



# Resistance

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*With images of protest and dissent widespread and frequently circulated in news broadcasts and social media posts, resistance to prevailing power structures seems to be an expected and regular feature of contemporary life. This entry explores how anthropology has linked these spectacular moments of resistance to broader social questions. It further explains how identifying a particular practice or process as a form of resistance is not always straightforward when broader context is thus taken into consideration. I do this by considering how resistance has appeared (or has been neglected) as a topic of study through the history of anthropology until the present day, and how prevailing theoretical frameworks and political contexts shaped what anthropologists made of resistance in different periods.*

*The entry begins from early political anthropology's avoidance of questions of conflict and social inequality and moves through paradigm-shifting moments in the discipline – in particular, post-colonial and Marxist analyses – whereby resistance and social change became central concerns. It then examines how anthropologists began to study 'everyday resistance' and to emphasise how ethnography can reveal many small and subtle acts as forms of resistance, and as linked to more obvious and public forms of protest. Questions of consciousness and intentionality in political practice that are raised by everyday struggles are then considered in connection to the problem of defining resistance. In light of a focus on unconscious practices or acts that simultaneously challenge certain power structures and reinforce or create different ones, resistance is framed as that which constitutes a subversive relationship to forms of domination or systems that reproduce inequality, but that is not necessarily intentional or outside of prevailing political structures. Additionally, I consider anthropologists' changing relation to resistance – from one of neglect to the position of activist or engaged researcher – as shifting forms of media and communication highlight researchers' involvement in shaping perceptions of more and less organised forms of political struggle.*

## Introduction

It might seem like resistance is both a frequent occurrence and something that we recognise immediately when we see it. Images of protesting crowds, confrontations with police and military, workers' strikes, or silent vigils attest to the ubiquity of resistance as various ways in which people organise themselves to challenge systems of inequality and oppression. Scenes such as massive crowds at Tahrir Square following the overthrow of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, or of demonstrations and strikes in Greece opposing public spending cuts and other austerity measures, seem to define and pervade contemporary life in diverse global contexts. Anthropologists have explored the nature of these events and their political effects, understanding them as instances of resistance against domination by states and other powerful institutions as well as economic systems more broadly. The discipline has also, however, been interested in understanding the broader everyday contexts that make these spectacular events and moments possible. Seeing resistance as one element in a complex system of power relations, anthropologists have sought to describe and explain acts of resistance within the rich social, cultural, and economic fabrics in which they

take place.

At the same time, anthropologists have approached the idea of resistance with some caution: do protest movements and uprisings really have subversive outcomes? And conversely, how do people resist and challenge the status quo in unintentional and seemingly un-political ways? Recognising a particular act or practice as resistance is often linked to the broader theory of power and politics employed. For example, following the famous dictum of feminism, 'the personal is political', anthropologists have considered women's acts within the intimate domain of their domestic relationships as involving forms of resistance. Or, when analyzing protest movements, that people's personal lives impact upon their capacity to act within public and organised politics. On the other hand, anthropologists have also tried to see resistance where it is less expected. This has often involved stepping back from overarching theoretical frames such as feminism or Marxism when describing and analyzing resistance.

In the following essay, I trace the history of the anthropology of resistance - from its beginnings as a moot concept within a discipline concerned with understanding order, to its attempts to analyze the contemporary proliferation of protest movements. In this way I explore how resistance can be an unintentional, unconscious, and ambiguous feature of the everyday, as well as the desired outcome of organised political movements.

### **Order and rebellion: resistance in the shadows**

Early anthropological attention to resistance was framed in the terms of the dominant political anthropology of the time (up until the late 1950s), which emphasised the maintenance of social order and avoided questions of oppression and conflict. In light of this focus, those anthropologists who did analyze points of friction tended to depict them as the temporary release of social tensions. This would allow those who were discontent or found themselves in subordinate positions to then be re-absorbed into the normal social fabric with the threat of potential upheaval removed. A key work in this vein was Max Gluckman's *Rituals of rebellion in South-east Africa* (1954), in which fertility rituals and ceremonies humiliating royal leaders among Zulu, Tsonga, and Swazi peoples were treated as moments in which social taboos can be broken and rebellious drives aired so that all involved - both the weak and the powerful - can continue in their assigned social roles without [revolution](#). Social hierarchies are thus in fact protected, Gluckman claimed, by socially sanctioned expressions of discontent, or at least by the recognition of the existence of inequality within a society and ritualised attempts to deal with it.

