the junta stems from ordinary villagers seeking to defend their land and natural resources from encroachment and expropriation by commercial companies. From May to December 2014, villagers in at least 28 localities throughout Thailand were given notice to evacuate. Local military units claimed that they received orders from their commanders to evict those 'illegally' residing in the officially 'preserved' areas. The government denied any involvement in this abuse. And it seems that local military units that have enjoyed increased autonomy since the coup initiated the harassment on their own. Commanders of these units allegedly have close ties with companies grabbing villagers' lands (Chaiwat Satha-Anand, chairperson of Strategic Nonviolence Committee, pers.comm. June 30, 2015). Despite the government's denial, it seems clear that the ongoing imposition of Martial Law and other draconian laws have served to facilitate arbitrary resource grabbing (Human Rights Watch 2014a). Villagers, assisted by NGOs, academics

and student activists, have voiced their grievances. They have held public forums and seminars, while expressing their defiance against military abuses by wearing anti-junta T-shirts, submitting petitions, and rallying to demand the investigation of companies' encroachment (*Prachatai* 2014c).

Crackdown on anti-junta dissidents

Public dissent has been outlawed and punishable by Martial Law, *lèse majesté* (offense against monarchy) law and under section 44 of the interim constitution.⁵ This has resulted in the militarization of the judicial process such that individual suspects can be detained arbitrarily, civilians tried in military courts, and a military unit set up to investigate crimes on behalf of the police (*Prachatai* 2015a). Under these circumstances, dissenters can face forms of harassment listed as follows.

Summoning and pressing charges

Between May 2014 and May 2015, 751 individuals were summoned. At least 22 of them were subsequently charged with six of them prosecuted under the *lèse majesté* law (*Prachatai* 2015b).

'Attitude adjustment'

Most of the summoned were detained for about seven days, which helped discourage any attempt to resist the military rule. As the term 'detention' sounds harsh and can give the Thai junta a bad name overseas, they opted for more benevolent terms such 'attitude adjustment' (*prap thassanakati*). Martial Law allows detention of a suspect without warrant for seven days. Most detainees were released on the condition that they signed a document prohibiting their future participation in any political activity and/or requiring them to obtain permission from the army prior

⁵ In Thailand, punishment by *lèse majesté* charge is harsh. A fair trial is rare which results in many innocents being given sentence without being able to defend themselves. The jail sentence for violating the *lèse majesté* law is between 3 to 15 years. One year after the coup, there are 46 individuals being charged with *lèse majesté*. Among others, two convicts are young theatre performers alleged of staging a play mocking the monarchy. See *Prachatai* (2015b) and Campbell (2014).

to making any travel abroad (*Prachatai* 2015b). In 2015, the discourse shifted from 'attitude adjustment' to reconciliation' (prong dong), with the military claiming that its critics were being invited for a discussion on plans for national reconciliation (Suluck 2015).

Outlawing symbolic protests

Martial Law and interim constitution's section 44 bans a gathering of more than five persons, and it is normally stretched to cover other activities such as distributing leaflets. When flashing three finger salute became a popular method of protest, the authorities warned that they would arrest anyone in a large group who gave the salute and refused to lower their arm when ordered whilst the prime minister threatened that anyone flashing it could put their futures at risk (*BBC* 2014b).

Media censorship and ban on academic seminars

The rights to free speech and academic freedom have been curtailed by the junta. . Journalists were summoned for a lecture on how to produce and report 'reconciliatory' news. Outspoken journalists such as Pravit Rojanapruk and Thanaphol Eawsakul were detained (Reporters Without Borders 2014, *Prachatai* 2015d). TV programmes have been heavily censored and offending programme makers forced to resign.

Martial Law and section 44 provide grounds for banning academic seminars. Holding a public discussion on issues considered 'political' requires permission from a local military unit. Without this permission events can be cancelled and organizers detained. The Legal Education Centre (known as iLaw) has documented that in the first year of the coup at least 71 public academic events, theatrical performances and movie screenings were subject to intervention and censorship by the military (*Prachatai* 2015b).

Arbitrary arrest, 'forced promise' and trial in military courts

Protesters often face arbitrary arrest. Usually they are held at a local police station for hours before any decision is made as to whether or not they should be charged.. Students in particular are released after detention on the condition that they sign a document promising not to participate in any future anti-government protests.

Internet surveillance and harassment

Students, activists and academics have been closely monitored. Upon their seizure of power the, coup makers made it clear that their battlefield would include cyber space. On May 29, 2014, the junta issued the Order Number 26/2014 which outlined measures to prevent ‘the dissemination of false information online’ (Thaweepon 2014). In addition, it enables the authorities to trace anti-junta activities in social media, especially Facebook. Many have been sentenced with *lèse majesté* because of their comments interpreted as insults against the royal family, its symbols and its representatives (see Prachatai 2015f). In January 2015, the junta approved a proposed bill which allows the authorities to conduct mass surveillance on every means of communication in the name of national security. Moreover the junta cabinet has approved a proposal from the Royal Thai Police to amend the 1934 Criminal Procedure Code which will enable the police to intercept communication devices of criminal suspects (Thaweepon 2015). This legalisation of communication surveillance facilitates different forms of harassing dissidents, ranging from monitoring their daily routine leading, phone threats and house visits (Kongpob 2015, Lefevre 2015), to filing a lawsuit against villagers posting pictures of abusive authorities (Prachatai 2015b).

Thai junta’s securitization of dissidents

These forms of crackdown mark a departure from blatantly violent suppression by the ‘old school’ juntas of the past. The incumbent Thai junta has opted for legal intimidation and bureaucratic hassles obstructing effective pro-democracy protests. Despite international condemnation of these practices (see, for example, U.S. Department of State 2014, *Deutsche Welle* 2014, Federation for Human Rights 2015, Lawyers’ Rights Watch Canada and Asia Legal Rights Resource Centre 2015, Lefevre and Aukkarapon 2015), a large number of domestic constituents, especially amongst the urban population and business sectors, maintain their support for the junta (Kapook Poll 2015, *Manager Online* 2015, *MThai news* 2015, *Thairath* 2015). A major reason has to do with the ruling elites’ manipulation of rhetoric that feeds the public fear of political instability caused by a decade-long conflict. The junta has depicted itself as the most capable agent in dealing with this crisis.

Defining Threats and Dangerous Time

Linking a national threat to the undermining of established order has historically been a common discourse among coup-makers (Streckfuss 2011). However, the current junta's security discourse is different from earlier versions in that the presumed threat of 'civil war' precipitated by disruptive mass demonstrations demonstrates the existence of a physical threat to the wellbeing of the Thai nation. Since the very first days in power, the leader of the junta declared his mission to tackle the problem of street clashes through the imposition of draconian laws and introduction of returning happiness to the people scheme.

Our priority is to safeguard peace and security of the Kingdom [of Thailand]. Therefore, the enforcement of Martial Law is essential because it enables the authorities to terminate violence immediately. Over the past months, normal law could not achieve this.. Our mission is to return this country to normalcy, so that everyone is happy. We want to return happiness to the people in this nation... (Prayuth 2014a).

With this theme as a backdrop, the junta has identified three elemental threats to national order. These are the risk of civil war, a dangerous and destabilizing democracy, and national disunity caused by prolonged political conflict and associated tensions. These threats are, of course, interlinked. The threat of civil war is presented as the reason why representative democracy – the core feature of which is free and fair elections – is not the most suitable option for Thailand in crisis. Democracy brings conflicts to the fore, it thereby heightens the risk of violence, and as such is a danger. As the head of the junta explained:

If there is still an election in this country, it will create conflicts, and the country will, again, experience the endless circle of conflicts, violence, politicians' corruption, terrorism and the use of war weaponry... This is very dangerous, I have realized... you can see what we (the government) have been trying to do here. Without our intervention, people would have used these weapons to kill one another (Prayuth 2014b).

The fundamental threat to the well-being of the Thai people is their disunity. The answer to this is the acknowledgement that there can be

only one source of ‘true’ information about the country – the junta. The Prime Minister’s rant at a journalist reflects this conviction:

Why do you always have to argue with me? The only person who deserves to say anything at all is me” (*Matichon* 2015b). When in a good mood, he welcomes questions, but not disagreement: “If you have any questions, come and ask me. All countries can ask me directly what the truth is ...Watching people voice disagreement, that I hate” (Hui Yee 2015). Sometimes silent dissent might be tolerated, but saying it out loud is unacceptable. As General Prawit Wongsuwan, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister affirmed: ‘If anyone disagrees with us, they have the right to think that way. But they cannot express that [disagreement] publicly (*Khaosod* 2014c).

Defining ways to bring about unity and security

Overcoming this dangerous time requires a project to consolidate national unity in which citizens are re-educated about how to be subservient Thai subjects. Unlike the past when the juntas labelling dissidents ‘un-Thai’, the current elites consider critics and protesters as not being Thai enough. Their rebellious attitude is not to be dismissed, but adjusted (hence the ‘attitude adjustment’ programme) so they better comprehend the ongoing crisis of national unity, and the junta’s efforts to resolve this (see, for example, Pravit 2014, 2015). Meanwhile, Thai values such as patriotism, loyalty and Buddhism have been reinforced among school children and villagers in Red Shirt strongholds (Saksith and Siam Voices 2014, *The Isaan Record* 2015). As mentioned earlier, the military regime diagnosed that disunity caused by democracy and Red-Yellow conflicts have challenged the existing order. The term reconciliation serves as a discursive instrument to facilitate order redemption, and at the same time to put down potential challengers. The establishment of reconciliation centers across provinces epitomize this. Run by the army’s Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), these centers aim at ‘teaching people to live together harmoniously’ (Lefevre 2014) and about the importance of monarchy (*The Isaan Record* 2015). Despite the junta’s claim to have resolved the Red-Yellow antagonism, only Red Shirts in Thailand’s north and northeast are key targets. Moreover, they are prohibited

from expressing their political view during and after the training sessions. In this sense, as junta leaders have reiterated, the success of the reconciliation project depends on people's complete cooperation with the government (Prayuth 2014e, The Royal Thai Government 2015). The end result of the reconciliation process is to bring 'happiness' to the Thai people, which entails the forgetting of the army's past human rights abuse and Red Shirt identity (Siwach 2015). This Thai sense of happiness – implying stability, social harmony and the elites' monopoly of power and resources – constitutes an ideology used to induce public acceptance of the junta crackdown on dissidents (Bandow 2015).

Defining spoilers/threats to the junta's efforts to bring unity and security

Unlike Red Shirt politicians identified as a direct threat to the junta's rule, nonviolent dissidents are publicly framed as spoilers who are sabotaging the government's reconciliation plan. In response to protesters' criticism regarding its unconstitutional and undemocratic seizure of power, junta leaders often denounce this claim as 'lacking an understanding' and 'not true.' For example, General Prawit once commented that the government cannot continue working if people always protest. "All hell will break loose again, and there will be no reconciliation. If we upset you, you should tell us directly. You shouldn't have said something untrue publicly." (*Bangkokbiz News* 2015). When Daodin activists flashed the three finger salute during Prayuth's speech, he kept his cool and even invited more protesters to come forward so they all could listen to him at once. Afterwards, he stated, "If these protests go on, we cannot move forward. There will be no change for a better future. I think the majority of people understand what we are trying to achieve" (*Manager Online* 2014).

The government and army leadership have routinely repeated similar statements in order to dissuade citizens from participating in anti-regime protests. For instance, Colonel Winthai Suwaree, army spokesperson, repeatedly reminded Thais that the army has sacrificed greatly. The coup was a good thing because it de-escalated the ongoing conflict so that Thailand can move forward. Protests and criticism against the authorities will surely be counterproductive to this effort (*Khaosod* 2014a).

Such a rhetoric is used time and again to warn against protests by groups addressing different grievances, ranging from Buddhist monks and factory workers to farmers and fishermen (*Now 26 Channel* 2015, *Bangkokbiz News* 2015, *Daily News* 2015). One year after the coup, with resistance to military government still manifest, the Prime Minister has repeated the claim that the coup would not have been necessary if democracy had worked in the first place: Prime Minister “[Staging a coup] is actually a waste of my time and the loss of my credibility, but I do care about this nation...it would be my utter failure if disharmony among the people remains” (*Post Today* 2015).

This is a recurring theme in the rhetoric of the junta, that the Prime Minister and his military entourage have made a great sacrifice taking power from a corrupt government and saving Thailand from the brink of civil war. An anti-government protest implies terrible ingratitude and disregard for this sacrifice. Something which the junta members find difficult to comprehend, as the Prime Minister explained:

The call for democracy is not strange. But what is strange is our past version of democracy creating all kinds of problems...I don't understand why protesters don't care that these problems [of democracy] exist, especially the insecurity of citizens' lives and property...We're working hard to solve these problems, but [instead of thanking us] you are blaming us [for curbing freedom of expression]. This is not fair! (Prayuth 2014f).

Professing incomprehension that anyone might be critical of such a necessary and benevolent coup, the junta consider any dissidence to originate in the extreme margins of society or be politically driven by evil (Red Shirt) politicians. The ‘fringe’ frame aims to belittle protesters, making it difficult for them to gain any political momentum, whilst the ‘evil Red Shirt’ frame aims at demonizing protesters in a context where the junta feel that a crackdown could backfire on them, generating public sympathy for the protesters. The Prime Minister’s and Defense Minister’s comparative responses to arrests of student activists in November 2014 and June 2015 illustrate this discursive development. In his November 2014 interview, the Defence Minister stated;

All the polls obviously show that the public don’t want any open defiance against the government and security forces. We deserve more time to prove ourselves. I can tell you that the number of resisting groups is not increasing. [Subversive acts] are rather a lone wolf action. But we need to investigate whether or not there is a mastermind (*Reung Lao Chao Nee* 2014).

In a similar vein, General Udomdej Sitabutr, then army chief, asserted that the majority of people want peace and order to return to Thailand. That is why ‘troublemakers’ constitute only the minority who do not care about the well-being of their country at all (*Thairath* 2014b).

However, later in 2015, the discourse changed when it became apparent that the protests were not subsiding. The junta attributed the reason for this trend to a possible mastermind who must be financing protesters, particularly students. For instance, when students were arrested due to their pro-democracy activism in June 2015, the Prime Minister explained that the authorities had tried ‘inviting’ students for a talk several times, but to no avail. Students still disobey the junta’s order by continuing to criticize the government and defame him. The failed attempts to ‘make peace’ with students reflected the fact that “there must be someone backing the students” (*Post Today* 2015). The Prime Minister further pointed out that Daodin students look like ‘gangsters,’ rather than genuine students (*Matichon* 2015d). Likewise, the army chief made it clear that political groups were supporting the student activism. “We are aware of that, but [we] don’t want to name names.” Infusing this analysis with the ‘majority/minority’ and ‘civil war’ frames, he added that “the majority of Thai people disapprove [of student protests] because they are afraid that the country will descend into chaos again. There will be another round of conflict and clashes among groups who use heavy weapons and plot bombing attacks...I’d like to ask [student activists] if they want their family members to go through these [terrible things] again?” (*Matichon* 2015c).

It is worth noting that the representation of the students as being manipulated by political forces carry with it the implication that the students themselves are not seeking to threaten the well-being of Thais directly because, unlike the Red Shirts, there was no historical evidence of

the use of violence by the students. Accordingly, in order to undermine the salience of their protest whilst avoiding the risk of any crackdown on them ‘backfiring’ on the junta itself the dissidents are presented as ‘innocent saboteurs’ who do not realize the damage they are causing to national unity and reconstruction by their protests.

The Thai junta’s security narrative – that now is the time to come to the defense of the nation from the threats of civil war precipitated by Red-Yellow conflicts through the preservation of the established moral order and commitment to national reconciliation – remains credible for the Thai public, especially the Bangkok middle class. As a result, the securitization of dissidents has proven an effective means of limiting the leverage exercised by the activists. At least three factors have strengthened the significance of the junta’s securitization project..

Firstly, the army-dominated junta is a powerful securitizing actor. The junta and the Thai army are two sides of the same coin, and the latter has historically been portrayed as the defender of national order. The army’s image as sacrificing, courageous, decisive and uncorrupt has captured the Thai populace’s hearts and minds. Over the past forty years this image has been reproduced in school text books, news, songs, films and soap operas (Esri 2015, Talcoth 2015). However, one should not be mistaken that the Thai military’s authority has never been contested. In fact, the contestations – evident in the 1992 uprising, corruption allegations and rising military budget (see *ThaiPublica* 2013, *Prachachart* 2015) reached the zenith in the 2010 Red Shirts-led protests in which the army felt obliged to crack down on the protests to prevent a potential revolution. In this sense, the 2014 coup can be read as the army’s reaction to the perceived threat to its traditional status as the national guardian. Because the color-coded conflicts had polarized and weakened civil society, the army was able to present itself as the most organized and effective body of governance in a time of crisis. In this sense, the Thai army continues to act as a powerful securitizing actor which has the authority to define threats and the capacity to stretch this definition to cover perceived challenges to its traditional position. (see also Huntington 1981, Barany 2012).

Secondly, the members of the Bangkok middle class that joined the 2013-14 demonstrations that led to the toppling of the Red Shirt govern-

ment has by and large supported the coup. The junta's security narrative resonates with their contempt for what they consider to have been corrupt politicians who came to power through elections. From their point of view the populist Red Shirt government spent all the taxes that they, the urban middle class, had paid in order to gather the vote of the rural poor and be returned to power. By contrast, from their perspective, the military government embodies stability in a time of social, political and economic transformation. These changes have introduced a new social equation in which the rural populace has more say and demands more from the center. As a consequence large numbers of the Bangkok middle class feel that their relatively privileged position is under threat. Holding on to conservative values and elitist institutions helps reassure them that their status can be protected (for further discussion on the middle class retreat from democracy see Kurlantzick 2013, Saxer 2014: 162-73, Fukuyama 2014: 406-51). As with the junta, members of the middle class perceive pro-democracy protesters as a threat to the preservation of the status quo and accordingly support the crackdown on dissidents, rather than sympathizing with them as victims of an authoritarian regime. (see, for example, *MThai News* 2014b).

Finally, the salience of the junta's security discourse rests on a deep rooted political culture in Thailand which valorizes social hierarchy and collective harmony. As mentioned earlier, this political culture is intertwined with the role of monarchy and army in Thai politics, whose legitimacy in modern time requires the reproduction of a 'submissive ideology' among the populace. The official framing of protests as perpetrated by activists that have been deluded and misled by power-hungry politicians fits quite comfortably within such a world-view, particularly insofar as Thai political culture has tended to demonize those disagreeing with the authorities. Within this framework the junta's repression of the Red Shirts has been necessary to protect the established moral and social order, but the pro-democracy protesters are disrupting this honest endeavor. The implication of such a representation is that it is the patriotic duty of the Thai people to support the junta's good work for the nation by denouncing and delegitimizing pro-democracy demonstrations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, civil resistance against Thailand's junta has struggled to attract third party support, especially from the middle class, despite being cracked down on time and again. This is largely due to the junta's employment of security discourses that capture the public fear of protesters as a disruptive threat to the national order. Four discursive elements strengthen the securitization process, making it difficult for pro-democracy activists to gain any significant leverage, even when they have faced repression that might have been expected to backfire on the junta and generate support for the protesters from sympathetic third parties.

