Constructive Resistance:
Conceptualising and Mapping the Terrain[1]

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Abstract

People living in systems of domination and exploitation resist in many different ways. Some modes of resistance build and experiment with alternatives to the present in various forms, from the small to the large, the hidden to the open. An overall term for these efforts is "constructive resistance," which covers initiatives in which people start to build the society they desire independently of the dominant structures already in place. Within peace and conflict studies, this has been approached through Gandhi's concept of the constructive programme. In the anarchist and Marxists traditions, a related notion is prefigurative politics. There are large areas of overlap between these concepts, but they have somewhat different emphases. In spite of frequent references to the need for constructive supplements to protesting and non-cooperation among both practitioners and scholars of resistance, surprisingly little has been written about how to understand and analyse the alternatives. This article suggests a broad definition of constructive resistance, taking the point of departure in an inclusive understanding of resistance. But how much "construction" and how much "resistance" must be included in order to deserve the label of constructive resistance? Through a set of diverse examples, this article explores some possible ways of operationalising both the elements of construction and resistance.

Keywords: constructive resistance, theory, definition, constructive programme, prefiguration

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Introduction

In Brazil, hundreds of thousands of poor and landless people from *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra* (MST), the landless worker's movement, have occupied land for more than 30 years of struggle for land reform and the possibility for a decent life. On occupied land, they have started to grow food and establish communities based on ideas of gender equality, cooperative farming and organic cultivation. The occupations have been met with a number of different reactions from authorities and landowners, and these responses have varied over the years. On many occasions, MST participants have been exposed to violent evictions, and in 1996 21 people were killed in a massacre in Eldorado de Carajás (Branford & Rocha, 2002). However, the occupations have also modelled a successful strategy for gaining legal recognition of occupied land in many places. According to the organisation itself, 370.000 families have had their right to 7,5 hectare of land recognised, while 150.000 families are still waiting in temporary encampments (MST, n.d). This land reform from below is constructive resistance because the occupations challenge the established power structure of land distribution in Brazil, but using a method that constructs the desired future within the shell of the old society. With 1,5 million members, MST provides an example of contemporary constructive resistance on a large scale, but throughout the world, people undertake initiatives to establish autonomous spaces where they escape prosecution or experiment with alternative ways of living. Such constructive resistance is worth exploring because it is so widely practiced, yet hardly any theory exists in this area.

In an article about resistance, Stellan Vinthagen describes "constructive resistance" as resistance that can "transcend the whole phenomenon of being-against-something, turning into the proactive form of constructing "alternative" or "prefigurative" social institutions which facilitate resistance…" (Vinthagen, 2007). The purpose of this article is to explore the phenomenon of constructive resistance and how to operationalise the two components of "construction" and "resistance". How can these concepts be operationalised into an analytical tool that can be useful for academic investigations as well as practitioners of constructive resistance? How much "construction" and how much "resistance" does

an initiative have to include in order to deserve the label of constructive resistance? By mapping the terrain of constructive resistance, researchers and practitioners can establish a starting point for exploring the phenomenon further.

It is possible to study constructive resistance from many different perspectives, such as the level of organisation behind them or the areas they cover. Constructive resistance can be carried out by many actors, from individuals, small associations and local communities to national organisations or organised global networks. It covers areas regarding the fulfilment of basic needs, communication, economic concerns and decision making structures. Other possible approaches are whether the alternatives are legal or not, or to what degree people themselves frame their alternatives as resistance. However, I have settled on an approach that focuses on the two elements of "construction" and "resistance".

Below I start with a brief introduction to the two approaches most relevant to a discussion of constructive resistance: Gandhi's concept of *constructive programme* and anarchist/Marxist ideas about *prefigurative politics*. This is followed by my suggested definition of constructive resistance, a quite wide understanding of the term based on an inclusive understanding of what counts as resistance. Different possibilities for how to operationalise both the concepts of "construction" and "resistance" are introduced, concluding in two possible frameworks. These are introduced through a number of different examples of constructive resistance, ranging from a small Norwegian Montessori school, the file-sharing network *The Pirate Bay* and the organisation *FairTrade*, to Kosovo's alternative education system during the 1990's and Gandhi's campaign for homespinning. These examples are not comparable but illustrate the diversity that can be found within variegated initiatives, all of which can be conceptualised as constructive resistance. Finally, the conclusive reflections include discussions about intentions versus consequences, and what should not count as constructive resistance even with a broad definition of the concept.

Constructive programme and prefigurative politics

One of Gandhi's most common and widespread constructive campaigns was to promote Khadi, or homespun cloth. This was at once a promotion of non-cooperation with the British by refusing to buy imported textile, but even more important was the way spinning and weaving in the villages strengthened self-sufficiency and contributed to local-level empowerment. For Gandhi, the constructive programme was more important for the liberation of India than the non-cooperation and civil disobedience campaigns. He claimed that India could never be truly free as long as social ills like poverty, untouchability, discrimination against women and violence between Hindus and Muslims persisted, and the purpose of the constructive programme was to work on these issues as a means of achieving liberation (Gandhi, 1945). Authors writing about nonviolent struggle frequently mention Gandhi's concept of constructive programme and how important he considered it to be (Burrowes, 1996; Schell, 2003). The concept has rarely been developed further, although Mark Mattaini and Kristen Atkinson have investigated constructive programme through behavioural systems science and found it to a useful way to challenge oppression (Mattaini & Atkinson, 2011). Practitioners of nonviolent struggle have also discussed what constructive programme means today in a US context (Chisholm, 2010; Sheehan, 2007).

