

“Everyday Resistance”: Exploration of a Concept and its Theories

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This article explores the concept and theories of “everyday resistance”, and develops a theoretical framework that aims to develop studies of resistance in everyday life. Since James C. Scott introduced this concept in 1985, research has grown within partly overlapping fields – mainly subaltern, feminist, cultural, queer, peasant and poststructural studies – thus warranting clarifications of this relatively elusive concept. Theories within emerging “resistance studies” differ but they agree that resistance is an *oppositional act*. Like all acts, resistance is situated in certain time, space and relations, and engages with different (types of) actors, techniques and discourses. Therefore, articulations of oppositional acts will be *plural*. Our discussion of contemporary studies makes it possible to develop some proposals: (1) Everyday resistance is a *practice* (neither a certain consciousness, intent, recognition, nor an outcome); (2) It is historically *entangled* with (everyday) power (not separated, dichotomous or independent); (3) Everyday resistance needs to be understood as *intersectional* as the powers it engages (not engaging with one single power relation); and (4) It is *heterogenic and contingent* due to changing contexts and situations (not a universal strategy or unitary action form). Thus, the heterogenic and contingent practice of everyday resistance is, due to its entanglement with and intersectional relations to power, discursively articulated by actors, targets and observers; sometimes as “resistance” and sometimes not. However, it might be necessary to identify everyday resistance also when parties themselves call it something else. Further development of our understanding of everyday resistance warrants systematic research programs that are engaged with both critical conceptual-theory discussions and specific empirical case studies.

In one of the most well-known quotes of Michel Foucault, he claims that “Where there is power, there is resistance” (1978: 95–96). This also mean, as Lila Abu-Lughod observes, that “where there is resistance, there is power” (1990: 42). Still, social science has been, as was

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² The empirical illustrations all deal with “everyday resistance” (seen in an inclusive sense), illustrate different

Foucault, preoccupied with exploring power, but has been largely isolated from an analysis of resistance. Since resistance is helpful in order to understand power it seems necessary, also for the sake of understanding power, that we strengthen resistance studies. This overview article explores the concept and theories of one form of resistance: “everyday resistance”, and outlines a theoretical framework that aims to develop studies of this special kind of resistance. Everyday resistance is about how people act in their everyday lives in ways that might undermine power. Everyday resistance is not easily recognized like public and collective resistance – such as rebellions or demonstrations – but it is typically hidden or disguised, individual and not politically articulated. Therefore, everyday resistance poses a special challenge for research; but, it is well worth the effort. Our initial aim is to map the specific field of everyday resistance, its main theoretical approaches and the range of different empirical material.² The key debates of the field that we will visit are: (1) How to define “everyday resistance”; (2) If the resistance actors’ intentions or consciousness matter in relation to the definition; (3) The question of whether it is possible to separate power and resistance – not only analytically but also empirically; (4) If resistance is directed against one power relation or several power relations, simultaneously (i.e. the question of “intersectionality”); and lastly, (5) If what counts as “resistance” is a matter of context and discourse, or something universal. By taking positions in these debates, the proceeding aim is to theoretically develop our understanding of everyday resistance by suggesting how it can be fruitfully interpreted as an *activity* in a dynamic interaction with *opposition* to power.³

² The empirical illustrations all deal with “everyday resistance” (seen in an inclusive sense), illustrate different theoretical points, deal with issues from different fields of studies, and together show a variation of intersections, space and time. When possible we use complex theories of power and resistance with empirical richness to illustrate various dimensions and aspects of resistance. When not possible we use different illustrations that together show a complexity and variation.

³ In this analysis “power” is understood in a Foucauldian sense as something practiced in all social relations throughout the society, on all levels and in indeterminate struggles, negotiations and changing relations of forces. In line with Foucault power is understood as sometimes forbidding, but primarily productive and basically decentred, heterogenic and plural, however, sometimes taking somewhat more stable forms, as “domination”. However, our analysis of everyday resistance aims to also suit other understandings of power, at least those with a family resemblance to Foucault, e.g. Bourdieu, Butler, Laclau, Lukes, etc.

Through this exploration we hope to show the potential usefulness of the concept; most importantly, if some pitfalls are avoided, the common focus on consciousness.

The existence of mundane or non-dramatic resistance shows that resistance could be understood as a *continuum* between public confrontations and hidden subversion. It also suggests a possibility to understand *from where* open rebellions come, and why sometimes and in some places they don't occur, despite "objective" conditions. Furthermore, everyday resistance suggests that resistance is *integrated into social life* and is a part of normality; not as dramatic or strange as assumed – even if it is still unclear how common it is.⁴ It is thus a concept that brings new clarity to "resistance"; a recurrent social phenomenon that has often been ignored, feared, demonized or romanticized.

A clear problem with the concept of "everyday resistance" is that it risks labeling too many other expressions as "resistance". All expressions of difference, deviation, or individuality should not, we think, be labeled "resistance". Every concept that is made excessively inclusive becomes less interesting or useful since it is not clear enough what different activities have in common. The challenge for our investigation is to explore if "everyday resistance" is possible to limit enough in order for it to be a useful and distinct concept, both for theoretical development and for empirical studies, while simultaneously avoiding limiting it so much that it loses its relation to social life, and becomes an academic externality.

⁴ We need more systematic and empirical studies to determine its actual frequency in different contexts.

PART I: “Everyday resistance”

“Everyday resistance” is a theoretical concept introduced by James Scott in 1985 in order to cover a different kind of resistance; one that is not as dramatic and visible as rebellions, riots, demonstrations, revolutions, civil war or other such organized, collective or confrontational articulations of resistance (Scott 1985, 1989, 1990). Everyday resistance is *quiet, dispersed, disguised or otherwise seemingly invisible*; something Scott interchangeably calls “infrapolitics”. Scott shows how certain common behavior of subaltern groups (for example, foot-dragging, escape, sarcasm, passivity, laziness, misunderstandings, disloyalty, slander, avoidance or theft) is not always what it seems to be, but instead resistance. Scott argues these activities are tactics that exploited people use in order to both survive and undermine repressive domination; especially in contexts when rebellion is too risky.⁵

Scott fundamentally transformed our understanding of “politics”, making the ordinary life of subalterns part of political affairs. He also directly played an inspirational role for the international establishment of “subaltern studies” as a distinct school that reformulated a “history from below” of India and South Asia (Kelly 1992: note 1, 297; Ludden 2002: 7–11; Sivaramakrishnan 2005), and he still inspires numerous empirical studies on everyday resistance (Sivaramakrishnan 2005): with general applications (for example, Smyth & Grijns (1997)) on how covert resistance transforms into overt forms, (for example, Adnan (2007)) or on effectiveness, (for example, Korovkin (2000)). Some deal with specific social spaces, such as the workplace (Huzell 2005), the family (for example, studies of resistance among women in violent relationships; Holmberg & Ehnander 2007) or gay/queer spaces (Myslik 1996; Campbell 2004). Others study everyday resistance and specific categories, often women, low-skilled workers, migrants, gay/queer people, Palestinians, minorities, peasants, but also

⁵ This “zone of struggle exists *in between* the public and hidden ‘transcripts’ of native discourse, a construction of resistance not dissimilar to Bhabha’s ‘Third Space’ of colonial discourse” (Jefferess 2008: 38).

sometimes “new agents” such as white-power activists (Simi & Futurell 2009), or white, middle class singles resisting stigmatization (Zajicek & Koski 2003). Studies may also cover specific themes, such as resistance and stigma (Buseh & Stevens 2006) or resistance and consumption/shopping (Fiske 1989) etc.