1) The existence of a threat stemming from Red-Yellow conflicts which brought Thailand to the brink of civil war. This threat was a by-product of representative democracy allowing groups to openly express their disagreement and antagonism. In Thai political culture, this characteristic is framed as disharmony which is believed to threaten national order. This discourse is particularly popular among Bangkok middle class who associate the junta with stability.

2) The way to eliminate this threat to national order is to restore the traditional order which has been eroded due to Red-Yellow conflicts. This can be achieved through reconciliation projects, activities to return happiness to the Thai people, and moral policing. Turning Thailand back to 'normalcy' in the future necessitates the collective devotion of all Thais.

3) Accordingly, anti-junta protests are identified as an attempt to sabotage this order restoration process. Good things are happening, but these people are making a fuss. They are 'trouble makers, and they are not being Thai (patriotic) enough.

4) Security discourses gain credibility because of the historical image of the army as being at the service of the nation, uncorrupt and benign. The junta always claims that it saved Thailand from the brink of civil war. In addition, the middle class fear of losing status quo and the Thai political culture that stigmatizes open protests against authority also contribute to the salience of the securitization discourse

Civil resistance to securitization: The challenge

This article showed the way in which the incumbent Thai junta has securitized pro-democracy groups by generating the fear of a breakdown of social order and the risk of violent political conflict. Although the case elaborated in this paper is limited to Thailand, similarities in tactics of securitization can be detected in other countries where the state is deemed to be facing some kind of existential threat. The definition of what constitutes a threat can often be extended to encompass those opposed to the regime's stance, thereby undermining the capacity of protest movements to generate political momentum. One way in which non-violent movements can respond to being targeted in such a manner is to explore means of de-securitizing the issue, attempting to deconstruct the regime's security discourse. The means by which this might be achieved will vary from one context to the other. But there are certain methods that would appear relevant to undermining attempts to label nonviolent protest as a security threat. These include:

Humor: The Serbian resistance movements Otpor opted for satire to show the incongruence between the regime's portrayal of them as terrorists and the reality. Admitting that they were terrorists as accused, Otpor activists emphasized that they were also nerds ('good kid' discourse), and their weapon was just pens and textbooks. By doing this Otpor aimed to reveal themselves as fundamentally non-threatening whilst highlighting the nonsensical nature of the regime's accusation. (see Janjira 2015).

Start a public conversation and debate about securitization: social media can serve as a platform facilitating political debates on security issues – as exemplified in the latest cyber movement in Thailand called 'F5'. The junta is imposing the new cyber law to curb freedom of expression, which will result in restricting the internet speed. The youngsters, especially 'video gamers,' saw this policy as an impingement on their lifestyle because they rely on fast internet to access information online for 24/7 and to participate in virtual online games. More than 100,000 people signed a petition demanding the government abolish this policy. The cyber campaign opened up a political space for public discussion about the junta's authoritarianism.

Making the link between securitization strategies and material well-being: De-securitization campaigns can attempt to highlight the manner in which the economic costs of securitization can impact on the living standards of the population as a whole. ‘Security is bad for economy’ can be a slogan that resonates with large sections of the population.

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DEBATE - REFLECTIONS

Civil Resistance vs. ISIS

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Introduction

The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS), a radical religious organization that exhibits attributes of both an insurgency and a totalitarian regime, is the latest global scourge. Even top U.S. generals acknowledge that military force alone is insufficient to degrade, much less defeat an organization that currently rules an area larger than the United Kingdom (Fallows, 2015).² ISIS, which aims to create an independent Islamic state, or caliphate, will only be weakened through a multifaceted strategy combining diplomatic, economic, political and other means. Organized civilian action that aims to disrupt and deny the group's key sources of power could be a critical part of that strategy. This article will examine this contention and suggest how, practically, such nonviolent resistance could be supported.

Some commentators have called nonviolent resistance to ISIS a nonsensical response (Peck, 2014).³ Their skepticism is understandable. After all, this is a transnational jihadi group with an apocalyptic worldview, awash in cash and sophisticated weapons that has institutionalized

¹ The author would like to thank Chelsea Dreher and Danny Hajjar for their research assistance.

² Fallows, James. February 15, 2015. "On the Impossibility of Fighting ISIS." *The Atlantic*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/02/on-the-impossibility-of-fighting-isis/385530/>.

³ Peck, Michael. July 9, 2014. "Sorry, Peaceniks – Nonviolence Won't Stop ISIS." *Medium*. <https://medium.com/war-is-boring/sorry-peaceniks-nonviolence-wont-stop-isis-de96bc546019>.

the practice of rape and regularly employs beheadings and crucifixions to terrorize populations under their control (Callimachi, 2015).⁴ Meanwhile ISIS is functioning as a quasi-state: the group delivers services and builds infrastructure, its shari'a courts dole out consistent verdicts, and it boasts a well-oiled media propaganda effort (Wood, 2015).⁵

There is no quick fix to the ISIS scourge, or to the political and governance failures that fueled its rise. Meanwhile, while global attention has honed in on the terrorist group, vastly more civilian lives have been lost due to barrel bombs and intentional targeting of civilians by the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria (Roth, 2015).⁶ State and non-state tyranny have reinforced each other in the cases of ISIS. Civil resistance, a strategy of political struggle that relies on techniques of self-organization and collective noncooperation, can contribute to an aggressive containment of ISIS and help dissolve its roots (Neumann, 2015) by weakening its legitimacy and support base.⁷

ISIS's Objectives

Before considering the role of civil resistance, or any other response, in challenging ISIS, one should assess the motivations and capabilities of this group. ISIS's central political goal is to re-establish an Islamic caliphate, which has not been seen since the dissolution of the Ottoman

⁴ Callimachi, Rukmini. August 13, 2015. "ISIS Enshrines a Theology of Rape." *The New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/14/world/middleeast/isis-enshrines-a-theology-of-rape.html?emc=edit_na_20150813&nliid=64560341&ref=cta&r=1.

⁵ Wood, Graeme. March 2015. "What ISIS Really Wants." *The Atlantic*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/03/what-isis-really-wants/384980/>.

⁶ Roth, Kenneth. August 5, 2015. "Barrel Bombs, Not ISIS, Are the Greatest Threat to Syrians." Human Rights Watch. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/08/05/barrel-bombs-not-isis-are-greatest-threat-syrians>.

⁷ Neumann, Peter R. August 16, 2015. "Smart and Realistic: Defeating ISIS through a Strategy of "Aggressive Containment." Informal Institute for National Security Thinkers and Practitioners. <http://maxoki161.blogspot.com/2015/08/smart-and-realistic-defeating-isis.html>.

Empire (Lewis, 2014).⁸ Its strategy to achieve this political vision is, first, military conquest to claim control over territory, starting with Iraq and Syria; and second, to establish functional governance in that territory as a means to legitimize its religious authority (Ibid.).⁹

Unlike other prominent jihadi groups, including al-Qaeda, ISIS requires territory for legitimacy and to exert political and religious control. Where it holds power, ISIS collects taxes, regulates prices, operates courts, and provides services ranging from health care and education to telecommunications (Wood, 2015).¹⁰ In this way, and based on the selective ways it has employed violence, ISIS resembles traditional insurgencies (Pischedda, 2015).¹¹ This also represents a vulnerability, since ISIS is currently spread thinly across northern Iraq and eastern Syria.

ISIS is ideologically committed to the destruction of the modern nation-state and to returning civilization to a seventh-century legal environment. Every decision and law promulgated by the so-called Islamic State, including stoning for adultery, amputation, slavery of infidels and crucifixions, are based on its interpretation of the prophecy and example of Muhammad, also known as the “Prophetic methodology” (Wood, 2015).¹² Central to ISIS’s worldview is the idea that its actions today are laying the groundwork for the “Day of Judgment,” or apocalypse, when the end of the world is presaged by massive battles between Muslim and Western armies. ISIS’s English language propaganda magazine, *Dabiq*, is named after the place in Syria where those battles are supposed to occur according to the hadith, or sayings of the Prophet Mohammed.

⁸ Lewis, Jessica D. July 2014. “The Islamic State: A Counter Strategy for a Counter-State.” Institute for the Study of War. <http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Lewis-Center%20of%20gravity.pdf>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants.”

¹¹ Pischedda, Costantino. August 27, 2015. “A Provocative Article Says the Islamic State is a Mystery. Here’s Why That’s Wrong.” *The Washington Post*. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/08/27/the-islamic-state-is-no-mystery/>.

¹² Wood, “What ISIS Really Wants.”

In order to dismantle political boundaries in Iraq, Syria and the broader region, ISIS is seeking to expedite government failure and stoke sectarian civil war. Years of civil war and weak nationalist projects in Syria and Iraq have helped ISIS considerably (Hashim, 2014: P. 76).¹³ The organization will aim to win and maintain territory in Iraq and Syria, govern the populations within, and defend it against external threats. Finally, it will recruit Muslims to fight alongside and live within the caliphate, eventually connecting it to the wider Muslim community, or Umma.

ISIS's Sources of Power

A central insight from the civil resistance literature is that no government or other power-holder, including non-state or quasi-state actors like ISIS, is monolithic. Rather, their power is fluid and dependent on the active and passive cooperation of ordinary people. As Gene Sharp has written,

The rulers of governments and political systems are not omnipotent, nor do they possess self-generating power. All dominating elites and rulers depend for their sources of power upon the cooperation of the population and of the institutions of the society they would rule (Sharp, 1990: 3).¹⁴

The theoretical and practical challenge for civil resistance scholars is how collective nonviolent action, both within and outside ISIS territory, can be used to disrupt the patterns of cooperation and obedience on which ISIS depends and deny it the human and material resources it needs to wield effective control (Bartkowski, 2014).¹⁵ How can sporadic,

¹³ Hashim, Ahmed S. December 2014. "The Islamic State: From al-Qaeda Affiliate to Caliphate," *Middle East Policy* 21.4, P. 76.

¹⁴ Sharp, Gene. 1990. "The Role of Power in Nonviolent Struggle." The Albert Einstein Institution. P. 3. <http://www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/TheRoleofPowerinNonviolentStruggle-English.pdf>.

¹⁵ Bartkowski, Maciej. December 20, 2014. "Can Political Struggle Against ISIL Succeed Where Violence Cannot." *War on the Rocks*. <http://warontherocks.com/2014/12/can-political-struggle-against-isil-succeed-where-violence-cannot/>.

localized nonviolent action in ISIS-controlled parts of Syria and Iraq be supported and scaled?¹⁶

Sharp's consent theory of power has been critiqued for downplaying structural realities that shape individuals' behaviors and focusing instead on the psychological processes that drive individual level obedience. Critics contend that obedience is not as voluntary as the consent theory of power would suggest - that it is instead the only option for citizens whose behaviors and agency are constrained by the power asymmetries inherent in social systems like patriarchy, capitalism and bureaucratic hierarchies (Martin, 1989).¹⁷

Indeed, one could assert that accounts of civilian behavior under ISIS are similarly downplaying structural factors. Arguments in this vein would suggest that those obeying ISIS' dictates in Iraq and Syria are hardly doing so voluntarily: they are being terrorized into submission. While true in many respects, terror-based fear does not explain ISIS' ability to recruit foreign fighters or keep a state functional. And it doesn't mean that the group is not vulnerable to organized political struggle. The next section will apply Sharp's six sources of power to ISIS and suggest ways they could they be severed through civil resistance (Sharp, 2013: 5-6).¹⁸

Authority, or perceived legitimacy

Authority, or perceived legitimacy, is the quality that leads people to voluntarily obey commands, accept decisions, accede to requests, or follow suggestions. It is the perceived right to command or direct the actions of others.

¹⁶ For a discussion on scaling up support for localized, nonviolent action, see: Stephan, Maria J. April 2015. "Resisting ISIS." *Sojourners*. <https://sojo.net/magazine/april-2015/resisting-isis>.

¹⁷ Martin, Brian. 1989. "Gene Sharp's Theory of Power." *Journal of Peace Research*, 26.2. <http://www.bmartin.cc/pubs/89jpr.html>.

¹⁸ Sharp, Gene. 2013. "How Nonviolent Struggle Works." The Albert Einstein Institution. <http://www.aeinstein.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/How-Nonviolent-Struggle-Works.pdf>. P. 5-6.

ISIS' ideology is coherent and its vision of an alternative religio-political reality is compelling to many Arabs and Muslims disillusioned with the status quo. This particular theology, which acknowledges ISIS leader Abu Bakir al Baghdadi as the eighth caliph and commander of all Muslims, and orders all Muslims to both accept his dictates and to struggle for the caliph, is defended by a cadre of Islamic scholars and sophisticated information and propaganda effort (Dettmer, 2014).¹⁹

Simply declaring ISIS “un-Islamic” is unlikely to make much headway, given the amount of resources the organization is dedicating to propagating its vision of Islamic jurisprudence. Instead Islamic scholars, both Sunni and Shia, who are well versed in Koranic text could offer pointed renunciations of ISIS' religious interpretations. In addition, ISIS recruits and their families, who have grown disillusioned living under ISIS's rule, could act as powerful counter-voices to the righteous narrative put forward by ISIS.

The number of disenchanted ISIS defectors is growing as their battlefield experiences are not living up to expectations.²⁰ Amplifying these voices and their stories – through supporting and coordinating a united hashtag campaign on Twitter, for example – could prove a more fruitful course of action for Western governments that have attempted to create and propagate their own counter-narratives. Digital resistance that enables and empowers credible Arab and Muslim voices should be part of any counter-ISIS strategy.

Humor as Critical Counter-ISIS Weapon

Humor and satire, which have served an important role in Arab culture going all the way back to its ancient poetry, are among the most powerful ways to undermine ISIS's legitimacy. A growing body of literature

¹⁹ Dettmer, Jamie. July 9, 2014. “Al Qaeda to ISIS: Get Off My Lawn – The Theological Debate Behind the Caliphate.” *The Daily Beast*. <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/07/09/al-qaeda-to-isis-get-off-my-lawn-the-theological-debate-behind-the-caliphate.html>.

²⁰ De Fraytas-Tamura, Kimiko. September 20, 2015. “ISIS Defectors Reveal Disillusionment,” *New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/21/world/europe/isis-defectors-reveal-disillusionment.html?_r=0.

highlights the potential utility of humor when it is integrated into strategic, nonviolent struggles. Drawing on theories of both nonviolent action and humor, researchers and practitioners have shown that humor has been successfully employed in nonviolent resistance campaigns in Serbia, Norway and a number of other locales.

Humor allows resisters to manipulate uncertainties and cognitive incongruities, enabling them to undermine an oppressor in a manner that is less confrontational than other tactics like protests or street demonstrations. In other words, humor allows movement participants to communicate serious messages under a façade of innocence that makes their actions less openly threatening to the opposition (Sørensen, 2008: 171).²¹ Humor can also play a role in creating dilemma actions for opposition members, in building movement solidarity, and in reliving intramovement stress (Sørensen, 2008; Sørensen and Martin, 2014; Hastings, 2014).²² In areas under extremely oppressive ISIS control, humor is one of the main tools that activists have at their disposal. As revolting as ISIS practices are, satire developed by popular Arab and Muslim artists and media personalities targeting the hypocrisy and absurdity of ISIS tyranny can help lower fear barriers while poking holes in ISIS's claims to authority.

In Raqqa, the first city liberated from regime control in northeastern Syria, which was later taken over by ISIS and now serves as the group's de facto capital, humor has become a staple of anti-ISIS resistance. The Raqqa is Being Silently Slaughtered campaign, launched in June 2014, was one of the first activities to use verified reporting of ISIS activities, combined with humor, to deride the group's ideology and brutality (Van Langendonck, 2015).²³ The campaign, which is based in Turkey but relies

²¹ Sørensen, Majken Jul. "Humor as a Serious Strategy of Nonviolent Resistance to Oppression." *Peace & Change*, 33.2: 167-190.

²² Sørensen, "Humor as a Serious Strategy;" Sørensen, Majken Jul and Brian Martin. 2014. "The Dilemma Action: Analysis of an Activist Technique." *Peace & Change*, 39.1: 73-100; Hastings, Tom H. 2014. *A New Era of Nonviolence: The Power of Civil Society Over War*. McFarland. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland.

²³ Van Langendonck, Gert. July 8, 2015. "For Syrian Activist Group, Resisting the Islamic State isn't about Making War." *McClatchy DC*. <http://www.mcclatchydc.com/news/nation-world/world/middle-east/article26745517.html>

on a group of activist-informants inside Raqqa, now has over 25,000 Facebook and 10,000 Twitter followers. As one of the campaign leaders, 29-year old Mohammad Khedhr, pointed out, “Humor can be a powerful weapon. Daash [ISIS] rules through fear. If we can make people laugh at them we break through the fear barrier” (Ibid.).²⁴

Meanwhile, the northern Idlib (Syria) town of Kafr Nabl has won international acclaim for its vibrant self-organization and use of humor targeting ISIS, the regime, regional actors and the international community (Abdelaziz, 2013).²⁵ Every Friday, village members rally around a new banner, written in Arabic and English, critiquing some aspect of the revolution, including ISIS tyranny, while showcasing community solidarity and resilience. ISIS has failed to establish a foothold in Kafr Nabl.

In response to ISIS’s campaign of terror, television networks throughout the Middle East, including Iraq, have broadcast animation and comedy to ridicule the group’s radical views. “Loony Tunes” style cartoons have derided the group’s primitive ideology and animated contradictions in their radical philosophy (Hall, 2014).²⁶ Social media, in facilitating the quick dissemination of information across geographical barriers, has also played a role in nonviolent resistance to heavy handed rule in ISIS-held territories. A new Twitter account mocking the organization, called “ISIS Karaoke”, has gone viral (Kesvani, 2015).²⁷ The account takes photos from ISIS propaganda videos, and then captions them with lyrics of famous pop artists, including Beyoncé and Britney Spears.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Abdelaziz, Salma. October 24, 2013. “In Northern Syria, Rebels Use Satire as a Weapon.” *CNN*. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/10/22/world/syria-war-satire/>.

²⁶ Hall, John. September 1, 2014. “ISIS Jihadis Blowing Themselves Up and Rejecting Radio as Un-Islamic – Welcome to Iraqi TV’s Cartoon Satire on Terror.” *Daily Mail*. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2739534/ISIS-jihadis-blowing-rejecting-radio-Islamic-welcome-Iraqi-TVs-cartoon-satire-terror.html>.

²⁷ Kesvani, Hussein. August 24, 2015. “This Twitter Account is Hilariously Mocking ISIS with Popular Karaoke Songs.” *BuzzFeed News*. <http://www.buzzfeed.com/husseinkesvani/isis-karaoke-twitter-account#.jsr036qLx>.

Personnel

Personnel are the people who obey, cooperate with, or give assistance to the powerholders. This includes people working within the ruling authority and allied institutions, as well as cooperating persons in the general population.

ISIS didn't take over large swaths of Iraq and Syria without the active and passive support of many people. In Iraq, ISIS exploited widespread anger targeting the government of former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and the Shi'a-dominated Iraqi security forces to rally fighters and supporters (Sergie et al., 2015).²⁸ Initially, in some places ISIS fighters, backed by Sunni tribal leaders and others, were greeted as liberators. In Syria, ISIS took advantage of the power vacuum in territory cleared of Assad regime forces, including power rivalries between various opposition groups, to establish control of the territory (Lister, 2014).²⁹

ISIS relies on the skills and resources of imams and Islamic legal scholars, engineers, tax collectors, bankers, teachers, trigger-pullers, farmers, truck and taxi drivers, oil workers, recruiters, service providers,

²⁸ The Council on Foreign Relations produced a comprehensive overview of the history of Shia-Sunni Sectarianism in the Middle East. The overview explains the way in which sectarianism has contributed to violence in the region, and the way in which it has contributed to the rise of ISIS. For further information, see: Sergie, Mohammed Aly et al. August 2015. "The Sunni-Shia Divide." The Council on Foreign Relations. http://www.cfr.org/peace-conflict-and-human-rights/sunni-shia-divide/p33176#!/?cid=otr-marketing_url-sunni_shia_infoguide#resources.