Gene Sharp's famous categorisation of 198 methods of nonviolent actions also include several which are constructive, for instance establishing alternative communication channels, new social patterns and alternative social institutions. However, Sharp emphasizes how these alternatives can disturb the ordinary functions, not so much on how they themselves contribute to developing a desirable society. The examples he uses are also mainly taken from nonviolent struggles where non-cooperation creates the need for an alternative. Sharp's description of the alternative modes of transportation established by the civil rights movement during the Montgomery bus boycott starting in 1957 is a good example of this approach. African Americans and the white population were not allowed to sit together on public buses, and as part of the struggle to de-segregate public transport in the US South, the civil rights movement

initiated a boycott of the bus company in Montgomery. The boycott itself did not have any element of constructive resistance, but the need for an alternative form of transportation quickly arose. People still needed transport to get to work, for example. The organisers of the boycott soon organised alternative forms of transport, first with taxis and later through a private car pool. Without this constructive element, the boycott would not have been able to continue for more than a year (Sharp, 1973: 222, 414-15). However, the constructive element was developed as a result of the boycott. If constructive resistance had been the main approach to confronting segregation of buses in Montgomery, it would have required something along the lines of establishing an independent, unsegregated bus company.

The concept of *prefigurative politics* or *prefiguration* has much in common with constructive programme, although it derives from anarchist and some Marxist traditions of talking about how to "create the new society within the shell of the old". The term was first used in reference to left-wing movements in the United States from the 1960's (Boggs, 1977), but the idea of course dates back many centuries. Prefiguration usually refers to "the attempted construction of alternative or utopian social relations in the present, either in parallel with, or in the course of, adversarial social movement protest" (Yates, 2014: 1). According to Luke Yates, prefiguration has been used with two different meanings: one refers to the alternatives built by movements, and another focuses on the way protest is performed (Yates, 2014: 2). An example of the latter is Barbara Epstein's study of the way protest camps were organised during large civil disobedience actions in the US in the 1970's and 80's against nuclear power plants and nuclear research facilities. In these movements, the community building, affinity groups, tolerance for diversity and decision-making based on consensus could be very empowering for the participants. Since they were distinguishing themselves from the "old left's" hierarchical organisations and top-down structures in an attempt to create a more desirable world in the present, many participants had a sense of the actions being successful even if the immediate goals were not reached. It was considered more important to spread ideas about nonviolent direct action and to have more people learn about and experience well-functioning consensus than to reach a specific goal (Epstein, 1991).

Later movements have used the idea of prefiguration differently. Mirianne Maeckelbergh discusses the concept in relation to the alterglobalization movement, in which the term "process" is used to cover ideas about how protest can be done differently. It is not about a theory for change, but about doing things differently in practice. According to Maeckelbergh, the alterglobalization movement uses prefiguration strategically. Previously, the term "strategy" has been used in a particular way by the "old left"/Marxists who consider it something that the leadership decides upon and the members then carry out. Where others have talked about prefiguration as a supplement to strategy (or even more important than strategy, because they equate strategy with hierarchical, goal-oriented organisations) Maeckelbergh seeks to claim the term strategy for other purposes (Maeckelbergh, 2011). In the alterglobalisation movement, prefiguration is strategic because the goal is to change the way power operates. The goal is not to take over state power or control the revolution, but to make space for people to pursue many goals simultaneously. This is done by constantly decentralising power whenever there are signs of its centralisation, and by creating connectivity between movements that have different goals. With Maeckelbergh's understanding of the term, the prefigurative embodies two elements that must be pursued simultaneously – challenging established structures and constructing an alternative (Maeckelbergh, 2011: 14). This is what I aim to do with the concept of *constructive resistance*, but in relation to a much wider set of practices than what has been done with prefiguration.

Yates has provided an interesting theoretical approach to the study of prefiguration. Based on his study of autonomous social centres in Barcelona, he concludes that "prefiguration necessarily *combines* the experimental creating of 'alternatives' within *either* mobilisation-related *or* everyday activities, with attempts to ensure their future political relevance" (Yates, 2014: 13). Yates presents five social processes that "allows for a more practical and specific evaluation of the political logic at play in processes of prefiguration" (Yates, 2014: 13-15). First of all, Yates finds that prefiguration involves *experimentation* with everyday practices and projects, as well as with political mobilisation. Secondly, by *perspectives* he refers to how "prefigurative groups host, develop and critique political perspectives, ideas and social movement frames" (Yates, 2014:

14), for instance by organising seminars and debates for self-education. Third, *conduct* is about establishing new collective norms which result in new routines for how things should be done. Fourth, Yates finds that *consolidation* is related to how prefigurative politics is manifested in material environments or social orders. In Yate's study, this ranged from establishing dry toilets to sharing of possessions and division of space. Finally, fifth, *diffusion* allows the alternatives to "to persist beyond the present for groups and collectives" (Yates, 2014: 14).

The philosophy and practice of anarchism has a strong tradition of prefiguration. Richard Day describes and analyses the role of anarchism in what he calls "the newest social movements". Day considers the constructive and prefigurative elements in examples like social centres, food cooperatives and various temporary autonomous zones the "newest" way of organising. Many activists have given up on the idea of *demanding* change, and instead carve out niches of autonomy. The more visible aspects of the movement criticizing globalisation, holding street protests during high-profile meetings of the G8, the EU, the IMF, etc., have received the most attention, but Day claims this eruption of protest originated in autonomous ways of organising in solidarity across many different struggles (Day, 2005). Shantz provides a detailed account of how anarchists in North America have built "infrastructures of resistance" by establishing independent media and free schools, organising together with unions, and taking direct action in solidarity with poor people and migrants (Shantz, 2010). Anarchism and some forms of socialism have a century-old tradition of advocating and practicing autonomy and experimenting with different ways of organising life and work, such as the English diggers who cultivated common land in the 17th century (Winstanley & Hill, 1973), the Spanish anarchists who organised collective ways of working during the Spanish civil war (Leval, 1975), and the so-called utopian socialists (Day, 2005).

To sum up the contributions and limitations of existing literature relevant to the concept of constructive resistance, we see that the literature on prefiguration usually discusses the phenomenon in the context of taking direct action, and not as something that can be done independently of direct action in more discrete and hidden forms. When it

comes to the constructive programme, it is a limitation that constructive resistance has been theorised so little and rarely mentioned outside of a Gandhian context. Thus we know little about what it means for a movement to have a constructive programme, and what constructive programme looks like under other circumstances than the Indian struggle for independence. By exploring the concept of constructive resistance I intend to bring the insights from constructive programme and prefiguration together in the context of the emerging field of resistance studies.