Scott has suggested a general categorization of resistance that builds on two main forms: *the public and the disguised resistance* (Scott 1985: Table 6.1). These two forms of resistance relate to three forms of domination (material, status and ideological), which results in six types of resistance. Resistance exists as *publicly declared resistance* (open revolts, petitions, demonstrations, land invasions, etc.) against: (1) material domination; (2) *assertion of worth or desecration* of status symbols against status domination; (3) *counter-ideologies* against ideological domination. Further, resistance exists in the disguised form (low profile, undisclosed or “infrapolitics”) as *everyday resistance* (e.g. poaching, squatting, desertion, evasion, foot-dragging); (4) *direct resistance* by disguised resisters against material domination; (5) *hidden transcripts of anger* or *disguised discourses of dignity* against status domination; or (6) *dissident subcultures* (e.g. millennial religion, myths of social banditry, class heroes) against ideological domination.

Thus, a typology of “paired forms of resistance” construes the difference between everyday resistance and “a more direct, open confrontation”. In everyday resistance one seeks “tacit, *de facto* gains”, while in the other “formal, *de jure* – recognition of those gains” (Scott 1989: 34). Desertion corresponds to open mutiny in the same way as pilfering is the hidden version of open attacks on markets, etc. Objectives are similar, but the forms are different. “If everyday resistance is ‘heavy’ on the instrumental side and ‘light’ on the symbolic confrontation side, then the contrasting acts would be ‘light’ on the instrumental side and ‘heavy’ on the

symbolic side” (Scott 1989: 56). Everyday techniques are “small scale”, “relatively safe”, “promise vital material gains” and “require little or no *formal* coordination” (Scott 1989: 35), but “*some* level of cooperation” and evolve into “a *pattern* of resistance” (Scott 1989: 36) that “rely on a venerable popular culture of resistance” (Scott 1989: 35). The practical techniques come in many varieties but acquire “a certain unity ... [through their] invariably quiet, disguised, anonymous, often undeclared forms” (Scott 1989: 37). This amounts to a:

... quite unremitting guerilla warfare ... day-in and day-out [that] rarely make headlines. But just as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, thousands upon thousands of petty acts of insubordination and evasion create a political and economic barrier reef of their own. And whenever ... the ship of state runs aground on such a reef, attention is typically directed to the shipwreck itself and not the vast aggregation of actions which make it possible. (Scott 1989: 49).

According to Scott, the form of resistance depends on the form of power. Those who claim that “‘real resistance’ is organized, principled, and has revolutionary implications ... overlook entirely the vital role of power relations in constraining forms of resistance” (Scott 1989: 51). If we only care for “real resistance” then “all that is being measured may be the level of repression that structures the available options” (Scott 1989: 51).

The coordination of small acts of resistance is not done formally but informally through the subaltern culture. Scott first understood this while studying his first subaltern culture, that of peasants in South East Asia. He argues that the “climate of opinion” articulated in “folk culture” of peasants gives legitimacy, or even a “celebration, of precisely the kinds of evasive forms of resistance” (Scott 1989: 52). What we find is a typical way of doing collective actions, not unique for resistance. Peasant societies coordinate a range of complex activities such as “labor-exchange to wedding preparations, to rituals [through] networks of

understanding and practice” (Scott 1989: 52). However, everyday resistance is “not a peasant monopoly” (Scott 1989: 52), but one that exists among all kinds of subalterns (Scott 1990).

The key characteristic of everyday resistance is the “pervasive use of disguise”, through either “the concealment of anonymity of the resister”, in which “the *personal* (not the class) identity of the protesters” is kept secret, or concealment of the act itself (Scott 1989: 54). “Instead of a clear message delivered by a disguised messenger, an ambiguous message is delivered by clearly identified messengers” (Scott 1989: 54–55). “A practical act of resistance is thus often accompanied by a public discursive affirmation of the very arrangements being resisted” (Scott 1989: 56). And within folk culture we typically find trickster figures, spirituals, metaphors or euphemisms that “have a double meaning ... so that they cannot be treated as a direct, open challenge” (Scott 1989: 54).

The two main forms of resistance have very different relations to the dominant symbolic order. The “public, symbolic confrontations ... intended as discursive negations of the existing symbolic order ... fail unless they gain attention”, while everyday resistance “*by not openly* contesting norms of law, custom, politeness, deference, loyalty and so on leaves the dominant in command of the public stage” (Scott 1989: 57). Scott compares the two forms in an example of resistance to the “norm of a religiously sanctified marriage as the only legitimate basis for family life”, by arguing that this moral norm can be resisted not only through a social movement that “openly repudiates the norm”, but also through “a pattern of unsanctified, common law marriages that are widespread but ... undeclared as public acts” (Scott 1989: note 37, p. 62).

Even if Scott recognizes occasions when the hidden everyday resistance becomes public and collective (1989: 58), his conceptualization seems to create a dichotomy between the two main forms: everyday resistance and public resistance. One of the main criticisms voiced by Asef Bayat (1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 2000) against Scott and “the resistance literature” is this equation between subalterns and hidden, individualized and everyday forms of resistance. While Bayat admits “quite encroachment” – the concept Bayat prefers – is the typical kind of politics of subalterns, it is clear that the unemployed, slum-dwellers, urban poor and lowest of classes, regularly do, in fact, also employ public and collective resistance. “Quite encroachment” means “the silent, protracted but pervasive advancement of the ordinary people on the propertied and powerful in order to survive and improve their lives ... marked by quiet, largely atomized and prolonged mobilization with episodic collective action” (Bayat 2000: 545–546).

Similarly, Simi and Futurell (2009) claim the study of activism has become based on an implicit dichotomy of “normal activism” versus everyday resistance: “Researchers have not usually considered everyday forms of resistance to be what participants in established social movements do as part of their activism” (2009: 90). They argue that managing the stigma of being an activist in a certain social movement is a type of “veiled, identity-based resistance that occurs across many everyday contexts” (2009: 91). In their article “Negotiating White Power Activist Stigma” Sims and Futurell describe a process that “pivots on strategies of calculated concealment and revelation of their Aryan activist identity” (2009: 89). The Aryans experience stigmatization through experience of “soft” repression such as ridicule, ostracism, and other “interactional conflicts”, which surge within the contexts of everyday life. Based on interviews with Aryan activists the authors identify a wide range of stigmatization such as neighbors that shun and picket their residence when they are exposed, as well as losing jobs.

The Aryan activists always conceal more than they reveal and Simi and Futrell regard the disclosures the activists make as a “form of individual everyday activism to resist social controls that subjugate them to others’ values and identity expectations” (2009: 106).

Furthermore, all social movements are not necessarily creating formal kind of politics. Autonomous anarchists create what Katsiaficas calls an “anti-politics” of “the first person” in which individuals do not act on abstract principles, distant goals or on behalf of large-scale collectives, but based on their own desires and values by trying to implement change locally, informally and directly (1997).

Therefore, we have to avoid creating a dichotomy and need to understand everyday resistance as a different kind of resistance that relates to other resistance. It constitutes an *initial, off-stage, or later stage activity* in relation to other more sustained, organized and conventional political forms of resistance. Thus, everyday resistance goes on *between or at the side of* the dramatic resistance events. When and where everyday resistance occurs is not necessary for us to determine here.⁶ Our interest is to put the searchlight on these less obvious kinds of resistance that are – for the moment and in certain situations – neither expressed in dramatic, confrontational and public events, nor with (collectively elected) leadership, or (explicit) political motivations or sustained by formal (underground) organizations.