This approach from political anthropology was picked up and elaborated into one of the most influential contributions to the anthropology of ritual and religion, by Gluckman's student Victor Turner. Based on his fieldwork with the Ndembu of Zambia, Turner combined Gluckman's attention to the cathartic dimension of rituals of rebellion with his own interest in rites of passage that marked, for example, the change from

youth to adulthood, to suggest the idea of 'liminality' (1969). In the liminal phase of ritual, Turner argued, status roles could be reversed and subjugated members of a society can assume powerful positions, as 'anti-structure' is allowed to prevail over 'structure', and a temporarily [egalitarian](#) status of 'communitas' - a fervent and powerful feeling of group bondedness - is reached. Unlike Gluckman, though, Turner took this model and applied it to various social movements and cultural phenomena in other times and places, notably to [secular](#) contexts and to the groups in Europe and North America, such as the [artists](#) and poets of the Beat Generation and their successors the 'hippies', citing Bob Dylan as the 'authentic voice of spontaneous communitas' (Turner 1969: 165). In framing such phenomena in this way, and arguing that their enactments of different kinds of power [relations](#) were basically utopian moments that could not be sustained within the political and economic systems in which they operated, Turner maintained a conservative view of social order that made resistance seem like an anomaly or even a naïve and youthful aspiration to social change that could never be realised.

Resistance as it is generally considered - as a challenge to power or domination - was thus largely written out of anthropology of this period. When it did appear, it reinforced the view of prevailing political anthropology approaches at the time: that societies were rather static and maintained a basic equilibrium. This went hand in hand with the almost total absence in these writings of the [colonial](#) authorities' presence in the places where anthropologists were working. The ways in which European powers maintained their rule but also faced persistent challenges to it by colonised peoples emerged later, as Marxist and post-colonial theoretical approaches gained ground in anthropological work.

### **From order to conflict: Marxist and post-colonial anthropology**

Along with the discipline in general, political anthropology underwent a fundamental change in the wake of the national [anti-colonial](#) movements of the mid-twentieth century, and so too resistance began to take a more central place in analyses of political systems. As power began to look less static, both in the formerly colonised countries and with the anti-war and anti-capitalist movements elsewhere, two key theoretical approaches shaped anthropological takes on resistance. Marxist and post-colonial perspectives both introduced a profound historicisation of anthropological knowledge, sometimes in differing and sometimes in converging ways, such that no approach to power or to resistance could now render society or culture as unchanging or uncontested systems that simply reproduce themselves.

On the one hand, a Marxist emphasis on modes of production informed a generation of political anthropologists who paid attention to how people's [labour](#) and material circumstances affected their social and cultural practices, beliefs, and relationships more broadly. Eric Wolf's (1982) and Sidney Mintz' (1985) work on the entanglement of local economic and political processes with global markets and systems of inequality provided key reference points for those who wished to understand how changing global economies led to sometimes unfamiliar and often ambivalent forms of resistance.

Michael Taussig's *The devil and commodity fetishism in South America* (1980) remains a provocative example of this kind of work, as he argued that in the rapid change from peasantry to work on sugarcane plantations in Colombia, workers' beliefs about [money](#) earned as wages and their integration of these with the Christian symbol of the devil expressed an indigenous critique of both capitalism and the religion of the Spanish colonisers. Increased productivity, and thus higher earnings, were thought to emanate from a pact with the devil, and the worker concerned was said to suffer a painful, early [death](#). Taussig thus argued that plantation workers were expressing and condemning the suffering brought about by the new economy through the idiom of the pre-commoditised relationship with material objects they had as peasants, when workers and the material things they made and circulated were entwined with their very person. The banknotes earned as wages in the plantations are thus symbolised as having a [magical](#) quality that can cause suffering and bad fortune, in Taussig's twist on Marx's theory of commodity fetishism.

The point of studies like these is at least partly to disturb a historical narrative that sees the growth of global capitalism and its attendant securing of hegemony as a linear process. By pointing to expressions of resistance on the part of workers, of more and less conscious forms, and with greater or lesser immediate impacts, this focus on resistance has attempted to lend [ethnographic](#) richness to broader theoretical framings of political economy, as well as to undermine modernist accounts that anticipate such developments as inevitable and universally similar. At the same time, though, another intellectual trend to come out of this historical period questioned the sometimes unexamined assumptions of these texts about the false consciousness of workers and the ability of the ethnographer to truly know what the intentions or understandings of the people with whom they did research actually were.