Defining constructive resistance

Resistance is often defined in relation to some form of power that it aims to undermine, and the explicit or implicit understanding of power shapes the way resistance is conceptualised (Vinthagen, 2007). It is not within the scope of this article to discuss these matters in depth, since other authors have already written on these topics. Suffice it to say that resistance to domination can take many different forms: Some people chose violent resistance to tyranny, occupations and injustice through riots and guerrilla war. Others commit to nonviolent struggle with methods such as strikes, boycotts, and civil disobedience. These are the actions and events that the average person will think of if asked to describe resistance. However, authors such as James Scott and Asef Bayat were forerunners in documenting hidden and quiet forms of resistance. Scott showed how poor peasants, serfs and slaves quietly resist when they are out of sight by working slowly, gossiping, and stealing (Scott, 1985; Scott, 1990). Bayat has focused on how the urban poor in the global south create a better life for themselves day by day, by establishing businesses on the pavement, building illegally or tapping into the power grid (Bayat, 2010). Feminist researchers have pointed out that women's resistance might look different than men's and take quieter forms (Marchand, 2003). An inclusive definition of resistance that takes into consideration this wide variety is the beginning of Stellan Vinthagen and Mona Lilja's entry on "resistance" in *Encyclopedia of Activism and Social Justice*. They write:

> "Resistance is a response to power, it is a practice that challenge and negotiate, and which might undermine power. Depending on the definition of power, different types of activities will count as resistance." (Vinthagen & Lilja, 2007: 1215).

They continue describing how resistance is part of social life and relational, and then explains that

> "When power becomes (perceived as) dominance, resistance is likely. If power is understood as the creation of subordination through discourses that structure performance, label and rank identities, create boundaries, reduce complexity, and then promote power-loaded images of identities to be invested in, then resistance might be performed by the usages of identities, images and discourses in order to alter stereotypes and hierarchies." (Vinthagen & Lilja, 2007: 1216).

Across all the forms of resistance mentioned previously and included in Vinthagen and Lilja's quote, we find initiatives which not only criticise, protest, object, and undermine what is considered undesirable and wrong, but simultaneously acquire, create, built, cultivate and experiment with what people need in the present moment, or what they would like to see replacing dominant structures or power relations. I suggest a definition which says that *constructive resistance occurs when people start to build the society they desire independently of structures of power. They can act alone, but usually constructive resistance is carried out by groups. In order to be considered "constructive resistance", they necessarily have to be both constructive and provide a form of resistance, but there is a huge variety within both concepts. Resistance can be either an implicit or explicitly outspoken critique of structures of power upholding the status quo. These structures of power can be the state, corporate power or patriarchy, but is not limited to these. The constructive element can be either concrete or symbolic, and ranges from initiatives that aim to inspire others to actions that partly replace or lead to the collapse of the dominant way of behaving and thinking. Constructive resistance does not exclude conventional forms for protests, boycotts and civil disobedience, but focuses on creating, building, carrying out and experimenting with what is considered desirable.*

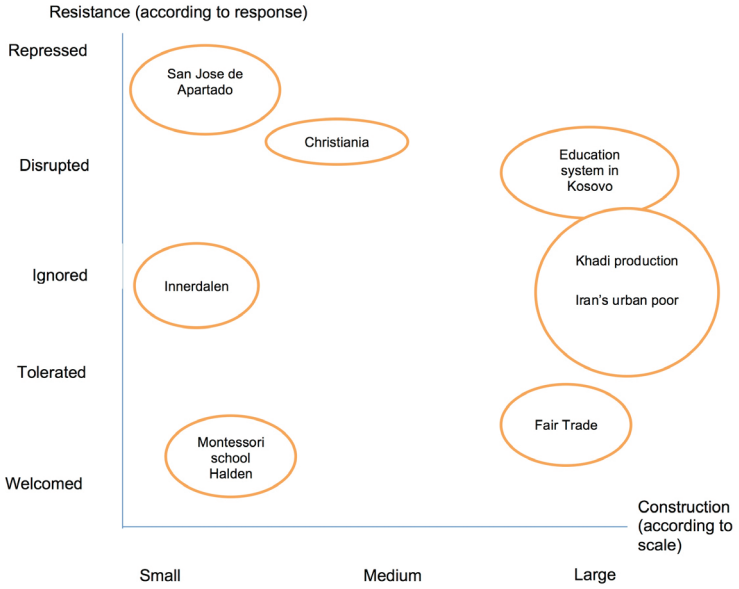
In order to be open-minded towards the phenomenon of constructive resistance, this definition is deliberately rather generous towards what can be considered both resistance and construction. For instance, I suggest leaving aside two of the elements that Vinthagen mentioned in his discussion of the term, which also appear in the writings on prefiguration. First of all, I do not include anything about "institutions" in the definition, making it possible to include unorganised and individual acts

as constructive resistance. Secondly, I think it is an unnecessary limitation to speak about the construction as something that "facilitates" resistance. Creating alternatives can be resistance without having to facilitate anything that looks like more traditional or well known forms of resistance. When MST occupies land, the act of creating the alternative is the resistance. This way, we also count as constructive resistance initiatives that remain small and do not advance beyond exemplifying an alternative or providing inspiration for others. Such a broad definition of constructive resistance is a logical consequence if one subscribes to an inclusive definition of resistance generally. It also means that initiatives can be oriented towards reform rather than revolution. Although activities might currently take place outside of state structures, it does not have to be a goal that they remain independent. There is no normative aspect of this definition; constructive resistance is not necessarily "good", and what starts out as constructive resistance might itself result in new forms of domination and exploitation when it grows and expands. One can say that early capitalism was constructive resistance to feudalism, but it soon developed into one of the most oppressive economic structures imaginable. And no matter how much we might disapprove of their agenda, right wing extremists and religious fundamentalists are also engaging in constructive resistance. Normative criteria are relevant, for instance, when we decide what types of resistance to support and which topics to spend our time researching, but it should not be applied when establishing an analytical definition of a phenomena. Thus, there is deliberately no normative aspect in the definition. However, the examples I have chosen to focus on are all striving, in one way or another, for a more just, peaceful or free society.