The concept “everyday” in everyday resistance is necessary to understand in contrast to the extraordinary or, according to Bhabha: the “spectacular”.⁷ Everyday resistance happens in other spaces and times or in other relations. In this sense it becomes the silent, mundane and

⁶ We instead develop a theoretical framework for empirical studies of everyday resistance at other places; see Johansson & Vinthagen (forthcoming, 2013).

⁷ Bhabha calls hidden resistance “sly civility”, which he differs from “spectacular resistance” (Jefferess 2008: 37–44).

ordinary acts that are normalized. Therefore, actors themselves are not necessarily regarding it as “resistance” at all, rather a normal part and way of their life, personality, culture and tradition. On the other hand, not everything within everyday politics or a subaltern lifestyle is resistance, since things might be political or expressions of claims without being resistance. It is, thus, necessary on the one hand to talk about acts as being resistance – in the sense of subordinate’s acts that might undermine power (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009) – and on the other hand acts that are part of the ordinary everyday life – in the sense of being integrated into actors’ way of life. If we have both of these aspects covered – the everyday and the resistance – then we have everyday resistance. Therefore, conceptualizing and analyzing everyday resistance begins with a double identification of something as being part of the everyday, and that part as being an expression of resistance to power.

We, consequently, propose a definition that reserves everyday resistance to such resistance that is *done routinely*, but which is *not politically articulated or formally organized* (yet or in that situation). It is a form of activity that often avoids being detected as resistance. But it might also be *made* invisible by society, by not being recognized as resistance. Acts that deviate from hegemonic understandings of resistance tend to achieve non-recognition. Sometimes we have a kind of “life-style” or “way of life” of people, like that of explicit vegans for example, that make visible everyday resistance to certain norms and discourses. Despite being a visible “counter-hegemonic embodiment” (Kwan & Roth 2011: 194) it is largely *politically* invisible, as it does not conform to conventional understandings of politics.

There are a number of alternative concepts that cover aspects of resistance that are done in the everyday. “Off-kilter resistance” is one possible concept and form that is not following any strategic principles, but tactical opportunities (Butz and Ripmeester 1999). “Infrapolitics”

(Scott 1990; Mittelman 2001) is a popular alternative, which emphasizes the fact that certain practices that have political intention or consequences are not treated or perceived as “political” in that society. “Embedded resistance” is a kind of “almost unwitting resistance” in which subalterns “influence the nature of the hegemonic structure as they broaden their roles by working within the system ... [and] continue to “embrace their role in the hegemonic system, and because, in hegemonic fashion, they are not motivated by a consciously articulated resistance” (Mihelich & Storrs 2003: 419). Some even use “worker resistance” or “peasant resistance” as their concept, thus based on the actor category, or “consumer resistance”, based on the activity category. We have chosen “everyday resistance” as our concept since it is intuitively understood and encompasses many variations, yet it easily relates to other resistance concepts (e.g. armed resistance, nonviolent resistance, economic resistance, etc.). We choose the concept despite being aware of a critique that it is difficult to distinguish from coping, survival-technique and compliance. In our view, these problems are possible to deal with by focusing on the *acts* of resistance, and avoid the trap of privileging the political *consciousness* of actors – something we will develop below.

Resistance studies build on theories, concepts and empirical findings within several research fields, disciplines or traditions (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009). Resistance studies are simultaneously rich yet poorly developed. Specialized and systematic research on “resistance” is uncommon; while at the same time “resistance” is a concept that is at least (occasionally) used within most social science disciplines. Thus, research on the subfield of everyday

resistance is even less developed, and therefore this article tries to contribute to such theoretical development.⁸

In Part II, the article will outline the heterogeneous theoretical perspectives of everyday resistance with the purpose to discuss the key theories of everyday resistance in relation to the two major propositions from an overview done by Hollander and Einwohner (2004): that resistance is an *activity*, and it is *oppositional*. With the help of two of the main researchers in the field, we then develop the ways in which everyday resistance can be understood as oppositional (James C Scott) and an activity (Michel de Certeau). Then, in Part III, we draw conclusions and discuss the kind of theoretical framework that has evolved from our encounter with the theories.

PART II: Theoretical perspectives on “everyday resistance”

Besides agreeing that resistance is an oppositional activity, the literature on resistance differs in the meaning of the concept, at the same time as the theoretical understanding and empirical scope varies tremendously (Hollander & Einwhoner 2004; Lilja & Vinthagen 2009). Therefore, we have chosen to orient ourselves according to the main theories. The classic theoretical frameworks for understanding resistance is based on the literature of Karl Polanyi, Antonio Gramsci and James. C. Scott (Gills 2000). Chin and Mittelman argue that these “three master theories of resistance. Antonio Gramsci’s concept of counter-hegemony, Karl

⁸ In a broad sense an overview of “everyday resistance” will have to engage with intersections of other more established fields of study: (1) theories of the “everyday” that use perspectives or concepts that are applicable to or have relevance for resistance, even though they might not use the concept (e.g. gender studies or sociology of the everyday); (2) general theories of “resistance” that are applicable to or have relevance for the everyday (e.g. cultural and identity theories of social movements); and (3) the limited area of studies that explicitly deals with “everyday resistance” (e.g. subaltern studies). All of this is, however, not possible to cover in this article. We therefore limit this to no. 3.

Polanyi's notion of counter-movements and James C. Scott's idea of infrapolitics" (1997: 26), are dealing with different targets. Gramsci with "state apparatuses (understood as an instrument of education)", Polanyi with "market forces", and Scott with "ideologies (public transcripts)" and different modes of resistance ("wars of movement and position"; "counter-movements aimed at self-protection"; and, "counter-discourse") (Chin & Mittelman 1997: 34, Table 1). Thus, we get a work-division between these "master theories", where Gramsci and Polanyi deal with collective politics and Scott with individual everyday life, at the same time as they reflect on how globalization transformed conditions of resistance: "as societies became more complex, so too did the targets and modes of resistance" (1997: 34), and furthermore, as they argue, also the forms, agents, sites and strategies, become more diverse and complex (1997: 34–36). Still, we agree with Chin and Mittelman (1997) who argue that a limitation with Scott is that he overemphasizes class; forgetting that peasants also "are embedded in whole ways of life" and that "class is but one (albeit important) modality of identity in landlord–peasant or other forms of dominant–subordinate relations" (1997: 32). There is also a need to understand "domination within domination". However, Scott becomes specially interesting for us, since he is the only one of the classics that develops the spectra of everyday resistance.

An important point guiding our research is the claim that power and resistance are not the dichotomous phenomenon that is often implied. In practical interactions they are mixed and interconnected hybrids (Lilja & Vinthagen 2009). Agents of resistance often simultaneously promote power-loaded discourses, being the bearers of hierarchies and stereotypes as well as of change. Hence, each actor is both the subject and the object of power – the subject is exposed to the ranking and stereotyping as well as promoting repressive "truths" – thus being both an agent exercising powers and a subaltern who has been subjugated and reduced to

order by disciplinary strategies (Lilja 2008). Resistance is always situated, in a context, a historic tradition, a certain place and/or social space forged by those who rebel. And even, not to say especially, when resistance is innovative, experimental and creative, it needs to build on the material left by other rebels – stories, myths, symbols, structures and tools available in that special situation, as Charles Tilly has argued in several books. New forms of resistance connect to old forms by using them as a stepping stone, translating existing hegemonic elements, dislodging and recombining that which is available (Vinthagen 2006).

Within the heterogeneous and broad field of studies on everyday resistance we draw our framework from a discussion of what we see as the two main competing theoretical perspectives, developed by James C. Scott and Michel de Certeau. We will proceed by discussing them together.