Emerging mainly out of historical studies of colonial India, the subaltern studies school of thinkers suggested that much of the ethnographic record and anthropological theorising that came with it relied too heavily on elite and colonial knowledge. It was unable to take into account the vast majority of the world's ordinary, colonised people - the subalterns - and the ways in which they were not represented in most scholarship. The subaltern studies scholars attempted to study the resistance of groups such as peasants and the way hegemony was never complete in colonial societies, in a way that classical Marxism could not do because of its assumptions about class structure and historical change. The subaltern studies school differed from the Marxist notion that an individual's political consciousness was determined by their position in the class system, and that this would eventually lead to collective struggle aimed at forwarding class-based interests. Rather, they proposed, different forms of individual and political consciousness existed in non-Western histories that universalist theories such as Marxism were unable to comprehend. Thus, the proposition of subaltern 'autonomy' (Guha 1983) - a domain of consciousness outside of elite and colonial representations - was offered as the neglected side of uprisings against the colonial state and raised issues of [agency](#) and will in resistance. This line of thought opened significant questions about the nature of consciousness, agency, and knowledge in resistance and political struggle. What do we make of

acts that look like resistance, but are not interpreted as such by those performing them? Does the idea of 'false consciousness' provide an answer, or can we think about ways of thinking outside of systems of power and domination? With increased attention towards such forms of intention and perception in anthropology more broadly, as well as in the study of politics, the question of resistance became salient in new ways, not least because traditional theories of domination and class struggle had been shaken by emerging scholarship in the wake of decolonisation.

### **Culture, identity and symbolism: everyday resistance**

In light of the interest in histories of resistance that had previously gone unwritten, the 1980s and 1990s saw a wave of work focusing on resistance where it had not been seen before. James Scott's work was key in creating an analytical framework of 'everyday acts of resistance' that saw individual acts that were not formally part of any insurgent political movement as ways in which people resisted domination in banal and often unnoticed ways. Scott's study built on Marxist and [post-colonial](#) attention to peasant studies, arguing that a lack of mass political action or violent uprising did not mean that resistance was not occurring. Based on his fieldwork in Malaysia, in *Weapons of the weak* (1985) Scott claimed that although outwardly compliant with rich local landowners, poor villagers were not taken in by inequality and domination but rather chose when and how to express discontent through low-level sabotage and private gossip that could be considered an everyday form of class struggle and resistance. In the later *Domination and the arts of resistance* (1990), he elaborated on these ideas and introduced the concept of 'hidden transcripts' – the 'offstage' criticisms of the powerful that show that subordinate groups are not mystified or falsely conscious, as in classical conceptions of hegemony. Among his wide-ranging examples of hidden transcripts, Scott offers the case of slaves' 'theft', arguing that their taking of crops of livestock was seen as a kind of reclaiming of that which they had produced, although it was described as theft or pilfering by slave-owners or overseers. The point of taking such produce without being detected was not only to avoid punishment or to satisfy hunger but also to achieve an invisible culture of reclaiming ownership over the fruits of their own [labour](#) that subverted slave-owners' narratives of property and theft. With this work Scott not only intervened in debates within Marxism, but also drew anthropologists' attention to the banal forms of being dominated and resisting that domination, and offered a way of investigating these questions with the detail of [ethnography](#) rather than broad political theory.

Some of the most influential ethnographic work in this vein took this preoccupation with the everyday to classic subjects of anthropological fascination, such as symbolism, religious practice, and spirit possession, and re-read these phenomena in the light of this lens of domination and resistance. Thus Jean Comaroff, for example, studied the rise of Zionist churches among the Tshidi of South Africa as tied up in the persistence of indigenous cultural categories through colonial rule and capitalist transformations (1985). Comaroff's argument is not that Tshidi 'culture' survives untouched by what are presumed to be external political