²⁹ In late 2014, the Brookings Institute released a report profiling the Islamic State. A section of the report was dedicated to examining the infrastructure and services that exist in areas under the control of ISIS. The organization has established large and complex educational, health, transportation, and other systems that depend upon the services of the individuals listed above. The participation of not just fighters but of individuals that can fill roles similar to those of civil servants and small business owners are key factors in ISIS's ability to meet the needs of populations in these areas. For a description of ISIS governance, see: Lister, Charles. December 2014. "Profiling the Islamic State." The Brookings Institute. http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Research/Files/Reports/2014/11/profiling-islamic-state-lister/en_web_listier.pdf?la=en.

tribal leaders and wide array of other societal groups to exert control and influence (Ibid.: 25-29).³⁰ Members of these groups are not equally loyal to ISIS. One of ISIS's greatest vulnerabilities is its ability to provide reliable, good-enough governance to those under its control for an extended period of time. Disruptions in service delivery, joblessness, and inflation are as problematic for ISIS as they are for state actors.

There have been documented cases of popular challenges to ISIS policies and practices. In Mosul, Iraq, a city overrun by ISIS in July 2014, there have been a number of isolated acts of civil resistance. In July 2014, after a prominent imam and 33 followers refused to pledge allegiance to ISIS leader al Baghdadi, a large following of the imam's supporters marched to the mosque where he preached to demonstrate solidarity. ISIS detained some of the protestors but didn't kill any of the religious leaders, who had large followings. That same month, when an ISIS battalion charged with demolishing mosques and other heritage sites deemed heretical threatened to explode the Crooked Minaret, residents living nearby formed a human chain to protect it.³¹ They warned the fighters that they would have to kill them first if they wanted to destroy the mosque. The militants backed down and left.

In Syria, nonviolent resistance challenging ISIS began as early as July 2013 in Raqqa, the first city liberated from regime forces. After ISIS began to establish a presence there, a Muslim schoolteacher named Soaad Nofel began marching daily to ISIS headquarters carrying a cardboard sign with messages challenging the behaviors of ISIS members as un-Islamic and demanding the release of nonviolent activists whom it had kidnapped. She was joined by hundreds of other protestors and a small number of activists were released (Taleb, 2015).³² A year later, the

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ The attempted destruction on the Crooked Minaret in Mosul was part of a larger ISIS campaign to destroy significant cultural sights in areas under the organizations control. For a discussion of what motivates this campaign and a list of impacted historical sights, see: Cullinane, Susannah, Hamdi Alkhshali and Mohammed Twfeeq. April 13, 2015. "Tracking a Trail of Historical Destruction. ISIS Trumpets Destruction of Nimrud. *CNN*. <http://www.cnn.com/2015/03/09/world/iraq-isis-heritage/>.

³² Taleb, Julia. August 22, 2014. "From Assad to ISIS: A Tale of Syrian Resis-

Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently campaign attracted thousands of on-line followers. ISIS nevertheless maintains a firm grip on the city. Raqqa activists have since acknowledged that their failure to wage an organized challenge to ISIS earlier helped the group anchor its presence there.

While mass protests are highly risky under ISIS, there are other tactics that those living under ISIS control could employ to slow or thwart the smooth functioning of ISIS operations. Deliberate under-performance in ISIS administration, sharing of important documents and information to activists and outside supporters, nonviolent sabotage of oil production facilities and other infrastructure – these are examples of nonviolent action that could weaken ISIS's grip on power. Yet even these more quiet, nuanced actions are fraught with risk.

ISIS's support base extends far beyond Syria and Iraq. Its military wing is reinforced by at least 20,000 foreign fighters from Chechnya, North Africa, Europe, North America, and even Asia (“Jihadi Trails”).³³ According to experts, it is not the graphic videos of beheadings that are attracting recruits (Stern, 2015).³⁴ Rather, it is the persistent on and offline relationship building that ISIS recruiters are using to first win people to the cause, and then lure them to the battlefield. For young Muslim men (and women) who are socially, politically, and economically marginalized in their home countries, the prospect of an exciting experience fighting for a presumably noble cause is highly attractive.

In instances where a powerholders' sources of power range beyond the immediate domestic context, scholars have found that effective civil resistance requires extending the nonviolent battlefield.³⁵ One example

tance.” Waging Nonviolence. <http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/assad-isis-tale-resistance/>.

³³ “Jihadi Trails: The Circuitous Routes Foreigners Take to Syria and Iraq.” Edited by Crowley, John and Tom Mudd. *Wall Street Journal*. <http://graphics.wsj.com/jihadi-trails/?mod=e2tw>.

³⁴ Stern, Jessica and J.M. Berger. March 8, 2015. “ISIS and the Foreign-Fighter Phenomenon.” *The Atlantic*. <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/03/isis-and-the-foreign-fighter-problem/387166/>.

³⁵ Stephan, Maria. Summer 2006. “Fighting for Statehood: The Role of Civilian-Based Resistance in the East Timorese, Palestinian, and Kosovo Albanian

of this in the ISIS context is disrupting the relationship between ISIS recruiters and potential recruits. Hacktivists from groups like Anonymous are already subverting ISIS's social media communications.³⁶ Counter-recruitment efforts involving organized action by those Muslims who have defected from ISIS and by popular religious and entertainment personalities could help slow the steady supply of manpower to ISIS.

Skills and knowledge.

This section refers to the availability of needed skills, knowledge, and talents among those persons cooperating with power-holders.

Besides the trigger-pullers and trained jihadis, ISIS relies on a network of support that includes religious scholars and imams, engineers and laborers, bankers, drivers, online recruiters, service administrators, tax collectors, bureaucrats, and media/communications practitioners (Lister, 2014: 25-29).³⁷ ISIS will only be able to create and sustain a functioning state if these groups provide the knowledge and know-how required to collect taxes, produce ISIS "passports," assess and implement infrastructure projects, collect traffic tickets, deliver medical care, run the schools, provide licenses, promulgate religious edicts, and produce propaganda for traditional and social media.

Each of these groups present vulnerabilities for ISIS if some of their members either fail to perform as they are expected to, or else begin to actively (though likely quietly) disobey. Organized disruption of ISIS administrative and governance functions could assume a variety of different forms. Go-slow tactics, prolonged "sickness", and the delivery of non-ISIS religious and educational materials to underground schools, while obviously not without risk, could be used to slow or thwart ISIS activities.

Self-Determination Movements." *The Fletcher Forum*. Volume 30, Issue 2.

³⁶ For an overview of the Anonymous campaign against ISIS, see: Viebeck, Elise. February 12, 2015. "Anarchist Hackers Start Cyber War with ISIS." The Hill. <http://thehill.com/policy/cybersecurity/232583-anarchist-hackers-go-to-cyber-war-with-isis>.

³⁷ Lister, "Profiling the Islamic State" 25-29.

Noncooperation by the business community could be potentially consequential, though difficult to organize. In the northern Syrian town of Menbej, in Aleppo province, the business community closed their shops in a general strike against ISIS in May 2014. ISIS cracked down on the shop owners and they remained defiant, albeit for a short time (Taleb, 2015).³⁸ Consumer boycotts targeting businesses and business leaders known to be selling ISIS food stuffs, machine parts, and infrastructure materials could be another effective form of extending the nonviolent battlefield.

Material resources

This is the control of money, land, computers, communications, transportation, natural resources, etc., which power-holders can use for their own purposes.

ISIS controls a sizeable amount of territory and is organized as a highly efficient company, whose operations are fueled through a self-financing business worth an estimated \$2 billion (Gray, 2014).³⁹

The organization captured US-made tanks and advanced weapons systems from Iraqi troops when they overran Mosul last July. While the sale of oil from ISIS-controlled parts of Iraq and Syria was once a major source of revenue for the organization, as oil pipelines and extraction sites have been increasingly targeted by US-led military strikes, the organization has had to raise funds elsewhere. According to the New York Times, ISIS relies on extortion and taxation, taking in more than \$1 million per day, to fund its jihadist activities (Almukhtar, 2015).⁴⁰ The organization taxes salaries of Iraqi government employees along with the contracts and revenue of companies.

³⁸ Taleb, “From Assad to ISIS.”

³⁹ Gray, John. July 11, 2014. “A Point of View: ISIS and What it Means to be Modern.” *BBC*. <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-28246732>.

⁴⁰ Almukhtar, Sarah. May 19, 2015. “ISIS Finances are Strong.” *The New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/05/19/world/middleeast/isis-finances.html?_r=0.

ISIS benefits from an extensive communications and service-delivery infrastructure to be able to provide basic governance in the areas it controls (Lister, 2014: 25-29).⁴¹

Preventative action targeting communities in territories abutting or close to ISIS-controlled parts of Iraq and Syria is another way to both deter ISIS activities and deny the organization a steady supply of material resources. Studies of nonviolent action targeting non-state armed groups reveal that those communities in places like the Philippines, Columbia, and Syria boasting the highest degree of self-organization were the most capable of “nudging” these armed groups while remaining resilient to violence. Civilian deaths were lower in places that had high concentrations of autonomous organizations (Kaplan, 2013).⁴²

This finding suggests that supporting the ability of local communities to organize across sectarian divisions would challenge a key facet of ISIS strategy and help strengthen them in the event of a future ISIS attack. In Iraq, active shuttle diplomacy by a group of mediators from the Iraqi Facilitators Network helped prevent a sectarian-based spiraling of violence following the massacre, by ISIS, of 1700 Shi’a Iraqi air force cadets at Camp Speicher near the city of Tikrit in July 2014. The Iraqi mediators brought Sunni and Shi’a sheikhs and tribal elders together to denounce the killings, hold the perpetrators accountable, and to condemn further violence.⁴³ In Syria, Local Coordination Committees (LCCs) and local councils in those parts of Syria no longer controlled by government forces may be in the best position to organize preventatively.

⁴¹ Lister, “Profiling the Islamic State,” 25-29.

⁴² For example, see Kaplan, Oliver. 2013. “Nudging Armed Groups: How Civilians Transmit Norms of Protection.” *Stability: International Journal of Security and Development*, 2.3.

⁴³ Gienger, Viola. July 16 2015. “In the Shadow of a Massacre, a Peaceful Return in Iraq,” The Olive Branch. <http://www.usip.org/publications/2015/07/16/in-the-shadow-of-massacre-peaceful-return-in-iraq-part-i>.

Intangible factors

These are psychological, cultural, and ideological factors that promote obedience to and cooperation with power-holders. They may include habits, traditions, religious beliefs, language conventions, a sense of belonging, presence or absence of a common faith, ideology, or sense of mission.

ISIS is tapping into a number of intangibles – notably a desire for identity, belonging, and participation in a meaningful enterprise – to attract adherents and fighters. These elements, combined with ISIS’s coherent religious and political ideology, help to explain the group’s allure. ISIS promises excitement, adventure, and a glorious afterlife to those who join its ranks. For alienated Muslim youth in particular, the prospect of joining a seemingly powerful, mission-focused organization holds great appeal. Even some Muslim women, facing family and societal pressures and increasingly enabled by social media, are responding to ISIS’s call for active participation in the larger-than-life struggle of reconstructing a caliphate.⁴⁴

Undermining ISIS’s claim to be providing an honorable, dignified lifestyle to devout Muslims with poignant testimonials by ISIS defectors, their families, respected imams, and prominent cultural figures is only part of the battle. A longer-term effort needs to focus on developing alternative pathways to social and political participation for Muslim youth, in both the democracies and non-democratic states where ISIS messaging is resonating. While there is no simple answer to meaningful integration in European societies, it is difficult to imagine ISIS being nipped in the bud without a targeted social movement addressing the social, political, and economic malaise faced by communities vulnerable to ISIS recruitment.

Dissolving the roots of ISIS terrorism requires empowering people with the tools and narratives to challenge the injustices that give rise to violent extremism.⁴⁵ Disempowered youth need to be shown alterna-

⁴⁴ Brown, Katherine. October 6, 2014. “Analysis: Why Western Women are joining ISIS.” *BBC News*. <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-29507410>.

⁴⁵ DuVall, Jack and Hardy Merriman. “Dissolving Terrorism at its Roots.” In Ralph Summy and Senthil Ram (eds.), *Nonviolence: An Alternative for Countering*

tive means to achieve social justice and political inclusion that involves fighting with different weapons. Using the rich history of Muslim and Arab-led nonviolent struggles⁴⁶ as a cultural referent, dramatizing these struggles and their leaders using popular media and educational tools, needs to be part of a longer-term solution to extremism.

Sanctions

This is punishment of those who disobey, typically by seizure of assets, imprisonment, or execution.

ISIS is infamous for its use of sanctions, often brutal, to terrorize the populations under their control and to deter dissent. Making ISIS's use of corporal punishment backfire, politically, would be the goal of any potential nonviolent action. According to Brian Martin, there are two conditions for "backfire". First, an action is perceived as unjust, unfair, excessive or disproportional. Second, information about the action is communicated to relevant audiences.⁴⁷

Certain ISIS actions have provoked counter-mobilization and resistance by those living under their control. For example, there have been isolated instances of ISIS releasing political prisoners in response to organized protests by women and others. While it is unlikely that core members of ISIS's punishment brigades will succumb to civic pressure, it is not unthinkable for lower-ranking foot soldiers to begin to question orders. The more organized and unified the community is, the greater the chance that such questioning, and potentially changed behavior, would occur.

Indirect influence through third parties, including counter-recruit-

Global Terror(ism), Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers, 2007.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Stephan, Maria J. (ed) *Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization and Governance in the Middle East*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009; Zunes, Stephen. "Nonviolent Resistance in the Islamic World," *Nonviolent Activist*. January-February 2002. <http://www.warresisters.org/nva/nva0102-1.htm>.

⁴⁷ Martin, Brian. "From political jiu-jitsu to the backfire dynamic: how repression can promote mobilization". In Kurt Schock (ed.), *Civil Resistance: Comparative Perspectives on Nonviolent Struggle* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), pp. 145-167

ers and popular personalities, can help expose the moral depravity of ISIS's use of sanctions. The more the organization relies on brutality (vice forms of cooptation) to rule over populations, the more vulnerable it is to other forms of non-cooperation. A trans-media campaign that exposes the moral hypocrisy of ISIS actions could help trigger backfire amongst Arab and Muslim populations. Beyond that, supporting victims of ISIS rape, torture, and imprisonment with psycho-social aid is critical to helping these individuals re-enter society.

Resisting Totalitarianism

ISIS keeps its grip on power by inserting itself in all aspects of societal life and by destroying any sort of autonomous political action. In this way, ISIS exhibits features of both a totalitarian regime and a socio-religious movement. As one analyst noted, “There’s nothing mediaeval about this mix of ruthless business enterprise, well-publicized savagery and transnational crime” (Gray, 2014).⁴⁸

German philosopher Hannah Arendt, in her compelling treatise on totalitarianism, described how these regimes combine ideological indoctrination, terror, and a sophisticated bureaucracy to maintain total domination over populations. Focusing on Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, Arendt described how totalitarian regimes destroy the public realm of politics and collective action, leaving victims isolated and atomized (de Waal, 2012: 132-33).⁴⁹ In his 2008 book *Hannah Arendt’s Response to the Crisis of Her Times*, Professor Anthony Court draws on the philosopher’s text and explains:

Wherever totalitarian regimes come into being they obliterate social, legal and political traditions, evolving new political institutions in accordance with ‘a system of values so radically different from all others, that none of our traditional legal, moral, or common sense utilitarian

⁴⁸ Gray, “A Point of View.”

⁴⁹ de Waal, Tamar. 2012. “Personal Responsibility Under Totalitarian Regimes: An Analysis of Hannah Arendt’s Philosophy on the Prevention of Evildoing and Criminal Liability for International Crime.” *Amsterdam Law Forum*. <http://amsterdamlawforum.org/article/viewFile/256/444>.

categories could any longer help us to come to terms with, or judge, or predict their course of action'... Total domination, as distinct from despotic or tyrannical forms of political oppression, rests on the perverse but 'seemingly unanswerable' claim that... far from being 'lawless', it goes to the source of authority from which positive laws received their ultimate legitimation, that far from being arbitrary it is more obedient to these supra-human forces than any government ever was before (2008: 165).⁵⁰

Totalitarian movements seek to create isolated individuals who pledge allegiance to rigid ideologies, which are strictly closed systems of thought that exploit history and justify their policies. They set up bureaucratic infrastructure that turn people into administrative cogs and deploy terror to dis-incentivize any form of challenge or dissent.

Those who aspire to total domination must liquidate all spontaneity, such as mere existence of individuality will always engender, and track it down in its most private forms, regardless of how un-political and harmless these may seem (Arendt, 1973: 456).

As ISIS grew in power inside Syria, it first took on the other armed groups fighting against the Assad regime, including the Free Syrian Army (FSA). After killing off some competitors and co-opting others, ISIS took over entire cities, like Raqqa, through fatwas, or Islamic dictates given by religious authority. The organization then systematically cracked down on autonomous activity. Suad Nofel, who led the nonviolent protests against ISIS in Raqqa, noted that ISIS broke down the doors to her women's organization, "Jina," in order to prevent any civil gathering or organization that wasn't under its control.

Arendt's ruminations about totalitarianism and its vulnerabilities are instructive in terms of possible civil resistance responses to ISIS. As Anthony Court wrote, once again drawing upon Arendt's own words, '[t]he greatest threat to totalitarian rule, and the main target of total terror, is human spontaneity or 'man's power to begin something new out of

⁵⁰ Court drew from the 1979 version of Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*.

his own resources, something that cannot be explained on the basis of reactions to environment and events' (2008: 142).

Arendt recognized that human agency and eruptions of spontaneous political action are threatening to totalitarian regimes. This type of political action is extremely difficult in full-blown totalitarian dictatorships. However, it is not unimaginable. We have seen spontaneous outbursts of protest activity lead to small victories in ISIS-controlled parts of Iraq and Syria. These incidents should be further studied and support models developed based on an analysis of what allowed the local communities to exert effective leverage over ISIS.

Conclusion: Supporting autonomous civic action

If ISIS perpetuates its totalitarian-esque control by blocking any sort of autonomous collective action, then the civil resistance antidote is to support self-organization in various forms. An organized population that demonstrates the ability and inclination to act independently of ISIS dictates is a threat to that organization. Local organization can take different forms – protests and direct confrontations with ISIS are only two options and may be inappropriate in many cases.

Helping Syrians and Iraqis create parallel structures and institutions is how outsiders - governments and international non-governmental organizations - can support community resiliency and subtle forms of non-cooperation with ISIS. Practically, this entails providing educational materials and medical supplies to Iraqi and Syrian men and women who may be leading underground schools and medical clinics. It means offering trauma support to those who have been victimized by ISIS and are struggling to re-enter normal life. It means supporting alternative media and communication channels and getting non-ISIS news and information into the territories it controls and in adjacent territories. This entails supporting authentic local and regional voices with the cultural heft and legitimacy to challenge the absurdity of ISIS tyranny.