Scott and de Certeau

Scott looks on class struggles in repressive contexts from anthropological and political science perspectives, while de Certeau looks on creative practices in liberal-democratic contexts from a perspective of postmodernism and cultural studies. Scott comes from a social science perspective on everyday resistance, while de Certeau comes from the humanities. In this discussion we argue that it is necessary to build on both of them but move beyond certain key limitations.

Many have criticized Scott (see e.g. Gupta 2001; Howe 2000; Field 1994; Gal 1994; Gutmann 1993; Kelly 1992; Tilly 1991). In line with subaltern studies in general O’Hanlon (1988) argues Scott applies a division that is too strong between dominants and subalterns while simultaneously overemphasizing the role of resistance. To O’Hanlon “this is a major problem

since acceptance and submission is probably the strongest element of subaltern culture” (1988: 214). Bleiker (2000) takes one further step and criticizes Scott for not understanding that subordinates who deliberately are “maintaining a public posture of consent” out of reasons of self-preservation or strategy, are not able to do that from any “pre- or extra-discursive knowledge” or “position of authenticity” (p. 193). Like everyone else the subordinates “live in a community whose language, social practices and customs set limits ... [and] provides the conceptual tools through which ‘reality’ makes sense” (p. 193). To Bleiker the solution lies in combining strengths from both Foucault and Scott in order to avoid their respective weaknesses (2000: 193). However, we chose in this case to draw from a different source than Foucault – one that more explicitly talks about resistance and the everyday: de Certeau.

The critique generally suggests that Scott gives resistance and the agents too many independent abilities – a kind of autonomous or even isolated position. Framed in a different way, we could then argue that resistance and its actors need to be seen *in a relation to power* throughout the analysis. To us, the main weakness of Scott is that of not incorporating resistance in a dynamic and interactive process with power. And, if power would be integrated into the analysis, it would mean that we have to take the intentions, consciousness and articulations of resistance actors as, at least, partly formed by the powerful discourses in which actors are situated. Therefore, we cannot base our definition of resistance on intention, as Scott does. de Certeau presents a perspective that is an alternative to Scott’s privileging of intention.

de Certeau takes a starting point in language as a way of reading and talking, *a way of using* a system, when he develops his *everyday life* perspective on resistance. de Certeau “proposes an

anti-Foucauldian path to understanding domination and resistance” that does not over-privilege the apparatus of discipline (Bleiker 2000: 201)

If it is true that the grid of “discipline” is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive, it is all the more urgent to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to it, what popular procedures (also “miniscule” and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them, and finally what “ways of operating” form the counterpart, on the consumer’s (or “dominee”s?) side (de Certeau 1984: xiv).

Together the procedures “ruses of consumers” and ways of operating make up the “network of antidiscipline” (de Certeau 1984: xv). The everyday resistance of de Certeau is a matter of “tactics” that “depends on time” since it does “not have a place” (de Certeau 1984: xix). It is not securely placed anywhere, and has to be mobile, and “is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized ... Whatever it wins, it does not keep.” (de Certeau 1984: xix). From de Certeau it becomes clear that everyday resistance is about the “*way of using* imposed systems” (de Certeau 1984: 18, emphasis in original) and how people use “popular tactics” in their ordinary and daily activities to turn “the actual order of things” “to their own ends” (de Certeau 1984: 26). Thus, “here order is *tricked* by an art” (de Certeau 1984: 26, emphasis in original).

A problem with de Certeau’s understanding of everyday resistance is that although these practices are indeed per definition connected to power networks and “concerned with battles” (see de Certeau 1984: 34) it is not visible in the way he has analyzed this. It is as if all ways of using the dominant’s products, spaces, systems, etc. becomes resistance, even if they do not have the potential to affect power relations. When he, for example, discusses Foucault’s

privileging of the panopticon system, he does not analyze it as a technology of *power*, but as a form of *privileged* technology (de Certeau 1984: 45–47). de Certeau has the tendency to treat non-conventional or different ways of practice, which somehow are not using existing systems according to the imposed way, as “resistance”.

The link between Scott and de Certeau is obvious. When Scott speaks of the “weapons of the weak” as hidden transcripts, infrapolitics and everyday resistance, de Certeau speaks about how “a tactic is an art of the weak” “determined by the absence of a proper locus” as “a maneuver ‘within the enemy’s field of vision’ ... and within enemy territory ... [that] operates in isolated actions, blow by blow.” (de Certeau 1984: 37). For both of them everyday resistance is a matter of the less visible and small actions by subalterns.

In a summary, we argue both de Certeau and Scott fail to incorporate the power/resistance dynamics. de Certeau solves one of the main problems with Scott, that of his privileged *intention*. Instead de Certeau focuses on *practice* (creative ways of acting), a solution we follow, but by suggesting a framework that closely and continuously relates resistance to power, we try to avoid the main problem with de Certeau: that acting differently becomes resistance. de Certeau view too much as “resistance” and makes power disappear. In our attempt to go beyond both Scott and de Certeau we will focus the rest of the text on a discussion on what it means to understand everyday resistance as a practice that is entangled in a dynamic with power.

The theoretical weaknesses within present research on everyday resistance will be addressed in the rest of this article by proposing a framework on the two basic features of everyday resistance (Hollander & Einwohner 2004): (1) It is an everyday *act*; and (2) That it is done in

an oppositional relation to power, which compels power to respond; i.e. being an everyday *interaction*.

1: Everyday resistance is practice/action

If you base a field of study on a certain kind of act it is a category mistake – as many researchers within the field make, including Scott – to infer a certain kind of consciousness, intention or even a class-motive to the definitional properties of this act. Bayat shows an objection to almost all aspects of the classic definition of resistance by Scott, in which Scott suggest that resistance is “any act” by a subordinate class that is “intended” to “mitigate or deny claims ... by superordinate classes” “or to advance its own claims” (Scott quoted in Bayat 2000: 542). To Bayat, Scott and other resistance writers basically “confuse an awareness about oppression with acts of resistance against it” (Bayat 2000: 543). Instead, if possible, such mental or psychological properties should be part of what we investigate. In this section we suggest that there is no *particular* intention or consciousness of the actor (e.g. Scott) or recognition by targets of resistance (e.g. Hollander & Einwohner 2004) that is necessary in order to detect “everyday resistance”. People do intend or recognize different things with the same acts. Instead we suggest, in line with de Certeau, it is the resistance act, the agency itself or *the way of acting* that counts. Furthermore, we argue that no particular effect or outcome should be mandatory; only the *potential* of undermining power. This is important since we have to count on many factors that matter for the de facto effect on power in different contexts. Resistance is a particular kind of act, not an intent or effect, even if it will always have some kind of intent or effect. Instead of any particular consciousness (recognition or intent) we suggest that discourse and context matter. It is through particular power discourses situated in certain contexts that resistance and power is framed and

understood in which actors understand themselves and their identities. To us that means consciousness will vary immensely.

Is it, for example, possible to define the practice of humor among women in a lower-class neighborhood in Nicaragua as everyday resistance? That is a practice which does not have any articulated intention of resistance and is performed out of sight from the men who are the target of the jokes, thus without recognition by the targets. Johansson (2009) argues that the jokes are part of an ongoing creation of identities that center on pride and independence. As such, the jokes are part of the creation of a distance to the oppressive conditions these women are living in – some kind of a space for breathing and maneuvering, therefore a way of creating themselves as agents of change. They do, therefore, arguably resist the sexist cultural framework and discursive structure that subordinate them by making them complicit.