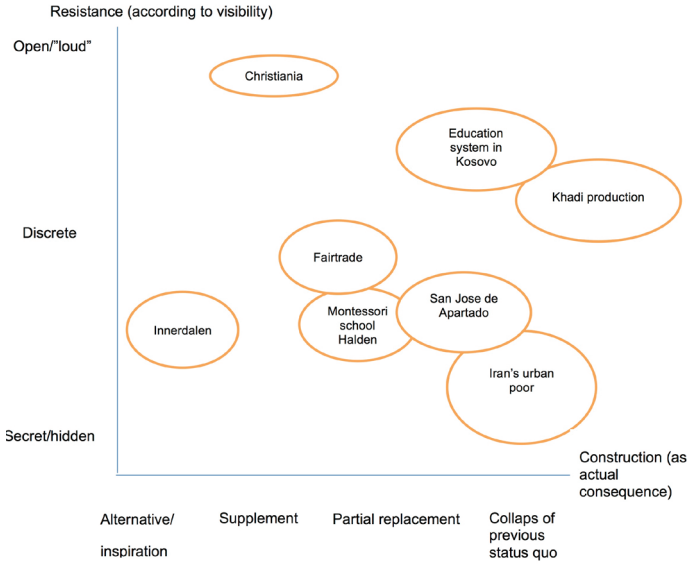
Both "construction" and "resistance" can be operationalised in different ways. "Construction" can be conceptualised as the actual consequences for the system under attack at the time of evaluation. Such consequences can be more or less severe for the system. In cases where the constructive initiative does not go further than providing inspiration for others to follow or functions as a supplement to the dominant way of doing things it might not be perceived as threatening. However, when it comes to initiatives where part of what is undesired has been replaced, the situation is very different. Ultimately the constructive alter-

native might become the norm, thus resulting in a complete collapse of the previous dominant structure. When it comes to judging how much "resistance" there is in an example of constructive resistance, there are several ways of making this assessment. One option is to evaluate resistance in terms of how confrontational it is towards a particular dominant system. This continuum ranges from the hidden and secret, to the discrete, and finally to resistance that is openly declared. Another option is to consider how "forceful" the resistance is, but the challenge then becomes how to decide who is responsible for determining what constitutes force. One possibility is to look at the response from authorities and those who are being "attacked" or undermined in the situation. This creates a continuum ranging from initiatives that might be welcomed, tolerated or ignored, to those which are disrupted and repressed. Both construction and resistance can also be understood in relation to the size and scale of the initiatives, such as how many people are involved and how long it lasts. None of these options are inherently better than the others; it depends on what aspect of the constructive resistance one is

Figur 1. Resistance/construction in relation to response and scale



Figur 2: Resistance/construction according to visibility and consequence



interested in examining more closely.

Below I have constructed two diagrams that each use two of the continuums suggested above. The same examples are plotted into both diagrams, to illustrate how the way one decides what to consider as resistance and construction influence how one evaluates the examples.

The variations within constructive resistance

Figure 1 shows eight examples of constructive resistance where the resistance axis is set in relation to the response from authorities, and the constructive element in relation to the size of the initiative. Figure 2 shows the same examples, but with a different operationalisation of both resistance and construction. Here resistance is shown according to the dimension of confrontation, with the hidden and secret on one end and openly declared resistance on the other. The axis of construction is laid out according to the actual consequences of the initiative at the time of evaluation, ranging from those that "merely" inspire to those that lead to a collapse of the previous dominant way of behaving or thinking. For

both figures, both axes are continuums and not categories. Some of the examples remain in the same area of the the figure no matter which axes are used, but others move quite a bit depending on how construction or resistance are operationalised. Together the examples illustrate how diverse constructive resistance can be while still being included in the definition.

Albanian school system in Kosovo in early 1990's

An example of constructive resistance which belongs in the top right corner of both figure 1 and 2 is the Kosovo Albanian parallel education system during the nonviolent struggle of the early 1990's. After a period of relative autonomy, things turned to the worse for the Albanian population in Kosovo during the 1980's. In 1989, ethnic segregation was introduced in schools, with the Serbian minority receiving far better conditions than the Albanian majority. In 1990, new legislation required that all students in Serbia (which included Kosovo) should use the same curriculum, "with only token concessions to the presence of Albanians in the republic" (Clark, 2000: 96). Albanian pupils should no longer be taught in the Albanian language, and the curriculum was changed in order to better fit the Serbian narrative of the history of the region. As a response, the Albanian pupils, students and teachers did not go on strike, which would have been counterproductive. Instead they established a system of parallel schools and a university. In improvised facilities, the teachers continued to teach the curriculum, which had been decided upon during the time of autonomy. Although the number of pupils fell during the 1990's, by 1997 there were still 330,000 pupils using the parallel system, compared to 376,000 enrolled in school before the changes took place (Clark, 2000: 99). In the beginning the teachers worked for only a symbolic salary, but this increased with time. The parallel education system meant much for keeping up morale and encouraging pride among the Kosovo Albanians. Ninety percent of the taxes collected by the parallel government went to the schools. The parallel schools received some criticism when it came to quality and lost momentum as the years passed and no progress was made with the nonviolent struggle in other domains. Nevertheless, it was an impressive effort which showed that the Kosovo Albanian population was perfectly capable of running their own lives (Clark, 2000: Chapter 5).