Attempting to dismantle ISIS without addressing the severe governance failures and venal corruption that fueled its rise is futile. The civil war in Syria is the greatest humanitarian catastrophe of our time. The

displacement, destruction, and despair resulting from the war, spurred on by dictatorial criminality and regional proxy conflicts, gave rise to ISIS in Syria and are sustaining its presence there. A political solution to the Syrian civil war that includes a regional accord involving Iran and Saudi Arabia, and a greater investment in those Syrian individuals and organizations that are capable of mediating across conflict lines, may be the only way to eliminate ISIS in the long term. In addition, strengthening inclusive, representative governance in Iraq, Libya, Tunisia and other countries that have spawned ISIS recruits will help dry up the roots of violent extremism.

In both the short and long terms, the role of organized civilians in challenging extremist, totalitarian ideology and subverting its power sources is neither negligible nor insignificant. Countering extremist narratives by amplifying local and regional voices capable of making a compelling religious, social and cultural case against ISIS is an important role for outside actors. Counter-narratives, in turn, should be backed by organized collective action and support for autonomous political, economic, and social activities. Investing in the strengthening of this type of people power is relevant not only for the fight against ISIS, but for the injustices and governance failures that catapulted its rapid spread.

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CLASSIC BOOK REVIEW:

Franz Fanon; The Wretched of the Earth

Fanon published his most famous text, *The Wretched of the Earth*, in 1961, coincidentally the year the Apartheid republic came into being. It is appropriate to review Fanon now, as he has recently seen a resurgence of popularity in South Africa. Fanon's analysis of the post-colonial elite and the national bourgeoisie are being taken very seriously, not only by a group of left academics, but by populist political forces, in particular the Economic Freedom Fighters. As the EFF takes inspiration from Fanon's writings, and attempts – not always accurately – to apply his analysis to the South African context – there is a particularly good reason to re-read Fanon and see what lessons can be learnt from his seminal writing on anti-colonial resistance.

Another good reason to reassess Fanon is the resurgence of scholarship drawing on Fanon to explain the upsurge in popular protest against the ANC government (itself an anticolonial liberation movement), and the rise of new social movements in what is understood to be a 'neocolonial context' characterised by a 'brutally corrupt' comprador elite managing the state on behalf of international capital. 'White left' academics including Richard Pithouse, Michael Neocosmos and Peter Alexander look to the marginalised *lumpenproletariat* for a new 'rebellion of the poor', and have established a Fanon reading group based at Rhodes University in Grahamstown (see <http://readingfanon.blogspot.com/2011/08/rebellion-of-poor-south-africas-service.html>). A new generation of black academics, including Raymond Nyapokoto and Kayode Adesemowo, have also embraced Fanon and explore his writings on emancipatory politics from a black consciousness perspective. Dismissive of liberal democracy and disappointed with the profound and persistent inequality in South African society, they understand black South Africans to still be oppressed and living in a 'zone of nonbeing'. Like the EFF, they look to Fanon for both analyses of neo-colonialism, and strategies for change.

For this new journal, on resistance studies, Fanon has a much broader significance. Historically, he has inspired two generations (at

least) of movements involved in resistance to colonial rule and psychological oppression. Of particular importance, and particularly controversial, are his writings on violence and related strategies of resistance to colonial oppression, as articulated in the first essay in *The Wretched of the Earth*, 'On Violence':

The colonized subject discovers reality and transforms it through his praxis, his deployment of violence and his agenda for liberation”(24)¹

The question is whether *The Wretched of the Earth* – written in the context of the extreme violence of Algerian colonial rule and anti-colonial war of liberation - still resonates, and if so, what its relevance is to current day resistance, to the many struggles of ordinary people around the world, in post-colonial and other contexts. As this is a journal of resistance studies, this is the focus of this review: it does not purport to be a review of Fanon's philosophy nor of his body of work. It is a reflection on what *The Wretched of the Earth* says about strategies of resistance, what resonance they have in the present, and nothing more.

For this review, I read the 2004 version of *The Wretched of the Earth*, which begins with a beautiful and incisive essay, 'Framing Fanon', by Homi K Bhabha. Bhabha writes that “Fanon, the phantom of terror, might be only the most intimate, if intimidating, poet of the vicissitudes of violence. But poetic justice can be questionable even when it is exercised on behalf of the wretched of the earth” (11). Bhabha's foreword to this the edition, is worth reading on its own. However, there is no pain in re-reading Fanon's collection of essays; as evocatively and dramatically written as they are, they are as engaging as when first published as a collection in 1961.

The nature of colonial oppression

Determining an effective strategy of resistance depends on a clear understanding of the oppressor and a correct analysis of the context of resistance to oppression. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon describes in beautiful but bitter language the segregation of colonial society:

¹ As I read this edition in an electronic (kindle) version, the reference in brackets is not to a page number but to the % of the text indicated in the electronic publication.

The colonist's sector is built to last, all stone and steel. It's a sector of lights and paved roads, where the trash cans constantly overflow with strange and wonderful garbage, undreamed of leftovers....the colonist's sector is a sated, sluggish sector, its belly is permanently full of good things.....the colonized's sector....is a disreputable place inhabited by disreputable people (19)

Beyond the description of the reality of colonial oppression, Fanon has great insight into the structure of colonial society, and the mechanisms of control and division. From the understanding of torture and other brutal methods used by the colonial security forces to contain resistance; to the more subtle instruments of Western education, religion and culture,

The Church in the colonies....does not call the colonized to the ways of God, but to the ways of the white man, to the ways of the master, the ways of the oppressor (20)

Fanon accurately describes the 'pillars of support' of colonial society. The co-optation of collaborators, the fomenting of ethnic divisions – all these strategies of the colonial oppressor are understood and made clear.

But what is the strategy of resistance to oppression? It is to 'eject the colonist outright from the picture' (20). Because the 'government's agent uses a language of pure violence' (19) does it make sense to resist with pure violence? Fanon's advocacy of violence is not primarily a strategic one: it is a psychological one.

The vicissitudes of violence:

In his famous essay *On Violence*, Fanon's starting point is that, given the violence of colonial rule, 'decolonization is always a violent event'. However, his analysis is not that armed struggle is inevitable, nor that some wars are just, or that the violence of the oppressed is inherently defensive – all common justifications for the use of violence. Instead, Fanon argues positively that the oppressed are liberated through this violence. It is the process of armed struggle itself, and the participation of the colonized subject in these acts of violence that this struggle entails,

that creates a 'new man' freed from the colonized's mind-set of 'submission and inhibition'(19). Bhabha thus understands Fanonian violence as "a search for human agency in the midst of the agony of oppression" (9); and Jean-Paul Sartre, who wrote the preface to the 1961 edition, understands Fanonian violence as something that "draws the fiery first breath of human freedom" (9). Sartre justifies his condoning of Fanon's notion by dismissing nonviolence as ethically impossible: "even your nonviolent thoughts are a condition born of age-old oppression" (9).

Fanon is not ignorant of other methods of struggle, and in some writing he does acknowledge the importance of building trade unions and other mass movements around local demands. He notes that the 'reformist' nationalist movement usually uses 'extremely peaceful methods: organizing work stoppages in the few factories located in the towns, mass demonstrations to cheer a leader, and a boycott of the buses or imported commodities.' He understands that these methods of struggle do 'put pressure on the colonial authorities'; yet he dismisses them as a strategy of 'containment' in that they 'also allow the people to let off steam'(26). He is explicit that mass mobilisation on its own will not achieve the desired change; the elite would like to see this, but

at the moment of truth – for them, the lie – they brandish the threat of mass mobilisation as a decisive weapon that would as by magic put 'an end to the colonial regime'(26).

For Fanon, it is only the armed struggle which can lead to liberation.

Fanon outlines the trajectory of many anti-colonial struggles; some of them lead to compromise, while others lead to liberation. In the early stages, there is usually a vague national framework and a set of minimum demands, but no clarity on the social and economic agenda. The hopes of the people are raised, (27); and indeed, there is sometimes a contained process of decolonization. In other contexts, there is harsh repression of mass mobilisation, with the arrest of nationalist leaders – but "far from breaking the momentum, repression intensifies the progress made by the national consciousness" (28). Here Fanon shows a clear understanding of the concept of 'backfire' as outlined by Brian Martin as a key strategy of nonviolent movements; the idea that the violence of the oppressor

'backfires' against him as widespread sympathy for the movement and international opprobrium for the oppressor grow, is described in many anti-colonial contexts; the one most familiar to South Africans is the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. However, instead of using the international condemnation of state brutality to increase the pressure on the oppressive regime, as Martin would advocate, Fanon argues that this is the 'point of no return' which justifies the use of violence, and necessitates armed struggle: "The existence of an armed struggle is indicative that the people are determined to put their faith only in violent methods" (31)

For Fanon, though, this use of violence is not a strategic response to an intransigent opponent, who 'understands nothing but the language of violence'. For Fanon, violence is a process of psychological liberation from oppression; in the process of the liberation struggle, violence and work merge into one, offering purpose to life:

"For the colonized, this violence represents the absolute praxis. The militant therefore is one who works...The group requires each individual to have performed an irreversible act" (31) "To work means to work towards the death of the colonist" (31) "The colonized man liberates himself in and through violence. This praxis enlightens the militant because it shows him the means and the end" (31).

The explicit call to violence can at a stretch of the imagination be regarded as metaphorical; that when Fanon writes that "The work of the colonized is to imagine every possible method for annihilating the colonist" (33) he does not literally mean annihilating all colonists, but the destruction of the colonial regime or administration; when he writes that "for the colonized, life can only materialise from the rotting cadaver of the colonist" (33) he does not advocate the killing of human beings but the metaphorical corpse of the colonial state. However generously one interprets Fanon's evocative and provocative writing, and whatever impact this has on the colonists, there is no doubt that Fanon understands this as an important and necessary process for the colonized to go through in order to achieve liberation:

"For the colonized, this violence is invested with positive, formative features" (33); one of these is the building of a new nation: "The armed struggle mobilizes the people, ie it pitches them in a single direction, from which there is no turning back. When it is achieved during a

war of liberation the mobilization of the masses introduces the notion of common cause, national destiny and collective history into every consciousness. Consequently, the second phase, ie nation building, is facilitated by the existence of this mortar kneaded with blood and rage” (33)

Violence in practice is ‘totalising and national’ and contributes to elimination of regionalism and tribalism; it is also, at the individual level “a cleansing force” as

It rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them and restores their self-confidence.

Perhaps even more significant, and controversial, Fanon argues that the process of armed struggle is a democratising and levelling one, as it involves the participation of all:

Even if the armed struggle has been symbolic, and even if they have been demobilized by rapid decolonization, the people have time to realize that liberation was the achievement of each and every one and no special merit should go to the leader. Violence hoists the people up to the level of the leader....When they have used violence to achieve national liberation, the masses allow nobody to come forward as ‘liberator’...enlightened by violence, the people’s consciousness rebels against any pacification.....The praxis which pitched them into a desperate man to man struggle has given the masses a ravenous taste for the intangible. Any attempt at mystification in the long term becomes virtually impossible (33)

Prefigurative strategies and emancipatory politics

Why is Fanon so determined that this revolutionary praxis must be violent? Why cannot the mobilization of the masses through other forms of struggle lead to the same outcome? Surely there are other strategies that break the psychological oppression of the oppressed, and that develop the self-confidence of the masses – in particular non-cooperation with authorities, and the creation of organs of popular power?

Fanon hints at some of these prefigurative strategies; drawing on his experience of the Algerian war of independence, he looks to liberated zones where the peasantry create a new social order. In such situations, the individualist values of Europe are replaced with the values of the collective. At local level, there are expressions of a new politics, a truly democratic politics of popular power. Fanon speaks of 'liberation at local level' as 'on every hilltop a government in miniature is formed and assumes power' (42). While his focus is on peasant struggles and rural guerrilla warfare, with a good example of this being Frelimo's liberated zones in Mozambique, there were many such instances of the formation of structures of peoples power in South Africa; many of them in urban townships, while the apartheid state still held state power through force of arms at the centre. Through this prefigurative process of gaining power at the grassroots, Fanon argues that the 'colonized intellectual' learns about the power of ordinary people:

The colonized intellectual....will also discover the strength of the village assemblies, the power of the peoples commissions and the extraordinary productiveness of neighbourhood and section committee meetings (21).

Other insights into strategies of resistance other than armed struggle are touched on by Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth*. One of these is security force defection – and the importance of trying to divide the oppressor's security forces, through challenging their loyalty to the colonial state. Fanon notes that at a certain point in the war of liberation, some soldiers desert the colonialist ranks, while

others explicitly refuse to fight against a people's freedom, are jailed and suffer for the sake of the people's right to independence.... (46).

It is a pity that he did not explore further how this could be a conscious strategy of the liberation forces.

Another interesting idea explored by Fanon is that of non-cooperation with colonial authorities. This non-cooperation takes a variety of forms. One of these is the retention of precolonial traditions or cultural practices; in South Africa, praise-singing, beer-brewing and other 'cultural practices' took on the character of resistance to authority. How-

ever, tradition changes meaning through struggle, and as the struggle intensifies, Fanon warns that “what was a technique of passive resistance may, in this phase, be radically doomed” (66). Another example given by Fanon is that ‘laziness’ of the colonized – another form of passive resistance to colonial rule: “The colonized indolence is a conscious way of sabotaging the colonial machine” (84).

In some situations, however, non-cooperation becomes a conscious strategy, and takes on the form of active resistance to colonial rule:

This is where non-cooperation or at least minimal cooperation clearly materializes” writes Fanon, and “can be applied to the colonized’s attitude towards the colonizers laws, his taxes and the colonial system (84).

Hence the refusal to pay hut and poll taxes; the extensive rent boycotts, and in its most organised form, the ‘Defiance of Unjust Laws’ campaign in South African in 1952. Fanon’s warning here is also strategic: the administration of colonial laws and taxes is not usually performed by the European colonizers, but by local collaborators (87). The relationship of the movement to those who collaborate with the authorities is another complex issue; extensively debated in South Africa, but probably relevant in many contexts of oppression.

Contradictions of nonracialism:

While Fanon’s writing on violence would seem to indicate a simplistic binary of oppressor and oppressed, of colonizer and colonized, of black and white, elsewhere he warns against such a simplistic perception of oppressor. In the process of struggle, he notes that “The species is splitting up before their very eyes” (46) as oppressors can change sides, and even “volunteer to undergo suffering, torture and death.” The problem is that these examples

defuse the overall hatred which the colonized feel towards the foreign settlers. The colonized welcome these men with open arms and in an excess of emotion tend to place absolute confidence in them (46)

– one need only remember the absolute love and admiration for Joe Slovo, a white communist, from millions of black South Africans. Through this process, some colonialists move ‘infinitely closer’ to the

nationalist struggle than ‘certain native sons’ and “The racial and racist dimension is transcended on both sides” (46). The collaboration of certain of the oppressed means that “Not every black is given a vote of confidence”, and at the same time, because some of the oppressors have changed sides, “one no longer grabs a gun or a machete every time a colonist approaches.”

What is the result? For Fanon, the clarity of consciousness gained through violence may be lost, as “Consciousness stumbles upon partial, finite and shifting truths”. This is, for Fanon and for the oppressed, “extremely difficult”; it requires leadership with “rigorous organization” as well as a certain “ideological level”(46). A strategy of inclusive nationalism could lead to a ‘new humanism’ which is premised in nonracialism and the transcendence of racial categories – but this would be in contradiction to the strategy of identifying and attacking the colonist or settler as ‘the enemy’. The latter, a more dangerous populist strategy, is the one more easily adopted by the followers of Fanon.

The other aspect of Fanon’s writings on resistance strategies that deserves mention is his focus on rural or peasant struggle; the importance of the struggle moving away from the coastal cities of the colonies, and into the interior.

In ‘Grandeur and Weakness of Sponteneity’, Fanon does acknowledge the role of labour organisations and other forms of organisation of the urban elite; he notes that “It is the repeated demonstrations for their rights and the repeated labor disputes that politicize the masses” (36). He describes the roles of union officials, students and intellectuals in the formation of nationalist parties. However, he is critical not only of the inherent weaknesses of the ‘elite’ politics of nationalist movements, but also of strategies focussed on the proletariat in a “highly industrialized capitalist society”. This is the ‘great mistake’ of the nationalist parties of the colonies: their focus on the minority rather than the peasant majority. For Fanon, “the urban proletariat is relatively privileged...in the colonized countries, the proletariat has everything to lose” (36); in the urban centres, “modernism is king” (36). Fanon therefore turns to the peasantry, the rural masses, and the marginalized shanty-town dwellers; as he argues that “political unrest in the towns will always be powerless to change and overthrow the colonial regime” and it is only the rural masses

who can secure liberation, taking back the land from foreigners through violent struggle (41).

Even when he wrote this, during the African anti-colonial wars of liberation in the 1950s, it was contested whether the revolutionary impetus would come from the peasantry, and considered highly unlikely that it would come from the lumpenproletariat. In South Africa, a peculiar context where a national bourgeoisie did emerge a hundred years ago, and the peasantry converted into a rural proletariat, it did not seem relevant even during the liberation struggle. Now, in the context of globalised struggles over land and labour, and new social movements contesting power in different sites of struggle, the idea of a revolutionary leadership coming from the peasantry is perhaps less likely than before.

Other themes, strengths and limitations of *The Wretched of the Earth*

The Wretched of the Earth is a collection of essays which deal with a range of topics related to colonial oppression; this review has focussed on the strategies of resistance, as relevant to the theme of the Journal of Resistance Studies. Fanon's classic is worth reading in its entirety, for its insights into post-colonial society, the role of trade unions, and the national question among others. He also documents, in 'Colonial War and Mental Disorders', case studies of the mental disorders of the oppressed in colonial society, detailing the effects of warfare, violence, torture, rape and post-traumatic stress on individuals caught up in the war of independence in Algeria. These fascinating but deeply disturbing case studies are counteracted by the essay 'On National Culture', wherein he gives a platform to the beautiful poetry of Keita Fodeba and others.

Ultimately, Fanon's valuable insights on colonial oppression and post-colonial society are overshadowed by the deeply problematic nature of his analysis of resistance. The most problematic aspect of this analysis is his reliance on, in fact his valorization of, violence as the only means of liberation from oppression.

Studies since the era of anti-colonial struggle in which Fanon was writing, including those of Maria Stephan, show that there is no positive correlation between the violence of the struggle and the outcome, as

Fanon liked to imagine. The disastrous civil wars in post-independence African countries, including Angola, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and currently in South Sudan, provide a strong counter-argument to Fanon's idea of a unifying national liberation being achieved through violence. Moreover, there is little evidence that armed struggle is a democratising or levelling force, as even in the most popularly-based guerrilla movements, warfare is inherently an undemocratic process and the organisation of armies is hierarchical and authoritarian.