According to Hollander and Einwohner (2004) theorists of resistance have addressed the issue of intent in three different ways (1) the actor's conscious intent is crucial for the classification of an act or behavior as resistance; (2) assessing intent is close to impossible; and (3) an actor's intentions are not central to the understanding of an act or a behavior as resistance. Scott belongs to the first group, arguing that the actions of an actor who intend to resist should be defined as resistance regardless of the outcome of their actions. Intent is a more relevant indicator than outcome, Scott argues, since acts of resistance do not always achieve the desired effect. Still, Scott is forced to detect intention in creative and indirect ways in his often historical investigations of resistance (see e.g. Scott 1989: 49, 53).⁹

⁹ There exist only indirect recordings in archives due to its small scale and anonymous form and officials' unwillingness to publicize the insubordination (Scott 1989:49). Thus, the "nature of the acts themselves and the self-interested muteness of the antagonists thus conspire to create a kind of complicitous silence" (1989:50). The "evidence of intention" is found through detecting a "systematic, established pattern" supported by a popular culture in "a relation of domination that seems to preclude most other strategies" (1989:53).

One of the pioneers in research of everyday resistance, Kerkvliet (2009), argues that when people navigate within a political system and try to get by, they might perform actions that may look like everyday resistance; but they are not.

“These actions usually convey indifference to rules and processes regarding production, distribution, and use of resources. They are typically things people do while trying to ‘cut corners’ so as to get by” (2009: 237).

What distinguishes them from everyday resistance, according to Kerkvliet, is that they do not intentionally resist and oppose, hurt or target people in superior positions or voice claims at odds with the interest of the superiors. Apart from that their actions may hurt and harm people who are in the same position as themselves; for example, when peasants bad-mouth fellow peasants due to their different ethnicities and religious beliefs or when men put down women, or the poor steal from other poor people. However, if their cutting of corners is actually at odds with the interest or power exercise of the superiors, then it seems to us that it is indeed resistance, irrespective of whether it is intended or not or has side effects or creates problems for their peers. Why should resistance have to be pure? Why is it not allowed to be “contaminated” with other motives or effects?

Like Weitz (2001: 670) we think research on resistance has to move away from the focus on consciousness and intention, and instead “try to assess the nature of the act itself”. It is sure that in any classic sociological definition of social action, the intention of the actor is the key. We do not dispute that. When people act, they always, per definition, have intentions. Therefore, also (everyday) resistance is indeed done with intent, however, not with *one* type of intent: neither necessarily a political-ideological one, nor antagonistic class interest (Jefferess 2008: 40; Lilja & Vinthagen 2009). Actors’ intent might be to survive, solve a

practical problem, fulfill immediate needs, follow a desire, or gain status among peers, take a pause, or something else.

If we create a category of action according to the political awareness or orientation of the actor, we risk excluding *not-yet political* awareness, or *differently motivated* resistance. It is of paramount importance to avoid making resistance into a category for the politically educated that excludes lower classes. It is furthermore “close to impossible” to access information on the intent of resisters when they are unavailable; for example, if they have political or personal reasons for wanting to stay anonymous or have lived in another historical period.¹⁰ However, more importantly, intent is irrelevant for *the definition* of a type of action, but relevant for *understanding* the ideas, strategic thinking, plans, psychology or cultural meaning that actors articulate when they resist.

Also Ortner emphasizes that transformative processes are not necessarily directed by intentions: “Things do get changed, regardless of the intentions of the actors or the presence of very mixed intentions” (Ortner 1995: 175). We suggest, in the same way as de Certeau (1984), that what matters is *how* people are acting – not what their intention is. In fact one of the recurrent repressive mechanisms of dominance is the accusation against (recognized) resistance for not having legitimate, legal or otherwise “appropriate” intentions. In an ironic and most probably unintentional way, critical scholars of resistance in effect follow suit in that tradition when they demand a certain kind of “political”, “ideological” or “class” motive or claim of the activity in order to qualify it as “resistance”.

¹⁰ This does not mean we oppose the attempt to utilize various archeological methods to trace or extract consciousness of historical resistance cultures with the help of folklore, myths, jokes, symbols, proverbs, etc. We only oppose the definitional criteria of such theorized mental states.

Instead of defining resistance according to particular properties of the consciousness of the actor our proposal is that we should try to understand and analyze its way of acting; the creativity of resistance, the actual *art of resistance*. de Certeau (1984) gives several examples of how such a detailed activity analysis can be conducted, one is about the “*La perruque* [‘the wig’]”, a general phenomenon that “is the worker’s own work disguised as work for his employer ... as a secretary’s writing a love letter on ‘company time’ ... Accused of stealing or turning material to his [sic] own ends and using the machines for his own profit, the worker who indulges in *la perruque* actually diverts time (not goods, since he uses only scraps) from the factory for work that is free, creative, and precisely not directed toward profit. [And] re-introduces ‘popular’ techniques of other times and other places into the industrial space” (de Certeau 1984: 25–26). “These transverse tactics do not obey the law of the place, for they are not defined or identified by it ... [but] they remain dependent upon the possibilities offered by circumstances ... [and] can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces.” (de Certeau 1984: 30). A “North African living in Paris ... find *ways of using* the constraining order of the place or of the language ... which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of *plurality* and creativity. By an art of being in between ... These modes of use – or rather re-use – multiply with the extension of acculturation” (de Certeau 1984: 30, emphasis in original). Therefore, it could be concluded that the more people are mobile and localities experience cultural change, the greater are the opportunities that arise for creative and non-hegemonic ways of using dominant systems. de Certeau implies these ways of using dominant systems are connected to “a different kind of production, called ‘consumption’ and characterized by its ruses, its fragmentation ... its poaching, its clandestine nature, its tireless but quite activity, in short by its quasi-invisibility, since it shows itself not in its own products (where would it place them?) but in an art of using those imposed on it.” (de Certeau 1984: 31).

However, as indicated above, we disagree with de Certeau's equation of creative use and resistance. Everyday resistance is not only a matter of creative ways of doing things “differently”, but also a silent, somewhat hidden way of (at least potentially) *undermining* power. The next part will return to this theme: how resistance is not only impossible to define and understand without relating it to power, but that it is always articulated as power/resistance *interaction*.

To detect, understand and analyze the everyday resistance act is an art in itself, with several pitfalls. It seems inherently difficult to measure these acts. In its mundane, repetitive and non-dramatic way of subverting domination it acquires an almost invisible character (de Certeau 1984: 34). Everyday resistance acts are hard to capture since they rely on contextual tactics, opportunities, individual choices, temporality and it is shifting, moving and transient. It is not (yet) a long-term strategic planning by a collective that articulates a claim to a well-defined target. Butz and Ripmeester (1999) use the term “off-kilter resistance”, which they argue may be manifested in “continuous tentativeness”. This is a lack of strongly voiced statements, definitive platforms or “arguments made strongly enough to seem definitive” (1999: 5). “This reflects the creativity, tentativeness, and sensitivity to opportunity that is characteristic of everyday resistance in general”. This also suggests the tactics used can never be seen as reliable. “(...) there are no guarantees that a particular tactic will work – or work the same day – twice” (1999: 5).

If social practice is the key to resistance then we have to be able to distinguish between different types of practices. In the resistance literature there are some key types of practices that are debated. Among the more frequent ones are: *coping*, *survival-technique*,

accommodation or avoidance/escape. It is not possible to discuss them in detail here, but we will briefly illustrate how we make use of our focus on action/practice.