forces, but that both mutually shape each other, and that the encounter is contained and expressed in various symbolic and ritual practices, which thus articulate a subversive manipulation of signs of [racial](#) and class inequality. Zionist ritual dress, for example, is adopted but transformed by Tshidi congregants, by changing its colours to those of pro-colonial symbols, or through Tshidi women wearing garments traditionally donned by male Protestant bishops. Whilst certainly still concerned with finessing Marxist concepts such as ideology and hegemony, this anthropological approach also exploited the banal nature of these phenomena to analyze how resistance takes place in the embodied and subjective realm of cultural practice, and thus Comaroff also called on other influential theorists such as Claude Levi-Strauss, Pierre Bourdieu, and Michel Foucault, in her analysis of how politics permeates the everyday. Similarly, Aihwa Ong's *Spirits of resistance and capitalist discipline* explores gender and female sexuality as the site of both domination and of resistance, although often of an unwilling nature (1987). In tune with the influence of feminist theory on the anthropology of gender, kinship, and production, Ong argues that Malay women factory workers' frequent spirit possessions on the factory floor were a mode of defiance against their control by non-Malay male supervisors. Along with small acts that decrease the women's productivity, as in Scott's framing of the various acts and forms of speech that constitute hidden transcripts, the affliction of spirit possession and its temporary release of women from their workplace is interpreted as an unconscious resistance against capitalist power and patriarchy, within the context of their family and village lives as well as in much broader spectrums of power within the global economy.

This anthropological work resonated with the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies, who, although not anthropologists, led the field in producing ethnographic work sensitive to the often small-scale reverberations of much larger political and economic structures, mostly focusing on British subcultures and working class life. Paul Willis' *Learning to labor* (1977) is a close study of twelve white working class English school boys, 'the lads', and analyses how their rejection of the system of academic achievement offered by the formal education system contributes to the [reproduction](#) of their class position and future as working class labourers. Unlike Scott's 'hidden transcripts', though, Willis' emphasis on the lads' irreverent approach to authority and the political ramifications of their clowning around represented a more ambivalent take on resistance even as he similarly rejected the idea that these boys were duped or mystified by power. The ways in which they resisted power became, with a bitter irony, a key part of why they continued to be oppressed by it. The question this interpretation raises, then, as with the anthropology of everyday resistance, is, is it really resistance? If resistance is either not named as such by those engaging in it, or contributes only to reinforcing domination, the sense of the term becomes less clear, particularly for anthropologists interested in being true to their ethnographic material rather than only advancing a theoretical or political argument. As everyday resistance seemed to proliferate, then, anthropologists also began to take a step back and cast a critical eye on this burgeoning field of work.

### Too much resistance: power and subjectivity

In light of the growing anthropological attention to resistance, in its spectacular as well as everyday forms, critical questions about this field of study began to emerge in the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, anthropologists reflected on what acts may truly count as resistance, and whether scholars had begun to pre-determine their analyses by looking too hard for it. Lila Abu-Lughod was one of those who critically re-evaluated earlier work, including her own analysis of women's and young men's love poetry and other practices among Egyptian Bedouins as subtle forms of defiance against local hierarchical and patriarchal [moral](#) codes (1986). In her later article, *The romance of resistance* (1990), Abu-Lughod influentially argued that resistance is not external, or in opposition, to power, but is rather a 'diagnostic' of it: a reflection of power structures within a given context. Thus she suggested that the resistance to local hierarchies in her earlier [ethnography](#) entailed an entanglement or complicity with another form, such as the state or global markets, which could tell us about the shifting political economy of Egypt at the time. She cited Foucault's argument that power, rather than being only oppressive or negative, is productive of all kinds of practice, subjectivity, and knowledge, and is diffused through all spheres of life rather than held and imposed top-down by the state or other entities (Foucault 1979).

This characterisation of anthropological work on resistance as romanticising was echoed in other [writing](#) during this period, which examined the investment on the part of anthropologists in certain moral or political projects. Some claimed that this propelled them to insist on an idealised picture of the oppressed as heroically standing up against those who dominate them (Brown 1996), while others defended such ethical engagements on the part of the anthropologist but argued that they required greater reflexivity about this positionality as well as more complex ethnographic description to capture ambivalence in projects of resistance (Ortner 1995; Scheper-Hughes 1995). Similarly, anthropologists started to write about cases in which practices of resistance could simultaneously challenge existing kinds of oppression and contribute to the creation or reproduction of other kinds of hegemony (Jean-Klein 2001; Kulick 1996; Theodossopoulos 2014).

