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Self, struggle and solidarity: from Foucauldian micro-politics to Arendtian struggle in organizations

Spicer, A. and Fleming, P.

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Author contact details are as follows:

André Spicer
Warwick Business School
University of Warwick
andre.spicer@wbc.ac.uk

Peter Fleming
Judge Business School
University of Cambridge
p.fleming@jbs.cam.ac.uk

'Self, struggle and solidarity: From Foucauldian micro-politics to Arendtian struggle in organizations',

André Spicer and Peter Fleming

Introduction

Our intuitive understanding of power and resistance is rather strange. We often draw a strict contrast between the diabolic world of power and the liberating world of resistance. This division has almost religious dimensions. On one side of the pearly gates is a devilish realm of power where employees are directed by dark-suited overlords. This is Dante's inferno where sinners are meted out excruciating punishment by a complex hierarchy of devils. On the other side of the pearly gates we have a world of sweetness and light where emancipated employees frolic in a corporate playground overflowing with opportunities for naughtiness.

Like most intuitive understandings, this stark contrast between power and resistance is naïve. It is a bedtime story of baddies (presumably the powerful manager) and goodies (presumably the oppressed worker). In such stories the baddies are always unfailingly bad and will not cease to exercise their diabolic power to achieve their dastardly plans. The freedom fighting goodie will of course be resolutely good and endeavour to further their noble struggle at every turn. But like any bedtime story, this is not the stuff of real social relationships, which are marked by ambiguous and ambivalent mixtures. Those in positions of power also resist. For instance, managers may subtly sabotage a corporate initiative. And those who resist need to mobilize power in order to do so. For instance, workers use everything from sly jibes to outright violence to build a coherent culture of opposition on the shopfloor (Collinson, 1992) or in the call-centre (Fleming, 2005). Power and resistance are closely knitted together in complex ways.

The last two chapters have treated power and resistance as separate entities, now we ought to investigate the relationship between them. What some have called a Newtonian approach to this relationship sees power/resistance as analogous to the physics of moving objects. First there is an action (power) followed by a reaction (resistance). This image informs most of the studies surveyed in Chapter 2. But this relationship might be dynamic. For example, Weber's defined power as 'the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will *despite resistance*' (Weber, 1978: 53, emphasis added). Here we notice that power is defined as an attempt to overcome resistance. Power is viewed as a response to resistance or even a response to the response. The exact nature of this dynamic was debated in some detail in the 1980s. Reacting to what he saw as the highly determinist accounts of power, Hindess (1982) argues that it should not be conceived as a capacity that allows a powerful actor to overcome a relatively weak actor who might put up some resistance. Rather, power relations are ongoing and involve a mutually implicated interlay. Building on this argument, Barbalet (1985) claims that resistance is not only implicated in relations of power, but actually shapes these power relations: 'It is through its limitations on power that resistance contributes the outcomes of power' These approaches suggest that instead of having two diametrically opposed worlds of good and evil, organizations are more like a chiaroscuro of power and resistance. 'Light' and 'dark' play off each through mixture, contrast and exchange.

In this chapter we aim to develop a more thoroughgoing and robust conceptualization of this dynamic by introducing the term 'struggle'. This term has been well used in disparate groups of literature. In introducing here, we suggest that it may better help

us understand the complex and ambiguous relationship that forms the interface between power and resistance. It is even suggested that the very term 'resistance' may be redundant in light of the image of friction and linear reaction it evokes.

The power-resistance dynamic
In recognising the intertwined nature of power and resistance, we can shift the focus from separate entities to a complex 'power-resistance' constellation in which different forms of power may evoke resistance and vice versa. We can impute this dynamic in the dimensions of power/resistance discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. Direct refusal by an employee to work on a project may be met with more coercive power such as an unambiguous command or being escorted from the building by a security guard. Attempts to voice unpalatable concerns may be met by efforts to manipulate the agenda further so as to exclude these demands before the discussion even begins. Various attempts to escape from organizational power relations may be met by continued forms of domination relating to guilt, values and sentiments of trust. And the creation of novel identities may be met with a more carefully orchestrated programme of subjection. As Mumby (2005) argues, the study of resistance should not focus on "the bow (an ostensible act of obeisance to power) nor the fart (a covert act of resistance to power) but rather on the ways in which these intersect in the moment to produce complex and often contradictory dynamics of control and resistance" (Mumby, 2005: 21).

Careful studies of the interplay of power-resistance certainly provide a rich and more nuanced picture of organizational life. Instead of two sharply contrasting images of heavenly resistance and hellish power, the power-resistance couplet is considered in a more earthly light of political purgatory. In this world light and dark play off against each other in ever-changing ways. But even though the notion of 'dynamic' emphasises the intertwined nature of power and resistance, they are still assumed to be ultimately separate. The result of holding onto this analytical diving line is the consistent temptation to try and decide which actions are resistance and which are power. As recent research has shown, teasing out the two can become a very difficult task when faced with the complex political situations of organizations today. With the obliteration of class politics in many western countries, shareholder attacks on managerial ranks and the emergence of new social movements based around consumerism and non-work issues, the once black-and-white picture of the controlled and controllers is difficult to retain. It is highly uncertain who exact is powerful and who is resisting.