Let us begin with *avoidance*. If resistance is about ways of acting that might undermine power, then the question is if “avoidance” can also be resistance; i.e. the act of not engaging with the space, time or relation where power is exercised. Critics argue that when you avoid power you do not influence it, and surely do not undermine it. However, there are those who argue that also avoiding or escaping power relations might be resistance since avoidance makes the exercise of power on that specific individual or group (temporarily) impossible. To Hardt and Negri (2004) escape is a key strategy of resistance against the globalized network power of the Empire. Riessman’s (2000) study of childless women in India who resist stigma, concludes that while resistant thinking and avoidance strategies do not attack stigma and discrimination directly, they might be “tactically necessary” (Riessman 2000: 124). As such, they might be a preparation for resistance, making resistance possible at a later stage, in another situation. Furthermore, if individuals are needed for the power exercise, then escape does indeed undermine in itself. Our conclusion is that it will depend on the context, the way the escape is done and the particular power relation that is (un)affected.

In our view, techniques of social and material *survival* in everyday life, as well as mental and physical techniques of *coping* under repression or immediate violent threats, might sometimes be resistance in its (cumulative) *consequences* of undermining power. Again, this depends on how the techniques are applied, in what context and in relation to what power. Both Scott and Bayat argue along these lines. Scott claims that scattered resistance acts might have “aggregate consequences all out of proportion to their banality” (Scott 1989: 34). And, when Bayat analyze how the masses of urban poor advance through individual and hidden, small-

scale survival techniques (“quite encroachment”) and expand the informal settlements of Third World cities, he claims it has profound “cumulative” consequences, not only for urban planning and social service access, but also for property structures and urban space, which can also sometimes change power relations (1997a). To us, it seems reasonable to at least be open for such cumulative effects of what individuals do, and to not dismiss survival or coping practices, per se.

Similarly, we argue that *accommodation* is not necessary the opposite of resistance, even if it accepts and follows the logic of power. To most accommodation is simply the reproduction of power. However, even if that is at least partly true, the whole point with Scott’s disguised forms of resistance is that the resistance does appear *as-if* it were accommodation. It is through being *both* accommodation and resistance, simultaneously, but in different aspects, it becomes a *disguised* form of resistance. Camp (2004) shows, in her study of slave resistance in the US South, that “accommodation” and “resistance” are not mutually exclusive concepts, but instead spaces within which the enslaved moves back and forth, with parts of her/his activity, body or time. The open rebellions and non-cooperation of bondspersons developed from the spaces and room of maneuver created from hidden and partial non-cooperation under slavery (Camp 2004). Similarly, Crewe (2007) suggests a gliding scale of how prisoners might orient themselves and create variations in their public transcript: “committed compliance”, “fatalistic or instrumental compliance”, “detached compliance”, and “strategic compliance and manipulation”, since overt resistance is uncommon.

In conclusion, we then suggest coping, survival, accommodation or resistance is not either-or choices, but combinations. The path forward is to focus on the situated techniques of the acts themselves. It is exactly when we stop looking for the mental status of the resister, but instead

look for techniques, that we are able to see how subalterns combine very different kinds of actions: power recreation, coping, resistance, as well as other conventional everyday activities. We will then be able to understand how the same person is doing contradictory things or utilizing creative and complex combinations. We might then be able to find out how what initially seems to be coping in its consequences, actually turns out to be resistance; or on the other hand, what looks like resistance turns out to be power recreation, or even how the one and same act turns out to be resistance in some aspects, yet a power exercise in other. That is a realistic option, since power is not only dispersed and complex, but also plural – operating along several intersections. And as we will argue below, resistance is always related to power(s).

2: Everyday resistance is an oppositional act

As we have seen it seems necessary to understand the resistance act/practice as a matter of both-and, not either-or. Subalterns produce both resistance and power. In this section we discuss the consequences of this intimate and unavoidable (1) *relation* between power and resistance. We suggest that this relation is oppositional with repeated actions and reactions and needs to be understood as (2) *dynamic interactions* played out in history, space and context that produce unexpected results. Furthermore, we argue that since power is not singular but both decentered and intersectional, it means that also resistance is (3) *decentered and intersectional*; i.e. resistance is always in relation to several powers simultaneously. Lastly, this also means, that (4) power and resistance are interdependent and constitute/affect each other and, as a result, become *entangled*. Therefore, what we have is an historical entanglement, not a dichotomy of separated or “clean” categories; not a choice between accommodation or resistance but combinations. Everyday resistance is then a matter of trying to understand how this entanglement is changing within the everyday life of subalterns.

In order to show the entanglement of power and resistance we will take a step-by-step approach. Our first claim is that since resistance needs to be understood as oppositional, it exists in a *relation* to power, and, therefore, cannot be determined without a *power analysis*. This is not only necessary in order to detect what is resistance, but in order to understand the ways in which resistance operates, how it is connected to power and in what sense it is partly autonomous or intertwined with power. An analysis of a particular configuration of power will reveal the kind of norms, rules or ideals that are maintained, and how, with what discourse, institutions and techniques. This becomes really interesting and complex when we look at all the features of power and resistance simultaneously. Then it will become clear that rarely we will find resistance that simultaneously undermines all the features of power, or even the most essential ones. Instead we will find it undermining some, while enforcing other features by using them as part of its strategy to become forceful resistance, and similarly enacting or proposing other, different features of its own kind, not addressed by power.

From any power analysis we will find that resistance is conditioned by the structures of power that determine how and what to resist. When power involves space and time bondage, as with slavery in the US South, then everyday resistance, logically, manipulates borders and regulations of space and time (Camp 2004: Chapter 1). Slave regulations dealt with limiting the space of movements, demanding permissions for all activities outside of the plantation, or enforced strict time discipline throughout the day and week. All of these regulations could be and were manipulated. Some slave owners used a “task system” in order to get slaves to work more effectively. It meant that when slaves were finished with their work assignments for the day, they could tend to their own garden, crafts, house and family. Increased efficiency

created more time for the enslaved, a kind of “free” time. Thus, a motivational system was supposed to increase productivity. However, in the perspective of slaves, the doing of tasks was still slave time. Therefore, doing the tasks with less care meant spending less slave time on slave tasks; i.e. gaining more time for yourself. Eventually, one of the key reasons to abandon slavery was its economic inefficiency, and we do not know to what extent this inefficiency could be explained from everyday resistance of slaves, but it is, for sure, one possible explanation.

Resistance is inconceivable without power since resistance is essentially oppositional to something, and affects existing power. Resistance changes over time since it has to adapt to the changes of power. But also power is reacting to resistance. During historical change, new techniques of power and resistance are developed, explored, rejected, refined and reinvented. Change does happen as a *result* of these struggles, and neither power nor resistance (permanently) “wins”. Both continue to exist, at the least as temporary tendencies, subterranean desires or potential activity.

If power and resistance are related and react to each other, then we have to conclude it is an *interaction* we are talking about. Karner (2004) combines Foucault and de Certeau and argues for how there is a *dynamic* between power and resistance that needs to be accounted for. Similarly, Cheung (1997) argues that hidden transcripts of resistance relate to domination in an interaction. Such dynamic between power and resistance is also shown by Adnan (2007). His study of poor peasants in Bangladesh, and the transformation of covert resistance into overt forms, shows “that there were sequential shifts in the respective strategies of domination

and resistance ... which shaped each other interactively over a dynamic trajectory.” (Adnan 2007: abstract). Within the “contentious politics” framework, a main argument is that actual articulations, actions and results from political struggles arise from the dynamic interaction, mechanisms and processes of the struggle itself – not the actor’s independent strategies or moves (McAdam et al 2001). Furthermore, Tilly has earlier argued, with the help of his concept of historical “repertoires”, that activism is creatively developed from and limited by engagement with historical and territorial traditions of activism.