The strategies of the Brazilian *favelas*, the Movement of landless workers (MST), the Streetnet International and the Slumdwellers International, the landless peasants of India marching across the country demanding land rights in the 'Ekta Parashad' movement – these new social movements are both inspired by, but fundamentally different in strategy, from Fanon's anti-colonial wars of liberation. What can they draw from Fanon? The idea of empowerment of the poorest of the poor through struggle; the marginalized, the landless, the slumdwellers and the *lumpen-proletariat*, taking control over their own future; the democratisation and decentralisation of the revolution; the warning of cooption by the new elite. But the notion that violence is a necessary praxis, that liberation can only be achieved through violence, is no longer – if it ever was – strategically valid. Much of Fanon's writing is in the context of anti-colonial struggle, and is limited in its nationalist focus and the focus of resistance against 'foreigners'. This is easy populism which is easily misinterpreted, and thus dangerous in misdirecting struggles for economic justice against particular racial groups or national minorities.

There are profound insights in *The Wretched of the Earth*; not least of which is the understanding of the power of the oppressed to bring about their own liberation; and that the people's revolution is an "awesome mixer and grinder" (22) which has the potential to lead to the creation of a new kind of human society. The idea of a new humanism, of emancipatory politics which come from the oppressed, has a lasting value: similar ideas from Paulo Freire saw the oppressed capable of analysing their own conditions and bringing about change in their society without help from a vanguard. As Fanon wrote, "For Europe, for ourselves and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man."

My concern is how the movements of today interpret Fanon: do the ‘subaltern, decolonizing thinkers’ have something to teach us? If so, it is not the use of liberatory violence, but the idea of people not needing a vanguard or an intellectual leadership to understand their reality and to be liberated. Perhaps it is wise to end with quote from *The Wretched of the Earth* which points to the limitations of anti-colonial independence struggles, but also points positively towards an alternative society, one which is transformed through the work of the people:

“Independence is not a magic ritual but an indispensable condition for men and women to exist in true liberation, in other words to master all the material resources necessary for a radical transformation of society” (88)

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BOOKREVIEWS

**Mary Elizabeth King: Gandhian
Nonviolent Struggle and Untouchability
in South India: The 1924-25 Vykom
Satyagraha and the Mechanisms of
Change**

*Foreword by Bhiku Parekh, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 312.
ISBN-13: 978-0-19-945266-8*

The Vykom Satyagraha was one of the important campaigns with which Gandhi was associated in the 1920s - and was promoted by the Indian National Congress party. It took place within the broader context of the Indian independence struggle, but was focused on a key issue of justice in Indian society - the discrimination against dalits (outcasts or untouchables in English translation) within the Hindu caste system. The campaign, which lasted from 30 March 1924 to 23 November 1925, was waged specifically to end the ban on untouchables using the roads that passed near the Vykom temple in the South Indian princely state of Travancore (now part of Kerala). But it was linked to much broader issues relating to the rights of untouchables and the role of the caste system in the independent India the Congress party was seeking to achieve.

The Vykom campaign is also of considerable interest because it reflected Gandhi's approach to nonviolent resistance. Vykom has often been interpreted as an important example of the efficacy of voluntary suffering by resisters in changing the hearts of the upper caste Hindus controlling the temple, and thus validating Gandhi's belief in the possibility of converting an opponent. Gandhi did not initiate the campaign, but he did play an important role in advising authoritatively on the conduct of the struggle and in its final resolution.

Mary King highlights the question whether Vykom really illustrates the possibility of conversion as one of the ways in which nonviolent resistance can succeed. She notes that it is the first of the four mechanisms of change analysed by Gene Sharp - the others being accommoda-

tion with an opponent, overthrow of a repressive power, or its disintegration as a result of the struggle. Her purpose is to demonstrate the inadequacy and inaccuracy of earlier 'idealised' accounts of Vykom in classics of the literature on Gandhian satyagraha, in particular Richard Gregg's 1934 *The Power of Nonviolence*, Krishnalal Shridharani's 1939 *War Without Violence* and Joan Bondurant's 1965 *Conquest of Violence*. This misleading version of Vykom was also perpetuated by Gene Sharp in his 1973 *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. King notes, however, that a number of academic historians have examined the complexities of and flaws in the actual campaign, as did Mahadev Desai, Gandhi's secretary and editor, in his 1937 account *The Epic of Travancore*. (She draws on all these in her own narrative and analysis.)

In the early stages of the Vykom struggle both sides adopted a confrontational strategy. The Travancore state authorities ordered the police to barricade off and guard the roads passing the temple, and as well known leaders of the protest arrived they were officially prohibited from taking part. The authorities therefore turned a planned symbolic protest into an act of civil disobedience. The protesters responded by sending small contingents from the larger protest march to walk through the barricades each day. Volunteers flocked to join and more leaders arrived - often to be promptly arrested. But on 10 April the police stopped the arrests but reinforced the barricades. The protesters decided not to scale the barricades, but to maintain a vigil in front of them on all four sides of the temple. Their initial response of also fasting at the barricades was discouraged by Gandhi, who viewed it in this context as a form of coercive violence.

King concludes that the Vykom volunteers, despite their pertinacity over many months in maintaining a presence in front of the barriers to the roads - including through a period of major flooding when they often stood waist or even shoulder deep in water - did not change the hearts and minds of the Brahmins in charge of the temple and its surrounds. Moreover, Gandhi's meeting with high caste officials from the temple in March 1925 achieved no hint of concession. Instead, a negotiated settlement on access to the roads was reached in stages with the political authorities who had ultimate legal jurisdiction. Initially Gandhi agreed, in March 1925, with the British police commissioner on a de-

escalation of the struggle by both sides. This involved the removal of barricades to the roads, on the understanding the protesters would not try to use them, a position formally endorsed by the Maharani of Travancore in early April 1925. The satyagraha continued on a symbolic and reduced scale until November 1925, after the Travancore government had released eight of the leaders of the Vykom protest from prison and constructed a separate exclusive access to the temple for the Brahmins, which allowed everyone, including untouchables, to use the other roads. Thus the satyagraha ended with a compromise. But it had encouraged other struggles in the state and government reforms: in 1928 the government ordered that untouchables throughout Travancore should have the right to use roads by temples, and in 1936 the new Maharajah authorised their entry into temples.

This detailed account, based on extensive interviews with Indian historians and study of relevant records, raises a number of other important issues relating to the Vykom struggle. The first is how it fitted into the much longer and broader struggle by the untouchables in Travancore for their basic social and religious rights. King charts the extreme complexity of the caste system in India in general and Travancore in particular, where - as elsewhere in Kerala - discrimination against untouchables was particularly extreme, involving not only a taboo on caste Hindus coming into direct contact with untouchables, but requiring untouchables to maintain fixed distances from caste, and especially upper caste, Hindus to avoid pollution. Untouchability was linked to 'unapproachability' and even 'unseeability' - for a caste Hindu to see an untouchable in the morning was ill-omened. Although all untouchables, who constituted about 40 per cent of the total population of Travancore according to an 1875 census, suffered from this kind of discrimination, there were considerable variations within their ranks. The majority came from the Ezhava community (possibly originally Buddhist immigrants from Ceylon), some of whose members by the 1920s had acquired education and some wealth. Below them in the social and religious hierarchy were a number of distinct and poorer groups, some previously slaves, undertaking the most menial tasks.

The Ezhavas had begun to organise and petition for their rights by the 1890s, and by the 1920s were represented by their own associa-

tion, the SNDP Yogam, led by Sri Narayan Guru, which promoted its own interpretations of Hinduism and also campaigned for the right to education in government schools, and to enter government service. This body was also demanding not only the right to use roads by temples (by 1919 recommending tax refusal as a tactic to achieve this goal) but to enter Brahmin temples. But although a key local leader of the Vykom struggle, T.K. Madhavan, was an Ezhava and the SNDP Yogam gave support (despite reservations expressed by Narayan Guru about the tactics adopted), King notes that Ezhava involvement in Vykom was very limited. Much of the active support came from middle and higher caste Hindus, and drew on volunteers from the neighbouring Tamil Naidu (also a source of women volunteers) and from across India.

The role of high caste Hindus in opposing discrimination and supporting the Vykom struggle was, however, important. A striking demonstration of support was the 124 mile grand procession of hundreds of Brahmins from Vykom to the state capital of Travancore in November 1924. Their purpose was to deliver a petition signed by thousands of high caste Hindus to the Maharani, asking for temple roads to be opened to untouchables. A second procession of 500, taking a different route, also converged on the capital.

Vykom aroused interest from other religious groups, such as Christians and Muslims. Syrian Christians suffering from job discrimination had earlier taken up the cause of the untouchables as part of a campaign for civil rights in the state. Some wished to expand Vykom into a broader civil rights campaign - George Joseph, a local Congress leader of the struggle and a Christian, arrested in April 1924 - saw Vykom as an assertion of 'the civic rights of all inhabitants to use public roads' (p. 119, quoting from a biography of Joseph). Gandhi, however, tried to limit participation to Hindus, believing their suffering would have more impact on high caste Hindus. His stance can be seen as not only exclusive but conservative, since his emphasis was on changing the hearts and minds of members of the upper caste. This approach seemed to undermine the importance of the untouchables themselves mobilising and organising for change. It also seemed to imply acceptance of caste hierarchy. Indeed, although Gandhi did passionately oppose the discrimination suffered by untouchables, he was reluctant to reject the caste

system altogether, which set him in opposition to the national leader of the dalits, Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. Although Ambedkar did publicly recognise the important impact of the Vykom struggle in India in a 1924 speech, he attacked the Congress Party and Gandhi for not adopting a strong enough position on untouchability.

Gandhi has often been criticised for his willingness to compromise with opponents rather than pressing for greater concessions, and was criticised for compromising over Vykom. One reason for his approach here, King suggests, was his reluctance to promote a militant campaign of disobedience against a Hindu ruler. The role of the nominally independent princely states (incorporated into the British empire through a system of British residents, who promoted administrative change but tended not to intervene too much in internal religious and social practices) was a sensitive issue for the Congress Party. But it can also be argued that a more fundamental reason for his general tendency to compromise lay in his basic approach to satyagraha, and his desire to show respect for his opponents as individuals and to try to promote trust.

King provides a wealth of fascinating detail, and raises many issues relating to the tactics and leadership of the Vykom struggle. She also discusses the impact of Vykom and later Indian campaigns of nonviolent resistance on the developing US Civil Rights Movement (in which she herself played a direct role in the early 1960s). But her central concern is to use Vykom as a test of Gandhi's whole approach to nonviolent resistance, and to adduce possible lessons for today. She provides a sympathetic analysis of Gandhi's interpretation (see pp. 62-73 for an excellent summary); and gives weight to the importance of the constructive programme as a basis for a new just society. One important element of this programme, spinning cotton to substitute for the boycotted British cotton goods, was part of the routine at the ashram established at Vykom. But King also emphasises criticism of Gandhi's strategy over Vykom, and suggests that elements of Gandhi's approach - such as the belief in conversion and conviction that nonviolent action, if undertaken correctly, can always work - could be dangerous for contemporary civil resistance movements.

April Carter; has written on nonviolent resistance since the 1960s.

Darweish, Marwan & Andrew Rigby: Popular Protest in Palestine: The uncertain future of unarmed resistance

London, Pluto Press, 2015, 211 pp. ISBN: 9780745335094

During the last decade, the relatively new field of *resistance studies* has seen an upsurge of important contributions that have provided convincing evidence for why unarmed resistance can work (Chenoweth & Stephen 2011, Nepstad 2013; 2011, Schock 2005). Many of these previous empirical contributions have given support for why civil resistance can work. They raise the much-needed theoretical discussions related to the causes for success of unarmed resistance. The common denominator, for most of these studies, rests on the assumption that certain conditions need to be in place for the success of unarmed resistance to follow. Much of the recent resistance research has rigorously and systematically looked into the aspects of conditions needed for successful unarmed resistance, as well as into the stage when these conditions can be seen as being in place. However, this research field is still at its dawn, leaving many questions yet to be answered. Darweish's & Rigby's book *Popular Protest in Palestine: The uncertain future of unarmed resistance* (2015) makes a significant contribution to this research field, with a slightly different but immensely important focus on a topic that is still under-researched. The case study "Palestinians under Israeli occupation" gives new empirical as well as theoretical insights on why popular resistance has (so far) faced difficulties to impact conflict transformation.

Aim, Framework and Structure

The book by Darweish & Rigby (2005) is not merely a diachronic and historical descriptive overview of all forms of Palestinian unarmed resistance. The added value of the book is that it also addresses theoretical issues; more specifically, it discusses what conditions are required and need to be in place for an unarmed popular resistance to have an impact.

This new book shows the dilemmas and challenges that unarmed resisters face in their efforts to end the Israeli occupation.

The monograph has 10 chapters and it links the conclusion to the theoretical discussion that introduces the reader to the authors' structure. The empirical chapters (2-5) give us a systematic descriptive overview and presentation of all forms of unarmed resistance that the Palestinians have applied at one time or another over many decades. The analysis of why the various unarmed resistance forms succeeded/failed to have an impact (i.e., to influence and prevent the Zionists, and later Israel, from taking the control over historical Palestine) is continually linked to the theoretical assumption discussed in the introduction chapter. Giving a historical overview of the unarmed Palestinian resistance since the 1880s, when the first political Zionists arrived in Palestine and began to colonize the area, the book lays out the types of activism that have been used. Bearing in mind the various forms that have been applied, we get to understand that *defensive resistance* has been the most dominant form, especially during the last two decades of unarmed resistance.

In general, when discussing the impact of the various attempts made to prevent Israeli occupation, the authors give rather pessimistic assessments. However, this does not imply that the armed resistance has been more successful. Referring to the ANC struggle to abolish apartheid, the authors underline that in the case of the ANC, violence was used in a more controlled way, which paved the way for maintaining 'the moral high ground, contrasting the actions of the ANC with those of the South African government and its involvement in torture, disappearance, deaths in custody, the violent suppression of internal protest and armed intervention in civil war situations in neighbouring states' (Darweish & Rigby 2015:164). The authors quite rightly underline that 'the Palestinian solidarity movement faces a much greater struggle to lay claim to the moral high ground in the context of the terror campaign of a decade ago when hundreds of Israeli civilians were killed by suicide bombers and the more recent launching of rocket attacks from Gaza that terrorised citizens in Southern Israel and beyond...' (Darweish & Rigby 2015:164). They also render important insights into the way the media operates, and how to apply these insights to support the unarmed activists. Concurrently, from what has been noted, at least implicitly, we

understand that the Palestinians are in a power disparity, also in terms of reaching out to and influencing the Western image of the conflict. It would have been interesting to learn more specifics about how the media “war” between the Israelis and the unarmed resistance is played out, what broker and communication capacities have been applied in relation to the own population - mainly for mobilization purposes, as well as with regards to the outside world - for support reasons.

In Chapters 6-9, the authors delve deeply into: the challenges that Palestinians face at present under Israeli occupation (Chapter 6); the potential roles that Israeli peace and solidarity activists could play (Chapter 7); the possibilities for international humanitarian agencies (Chapter 8); and the importance of various international links and the impact that existing long-term commitments have had (Chapter 9). While the empirical evidence gives a rather pessimistic image of a fairly unsuccessful unarmed resistance history, in the concluding Chapter 10 the authors try to reverse this impression by linking to protests of young Palestinians that have begun to direct their critique against both Hamas and the Fatah authorities (in the West Bank), as well as Israel, the UN and other governments, in March 2011. The chapter also lists conditions that the Palestinians need to consider in order to reverse the rather meagre results achieved by both armed and unarmed resistance.

In many ways, the book integrates perspectives from conflict transformation and peace studies as well as resistance studies. Some references do come from social movement theorizing; but the authors, though not engaging with the vast bulk of these studies, still succeed in providing sufficient theoretical eye openers that should feed this theoretical branch. The book is an important contribution to resistance studies field and should raise great interest in a wide audience. It also links to the debate on the consequences of “liberal peace” as Chandler (2015) 2014, Richmond & Chandler 2014, MacGinty 2014) and many others have addressed recently, though not from an IR perspective or from a ‘peace from above’ angle, but rather from a less studied perspective linking conflict transformation with conflicts, while including asymmetrical power disparities between the conflict actors.

There are quite a few important studies that address the efforts made by various grassroots activists in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Chaitin

2011, Svirsky 2012, Kaufman-Lacusta 2011, Kuriansky 2007, Bar-Siman-Tov 2007, Kaufman et al 2006). Almost all of these studies have a bias in the sense that they see the conflict from a manageable conflict resolution perspective, in which two parties, under the right circumstances, can compromise over territory, for example the two-state solution. Furthermore, they either focus theoretically and/or empirically (Bar-Siman-Tov 2007, Kaufman et al 2006) on conflict resolution issues, or mainly on (social) psychological issues (Kuransky 2007), or solely on power and resistance issues (Svirsky 2012). In contrast to previous works, Darweish & Rigby's study critically explores resistance in a highly asymmetric conflict from a conflict transformation perspective. The study also looks into the specific conflict situation that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict constitutes. The asymmetries, in terms of huge power disparities (military, economic and political) between the Israeli state and the Palestinian occupied society, constitute a particular challenge for unarmed resistance. Darweish & Rigby offer a contrast to previous studies by problematizing this specific conflict category and the idiosyncrasies that follow, in a context with a national group under long-term occupation.

Types of resistance applied

Darweish & Rigby are well aware of the different types of nonviolent actions that are discussed in the literature and build their partly new typology based on an integration of Gene Sharp's (2005, 1973), Ring's (1982), as well as Overy's (1982) studies. With the focus on Gandhi's approaches to unarmed resistance in Overy's study, the authors thereby gain inputs from this tradition, as well. From these studies they extract five forms of nonviolent actions: symbolic resistance, polemical resistance, offensive resistance, defensive resistance, and constructive resistance. These forms are used when describing the history of Palestinian popular unarmed resistance.

In the historical overview, one is struck by how early the reactions came up, and how the fears among Palestinians were triggered by the arrival of (mainly) European Jews to Palestine. Reports date back to as early as 1886, and refer to clashes between the newcomers and the peasants who had been evicted from lands they had cultivated. We learn that already from this point in time, several of the conditions that need to

be in place for an unarmed resistance to unfold, and also to make a difference, simply did not exist in the Palestinian case. Most historical descriptions of how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has evolved report on confrontations that began later, after 1910. The book does track different forms of unarmed resistance that had been tried out long before the use of armed methods that were part of the resistance repertoire in the 1920s and 1930s.

The book does slightly address the difficult issue of identification. It notes that one of the necessary conditions for sustainable civil resistance to work is '[a] strong sense of solidarity throughout the subject population ...' (Darweish & Rigby 2015:9). Rightfully the authors underline that one of the reasons for having complications mobilizing around a national Palestinian cause is that '[t]heir loyalty and sense of belonging was to the family, the clan and the village. Theirs was a sense of locality, not nationality' (ibid: 15). Hence, it is difficult to speak about a national Palestinian movement; it was rather the role of different families, clans, and other social categorizations that mattered more. Even the broader "umbrella-concept" of Arab nationalism only gained mass-based attraction after WWII. Most analysts would agree that mass-based Palestinian national identification began in the end of the 1960s, and particularly after the events at the city of Karameh in Jordan in March 1968, when the PLO managed to resist the attacking Israeli forces and inflict heavy losses on them (Kimmerling & Migdal 1993).