In both figures this is an example of constructive resistance that included both considerable resistance to the dominant Serbian education system and a lot of constructive action. It was a comprehensive initiative which involved the majority of the Albanian children and the consequences were quite far reaching. All these teachers, children and their families participated in the building of a parallel government which partly replaced the Serbian-controlled government when it came to schooling. It did not lead to a complete collapse of the Serbian school system, but nevertheless went way beyond the symbolic level of inspiring others. When it comes to the two ways of measuring resistance, the Kosovo Albanian education system ends up in different places in the figure. The schools were discrete in their operations; lessons were quiet, everyday occurrences that tried not to call too much attention to themselves. They took place in hidden and secret locations, but could not be completely clandestine, since the children and parents needed to know where to go (Figure 2). Nevertheless, as shown in figure 1, both teachers and pupils were harassed to such a degree that it disrupted the functions of the schools, which is why the case moves depending on how resistance is operationalised.

This campaign played an important role in upholding morale during these years of struggle, and as a direct consequence a large number of children were not exposed to nationalistic Serbian propaganda while they were in school. The nonviolent struggle in Kosovo collapsed and eventually war broke out, but the story of the education system in Kosovo remains a powerful example of how extensive constructive resistance can develop in spite of limited resources and a hostile environment that aims to crush opposition.

Gandhi's Khadi campaign

Gandhi's campaign for homespun and home-woven cloth is the most well known example of what he called "constructive programme." The idea was simple: instead of buying imported British textiles, Indians should produce what they needed themselves in a way which provided work to many people and simple industries in the villages. The Khadi production was an important element of both the non-cooperation campaign in 1920 and the nonviolent campaign of 1930-31. Since spinning is a very

simple procedure which only requires one tool, this became a way for millions of people to participate in the independence campaigns without running too much risk, and it could be done by the young and the old, men and women, rich and poor, in the cities and in the countryside. One can, of course, evaluate the khadi campaign in relation to the whole British system of colonialism, but it seems more fair to focus on the impact on Indian textile import. When combined with a boycott of British textiles, the consequences became even more substantial. In figures 1 and 2, this case is an example which goes far on the constructive scales, because so many people participated and it lead to a near collapse of the previous status quo regarding the import of British cloth. In connection with the 1920 campaign, the import of British-produced textile dropped by nearly half (Chandra, 1989: 188). When it comes to the aspect of resistance, khadi production was an activity that was difficult for the authorities to clamp down on since spinning and weaving was not forbidden. This meant that while many other aspects of the independence campaigns were repressed, khadi had to be ignored. Likewise, it was a quiet form of participation that did not have to involve taking to the streets. In between the major nonviolent campaigns, khadi production was also a simple way for people to show to themselves and each other that they remained committed to the cause of Indian independence.

Christiania

Staying in the repressive part of figure 1 but moving towards smaller examples, we find the community Christiania in Copenhagen, Denmark. This self-proclaimed "freetown" was established in the end of the 1960's as a squat settlement in an abandoned military area. Christiania was organised as a free space outside of government control where people experimented with alternative lifestyles, drugs, music, art, activism, etc. (Rasmussen, 2002), just like so many other squats, communes and community centres that existed during this time. The reactions towards Christiania have changed over the years, and authorities have tried to legalise the area when it comes to building permits, tax paying, and drug control. At times there have been violent clashes with the police, but Christiania has remained a place very different from surrounding Copenhagen. There are approximately 850 permanent inhabitants, but Christi-

ania's influence goes beyond the people who have chosen to live there. Many people visit and take part in the cultural activities, and the cultural life has had an impact far beyond Christiania itself. In figure 2 Christiania is a "loud" and openly confrontational example. Although some inhabitants would have preferred to continue quietly with their alternative lifestyles, as a whole the community has not been quiet and discreet in its resistance to the status quo of Danish society. Although it can be argued that the permanent residents have partly replaced conventional ways of living, most of Christiania's influence when it comes to the constructive elements has been to provide a lively supplement for the many visitors when it comes to music, art, bicycle culture, environmentally friendly energy, etc.

San Jose de Apartado

Another initiative which is modest when it comes to size but has managed to catch attention worldwide is the peace community San Jose de Apartado in Colombia, where the inhabitants in 1997 declared their village and its surrounding areas a peace community and refused to be part of the ongoing civil war. The area was a contested territory where the guerrillas had had the upper hand for some years, but where the paramilitary groups supporting the government was gaining control and actively displaced the population. When the inhabitants of San Jose de Apartado returned in spite of the continued warfare and high risks, they decided that they would not in any way assist any of the armed sides - be it guerrillas, para-militaries or the armed forces. Weapons are not allowed in the village and the members of the peace community also started with more collective ways of farming and organising community life (European Centre for Conflict Prevention, 1999; Jiménez, 2015; Westerbaan, 1999).

In Figure 1, the peace community is placed as a rather small-scale initiative; it involves only an estimated 1500 members. However, they have been constantly disrupted and approximately 200 members have been killed or disappeared, especially those who are most outspoken. The Colombian President Uribe in 2005 publicly declared that it was not possible to be neutral in the civil war, and that everyone who was not siding with the government was siding with the guerrillas (Jiménez, 2015: 56). However, using the scale of construction in figure 2, we see what a

difference it makes how you decide to define "construction". In spite of it modest scale, the establishment of the peace community lead to a collapse of the previous status quo with forced displacements around San Jose de Apartado. Although it only concerned a limited geographic area, the military did not get its way in this case. Support from Colombian and international human rights workers, which have accompanied the community since its establishment, has provided significant unarmed protection and support. Figure 2 also shows how the conceptualisation of resistance matters. Living an ordinary peasant life growing food and taking care of your family is in itself quiet, and it is only when the response it provokes is taken into consideration that it becomes obvious how much resistance there can be in such stubborn persistence.