The social change that happens as a result of the interactive dynamic between power/resistance does not seem to us to follow any single logic, but it shows various alternative patterns. One is when resistance leads to increased power and worsened conditions for subalterns. An illustrating example comes from the organizational research inspired by post-structuralism (Huzell 2005:43–44) that has argued that during the 1990s employers extended their possibilities to control and construct the identities of employees through new discourses of management (Just in Time, Human Resource Management etc.) and new methods of surveillance. According to Huzell studies show that employees’ resistance was contra-productive. Common strategies of resistance such as cynicism and skepticism towards the management reproduced power rather than undermining it.

Although the interaction between power and resistance is indeed asymmetrical, it does not mean power always decides the dynamic. Most tend to see resistance as a *reaction* to power, as an act against something that already existed and provoked a response: thus resistance, they argue, has to be secondary. That also fits with a common sense perception of what it means “to resist”. Others, however, maintain that “resistance” is an original activity that acts without the consent of power, thus by itself. As such, as an activity ruled by itself, it can be seen as

leading the interactive dynamic, in line with Hardt and Negri (2004). In their view only resistance (the “Multitude”) is able to produce, while power (the “Empire”) is simply an attempt to organize, capitalize or prey on production done in freedom, or on social life itself. What exists “first”, it could be argued, is people moving around as they please, doing things they like and relating freely to each other, without government, in anarchy. Governance only comes in when someone else perceives a need to get things in “order”, distinguishing what is “right” from what is “wrong”, and succeeds to organize other objects, individuals or practices according to some external principle or rule that is established through force.

An alternative position, which we tend to agree with, is, of course, to argue for some combination, as have Foucault and Butler, claiming that power indeed produces the subjectivity it needs, although it never does that in a totalitarian and complete sense; it is always in part. And these fractions open up opportunities for resistance to develop. Irrespective of this somewhat impossible debate on origin (similar to the eternal debate on the chicken and the egg), we know one thing for sure; forms of power and forms of resistance have existed as long as known history.

In our understanding, one would have to say that resistance and power are intimately interrelated and produced in a continuous process. Hollander and Einwohner (2004) discuss this relationship in terms of a cycle: “Resistance and domination have a cyclical relationship, domination leads to resistance, which leads to the further exercise of power, provoking further resistance, and so on.” (2004: 548). We agree, but think that the image of the repetitive cyclic stages misses how this production is an open-ended and historically emerging process. Power and resistance affect each other throughout history, in what we would instead describe as a spiral, or rather *constant spiral-dynamics of actions and reactions*, of innovations and

counter-innovations, measures and counter-measures. Multiple experiences are built up. Rulers learn new things and find ways to create obedience, and control rebellions. But those who make rebellions and become subjugated, also learn and find new methods and strategies. Constant learning from what earlier generations have done evolves; past mistakes and successes are built upon and form traditions. Subjectivity and its personal motives or intentions fade away in the fog of multiple layers of past battles – battles that goes on over generations, since new subjects with new motives and intentions are taking place in inherited positions of superordination and subordination, and taking up the learned techniques of power and the techniques of resistance. Collective knowledge of how to rule and how to resist is created. And those who master the knowledge and know the rules of how to do it (while at the same time being able to surprise, to take new initiatives, to play the rule-game *and* break the rules at appropriate moments) will also become successful; at least momentary, until others learn new tricks and moves.

Thus, to us the history of interaction between power and resistance seems inherently dynamic and fundamentally unpredictable, at least on this theoretical level.

The early studies of everyday resistance were based on a division and dichotomization of superior–subordinate relations; powerful–powerless, victim–perpetrator; for example, manager–worker, men–women, landlord–peasant etc. Over the years, many authors within the field have turned against this tradition since it ignores the fact that there are multiple systems of hierarchies and individuals can be simultaneously positioned as powerful and powerless within different systems (Einwoner & Hollander 2004).

As Chin and Mittelman (1997) point out “In increasingly complex social contexts, subalterns do not have an unproblematic unitary identity (...)” (1997: 32). They argue that Scott put “an unidimensional face on resistance” as well as to domination (1997: 32) and instead they put forward Gramsci who “reminded us that subaltern identities are embedded in complex overlapping social networks in which individuals simultaneously assume positions of domination and subordination” (1997: 32). They define this as the “internal politics of subaltern groups” and as a phenomenon of “domination within domination”. While Scott acknowledges that there are contradictory alliances formed between the subordinate and the dominant, which in turn dominate others, they argue that he does not pay sufficient attention to the interaction between class and non-class forces.¹¹

Thus, we think it is necessary to treat power as plural, as combined configurations, in which any subject always exists in an *intersection* of these powers. Any subject might then be subaltern in one power relation, while superordinate in other power relations, and her/his position is then always necessary to be understood as a combinatory effect. Intersectionality opens new perspectives on what resistance might be. Adim and Gurrier (2003) is studying narratives of women in hotel work, focusing “the interlocking of gender, with nationality, race, ethnicity and class. They argue that as with gender, categories such as race and class reinforce structural power relationships. To be a woman lessens one’s power within the organization, as does being black or a migrant female worker. However, the authors also note that the respondents do not seem to interpret their work experience in terms of one type of difference being added to another type of difference. Instead, they seem to conceptualize their identities as “fluid”. The way the women tend to *emphasize certain identities and down play*

¹¹ Already 1991 Gillian Hart did call for a “major rethinking of James Scott's notion of ‘everyday forms of peasant resistance’”, from a gender perspective. With her gendered analysis of class formation, published in the article “Engendering Everyday Resistance: Gender, Patronage and Production Politics in Rural Malaysia” (1991) she shows how struggles within the labor process intersect with those in the local community and the household, and how gender meanings shape the struggles on these interconnected sites.

others is a narrative practice that Adim and Gurrier define as a form of resistance. For example, Rachel resists her Israeli identity and another woman, Maria, brings forward aspects of her identity, which give her advantages. The authors point out that their study illustrates that gender and other representations at work do not represent a process of adding difference on to difference where categories are considered as separate and fixed. Instead, what emerges is a negotiation of many categories that exist simultaneously and that shift according to context.

Similarly, the study of the “Bear culture” by Hennen (2005) looks at a specialized homosexual subculture that consists of men who value big bodies, beards, outdoor activities and working class dress. This study shows that, as gay men, the bears are marginalized in relation to heterosexual men, but as whites they are positioned and position themselves as superior to colored men, and as middle class superior to blue collar men, and as men superior to women (at least women in a less privileged position). Thus, it goes without saying that one cannot make the “additive claim” that big, gay men identifying as Bears are twice as badly off as slim, heterosexual men and understand their practices of resistance from that perspective. Instead one has to carefully investigate practices of resistance that are produced as an ongoing interactive process of contradictions, multiplicity and complexity. The practice of dressing in flannel shirts, ripped jeans and working boots, is a practice of resistance in relation to the dominant gay culture, and at the same time it reinforces the norm of heterosexual, white masculinity. As Hennen (2005) notes, the identification with the bear and the “back to nature” image is linked to a “raced cultural dynamic which equates the return to nature to whiteness”. It is also historically a reaction to presumed feminization.

Therefore, we suggest that everyday resistance has to be understood intersectionally, as embedded in simultaneous combinations of several powers. Resistance might resist one power while embracing another.