The question about when the Palestinian national identification began is not only subject to academic controversy; it is also a politically sensitive issue. However, those who claim that identification in terms of a national Palestinian identity is something constructed have fewer problems seeing that the construction of Israeli identification also took place in a similar way. This occurred a quarter of a century earlier, and managed to foster mass-mobilized support in particular at the time of the foundation of Israel in 1948. Here the importance of the British Mandate government should not be underestimated, considering it gave the Zionists the possibility to organize the Jewish Agency as a pre-state body, and introduce Modern Hebrew as an official language, alongside Arabic and English. The Palestinian identification, on the other hand, had no broader meaning, and neither did Arab nationalism, which partly

explains the fragmented and socially divided Palestinian public, and their will to mobilize and resist, as well as the fact that ‘... Palestinian leadership was weak and divided...’ (Darweish & Rigby 2015:26). The authors use the label Palestinian as an *ipso facto* phenomenon, due to the historical record they have at hand. Hence, the roots of mass-based unarmed resistance came much later, and peaked around the time of the Palestinian uprising, the first *intifada*, in 1987.

Boomerang effects

Despite the general pessimistic picture portrayed in the study of Palestinian unarmed resistance, it can be noted that the authors still identify some future potential for Palestinian unarmed resistance. The most significant dimensions that may have a greater and more effective impact in future are what the authors call “The Boomerang Pattern”, i.e. the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement and its increased international status, as well as the young Palestinians, namely the 15th March movement that began to mobilize and protest against the Hamas-Fatah divide in 2011.

The Boomerang Pattern that is discussed by the authors explains that the Palestinians

‘feel that their influence on their targets is too limited and so they ‘throw a boomerang’ out to external actors and networks naming and shaming their oppressors, in the hope that the boomerang will return and hit their target with international pressure, particularly from international allies of the targeted regime’ (Darweish & Rigby 2015:162).

According to the authors, the BDS movement that was formed in 2005 has the most significant boomerang effect so far. The BDS operates worldwide with efforts to raise understanding that the continued occupation and breach of international law will have a long-term price. To this end, BDS calls for ‘individuals, companies and states to engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation’ (Darweish & Rigby 2015:163). The movement has gained dramatic growth, as well as international support. The authors could at the time of writing not include that the Israeli Prime

Minister Netanyahu even declared ‘a manifest in Jerusalem against the delegitimization of Israel [and calling] for a “wide front” to combat boycott, and ... to fight BDS’ (quote from Haaretz: <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/1.659269>, 2nd June 2015). The authors mention briefly the changed EU perceptions towards Israel, but we need more insights on why also the EU is seemingly under the influence of BDS principles. The EU has requested in the new trade agreements with Israel that products produced by settlers in the West Bank are not welcomed to be sold to the EU. The EU has otherwise never used trade, on which Israel is so dependent, as a bargaining or pressure instrument vis-à-vis Israel. The authors say that the BDS and similar international solidarity movements are among the most promising unarmed resistance forms that the Palestinians have at hand. However, when compared systematically with the ANC movement and its way of bringing down the South African apartheid government, it can be seen that on almost every issue BDS is in a disadvantageous position. The authors conclude that

‘... there are significant differences between the case of South Africa boycott and the contemporary BDS movement, which means that however significant the South African boycott was as a factor in bringing an end to apartheid, it does not follow that the Palestinian BDS movement will be able to play the same role in bringing an end to the occupation’ (Darweish & Rigby 2015:168).

The authors also underline that hopes are small that the BDS movement will be successful, considering the absence of political unity among all Palestinian factions, and capacity to mobilize on the inside, as well as in the Diaspora in order to ‘raise the financial, economic, political – and moral – costs of occupation ...’ (Darweish & Rigby 2015:169).

The book also discusses the importance of the Gaza youth Manifesto for change, the program for the so-called 15 March movement, which addressed one of the key issues for unarmed resistance to stand a chance. The political divide, mainly due to the Fatah-Hamas rivalry, has paralyzed much of the Palestinian unity and activism, and the movement demanded an end of the spilt, and that the Palestinian forces should form a unity government with the primary task to end the occupation.

Taking the Gaza youth Manifesto for change as an example for future hope, the authors end the book by underlining seven necessary preconditions. These relate to the need for political factions to unite, to form a unity government aimed at mobilizing the people, and the need to agree and understand that all resources have to be used for this campaign, as well as to ensure that the great powers recognize the situation as a major crisis. Many of these activities would need to be coordinated with the Israeli activists, and resources would need to be mobilized at an international level, as well. In the end, the unarmed resistance activism would need to ensure that the Israeli public understands that ‘ending of the occupation as the basis for substantive negotiations lay the foundation for a shared future for Palestinians and Israelis’ (Darweish & Rigby 2015: 178).

Future research challenges

Summing up the impressions of the book, one realizes that we also have a whole series of new interesting and important issues for future research that are explicitly and implicitly raised in the book. The book highlights much that has been previously untold, and it systematically examines the history of the Palestinian popular unarmed resistance. Much has been written about the Palestinian armed resistance; however, Daweish’s & Rigby’s study helps us recognize the need of a comparative study of both armed and unarmed resistance and the way the two forms of resistance influence each other. The book addresses some aspects of how armed resistance hampers and negatively impacts on unarmed resistance; at the same time, it inspires questions for further research on “resistance” culture, in which armed resistance is part of the national discourse – and more importantly, how it can be changed. How to shift from such a resistance culture to an unarmed culture? Are key figures, similar to Gandhi, Mandela and King, needed to lead this transformation of the resistance culture? Is the unity among political leaders enough (as the authors indicate), or is there a need for communication strategies by local grassroots and (new social) media activists (or a combination) as was the case in the so-called Arab spring events, in order to spur such a shift?

Not less important is the question raised in the book about the characteristics of unarmed resistance. More specifically, what features of resistance – i.e. techniques, methods, strategies and practical knowhow – promote change (i.e. ending occupation/domination/oppression) and which do not? Does the impact of a certain feature vary depending on the context?

In conclusion, the book by Darweish and Rigby is truly inspiring and the rich data we gain from the Palestinian case supports the idea that both *quantitative* and *qualitative comparative analysis* of different forms of unarmed resistance, as well as of different contexts (conflict types), are needed. This will bring further theoretical inputs on how *specific conditions* ('resistance practices') and *direct effect* ('undermining of domination') impact conflict transformation. What needs further attention is a systematic *comparison* of various resistance *practices* under different structural *conditions*. The empirical and theoretical detailed and rich discussions in the book by Darweish & Rigby offer important new suggestions on how to proceed further to develop this important path of the resistance studies field.

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Donatella della Porta: Mobilizing for Democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011

Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2014. pp. 384 ISBN: 9780199689323

Most scholars of democratization have either ignored movements altogether or regarded them as with suspicion as dangers to democracy, while most students of social movements have focused on fully mature democratic systems and ignored the transition cycles that place the question of democratization on the agenda and work it through to either democratic consolidation or defeat (Tarrow 1995: 221–222, quoted on p. 1).

In her new book, *Mobilizing for Democracy: Comparing 1989 and 2011*, Donatella della Porta (Professor of Sociology at the European University Institute, Florence, Italy) departs from the gap in literature, as identified by Sydney Tarrow in the quote above, and sets out to study various “episodes of democratization through the lens of social movement studies” (p. 1).

Without taking for granted that democratization is always the result of processes from below, she singles out various paths – (i) “eventful democratization”; (ii) “participated pacts”; and (iii) “participated military coups” – by looking at the interaction between masses and elites, on the one hand, and protest and bargaining, on the other hand. Among the paths of democratization identified, a particular focus is given to the first one: “eventful democratization, that is cases in which authoritarian regimes break down following – often short but intense – waves of protest” (p. 1).

The unique power of some transformative events is contextualized within broader processes of mobilization, which include various often less visible, but still crucial acts of “resistance”.

Della Porta writes:

While in eventful democratization protests develop from the interaction between growing resources of contestation and closed opportunities, social movements are not irrelevant players in the two other paths.

First of all, when opportunities open up because of misalignment in the elites, participated pacts might ensue from the encounter of reformers in institutions and moderates among social movement organizations. Protest, although rarely used, is nevertheless important here as a resource to threaten or use on the negotiation table (p. 2).

She continues:

If in particular pacts a strong (or strengthening) civil society meets emerging opportunities, more troubled democratization paths ensue when very repressive regimes thwart the development of any associational form. In these cases violence often escalate from the interaction of suddenly mobilized opposition and brutal regime repression. Especially when there are divisions in and defections from security apparatuses, skills and resources for military action contribute to coups d'état and civil war dynamics (p. 2).

By comparing different cases within two waves of protests for democracy in Central Eastern Europe in 1989 and in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in 2011, respectively, della Porta describes and, in particular, seeks to theorize casual mechanisms and conditions as they emerge in the three paths of democratization. The overall aim of the research is thus to theoretically understand “democracy from below” (p. 14). Protest events are, following Mark R. Beissinger (2002: 12), defined as “contentious and potentially subversive practices that challenge normalized practices, modes of causation, or systems authority”.

Inspired by Anthony Giddens (1979), della Porta argues that various protest events “are rooted in structure”. Put differently, there exists “an intrinsic relation between structures and actions, as agency is inherent in the development of structure and structure influences, to a certain extent, action”. Therefore, “[i]t is ... important to consider the influence of structures, including political opportunities, as well as the capacity for agency in participation from below in the different stages of democratization processes” (p. 14; cf. pp. 2–14; see further della Porta and Diani 2006; Rossi and della Porta 2009).

In order to achieve her chief aim, which is to build “actor-structure sensitive” theory of democratization from below, della Porta, as indicated above, seeks to “bridge insights from two field of the social sciences

– social movement studies and transition studies – building upon empirical evidence collected on a (relatively large) number of cases” (p. 23, 24). By tradition the former field has given priority to structure over agency, while the latter field has done the very opposite: given priority to agency over structure (pp. 4–14). But in order to understand transition, transformative moments and democratization from below, an approach that moves beyond these traditional approaches and looks at the relationship between structure and agency are, however, necessary (p.1). The crucial bridging of structure and actions can, according to della Porta, “be observed through a focus on protest events during episodes of democratization” (p. 17). In this regard, the language of mechanisms is central; “mechanisms are categories of action that filter structural conditions and produce effects” (p. 18). By this, the approach suggested by della Porta is, she writes:

... *relational*, as it locates eventful democratization in the interactions of various institutional and non- institutional actors; *constructivist*, as it takes into account not only the external opportunities and constraints, but also the social construction of their experiential reality by the various actors participating in social and political conflict; and *emergent*, as it recognizes that democratization from below involves the capacity of events to change structures (p. 17–18, italics in original).

Departing from this social theoretical foundation, della Porta addresses “mobilizations for democracy, mixing most similar and most different research designs” (p. 23; see further della Porta and Keating 2008). More concretely this means a comparison between “the major episodes of democratization in Eastern Europe in 1989 and in the ... MENA region ... in 2011” (p. 23).

Within each area, the case selection has been based on the following assumptions: Firstly, by focusing on eventful protests that led to episodes of democratization. In this regard, “[t]he German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Czechoslovakia are [considered] positive cases of eventful democratization in Eastern Europe; Tunisia and Egypt in the MENA region” (p. 23). These are the cases that are analyzed in more depth in order to understand the specific mechanisms of eventful democratization (p. 23). Secondly, “when moving from agency to contextual constraints”,

della Porta also, with the aim to avoid selecting on the dependent variable – introduces “cases that followed different paths” (p. 23). This is done by considering “all other countries in Central Eastern Europe, the Baltic and the Balkans during the ‘velvet revolutions’ of 1989 as well as MENA countries where relevant mobilizations for democracy developed during around 2011” (p. 23).

By this, the author claims that “rather than sampling a few cases based on theoretical assumptions” she aims “at covering all critical cases in two specific waves, in different historical moments, geopolitical conditions, and with different regime types and socio-economic structures”. “In particular”, she considers “together with GDR and Czechoslovakia, also Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Albania for Eastern Europe; and together with Tunisia and Egypt, also Libya and Syria in the MENA region” (p. 23–24). In addition to these cases, della Porta also introduces “some references to the Baltic States, former Yugoslavia, Yemen, Morocco, and Turkey” (p. 24). More in detail, she analyses GDR and Czechoslovakia as well as Egypt and Tunisia as “cases of eventful democratization”. Hungary and Poland, which are contrasted with Morocco, Yemen and Turkey, are considered as cases of (more or less) “participated pacts”. Romania and Albania, but also Libya and Syria are discussed as examples of “participated military coups” and the Baltic and the Balkan areas are compared as examples of evolution of democratization processes when other “nationalist social movements dominate the scene” (p. 24).

The overall impression of the research design, considering the results presented, is that it appears somewhat too complex and warped. A complex research design is, of course, not something that should be avoided *per se*. It should be as complex as necessary given the task that the researcher sets out to solve; neither more nor less. In this particular case, however, the conclusion that is presented does not fully answer to the advanced research design that is constructed.

Given the initial statement, which is to look at the relations between structure and agency (within transformative moments), I find that the social theoretical basis, on which the author theorizes on the substantive or operative level, leaves something to be desired. As it stands now, it seems more like an ambitious expression of will rather than a serious attempt to combine agency and structure.

In addition to this, I am not totally convinced that it is a good idea to treat the three identified paths of democratization as uneven, as is done in this book. It might have been a better idea to either focus on only one path – eventful democratization – or, at least, treat the three identified paths more equally. As it stands now, the two less highlighted paths leave the reader with a sense of having been shortchanged. All in all, the book appears somewhat unfocused and concentrates more on width rather than depth; this is an impression that is further strengthened by the fact that in all chapters, including the final, the author introduces references to other cases rather than the one that has been analyzed more thoroughly. The commendable aim for doing so, to discuss the external validity of the findings (p. 26), unfortunately contributes to the impression of fragmentation and lack of focus.

The book, which primarily relies on historical comparative analysis, is based on extensive empirical material that is derived partly from analysis of existing studies (in particular on Central Eastern Europe) and in part from fieldwork (chiefly on the MENA region). On all cases, della Porta has:

... relied upon research reports ... commissioned from country experts endowed with relevant linguistic knowledge, as well as [her own] secondary analysis of existing research and conversations with experts. All reports were written by social movements scholars using a common analytic scheme to investigate episodes of mobilization for democracy. To case reports [della Porta has] ... added the collection of systematic evidence on protest events, derived from various media sources (p. 24).

Besides the potential problem that the empirical material is uneven because different individuals collected it, there is also a problem due to time. The material regarding Central Eastern Europe is older and hence, it can be assumed that, it is more processed and, by extension, more accurate and complete than the material on the MENA region.

This problem is acknowledged and partly discussed by della Porta who writes – regarding the knowledge gap that exists between the two regions that are compared as well as the problem of potential outdated of the used empirical material – as follows:

[w]hile it is true that our knowledge of the recent upheaval in the MENA region is ... shallower than the one we now have on the 1989 “revolutions”, I will focus attention not so much on outcomes, which are still open, but rather on the characteristics (frames, organizational structures, forms of action) and dynamics of the past episodes of mobilization. As we do not know where these countries are going in terms of democratization, I focus on the insurgent moments rather than their long-term outcomes. Even if it still uncertain to which extent (some of) the Arab Spring protests will bring about democratic consolidation, we can already study them as episodes of mobilization for democracy (p. 24).

It is true that della Porta’s research focus is not so much on outcomes but rather on characteristics and dynamics of the past episodes of mobilization. But the book was published in 2014 and by then the radical turn in the MENA region, from an Arab Spring to an Arab Winter, was clear for most observers. The key question then becomes: do the shattered hopes for democracy in the MENA region undermine the potential to compare the region with the 1989 “revolutions” in Central Eastern Europe after all? Put differently, are the two regions, given the actual development we have witnessed, still comparable? If yes, should the regions be compared in a different way from that which has been done by della Porta? These questions are important, however (still) difficult to answer.

The book is organized as follows: The Introduction (Ch. 1) formulates the research problem, scans the literature on transition and social movement studies, as well as identifies some key contributions that could be useful in understanding the process of democratization from below, and then presents the research design and the structure of the book. Chapter 2, by comparing in-depth GDR, Czechoslovakia, Tunisia and Egypt, looks at the eventfulness of some episodes of democratization by singling out relational, cognitive and affective mechanisms within them and particularly focuses on the relevance of events as producers of opportunities. The focus of Chapters 3 and 4, which discusses the same cases as Chapter 2, is the resource mobilization and the collective framing of social movements, respectively. Chapter 3 concludes two things.

Primo, unexpectedly for social movement studies, which have in effect considered social movements as a product of democracy, it displays “the rooting of eventful democratization in a growing social movement milieu”. *Secundo*, unexpectedly for scholars of transition studies, who focus on elites, it shows that “the development of civil society is a long-lasting process that shapes – not just catalyzes – the democratization process” (p. 105). Departing from the conclusion that eventful democratization implies a growth in generalization of claims as well as the politicization of claims, Chapter 4, shows the “discursive contexts” that these mechanisms operate under – in particular diagnostic, prognostic and motivational processes (p. 133). Chapter 5, focuses on repression and facilitation, and concludes that:

... eventful democratization seems to have developed in settings in which regimes were far from lenient on protesters, but domestic and international constraints worked to diminish the state’s repressive strength. Police, armies, and militias were all potentially important actors whose structures and choices influenced the dynamics of transition. The regimes’ capacity and willingness to use force were tested during the protest waves, however, with trial and error on both sides (p. 159).

Looking on the appropriation of opportunities, by considering not only the politics, but also the economic bases of political regimes, Chapter 6 clearly displays the advantages of widening the scope of investigation. Put simply, both international and domestic economics (also) matter in the understanding of democratization from below. So does, needless to say, the interaction between economics and politics. In order to “asses the peculiarity of eventful democratization”, Chapter 7, focuses in particular on Hungary, Poland, Morocco and Turkey, and analyzes cases in which, more or less, strong civil societies have opted for bargaining rather than mobilization. In addition, the chapter also highlights the troubled history of democracy in some of the countries discussed. In Chapter 8, a particular interest is paid to cases – including Romania and Albania as well as Libya and Syria – in which strong repression have thwarted civil-society developments. The overall conclusion drawn here is that: “Violent uprisings do not require strong civil society orga-

nizational structures. Rather, they seem to develop when very repressive regimes have long thwarted any development of an autonomous associational life – let alone, of social movements” (p. 264). In Chapter 9, cases in which “nationalism was used in mobilization against democratization rather than for it” are discussed (p. 26) with a focus is on the Baltic States and Yugoslavia. Chapter 10 “concludes” the book not by presenting a theory of democratization from below as might be expected, but rather by highlighting various theoretical insights presented in earlier chapters.

One of the overall conclusions presented in Chapter 10 is on the level of social rather than substantive theory; Della Porta writes:

While both agency and structures clearly influenced each other, democratization from below was an emergent moment, whose evolution was influenced by the (intensified) interactions among different actors and their construction of (a quickly changing) reality. These moments were not only – as literature on regime transition has suggested – structurally undetermined, but also quite complex to address strategically, given the rapid evolution of chances and stakes, with little time and information available to solve difficult dilemmas” (p. 295–296).

As a reader, I had wished that the author had developed this very interesting reflection and elaborated her views on the relationship between actors and structures more thoroughly; that she had developed a “linkage theory”, which ties together actors and structure, and, by extension, in a more elaborated and specific way, shows how the process identified in the quote above actually works. Such a “linkage theory” would substantially strengthen the social theoretical foundation of the approach and thereby increase the possibilities to make intra-area as well as cross-area comparisons and, by extension, to build “theory of democratization from below” rather than only being able to “single out similarities and differences within and across waves of democratization” (p. 296).