Housing for Iran's urban poor

Bayat has coined the term "the quiet encroachment of the ordinary" to capture how the urban poor of the global south in many places manage to carve out space for themselves to make it possible for them to build better lives without any overt protest. This can be the establishment of shantytowns where people illegally tap into the power grid, small stalls on the pavement for selling merchandise, and so on. One of his studies focuses on the urban poor of Iran. During the 18 months preceding the Iranian revolution in 1979, the urban poor was largely ignored both by the regime and opposition forces. Instead of participating in the political revolution, the poor were involved in a parallel revolution of securing better living conditions (Bayat, 1997). Already before 1979 migration from rural areas increased the number of inhabitants in Tehran, which could not be accommodated in the legal housing market. Instead they resorted to building houses in slums and squatter communities, mainly at the outskirts of the city. By 1980 an estimated 1,4 million people or 35% of the population of Tehran lived in slums and squatter communities (Bayat, 1997: 29). When people had established their houses, they started to demand services such as water, electricity and garbage collection. When these demands were not heard, the squatters resorted to quiet direct action, illegally tapping into the water pipes and power grid. In most people's own perception, these actions were not political, but simply a way of surviving (Bayat, 1997: 45). In 1977, the authorities tried

to demolish many of the illegal settlements. Twelve people died during struggles where the squatters defended their homes in the autumn of 1977. However, as soon as houses were demolished, the squatters started to rebuild them from the rubble, and eventually the regime had to give in. In 1978, the squats were recognised by the government for the first time, and home construction outside of the city limit was accepted. From 1979 to 1981, the struggles for urban housing took more overt and organised forms, including occupations of hotels and homes, but once stability was restored this opportunity vanished and the poor once again resorted to the tactics from the pre-revolution years, with gains won quietly, followed by concessions from the authorities (Bayat, 1997).

In figure 1 (below), the Iranian urban poor's struggle for housing is placed at the "large" end because it involved such a vast number of people. Authorities ignored this struggle for the most part, although the clashes in 1977 of course moved it temporarily towards the repressive corner. When it comes to figure 2, if we take 1979 as the time for measuring, this example had led to a collapse of the previous status quo. According to Bayat, the gains for the poor was made due to the quiet nature of the way they built houses and acquired services like water and electricity. As long as they did not make too much fuss, they were to a large degree ignored and could continue establishing a better life day by day. This is an example of activities which are not explicitly framed as resistance, but nevertheless has had a huge impact on the living conditions of the urban poor in Iran.

Halden Montessori School

Schools which base their teaching on Maria Montessori's approach to children's learning and development exist worldwide, including in the Norwegian town of Halden. Montessori started to develop her pedagogical ideas in Italy before WWI, but the school in Halden was opened in 2015. The first year it has been attended by less than 20 children, so it is a small initiative in a town that has 30.000 inhabitants.

This small school is just one out of countless schools which base their teaching on some form of alternative pedagogy and which can also be considered constructive resistance. I have included this particular ex-

ample primarily for one reason: Halden Montessori school itself explicitly says that it does not compete with the pedagogy in the public schools (Halden Montessoriskole, n.d). This raises the question if it is reasonable to label initiatives "constructive resistance" if the organisers themselves state that they are not resisting. Although I respect the school's intentions of being non-confrontational, I will nevertheless argue that this is indeed an example of constructive resistance, although a modest one. In figure 1, the school is placed in the lower left corner because of the present size and the fact that the local authorities have welcomed it. However, in figure 2 it is an example of a discrete form of resistance, indeed because it so clearly frames itself as non-confrontational. However, when it comes to measuring the consequences of the constructive aspect, it falls in the middle as "partial replacement". This is because a child that attends the Montessori school cannot simultaneously attend the schools run by Halden municipality. The Montessori school is not just an inspiration for others or a supplement the children can choose after the ordinary school day is over, it is an alternative school which implicitly confronts the dominant way of educating children in Norway.

Fairtrade

Fairtrade describes itself as an organisation which "…is an alternative approach to conventional trade and is based on a partnership between producers and consumers (…) Fairtrade offers consumers a powerful way to reduce poverty through their every day shopping." (Fairtrade, 2016b). The organisation started out as a small initiative selling products in the Netherlands in 1988, but the idea soon spread to many other countries (Fairtrade, 2016a). Fairtrade is based on the idea of informed consumer choices and the assumption that individuals will be willing to pay more for products that they trust to have been produced under just working conditions. Rather than simply criticising everyone upholding an unjust trade system, Fairtrade uses its label to provide an alternative to the present system of exploitation. Although easily dismissed by radicals because the organisation does not distance itself from economic growth as a way to prosperity and continued trade between rich and poor countries, it has grown to gain a considerable proportion of the market. On its webpage, Fairtrade presently talks very little about what it is opposed

to, and this discreet way of creating an alternative might be a reason for its success. In figure 1, Fairtrade is currently an example of a large constructive initiative that ends up in the area between being tolerated or welcomed by authorities. This is the perspective from the consumers who buy the products, where for instance some cities have taken the step of becoming fair-trade cities. That they are welcomed by authorities in the global North does not mean they are welcomed by their competitors, but it makes it much harder to disrupt and repress them. However, the situation might be very different for farmers in the global South when their new practices challenge conventional power relations. Fairtrade is also an example that moves quite a bit from figure 1 to figure 2. With time it has moved from mainly being an inspiration and an alternative to replacing a large part of the market when it comes to products like coffee, bananas and chocolate. Nevertheless there is still a long way to go before it will lead to a collapse of the trade in conventional, unfair goods.

Innerdalen

The last example in figures 1 and 2 is the Norwegian struggle to save the valley "Innerdalen". In the end of the 1970's, the plans for establishing a number of power stations in the Orkla-Grana river system was far advanced. As a consequence, several valleys would be flooded, including Innerdalen where valuable land well-suited for food production would be lost. Local opinions about the issue were spilt, but in 1978 a number of environmental organisations together formed the action group "Grønn Aksjon Innerdalen" (Green Action Innerdalen) in order to draw attention to the issue. During the summers of 1978, -79 and -80, the group organised a number of camps, including a "people's university". The camps were places for socialising and learning more about environmental issues, practical skills, as well as discussing the actions against the planned power stations. Also other locations in Norway became centres of struggles against similar plans, with Alta being famous for the civil disobedience actions. An activity which made Innerdalen considerably different from Alta was the focus on constructive work. The land in Innerdalen had turned out to be of very high quality, a reason why this particular valley was chosen to be the centre of the struggle. In Norway, fertile, cultivatable land is scarce, and it frequently engenders strong