The study of resistance becomes, in these critical perspectives, the starting point for broader questions of political [agency](#) and subjectivity. For, if we cannot identify resistance or acquiescence as clearly distinct from one another, and if both can be present in the same set of practices, this has significant implications for theories of how people act, and with what kind of consciousness or intentions, within political systems. The gendered aspects of resistance and politics, and feminist theory's contribution to our understanding of it, were the subject of much anthropological work that considered these issues. Begoña Aretxaga's study of women's roles within working class Catholic struggles against British rule in Northern Ireland considered resistance within its nationalist and gendered context, arguing that women neither passively receive nor freely navigate these dominant political tropes (1997). Motherhood, for example, was held up as a central symbolic value in the communities Aretxaga worked with, and although she cites maternal suffering as a

subjective motivation for political action among Catholic women, it was also a trope through which they collectively challenged husbands' and sons' dominance in political activism. That is, whilst being able to draw power from the potent nationalist and Catholic symbol of the mother who suffers the pains of her son, the legitimisation of women's involvement in politics through such symbolism also contributed to their reconfiguring of domestic and intimate [relations](#) with their husbands and [children](#). The ideology of motherhood thus bolstered women's participation into political struggle at the national level whilst also helping to transform some of its key social and economic underpinnings. Further, Aretxaga analyzed women prisoners' participation in the 'dirty protest' in Armagh prison, and the use of their menstrual blood as a transgression of powerful taboos governing the expression of female sexuality.<sup>14</sup> Aretxaga suggests that whilst women's actions were conscious and intentional, they also relied on unconscious and emotional motivations of rejecting gendered humiliation, a level of personal experience which thus becomes part of the political realm and practices of resistance.

The role of the unconscious and the emotional, or affective, in resistance, and the ways in which political contexts shape these aspects of subjectivity, raises important questions about how social change and individual action or experience are linked. The feminist philosopher Judith Butler, herself influenced by both Foucault and psychoanalytic thought, argued that agency is made possible only through the workings of power, as people can only speak and be heard through the language and cultural forms available to them within specific [historical](#), and political, contexts (1997). Resistance and social change, in this theory, are the consequences of modifications – whether intentional or accidental – of dominant forms of expression and practice. This theoretical model of agency has been influential in political anthropology, but has also been questioned because of the way it emphasises agency as linked primarily with social change and resistance. Saba Mahmood, in her work on an [Islamic](#) women's piety movement in Egypt, argued that this aspect of Butler's work reflects a broader problem within Western liberal feminism, in its assumptions that freedom and agency have to imply opposition to authority (2005). Mahmood demonstrated ethnographically how the women she worked with in Cairo were often interested in living up to Islamic moral teachings, rather than challenging them, and argued that this need not mean that these women were therefore reproducing their own oppression, but rather that agency does not always equate to resistance.

When resistance is seen as a subjective as well as social encounter with power, then, our view of politics and its transformations become an ever richer field of investigation, whether one is skeptical of resistance studies or argues for more attention to the ambiguities and complexities within it. With this area of intimate and embodied experience opened up as a legitimate domain of anthropological thought, these critical takes on resistance promoted a new set of theoretical vocabularies that contemporary anthropologists have been able to draw on as historical events once again made resistance a key concern for the discipline.

### Imagining different futures: contemporary anthropological approaches to resistance

From the late 1990s until the contemporary moment, the prominence of anti-globalisation protests, the events of the 'Arab Spring', and the rise of socio-economic and [racial](#) justice movements such as Occupy and Black Lives Matter, have brought about a renewed interest in resistance, social movements, and activism in anthropology. Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of this recent work has been its focus on media and communication technologies, both as a factor in how resistance plays out, and relating to the potential for anthropologists to be politically engaged and in dialogue with the people with whom they conduct research. Although anthropological accounts have undermined popular understandings of these movements as driven by social media, pointing to the very real and often risky presence of protestors' bodies in public spaces, they have also not underestimated the possibilities for activism opened up by technologies such as Facebook or Twitter, and have considered how virtual networks contribute to novel forms of political organisation. An example is the 'hashtag activism' in the protests that followed the police shooting of an unarmed black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri, and in the Black Lives Matters movement that grew after this and other similar killings in the USA. This kind of engagement became a key way in which people across the country and elsewhere expressed solidarity with those demonstrating in Ferguson (Bonilla & Rosa 2015). This online activism exposed and played with dominant media stereotypes and racist language and allowed for users to actively re-inscribe the meaning of the black body, unlike in physical confrontations with police in demonstrations where it is often cast as threatening and dangerous.