Through this intersectionality and historical co-development, resistance and power become intertwined, blended, mixed and even constitute each other. Although most articles within resistance literature indeed view power and resistance as related (Hollander & Einwohner 2004), there is a tendency to see it as two related opposites. Butz and Ripmester (1999) suggest a theoretical location that occupies the space between those poles. They argue that: “Supposedly separate realms of power and resistance are more productively understood as mutually-constituted parts of the fluidity, play, or ambiguity of social life”. Power relations are “not a binary structure with dominators on one side and dominated on the other, but rather a multiform production of relations which are partially susceptible to integration in overall strategies” (Butz & Ripmester 1999: 2). Thus, resistance becomes impossible to understand without its relation to power – that which is resisted. The same is true of power, as it becomes pointless without at least the risk of resistance and, more importantly, it won’t be power anymore if resistance develops new and more effective techniques. And if they historically grow and change together, through various combinations and battles, they also become *entangled* (Sharp et al 2000). When they use each other as stepping-stones, new things are made possible. There are often elements of resistance within power institutions and elements of power within resistance projects. Mumby (2005) argues that studies of work place resistance are often based on an implicit dualism of control and resistance as mutually exclusive. According to him, a so-called dialectical approach instead captures control and

resistance as mutually constitutive and as a “routine social production of daily organizational life”.

Sometimes it is a matter of coinciding power systems that influence each other, that live side by side, and develop together; for example, like the Palestinian resistance fighter who is mounting all his resistance against the Israeli occupation, while he is the strong patriarch in his family home, ensuring that the women in the household respect him properly, and while furthermore, he is a willing subordinate to Allah/God and his imams/priests in the neighborhood where he lives. These three power systems – occupation, sexism and religion – are intertwined because they organize the same human bodies and subsequently the intertwining of power/resistance also occurs.

To reproduce power at the same time as you resist it, is one common form of entanglement. There are, for example, numerous studies within gender research that shows that women collaborate in the reproduction of gender hierarchy at the same time as they challenge and undermine it. Gagne (1998) shows how transgendered individuals conduct “gender resistance” as “a discursive act that both challenges and reifies the binary gender system.” And in Johansson’s (2009) study on laughter, humor and carnivalesque practice as everyday resistance among women in a Nicaraguan lower class neighborhood she concludes that while the humorous practice reinforces the idea of women and men as stereotypic and mutually exclusive categories – by jokes in which the women are constructed as responsible, rational and altruistic, and the men are represented as irresponsible, irrational and egoistic – they also, at the same time, undermine the superior position of masculinity and men.

In Part II we have argued that power and resistance are related and entangled in an historic and dynamic interaction, in which hybrid forms develop and in which intersectional analysis of this power/resistance nexus is needed. Fundamentally, we claim that resistance is not possible to understand or define as an independent category. It has to be analyzed in relation to its ongoing struggle with power(s).

PART III: Towards a theoretical framework on everyday resistance

Everyday resistance is a type of act available to all subaltern subjects, all the time, in some form or another. But not all will resist. And even those who do resist only do so sometimes and in relation to some systems of domination, while they might utilize other positions of dominance available to them. When they resist they will not always affect power; sometimes they will even strengthen power or create new forms of power techniques.

Since everyday resistance reveals how the “resister” (the subaltern subject) sometimes might do some resistance actions, while at other times or sites and in other occasions, will act in subordination, there is no point in tying “resistance” to the subject. Resistance is about specific *actions* in specific contexts. These acts of resistance are, like any other acts, done by someone since all acts have actors and rely on some form of agency. Thus, yes, subalterns do resist, but the resistance is not an attribute of the subaltern subject. Resistance does not “originate” within the subject, but is something that arises in the combination of subjectivity, context and interaction.

The often quoted statement of Foucault: “Where there is power, there is resistance” is

important to spell out completely, as it actually continues with; “and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance, is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault 1978: 95–96). “Everyday resistance” is clearly enmeshed in the power relations/discourse, seemingly more so than open resistance. It resists only bits and pieces of the power, and is never fully outside of the network of powers. Therefore “everyday resistance” is necessarily contradictory – both subordinate and rebellious at the same time.

Besides wanting to outline a possible framework of everyday resistance – as a practice, entangled with power(s) and within historic dynamic interactions – we also wanted to explore the basis of a definition that both distinguishes the key properties of everyday resistance, and is open enough to include new creative innovations of resistance actors. Our proposal is to understand “everyday resistance” as resistance that is: (1) done in a *regular* way, occasionally politically intended but typically habitual or semi-conscious; (2) in a non-dramatic, non-confrontational or *non-recognized* way that (has the potential to) undermine some power, without revealing itself (concealing or disguising either the actor or the act), or by being defined by hegemonic discourse as “non-political” or otherwise not relevant to resistance; and is (3) done by *individuals* or small groupings without a formal leadership or organization, but typically encouraged by some subcultural attitude or “hidden transcript”. Therefore, everyday resistance is a matter of scattered and regular resistance with a potential to undermine power without being understood as resistance (or without the actors being detected). Everyday resistance is a different kind of resistance than the more sustained, organized and political resistance, but might be utilized by the same actors in other times, spaces or relations.

We also want to emphasize how research on resistance is fundamentally about discourse, not only the discourse of resisters, but also about the scientific discourse on resistance. Resistance runs the risk of being able to marginalize, exclude and silence different articulations of resistance; especially when only some intentions are counted as legitimate. Those intentions that have to do with “non-political” goals, emotions and personal needs are not regarded as relevant, irrespective of whether they undermine power relations. Why are certain “political” intentions and consciousness privileged? It is as if expecting all resistance to express “politics” in the same way as researchers, regimes, national and educated elites and intellectuals. Such assumptions become a problematic power exercise. How we include or exclude the resistance of others is key to resistance studies. In social science, in general, there seems to be a problematic tendency to privilege political consciousness, or public, direct and confrontational resistance. What is more surprising is that researchers who focus on marginalized forms of resistance, such as hidden and everyday resistance, tend to privilege certain “political” forms of resistance.

It becomes almost unthinkable for subalterns to define what they do as “resistance” if their practices are made invisible and marginalized in public debates, mass-media and scientific discourses. If you were to ask them if they “do resistance”, then they will of course say “no”. If you ask a woman from Nicaragua why she jokes about the men, she will say she is “not an idiot”, or “I am my own”, or something similar. However, she will not say “I do resistance”.

The purpose of critical research on resistance is to uncover and analyze unrecognized assumptions, power dynamics, discursive structures and social change potentials of different forms of resistance, guided by non-conventional intentions, actors, contexts and means. If that

is going to be possible we need a scientific discourse on resistance that does not just have good theories, methodology and empirical studies, but one that is open enough to identify and incorporate unexpected resistance – one that is not so embedded in prevalent power discourses that it (unintentionally) silences the other.

In conclusion, our evaluation of contemporary studies makes it possible to develop some fundamental proposals: (1) Everyday resistance is a *practice* (not a certain consciousness, intent, recognition or outcome); (2) It is historically *entangled* with (everyday) power (not separated, dichotomous or independent); (3) Everyday resistance needs to be understood as *intersectional* as the powers it engages with (not one single power relation); and, as a consequence (4) It is *heterogenic and contingent* due to changing contexts and situations (not a universal strategy or coherent action form). Thus, the heterogenic and contingent practice of everyday resistance is – due to its entanglement with and intersectional relation to power – discursively articulated by actors, targets and observers, sometimes as “resistance”, and sometimes not. However, in order to develop research on this social phenomenon it might also be necessary to identify everyday resistance when parties themselves call it something else. Further development of our understanding of everyday resistance warrants systematic research programs engaged with both critical conceptual-theory discussions and specific empirical case studies.

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