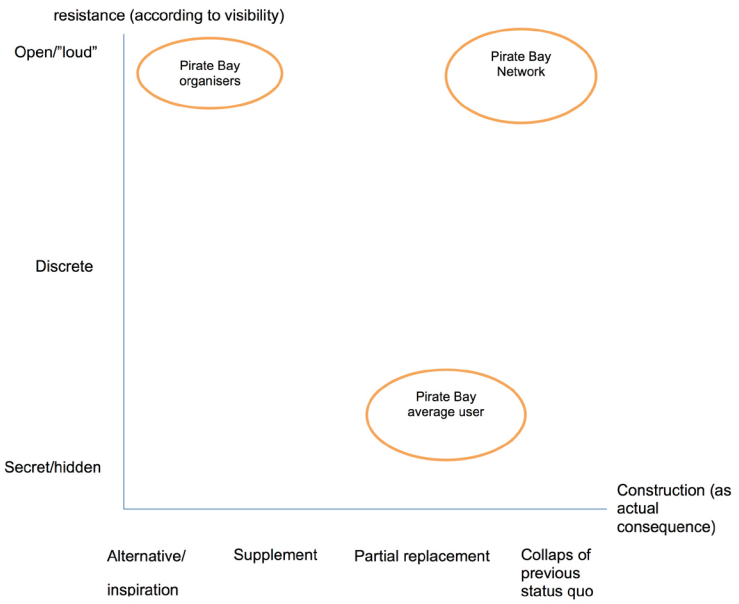
emotions when there is talk about projects that will destroy soil. With direct inspiration from Gandhi's constructive programme, it was decided to start to cultivate more of this land. One person also settled in the valley together with his 40 sheep (Grønn Aksjon Innerdalen, 1981: 25).

In figure 1, the settlements in Innerdalen are a small scale example that was easily ignored by authorities. In figure 2, it did not get further than providing an example, and it was quite discrete as long as the settlements did not obstruct the building plans. In order to have become more confrontational, the activists would have had to be working the land in the valley when the water started flooding it, something which did not happen.

Managing large networks in the model

In figure 1 and 2, the examples of Christiania, Innerdalen, the Montessori school and the peace community in Colombia all take place in a specific and limited geographical location. In contrast, the examples of Kosovo's education system, the Khadi production and Iran's urban

Figur 3: Pirate Bay



poor are dispersed over larger areas and without a centre. Nevertheless the constructive element still requires a physical location to meet for the schools or a place to build the illegal houses or produce the cloth. The final example, the organisation Fairtrade is also dispersed, but since it is one organisation in the figures it is treated as one "unit". When it comes to global networks, this becomes more challenging because different parts of the network have to be placed on different parts of the figure.

The Pirate Bay is a peer-to-peer file-sharing network where people can share large files such as films, music or videogames through BitTorrent technology. It was started in 2003 by the Swedish organisation "Piratbyrån" (The Pirate Bureau), which together with groups such as Anonymous and Wikileaks is part of a "hacktivist" culture and a growing movement for an open internet (McKelvey, 2015). At first the file sharing was just a small part of what Piratbyrån did, but it soon started to grow and at the end of 2005, The Pirate Bay website had 2,5 million users (Looper, 2014). The growing popularity of the site prompted companies with copyrights to the shared material to accuse The Pirate Bay of copyright infringement. In 2006 the Swedish police raided Pirate Bay for the first time, but the file sharing was only down for three days. In spite of all attempts to close it down, file sharing continue via The Pirate Bay. Decreases in the number of users has only been temporary, and a Dutch study has shown that six months after a Dutch court demanded that internet providers block access to Pirate Bay, downloads via the network had increased instead (Essers, 2013).

The initiators of The Pirate Bay have become public spokespersons against control of information. In 2009 all four were convicted to one year in prison for assisting in copyright infringement and fined. The verdict was appealed, and in 2010 the prison time was reduced, but the fines increased to 6.5 million US dollars. Thus, in figure 3 the organisers of Pirate Bay are placed in the top left corner. They are few, but the repression they have experienced has been relatively severe. Alone they could not have posed much of a challenge to the film and music industry, and it is unlikely that anyone would have bothered to press charges against them if they had not grown to include so many users. However, the situation for the average user is very different. Most of them do their downloads discretely and anonymously, and although some share the hacktivist phi-

losophy, they are not prepared to be public spokespersons. In addition, we must also suspect that a large proportion of the users do not perceive their acts as political, but simply want free music and films. These average users are placed in the lower middle part of figure 3, because their actions have become a widely used supplement to the usual way of accessing films and music, but did not replace more conventional forms. Thus, when we look at the Pirate Bay network as a whole, including both organisers and average users, it ends close to the top right corner of figure 3. Although the film and music industries have since adapted to demand for files that could be easily downloaded and developed legal services where people can download and stream films and music, for a while the ordinary way of doing business looked as if it would collapse.

Concluding reflections

The intention with including these nine examples of constructive resistance is to illustrate how highly diverse this phenomenon can be when it comes to the context, how many people are involved and how long they last. In spite of the diversity, the cases do have a common characteristic: a constructive aspect of their resistance to the dominant systems of trade, education, housing, music purchasing etc. that they confront. The people performing these activities are not (just) criticising, demanding change or tearing down established structures. While they might be involved in such types of resistance as well, what is highlighted here is the way they create, build or simply acquire something they consider better than the status quo. They imagine that things can be different, they experiment through trial and error, they change practices and norms, and they share their experiences with others. The motivation for creating an alternative varies considerably. Some people engage in constructive resistance out of an immediate necessity. They start to grow food on occupied land because they don't have enough to eat or see no other option of earning an income. Some are responses to changing circumstances, such as the civil war in Colombia. Out of these new situations grew a need for creating alternatives. The inhabitants of San Jose de Apartado developed a way of living that made it possible to stay close to their land rather than be displaced. Some forms of constructive resistance combine the alternative they create with critique of conventional society, such as places like

Christiania or the parallel education system in Kosovo. Other examples, like the Montessori school and Fairtrade are obviously not as necessary for immediate survival or explicitly critical, but arrive at constructive resistance out of a desire to create a better alternative rather than criticising or obstructing what one considers problematic.