The book indeed “addresses several debates in both social movement and democratization studies” (p. 296) and contributes in important ways to the development of a “theory of democratization from below”, but it does not, ultimately, build “theory of democratization from below” as explicitly claimed in the beginning of the book. It would, for example,

have been good if the author had theorized the relationship between the different paths of democratization that have been identified thoroughly. This is of course a lot to ask, but would nonetheless have been interesting to read and strengthen the overall theoretical contribution.

The links identified and discussed in the book between “everyday resistance” (which is performed by the non-movements) and organized protest (which is performed by various social movements) is very interesting and holds large potential for further research (pp. 299–300, 309.) Also of great interest and with potential for further research are della Porta’s discussions on: (i) the ways in which, “small and tendentially scattered – or loosely structured – networks” were developing discourse(s) “capable of resonating with a broad range of political and social groups” (p. 302); (ii) the role of the universities and intellectuals, trade unions as well as the relationship between various secular and religious forces in various paths of democratization (pp. 304, 306); (iii) the importance of regime reactions in influencing which type of paths democratization would take; (iv) the role of economic difficulties; and, not least, (v) the international dimension of democratization from below. della Porta makes interesting interventions in these debates, which all constitute an excellent ground for further and necessary discussions as well as theory building.

In spite of the criticism put forward above, my overall and definite impression of the book is that it is an interesting, impressive and important work that – besides introducing rich empirical material in an innovative way, which is mainly thanks to its ambitious trans-disciplinary approach – substantially contributes to our understanding of transition in general and democratization from below in particular. The book is stimulating and thought provoking, in the best sense of the words. I am really looking forward to future books by the author, in which she hopefully returns to some of the interesting questions that have partly been addressed and discussed in the book under review.

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Daniel P. Ritter: The Iron Cage of Liberalism: International Politics and Unarmed Revolutions in the Middle East and North Africa

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 288, ISBN: 9780199658329

How can the toppling of repressive rulers by unarmed citizens be explained? Cases in which dictatorial leaders were overthrown include the Philippines 1986, Eastern Europe 1989, Serbia 2000 and Egypt 2011. Within the traditional approach used by political scientists, the main emphasis is on structural conditions, for example economic weakness, changing international connections and political rivalry at the top. In contrast, scholars of civil resistance put much greater emphasis on the capacities and strategies of nonviolent campaigners.

Until recently, the traditional approach dominated scholarship, so much so that it was commonplace to read analyses of the collapse of the Soviet Union focusing on the politics and economics of the regime, including its internal contradictions, with citizen action unmentioned or relegated to an afterthought. This one-sided perspective has been met with a new generation of scholarship, of which the most influential contribution has been Erica Chenoweth and Maria Stephan's 2011 book *Why Civil Resistance Works*. They provide statistics showing that unarmed movements are more likely to be effective against repressive regimes than armed ones. Furthermore, they conclude that the superiority of nonviolent resistance seems not to depend much or at all on the level of repression. The implication is that the methods and strategies used by resisters are keys to success.

Within this matrix of scholarly endeavour, Daniel Ritter's book *The Iron Cage of Liberalism* is an innovative contribution. Ritter wants to combine insights from structural and strategic perspectives, and proposes that a crucial factor in at least some cases is the degree to which a dictatorial regime has developed connections with Western governments, especially the US government, and adopted liberal trappings, including political parties, elections and a rhetoric of human rights. The reality can be different: opposition political parties may be hindered, elections may be fraudulent and the regime's actual practice may contradict its human rights rhetoric. Ritter calls such regimes "façade democracies."

He argues that this sort of false liberalism has real effects. It makes armed opposition less likely to succeed, because legitimate channels for opposition appear to exist: armed resistance gains legitimacy when injustices are great and there seems to be no alternative. At the same time, Ritter argues, the façade of liberalism opens doors for unarmed opponents. They can use human rights rhetoric to mount criticisms of the government and mobilise support. When the opposition gains strength, Ritter says the regime is inhibited from using brutal repression by the concerns of Western government leaders and human rights groups. The combined effects of forging government-to-government connections and adopting a seemingly superficial coating of liberal democracy constitute what Ritter calls the "iron cage of liberalism."

Ritter applies this framework to three nonviolent revolutions, in Iran, Tunisia and Egypt. He provides detailed accounts of the prior history of each country, government relationships with the West (especially the US government) and the events leading to overthrow of a dictator. In each case, he traces the role of human rights rhetoric, with Western governments and human rights organisations providing pressure leading to liberalisation, for example legalisation of opposition political parties and approval of the formation of domestic human rights organisations, that were used as levers by regime opponents to push for more changes. When protests escalated, Ritter says that in each country the ruler's Western connections prevented the use of excessive force.

In terms of the poles of structure and agency, Ritter draws attention to one particular facet of structure, namely links with Western governments, especially the US government, and associated steps adopted to give the appearance of moving towards liberal democracy. This aspect of structure puts constraints on rulers: they are in an "iron cage." It undermines the option of armed struggle and opens political opportunities for unarmed opponents, who can use the regime's own rhetoric against it. Ritter thus could be considered to be advancing a version of the approach to social movements based on political opportunity structures, with an emphasis on the role of human rights rhetoric. Unlike most studies in this area, Ritter has oriented his analysis to the phenomenon of unarmed revolution.

How important is the iron cage?

Ritter recognises that human rights rhetoric only becomes a cage when there are groups, such as foreign governments and human rights organisations, that can use the rhetoric as a lever against the regime. But how potent can a rhetorical lever be? After all, governments are masters at image management. From the viewpoint of a structural analysis, looking at economic and political structures, rhetoric is not a powerful battering ram. From this viewpoint, Ritter might have better titled his book *The Discursive Cage of Liberalism*.

Discourse can sometimes be influential, and here Ritter's analysis ties with research on civil resistance, in particular Gene Sharp's theory of power: all it takes to bring down a dictator is for subjects to withdraw

their consent from the ruler, through various forms of protest, noncooperation and nonviolent intervention. Ritter recounts the importance of rallies and strikes in the three nonviolent revolutions. The question then is the influence of each of the governments' liberal façades and connections with Western government in enabling a people power revolution.

Political jiu-jitsu

Ritter attributes the hesitancy of rulers to use all-out violence to their democratic façade and their reluctance to upset Western government supporters. For example, in describing the actions of Ben Ali, Tunisia's autocratic leader, in the face of escalating protests in January 2011, Ritter writes:

Ben Ali and his domestic allies' international obligations caused the government to vacillate in the face of popular, unarmed protests. In the absence of repression the population's fears diminished, which in turn allowed the demonstrations to grow beyond what the state could manage. ... Overwhelming violence might have saved Ben Ali, if only temporarily, but ... it would have come at the high cost of international condemnation. (p. 154)

Some might suggest that most rulers would rather stay in power despite international condemnation. Setting this aside, this example highlights contrasting differences between Ritter's analysis and one built on civil resistance ideas. It is useful to look to Gene Sharp's "dynamics of nonviolent action," a set of facets or stages of nonviolent campaigns: laying the groundwork, making a challenge that brings repression, maintaining nonviolent discipline, political jiu-jitsu, achieving success and redistributing power. In relation to the culmination of the Tunisian struggle, two keys are maintaining nonviolent discipline and political jiu-jitsu. The protesters, for the most part, avoided violence, thus accentuating outrage from any violence used against them. When governments use violence against peaceful protesters, it can cause greater outrage, leading to greater commitment and new participants, a process Sharp calls political jiu-jitsu. Earlier, Ritter recognised this process, writing "When protests turned deadly, which happened on a relatively small scale considering the

extent of the protests and the high political stakes, this tended to only outrage the population further and generate additional demonstrations.” (p. 152). Yet Ritter does not follow through with this insight, for example when he suggests that “overwhelming violence might have saved Ben Ali.” It might just as well have hastened the collapse of the regime.

Then there is the question of what inhibits governments from using overwhelming violence against peaceful protesters. Ritter attributes this to adherence to the iron cage of human rights rhetoric, ties with Western governments and a façade of liberal democracy. Sharp, in contrast, does not rely on any of this. His “dynamics of nonviolent action,” part three of *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, was published in 1973, prior to the rise of human rights as a prominent feature in international discourse. So what could be triggering the phenomenon of political jiu-jitsu, if not concerns over human rights? The answer is an instinctive human concern about injustice (Moore, 1978), shown in practice in dozens of struggles where formal human rights rhetoric, groups and international linkages were absent.

There is one more crucial factor involved: the loyalty of the regime’s functionaries, especially the police and military. The assumption that “overwhelming violence” can succeed relies on troops being willing tools of their commanders and ultimately the country’s ruler. But willingness to obey can waver when protesters remain nonviolent: troops may be reluctant to use extreme force, and commanders may refuse orders. This is precisely what has happened in case after case. Sharon Nepstad (2011) has argued that undermining the loyalty of troops is a key factor in nonviolent revolutions.

Unfortunately, Ritter gives little attention to this aspect of the struggles in Iran, Tunisia and Egypt. His examination of the regimes’ international linkages and the sequences of events leading up to the revolutions focuses on actions by leaders, both in the regimes and in Western governments. It would be informative to know how façade democracy affected commanders and troops tasked with defending the regimes and, in particular, being asked to control public protest.

In other nonviolent revolutions, such as East Germany in 1989, government leaders decided not to use force against protesters, even without any concern about Western government opinions. This reluc-

tance could be due to unwillingness to cause massive bloodshed, awareness that troops might not obey orders, a calculation that repression would not succeed, or something else. Ritter recognises that such examples show that ties with Western governments and development of façade democracy are not necessary for the success of civil resistance.

Ritter says, concerning his three case studies, "... repression of massive crowds became nearly impossible since it would likely have forced a response from the government's Western allies" (p. 169). But in all the major nonviolent struggles, successful or unsuccessful, in all sorts of contexts, it is hard to find any in which tens of thousands of peaceful protesters have been killed. (It is easy to identify many armed liberation struggles involving hundreds of thousands of deaths.) The explanation provided by scholars of civil resistance is that nonviolent protest seems on its own to inhibit massive use of force by regimes. Furthermore, in the face of heavy repression, opposition movements often shift to other nonviolent tactics.

The US government: beacon of freedom or ally of repression?

Ritter focuses on the role of Western governments, especially the US government, as promoters of liberal democracy. Yet there is another side to the story. Western governments, and especially the US government, have been instrumental in arming repressive governments around the world. This includes both conventional armaments and what is called the "technology of repression," including instruments used for torture and surveillance. Many of the weapons used by police and security personnel in countries around the world are made in the USA. Furthermore, US advisers provide training in surveillance and interrogation, including so-called "enhanced interrogation," otherwise known as torture.

Although most US citizens are unfamiliar with this role of Western governments, it is certainly known in recipient countries. Some of the anger driving opponents of repressive regimes is against the security apparatuses in their own countries and, by proxy, alliances with the parallel apparatuses in Western countries. How this has affected nonviolent revolutions would be a worthy topic, providing a perspective complementary to Ritter's.

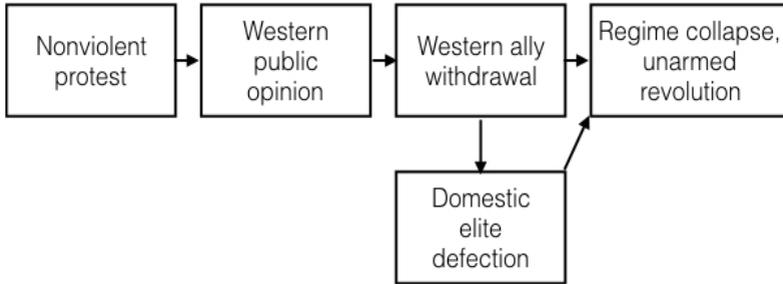
The US military has bases or a military presence in over 100 countries, and has been involved in dozens of wars and military operations in the past century, many of them causing a major backlash in world opinion. The 2003 invasion of Iraq was disastrous for the reputation of the US government, which had risen to unprecedented heights in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. For the US government to lead an invasion, illegal in international law and based on false claims about weapons of mass destruction and al Qaeda connections, tarnished the image of Western benevolence. Yet Ritter refers to speeches by members of the Bush administration shortly before and after the 2003 invasion as playing a role in building the iron cage of liberalism. A cynic might say that the invasion, and the subsequent exposure of abuse and torture by US guards at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, created a countervailing “iron cage of liberal hypocrisy.”

In his accounts of nonviolent revolutions, and the antecedent international and domestic circumstances in each country, Ritter relies on conventional political accounts. He presents a case for the relevance of the iron cage, but does not examine alternative explanations from the civil resistance literature. For example, although he cites Chenoweth and Stephan’s *How Civil Resistance Works*, Ritter does not discuss their detailed account of the Iranian revolution.

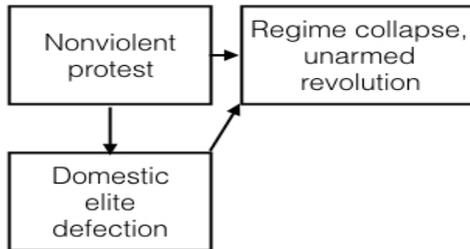
Ritter’s failure to examine civil resistance perspectives is most apparent in his treatment of the failed struggles in Libya and Syria in 2011. He notes that regime opponents turned to violence, and does not examine other options they might have pursued. Among other options for the opponents are (1) continuing with public protests in the face of repression and (2) switching to a strategy of dispersion, for example strikes and boycotts. Ritter, though, ignores strategic options and simply reports, in the case of Libya, “In the face of state brutality, protesters armed themselves ...” (p. 178), seemingly assuming some sort of inevitability to the switch from nonviolent to armed resistance. As Sharp and others have documented, maintaining nonviolent discipline is crucial to the success of civil resistance, and it has been argued that the resistance in Libya and Syria would have had a better chance of success by avoiding armed struggle (Chenoweth, 2011; Zunes, 2013).

Further research needed

Ritter's model of how nonviolent protest can lead to unarmed revolution is portrayed in a diagram (p. 170), shown below, which is a straightforward sequence of influences.



It may be contrasted with a simpler diagram closer to the usual model used in civil resistance studies.



The question concerns the two additional elements in Ritter's chain: Western public opinion and Western ally withdrawal. How important are they, and are they needed at all?

First it should be noted that Ritter's model is compatible with what Johan Galtung calls the "great chain of nonviolence." This involves an indirect influence on regimes, via one or more intermediaries. So Ritter's model is plausible. But Galtung did not specify a single sort of chain. There are various possibilities, some of them involving domestic elites, some involving international groups, and so forth.

Consider the collapse of Eastern European communist regimes in 1989. There were no Western allies, so Ritter's model is of limited relevance, as he acknowledges. Would it be plausible to speak of an "iron

cage of socialism” based on commitments to equality? Or is it better to go directly to the civil resistance picture?

Consider the Hungarian resistance to Austrian repression in the mid 1800s or the Finnish resistance to Russian domination from 1898 to 1905. These were well before the rise of human rights rhetoric. Then there were the 11 cases in which dictators in countries in South and Central America were overthrown as a result of civic strikes in the period 1931–1961 (Parkman, 1990). Again, façade democracy and ties to the US government seem not to have played major roles. The second figure seems more relevant.

Ritter writes, “Representatives for democratic countries like France simply cannot justify the support of a dictator when the people rises up to seemingly demand the precise values the West sees as its political foundation” (p. 155). Campaigners against Indonesian repression in West Papua wish that “representatives for democratic countries” would withdraw their support, and indeed that the elected government of Indonesia itself would do likewise.

Conclusion

Ritter has provided a fascinating argument, backed up by a careful analysis of the three cases of Iran, Tunisia and Egypt. However, in doing so, he has relied on assumptions common in the study of politics and international relations, including the effectiveness of unrestrained repression. Ritter’s claims about the importance of democratisation and liberal rhetoric for the success of nonviolent struggles need further investigation. While ties with Western governments may play a role, positive or negative, so will other factors.

Lawrence Wittner (1993–2003), in his comprehensive study of movements against nuclear weapons, provides evidence that government leaders were affected by anti-bomb protests even though in public they claimed not to be. Perhaps in the future, further information will become available about private discussions and correspondence by leaders of Iran, Tunisia and Egypt so that it will be possible to see how much they were worried about responses from Western governments or about adhering to their own liberal rhetoric.

It is hardly a surprise that international alliances, economics, rhetoric and many other factors affect the prospects for nonviolent struggle. Indeed, it is the task of shrewd organisers to take these factors into account when developing strategies. Military campaigns need to be assessed in the light of alliances, opportunities and opponent tactics, and so likewise do nonviolent campaigns. The elements of façade democracy are not just conditions affecting the success of nonviolent struggle, but rather are part of the social environment considered in strategic planning. Unfortunately, Ritter does not address this dimension of civil resistance.

Ritter's goal, like that of most political scientists, is to *explain* political dynamics; his specific goal is to explain the success of nonviolent revolutions. However, there is another possible goal for scholars: to provide insights for campaigners. Until there is a more solid case, activists would be unwise to wait for or rely on liberal rhetoric as a basis for their campaigning.

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Lee, Terence; Defect or defend: military responses to popular protests in authoritarian Asia

Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2015, pp 264, ISBN 9781421415161

Terence Lee’s *Defect or defend* compares two successful regime changes (Philippines and Indonesia) due to popular mobilization and defections within the armed forces, and two failed popular mobilizations (China and Burma), that failed due to a stronger version of authoritarianism (“power-sharing institutions”).

The fundamental argument by the author is that the *type of authoritarian institutions* will decide the likelihood of military defections, and thus the outcome of popular mobilizations. *Personalistic regimes* tend to create defections, where *power-sharing regimes* do not. Personalistic regimes create winners and losers within their elite coalition, and there are few options for the promotion and mobility of those that fail to gain the support of the totalitarian ruler. These dissatisfied military officers look for opportunities to change their situation and a rebellion offers one such opportunity. However, a pact is required between discontented officers and the regime’s opposition in order for the defections to become widespread. A pact ensures that enough defections are possible, and that the uprising will not be easily crushed by the military. Without an agreement, only small pockets of defections will occur, increasing the risk of general instability, often resulting in civil war. The author focuses in the literature on how certain authoritarian regimes are more vulnerable to civil resistance, emphasizing the situations of the regime’s military.

Questions asked include questioning why some officers seek change, and how a defection can be more than an individual choice and instead a part of a political process and alliance that affects the struggle's dynamic. Lee is generous in pointing out the weaknesses in his own study, an unusual and impressive way of lending credibility to a study with much academic potential limited both in scope and analysis.

The text does not look at any other factors besides military defection, which limits its theoretical scope. While every study needs to be focused in order to create a coherent analysis, there are some gaps that oversimplify the work. There is, for example, no real discussion on what role the different strategies of opposition have for facilitating (or limiting) the defections or outcome of the rebellion. Also, there is no discussion of the importance of political mobilization within the military. Furthermore, although authoritarian institutions are discussed in a refreshing, nuanced way, the typology between "personalistic" and "power-sharing" regimes is treated as dualistic, while it is arguably a continuum (with a broad range of elite coalitions and forms of sharing power). For example, Lee himself uses the expression "high personalism", which implicitly suggests that there exist "low personalism" and thus there exist degrees of how personalistic a regime may be. Therefore, the result of the study is a rather unmotivated determinism. Personalism correlates to military defection in the face of popular mobilization (since it serves as an opportunity for dissatisfied officers to escape), so the institution of a pact between the opposition and defecting officers will result in enduring protests and an eventual authoritarian collapse.