Other work has pointed to the different qualities of various kinds of online communication and media, arguing that whilst email list-servs and web fora were crucial in building and maintaining activist networks in the anti-globalisation movements of the late 1990s and early 2000s, social media such as Facebook and Twitter have been less useful for in-depth communication among activists working closely with each other but have contributed to the spread of movements such as Occupy beyond typical activist circles and have helped to create feelings of solidarity and collectivity across wide and disparate social contexts (Juris 2012). The participation of broader publics in socioeconomic justice and antiracist movements in the 'real time' of social media has also prompted anthropologists to [write](#) shorter and open-access pieces for audiences outside of the academy as well as within it. These are generally published faster than traditional academic articles and aim to contribute to public debates about these protests and the power structures they hope to challenge. The journal *Cultural Anthropology*, for example, has established the 'Hot Spot' forum on its website, which has published collections of essays by anthropologists and activists on the Occupy movement, the Egyptian revolution, and Istanbul's Gezi park protests, among others.<sup>21</sup>

What happens to participants during resistance, and how that in turn shapes its political effects, is also affected by its modes of communication and performance. Studies of contemporary activism have considered the collective experiences of humour and spontaneity, joyfulness and a sense of possibility, as crucial aspects of activism and as playing into a movement's broader trajectory (Haugerud 2013; Rasza &

Kurnik 2012; Sitrin 2013). These analyses sometimes recall older anthropological notions such as Durkheim's 'collective effervescence' (1995 [1912]) - the embodied passion and fervor that comes from communal, out-of-the-ordinary action - and Turner's 'rituals of reversal', and sometimes draw on more recent theoretical concepts such as 'affect' and 'becoming'. In what has been labelled the 'subjective turn' (Rasza 2013), a central argument has been that the ability of activists to imagine and sense different emotional and inter-personal [relations](#) in the forms of non-hierarchical organisation is vital for the potential of a political movement to offer and demonstrate alternative forms of social organisation to prevailing capitalist and [neoliberal](#) politics. This perspective also provides a good example of how anthropological analysis of movements such as Occupy or the Gezi park protests constitute resistance: by adopting a broadly critical stance on contemporary capitalism, neoliberalism, and state violence, these perspectives tend to echo activists' analyzes of certain formations of power and thus frame protest and social movements acting against them as resistance.

Persistent inequalities and enduring effects of past violence on social interaction, however, are also felt within activist groups even as they aim to resist domination. Scholars attentive to how class, gender or racial difference continue to be [reproduced](#) and enacted within protest movements have advocated for a 'decolonizing' approach, which aims to bring a consciousness of historical injustices of different kinds into activism that might unwittingly repeat similar patterns of domination (Liu 2013). These approaches relate to an older notion of 'identity politics', which has been criticised for the way in which it can reinscribe certain essentialist and even exclusionary notions of identity, and suggest that whilst more universalist political goals can be shared by various people in a resistance movement, activists must remain vigilant about questions of difference and power structures within the group. These issues were particularly visible in writing about indigenous activism and struggles for land rights and self-determination, where the very means of resistance - by recourse to legal technologies and vocabularies of rights, [citizenship](#), and territory - involve speaking the language of the powerful in order to make certain claims (Jackson and Warren 2005; Muehlebach 2010). Thus certain members of a community, as well as the anthropologist, may, paradoxically, be more able to articulate and represent 'indigeneity' than those who speak only the language of the [colonised](#). Equally, there is concern about the ways in which protest movements are represented and perhaps even appropriated in scholarship, as academics seek to capitalise on political events so as to prove the relevance or timeliness of their work whilst at the same time [silencing](#) and exploiting the knowledge and [labour](#) of local academics and activists (Abaza 2013).

The anthropology of resistance, then, is grappling with a new set of questions that have arisen from contemporary political events. Although some older conceptual questions - about social change and stasis, false consciousness and [agency](#) - remain pertinent, recent work on resistance has also been formed by different concerns. Alongside shifting theoretical frameworks, anthropological perspectives on resistance are being transformed by widespread acknowledgment of researchers' responsibility to research

participants, as well as reflexive awareness of their own roles in shaping local and global politics.

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[1] Developing out of their 'no-work' protest and refusal to wear prison uniforms, the Armagh dirty protest took place from 1980-1981, and involved women prisoners refusing to bathe, to use lavatories, or to clean their cells over long stretches of time. Combined with hunger strikes and Republican male prisoners' similar acts at a different prison, the dirty protest was one of the more violent and tense episodes in the history of British rule in Northern Ireland.

[2] See Cultural Anthropology website: <http://www.culanth.org/conversations/4-hot-spots> (accessed 28 February 2016).