I constructed two different scales for measuring both the constructive and resistance elements of the examples of constructive resistance. Instead of settling on one and arguing in favour of that choice, the purpose is to highlight the consequences of the decisions. With some of the examples, it did not make much difference which figure was used; if one were only to investigate Innerdalen and the khadi campaign, it might have led to the conclusion that it does not make much difference which scale to use. However, looking at San Jose de Apartado and Fairtrade show that the way one talks about both resistance and construction makes a considerable difference when deciding how "much" constructive resistance these cases demonstrate.

It is perfectly possible to make a convincing argument that it would be better to label the lower left corner of the figures something like constructive work or constructive action. However, I have chosen this approach because I embrace an inclusive definition of resistance and want to emphasise that constructive resistance happens along a continuum and can change significantly over time, making it difficult to judge when something has become "enough resistance" to be included. If one generally has a broad concept of resistance, then it also follows logically that the concept of constructive resistance should be broad. This said, not everything that can be included in the definition of constructive resistance is equally interesting for academics and practitioners focused on radical social change. Initiatives like Innerdalen, Fairtrade, Iran's urban poor and Halden Montessori school might not be considered to have goals that reach far enough or managed to reach a size where they can pose a threat to the status quo. Thus, when selecting what one considers interesting to study it might be necessary to set additional criteria about the potential of the constructive resistance or decide to focus on those who's aims include non-state structures. This would exclude things like Montessori schools that apply for permission from national authorities. Likewise, what starts out radical can very well stiffen with time. When

Gandhi conceived of the khadi campaign, it was part of larger struggle for Indian independence and liberation that went much further than getting rid of the British colonizers. Gandhi was critical of a centralised state, but today khadi is sold in government shops. It also seems quite ironic that the Indian national flag, one of the most powerful symbols of the state, is by law required to be made from khadi (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2002).

However, I want to emphasise that not everything that can be considered constructive is resistance. My definition requires that it takes place outside of state structures and challenges a dominant system. Thus, conventional development aid given through state agencies is not constructive resistance, but a way of "patching up" problems created by the current world order without challenging the structures that created the problems in the first place. When companies or industries start their own labelling as a way to appear "green" and compete with independent labels, they are not engaged in constructive resistance, since they are not challenging their own domination. Instead, this is "greenwashing": an attempt to appear green with as little effort as possible. Charity to the poor and homeless in the form of soup kitchens, shelters and donations might well be good deeds, but as long as they do not include an attempt to subvert a particular system that has created inequality, they do not qualify as constructive resistance. However, when the poor engage in social empowerment and themselves organise development or soup kitchens that is a completely different matter.

Another issue for discussion is the question of intentions vs. consequences. In my definition, considering an activity to be constructive resistance can both depend on the intentions and the result of what is done. If the intent is to do constructive resistance and can be reasonably argued to fit within the definition, then I consider it constructive resistance even when the results are limited. Likewise, if the result of activities is the construction of alternative practices, I consider it constructive resistance no matter what the intentions were. Not everyone is likely to agree with this definition, and it does pose some challenges. For instance, it might not seem reasonable to call something like Halden Montessori School in its present form resistance when it has been welcomed by the local authorities and the school explicitly says it is not a competition to

the ordinary schools. Nevertheless, even if such a small school seems insignificant now, there is a potential for growth with far reaching consequences. If a large number of parents in Halden decide to send their kids to the Montessori School, this would either force the municipality to find excuses to close the school, or close some of the public schools because of lack of pupils, or force the municipality's schools to adopt some form of Montessori pedagogic. Resistance always has to start small. The possible benefit of all the examples that are ignored, tolerated and welcomed is that because they are not involved in a constant battle, this gives possibilities to evolve gradually. On the other hand, many of the people who participate in these initiatives might not consider them resistance to anything at all. When people are not forced to defend their alternatives, they can continue to live comfortably without ever being considered a threat.

The example of file sharing illustrates the problem of only focusing on intentions and leaving out the consequences. Because so many people changed their behaviour, although they had no intentions of undermining the film and music industries, the result was nevertheless that the copyright holders felt threatened. Including only intentions or results would mean that examples such as file sharing or the Montessori school could not be considered constructive resistance.

The definition used here is much wider than what has previously been included in the discussions about prefigurative politics and constructive programme. In Maeckelbergh's use of prefigurative in relation to the alterglobalisation movement, only those who simultaneously confront established structures and engage in creating alternatives are involved in prefigurative politics. I think it is important to also include all those who are not interested in criticising or confronting (whether because of fear, ignorance or because they don't think it will make a difference), when we talk about constructive resistance. If we accept Maeckelbergh's own understanding of strategy, engaging in any kind of activity that creates alternatives can be strategic. No matter if they think it or not, people are still contributing to resistance as long as they are performing activities that create alternatives to or implicitly undermine established structures of power. Constructive resistance might become more effective if it is designed to confront the status quo and not just bypass it. On the other hand, it is easier to continue working undisturbed when you are involved in a small-scale non-confrontational supplement

rather than openly confronting and explicitly aiming for total collapse of the status quo.

The definition of constructive resistance suggested here, and the presentations of the different examples, provide starting points for mapping the terrain of a phenomenon with little theoretical exploration. Hopefully this aspect of resistance studies will be developed further with investigations of even more interesting questions than how to define them. Such studies can investigate some of the aspects I have pointed towards in the concluding reflections, like the question of consequences vs. intentions. Likewise, it will be interesting to know what differences exist between using methods of dispersion and methods of concentration when it comes to constructive resistance. A particularly important aspect will be to look at the relationship between constructive and non-constructive forms of resistance, and how these can work together to undermine systems of domination.

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