In the discussion of the explanatory potential of this defection model for cases of authoritarianism in Asia and elsewhere, Lee recognizes its mixed results. It seems to fit only in some cases. One of the possible explanations of the model's success in Tunisia and Egypt, (as opposed to its failure in Syria, Libya and Bahrain) has to do with the existence of ethnic or religious divisions created between the regime, its military and society at large. He has, however, no equally compelling explanations for the success of the uprising against the Thai military Junta in 1992 or the East European regime changes of 1989-90.

Even if we accept that the authoritarianism defection model suggested by Lee as generally correct, it seems as if different social cleavages

(such as ethnicity, religion, caste or region) threaten the defection-mechanism in ways that warrant further qualitative analysis. However, Lee does not take that further step.

Another step not taken is the failure to answer the obvious question of how an opposition could possibly *foster a shift* in the elite coalition that upholds a regime, irrespective of whether it is a personalistic or power-sharing regime. What new civil resistance strategies are necessary to make that possible? Assuming that power-sharing regimes also create dissatisfied elite groups, it seems possible to develop means of exploiting defections for the use of a wise oppositional movement. One indication resistance methods affect security forces is demonstrated in the research that shows activists can *decrease the levels* of repression. Binnendijk and Marovic has shown in their article “Power and persuasion: Nonviolent strategies to influence state security forces in Serbia (2000) and Ukraine (2004)” how creative tactics used by oppositional groups can “undermine the willingness of state security forces to engage in violent acts” against activists (*Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 39 (2006), pp. 411-429).

Terence Lee’s *Defect or defend* is clearly a contribution to our understanding of defection, particularly by relating defection to the type of authoritarian institutions. At the same time, the limitations of the study points to the need of larger comparative n-studies of military defection, and a combination of factors in such a comparison in order to find out what more than authoritarian institutions determine outcomes of popular mobilizations. To me it seems clear that Lee has detected one important part of the puzzle, but that the whole picture is still very unclear, and deals much more with *combination effects and dynamics* than what this study suggests.

Stellan Vinthagen, Editor, Journal of Resistance Studies

Bartkowski, Maciej; Nonviolent Civilian Defense to Counter Russian Hybrid Warfare

*Johns Hopkins University Center for Advanced Governmental Studies, 2015,
<http://www.advanced.jhu.edu/nonviolent>*

Normally, violence and nonviolence are seen as separate modes of action. However, they can be used along with each other, as a form of “hybrid warfare.” When used for aggressive purposes, this poses a novel challenge to advocates of nonviolent action.

This topic is addressed by Maciej Bartkowski in his valuable study of Russian hybrid warfare. In pursuing its war against Ukraine, in the Crimea and the Donbas region in eastern Ukraine, the Russian government has used a variety of techniques, including troops in disguise, propaganda, and civilians supported by the state. The civilians engage in sit-ins, occupations and protective accompaniment of troops. The government has learned that Ukrainian troops are reluctant to attack civilians and, if they do, their actions can be used to justify Russian military intervention. Many Ukrainian troops have defected or deserted.

This 27-page paper is valuable enough for its account of Russian hybrid warfare. It goes beyond this by offering a response: civilian-based defence, which involves organised actions by civilians to resist aggression, including ostracism of invading troops, documenting of attacks, sabotaging equipment and ensuring social support systems (food, shelter, etc.), all the while refraining from using violence. If nonviolent defenders are attacked, this undermines the credibility of the attackers, leading to defections and an erosion of popular support for aggression.

Bartkowski provides an informed review of the literature on nonviolent civilian defence, which can also be called social defence or defence by civil resistance, among other names. Just as importantly, he reviews initiatives in the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which adopted policies in support of civilian defence prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union. He notes that the subsequent incorporation of these states into NATO undermined commitment to civilian defence.

From Bartkowski's perspective, nonviolent defence is an obvious alternative to military defence in circumstances such as the Crimean struggle, yet it has been almost entirely overlooked by Western strategic planners. This is despite the wide recognition of nonviolent strategies for challenging repressive regimes.

The paper is especially good in providing concrete examples of Russian hybrid warfare methods and of nonviolent actions and planning, including Danish resistance to the Nazis and recent initiatives for nonviolent defence in Lithuania. It is well written and referenced.

While Bartkowski presents a strong case for supporting nonviolent civilian defence, and gives many examples of what governments could do, he does not examine strategies for activists to move in this direction in the face of the continuing lack of interest by most governments. It can be argued that because nonviolent defence empowers the citizenry, it is a threat to government power, so leaders are more comfortable in continuing to rely on military methods. In other words, they intuitively make judgements about modes of defence less on the basis of effectiveness and more on the basis of compatibility with existing power structures. Therefore, moves towards nonviolent alternatives may have to come from grassroots movements.

Despite a lack of attention to strategy, this paper deserves to be read for its insightful analysis of Russian hybrid warfare — which may be a model for the future — and for showing the value of organised nonviolent action as a way of resisting it. The topics Bartkowski addresses deserve more attention from resistance scholars and activists.

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Chris Dixon; *Another Politics:* Talking Across Today's Transformative Movements

University of California Press, 2014, pp. 355, ISBN: 9780520279025

Another Politics looks at the practices of numerous activists in many North American non-violent resistance groups and attempts to extract some common challenges and possible solutions. In particular, the role of leadership is highly contested within many anti-authoritarian political movements. Much can be learned from these struggles, which often take place inside groups and organizations and are therefore somewhat hidden from many members and outsiders. The everyday struggles that take place within resistance movements are very productive events or relationships that can inform academic work and help create a broader understanding of social and political change. This book is an excellent example of how empirical research can give rise to fresh ways of conceptualizing social movements and may also provide solutions for change that avoid some of the common obstacles we have seen in the past.

Resistance movements are diverse in their aims and methods, although the simple division between peaceful and violent resistance has often dominated discussions on characterizing resistance. This sort of dichotomous thinking does little to explain the many possibilities within these movements. Ideas such as 'diversity of tactics' enable activists to both discuss and practice a broad variety of resistance strategies. For resistance studies, these different groups can help reveal the various benefits and costs of alternative strategies. There is still a great deal of thinking to be done about these differences and it is valuable for this theorizing to be informed by actual struggles. Sometimes new ways of theorizing a problem are first enacted through practice before being translated into academic theory.

The approach of *Another Politics*

Another Politics is the product of a multi-year project to explore and connect political movements that work to oppose and change current power

structures. It is of particular interest to activists engaged in organizing for progressive social change and will also appeal to those who work within academe attempting to align their work with activism. The specific movements and organizations addressed in this book are largely based in North America and often focused on local issues, however they feature connections to global perspectives. The case studies represent a large and diverse group of communities that are well-connected to the increasingly globalized nexus of modern capitalism and various anti-globalizing forces. This book succeeds in finding commonalities between various movements. The resistance actions discussed fall under the broad umbrella term of 'social justice movements' including but not limited to students, veterans, feminist and gender activists. The author, Chris Dixon, specifically argues that anti-authoritarian currents could provide effective paths for social change. Said anti-authoritarian currents have increasingly come to the attention of academics noticing that anarchist ideas previously belittled or excluded from many discussions of social movements are gaining more tolerance or support amongst both professionals and the general public.

This book is written in an accessible style which offers readers many ideas for making activist discussions more productive and planning political actions that more effectively achieve their goals within a variety of social movements. It is not a narrative of the creation, growth, and decline of specific social movements, but is rather a thematically organized discussion on how groups work to implement change in both their local communities and the global arena. It includes numerous stories of campaigns on anti-authoritarian projects. The themes on which Dixon focuses most heavily are anti-racist feminism, prison abolitionism, and anarchism. He posits that these issues are currently some of the most significant and valuable movements covered by anti-authoritarianism. All three share historical roots, yet seem to have gained a new impetus in their opposition to a globalized, neo-liberal pressure that seems to define dominant political and economic structures.

As part of his effort to understand how these resistance movements work, Dixon uses a 'critically synthetic' approach. He defines this as a way of combining knowledge from divergent traditions and move-

ments in order to avoid ‘correct line’ politics (p. 60). He asserts that when people pay too much attention to reaching a ‘correct’ analysis, they miss lessons that can be learned from the messy, everyday world of political action and the multiplicity of experiences, circumstances, and consequent negotiations that occur when different people and communities meet. He argues that a nonsectarian approach is valuable when working across the international, complex web of hegemonic imperial capitalism.

For the purpose of this book, Dixon breaks down the current wave of resistance to four ‘anti’s’: Anti-authoritarianism, anti-capitalism, anti-oppression, and anti-imperialism. He asserts that these four streams of resistance are at the heart of what he labels ‘another politics’. Inspired by the Zapatistas in Mexico, the term ‘another politics’ helps to delineate a political movement that Dixon describes as ‘increasingly sophisticated’ and whose story is ‘largely untold’ (p. 7). He does not claim that this movement is entirely unique but rather that it addresses known problems in a way that could provide new wisdom and power to ‘victims’ of oppression. One of the challenges that arises within a resistance movement is concerned with how to construct new social organizations which can effectively create opportunities for those subject to exclusion and oppression. ‘Another politics’ helps us understand how we can both, for instance, oppose prisons in general and support their abolition while also exploring new ways to help people living within the existing prison system. Dixon points out that there is tension between being in opposition to something like the prison system and trying to live beyond the effects of that system. It is difficult to both escape and engage. We must find a balance that gives us some freedom while also allowing us to fight systems effectively to produce new social possibilities.

Strategy and tactics in resistance movements

The discussions of strategy and leadership within movements for social change are important within the realm of resistance studies and are thus a particularly strong element of the book. As part of these conversations, Dixon discusses the oft over-used term ‘prefigurative politics’ and the different ways in which it can be understood. This is important because the term usage is often misunderstood in terms of its implications

for developing social change strategies. Prefigurative politics describe a specific understanding of how goals and strategies are connected. Prefigurative strategies involve such ideas as being ‘in the world but not of it’. This refers to the difficulty of being enmeshed in localized struggles that involve goals that may seem to be at odds with a movement’s broader political aims. For instance, he talks about the group ‘Solidarity Across Borders’ and the difficulties that some members have in reconciling the work that they do with the broader political objectives of the group. The ultimate aim of some in this group is to eliminate national borders completely or nullify their ability to stop people’s movements on a global scale. However, in their practical projects to defend immigrants, refugees, and other people subject to border control, there is an acceptance of borders as a fundamental reality that must be accepted in order to benefit people subject to border oppression (p. 131). He sees this as a problem for people who wish to adhere to a ‘correct political line’ but also as an area of productive tension where new strategies and tactics can be developed that take the current conditions into account but still keep more idealistic goals in mind.

His experiences within different anti-authoritarian resistance groups provide examples of different goals, strategies, and tactics for negotiating with power. All of these possibilities mean that there are many different forms of resistance and their efficacy can be highly contested. Struggles around goals, strategies, and tactics take place both within and between groups and external powers. For instance, ‘No One is Illegal’ (NOII) is an organization that is in many ways fundamentally opposed to the existence of modern forms of the state because they theorize that the states are the primary reason for the existence of borders and border controls that can create a great deal of hardship for people (p. 128). Particularly in the case of refugee crises, borders can become very arbitrary and punitive obstacles. States are given the role of the neutral arbiter of border conflict, and it is often assumed that there is a logic inherent to the state that determines these decisions. In practice, NOII has found that the enforcement of borders and border controls is actually far more complex and involves many small-scale decisions that are made by individuals and private interest groups, including companies and corporations. Many activists in NOII have learned from their practical experi-

ence of influencing decisions about border enforcement and developed different forms of resistance that do not come from a theoretical understanding or a 'strategic vision' but are reactionary in some ways. Dixon then argues that connecting these lessons back into theory and strategy is an important component of successful resistance organization.

Leadership in anti-authoritarian movements

The kind of empirical data that is found in this book allows for a further analysis of how power and resistance interact and connect. Dixon does not promote a particular theoretical agenda, although his educational background would enable him to do so. He prefers to present information about what people are doing (praxis) and what people are thinking (theory) within activist communities and allow these different voices to mingle and contrast with one another. This facilitates a creative path of resistance that can adapt to constantly changing power relations. There are numerous ways in which these relations can be theorized. For instance, the same action could exhibit some aspects of a Foucauldian analysis of power, but could also be considered within a Bourdieusian framework of forms of capital (habitus, field and symbolic), or through the Marxist lens of class conflict. The point is that there are many paths of resistance and that these paths include different experiences and understandings of power relations.

One type of power relationship that is important both within and without resistance movements is the role of leaders. Classical sociological texts, such as those of Max Weber, tend to classify and analyze different types of leadership without questioning the existence or role of leadership itself. Leadership can be quite difficult to reconcile with anti-authoritarian politics in particular and is often a source of disagreement within resistance movements. Dixon argues that we need to recognize both the strengths and weaknesses within different forms of leadership, and find ways to analyze and use the qualities of leadership to move towards more abstract goals of liberation or social change. He advocates for 'leadership from below' that can utilize the existing leadership skills of certain members of the public while simultaneously developing leadership skills in others. Cyclic redistribution of leadership power contributes to a better understanding on how leadership roles are filled, and can help groups

actively learn how to deal with personal differences in constructive ways. He describes the idea of building a 'leaderful' movement that will make any organization both stronger in advocating for change, more equitable in how it currently functions, and more empowering for group members.

This question of leadership is particularly revealing when trying to understand resistance movements. The presence and form of leadership structures is often an aspect of organizations that is taken for granted. Two opposing arguments are often presented. One is that 'strong' leadership is needed to keep an organization focused on specific goals and to effectively engage and negotiate with powerful structural elements that the movement would like to change. For instance, a prison abolition organization may feel that is important to have knowledgeable leaders who can talk to decision makers within the criminal justice system. This often means that the leadership of the resistance group may share characteristics and communication styles with the leadership of the group that they are trying to change (p. 177). The activism leadership must speak the same language and share social norms with the dominant group so that they are not immediately dismissed as unreasonable. This is often seen within union movements where there is little observable difference between union leaders and business leaders when they occupy the same space. This type of leadership is also normally associated with a hierarchical decision-making structures that give preference to the opinions of leaders and may even give them power over others.

The other argument is that the presence of leaders is a problem that is best solved by reducing a leader's power or, more problematically, hiding the leadership roles by disguising a system or group appear leaderless(p. 178). This is often a reaction to the hierarchical structures on which conventional leaders often depend. Whether they use persuasion or punishment, a hierarchy gives precedence to their perceptions and decisions. Reducing this precedence is seen as a crucial component of creating a more egalitarian organization. Dixon describes the 'no leaders sleight of hand' that often results in a refusal to recognize differences and diversity within a movement and therefore fails to address possible means of working with these differences in order to create a more egalitarian and just societal organization. This argument over the visibility and usefulness of leadership has been around for a while. For instance, it was

addressed in the pamphlet, “The Tyranny of Structurelessness”, by Jo Freeman in 1972. If we do not make the qualities and practices of leadership visible, we cannot analyze them. If we cannot analyze them, we cannot change them or adapt them to new circumstances. In order to follow through with a ‘critically synthetic’ approach to understanding resistance movements, a full discussion of how leadership works is necessary. There is much to be learned from the practical struggles on this subject that have taken place within anti-authoritarian groups in particular.

Building resistance and resistance studies

Establishing strategic goals and reworking leadership models and practices are only two pieces of building an effective resistance movement. Resistance does not solely concern disruption. It is also tasked with building new structures and relationships. Resistance movements struggle with numerous questions that are not present within the discourses of dominance, such as: how can activists operate within a system that they fundamentally oppose? How can they exemplify new social structures when so many people are dependent on the old social structures? How can they retain an independent identity in resistance to hegemonic norms yet also acquiesce to said norms daily to survive? Some of these questions, while potent amongst anti-authoritarian groups, are relevant to all activists and researchers who wish to understand resistance.

Dixon’s analysis of current resistance movements is coloured by his own efforts as a North American activist and educator. After earning a PhD from the History of Consciousness Program at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Davis opted out of a career in formal academics. *Another Politics* offers a great deal of advice to both academic researchers and activists. It does an excellent job of bringing the experiences of current activists into academic discussions around social movements and politics. The book appears to be largely meant as a resource for activists rather than a contribution to some specific school of thought within academe. It is nonetheless an excellent example of how academic work can inform real-life efforts to organize and change social structures without completely losing sight of some of the lessons to be learned from more abstract theoretical discussions. The book cites an extensive bibliography, and includes numerous references to further references useful to

researchers and activists alike. The book is not easily categorized within a specific discipline but is a valuable resource for anyone with either an academic interest or an active involvement in resistance movements.

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Majken Jul Sørensen; Humorous Political Stunts

Sparsnäs, Sweden, Irene Publishing, 2015, pp. 589, ISBN: 978-91-88061-01-0

“Humorous political stunts can be powerful stories because they frequently speak to the imagination,” writes Majken Jul Sørensen in her fascinating new book *Humorous Political Stunts: Nonviolent Public Challenges to Power*. The author invites readers to walk with her in her journey to explore the creativity, and wit involved in nonviolent activism. The author in this well documented scholarly book, shares stories, and instances of her participation in political stunts, to provide glimpses of previously unnoticed political advantages that are innate to humorous political stunts.

Armed with artistic skills, and seamless narrative style that traverses through the unseen, this book speaks the language of the ordinary people. Ms. Sørensen, astutely identifies typologies of humorous political stunts, and they are: supportive, corrective, naïve, absurd, and provocative. A very funny, and powerful account is presented about John Howard—the notorious conservative former Prime Minister of Australia—who apparently had a “fan club.” The members of this fan club exaggerated their love and loyalty towards the ex-Prime Minister while satirizing his racist policies through actions such as “White Blindfold,” where tram riders were asked to put on a white blindfold so they could not see anything. The message this group tried to convey was that white supremacism could ‘white out’ everything in sight. Humorous political stunts like this are not just entertaining, argues Sørensen. She claims that these stunts serve to enable outreach facilitation, movement mobilization and cultivation of culture(s) of nonviolent resistance. Most importantly, the imaginative power of humor can weaken the dominant values and beliefs.

This book is worth your attention for three reasons:

First, the book documents creative actions of nonviolent groups that aspires to change their societies, and the world around them. Therefore, seasoned activists should read this book to learn, and to incorporate tactics defined in the text in their own struggle.

Second: Because the author analyzes complex narratives, and stories of more than ten activist groups operating across three continents (Asia, Australia, and Europe), her analysis provides new insights into political effectiveness of humorous stunts, which hasn't been studied enough in the existing scholarship of nonviolence, and social movements.

Lastly, while some may argue that the book preaches to the choir, the theoretical role, examined in the book, that of humorous political stunts on discrediting power, and challenging it, should not be discounted. Domination is at the discursive level, and mobilization for change will not occur without reframing current situation, and humor can activate this cognitive function through creating images of alternative reality. Further, this may help alter the fatalistic outlook—the point from where change is viewed as a foreign unattainable object—which is embraced by oppressed people. Also, Sørensen asserts the transformative power of humor through her ethnographic research.

However, some questions remain unanswered. While some are peskier than others, I will put forward some troubling ones here: What will happen, if and when, the dominant power holders adapt to humorous political stunts? Could it be possible that the dominant system has already developed resilience to humorous political stunts, and thereby the web of domination is immune to discursive shifts? Perhaps, answers to these questions will be answered in Sørensen's next book.

Janjira Sobatpoonsiri, Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University

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