This uncertainty, we suggest, derives from three assumptions that still remain in much of the literature exploring power and resistance in work organizations. First is the assumption that power and resistance are *epistemologically* distinct phenomena. This means that it is possible to actually know the differences between power and resistance and identify them in empirical settings. But there is difficulty here, as Kondo (1990) most notably argued in her study of a Japanese confectionary manufacturer. She argued demonstrated how the power of resistance and resistance of power infused the relation of domination experienced by the factory patriarch and female employees. Indeed, the power to rescript the dominant narratives in the factory in a manner that provided limited freedom actually fuelled elements of the control desired by the manager. Kondo (1990) suggests that what we conceptualise as resistance could easy be termed power and vice versa – the epistemological

distinction involves slippage and overlap to such an extent that they fall in on each other.

Deriving from the first, a second assumption underlying much power-resistance research is that the two terms *ontologically* distinct. While we may recognize that our academic concepts are not exactly accurate in identifying the forces underpinning power and resistance, there is still a reality out there that involves these two forces. Otherwise, why would we even engage in research about how the powerful control the relatively powerless? We suggest that there is indeed a very strong reality in which some enjoy and receive more privileges and controls than others. And this distribution is structured by broad patters of force associated with capitalism, nationalism, race and so-forth. But the empirical dynamic of power and resistance relations is characterised by overlap, blurring and mutual interpenetration. As we will argue in later chapters, resistance may involve forms of power that facilitates domination at other points in the power/resistance network. Power welded by management may involve forms of resistance too, of which are thy used to fuel the power of subordinates. Due to the commonality of mechanisms between 'power' and 'resistance', it seems difficult to keep them ontological separate.

Faced with this difficulty of keeping power and resistance apart as epistemological and ontological entities, some have sought to claim they are politically and ethically distinct categories (Fraser, 1995, 1998; Fleming, 2006). Here we turn to structures first, and then explore the ensuing dynamics of power-resistance within this frame. By identifying a certain group as powerful and another group as resisting power, we are able to make an important political intervention that gives voice to an oppressed political group and furthers their struggle for emancipation. This is certainly a defensible position that recognises the broader political context of the micro-politics in work situations. As Spivak (1993) argues, even the most tyrannical technocrat is a victim of sorts, but we would not want to compare their victim-hood to the most impoverished in society. We take cue from this position in later chapters. But there is still a danger that when we identify the 'powerless', we miss create simplistic stereotypes that romanticise the subordinate groups. In doing this, we may miss the politically regressive aspects of some forms of resistance among the powerless (such as homophobia on the shopfloor), and the progressive elements of the politically dominant. Moreover, by assigning social roles in this way we might further embed the sense of powerlessness and hopelessness associated with being a resistor. It is no wonder that small communities, for example, would feel disempowered and radical action pointless when all it could do was 'resist' a significantly more 'powerful' force. If we used a different vocabulary to talk about this engagement, it may be possible to begin to provide a politics of hope rather than a politics of defence that a language of 'power' and 'resistance' seems to imply in ostensibly 'hopeless' situations.

Given these three problems with the concept of power-resistance, we suggest that the concept of *struggle* may provide a supplementary vocabulary that can further our understandings of this relationship.

The Concept of Struggle
The word struggle generally connotes a highly antagonistic situation. For instance we might talk of two children struggling over a toy that they mutually long for. We might talk about two companies locked in a struggle to dominate a certain market. We speak

about the struggle of a colonised group to gain their independence from their colonial masters. We could talk about the struggle for women's rights. We talk about an individual's struggle for justice. We might even talk about struggles with ourselves, over which course of action we should take. Each of these common uses of the idea of struggle reveals the intimate, existential and wide-ranging elements of struggle. But from a strict conceptual vantage point, what exactly is struggle? Moreover, how can it help us understand in more detail the dynamic between power and resistance? In order to address these questions we shall now investigate some theories of struggle in social and political thought.

If we return to the power debates, we notice that struggle forms the foundation of modern approaches to power. The work of Niccolò Machiavelli (1513, 1517) is replete with images of struggle between the prince and his subjects, the prince and other princes, the price and other members of the nobility and so on. He presents a world where actors are "ungrateful, fickle, false, cowardly, covetous, and as long as you succeed they are yours entirely; they will offer you their blood, property, life and children, as is said above, when the need is far distant; but when it approaches they turn against you" (Machiavelli, 1513, chapter 17). Political life involves the constant attempt by egocentric actors to advance their interests, often at the expense of others. The result is that politics is a space where mutually mistrusting actors are consistently locked in a struggle for political advantage that is not bound by any external reference points, save the constant calculation of power. We also find images of struggle at the heart of Thomas Hobbes' (1651) theory of the modern state. Hobbes (Chapter 13) argues that people are largely equal in physical and mental abilities, but tend to over-value their own ability vis-à-vis the ability of others. This gives rise to a situation where an actor will seek to use their abilities in order to obtain a resource they desire from another person. Because of the limited nature of these resources, actors begin to fear attack from others, they seek to pre-empt an attack on their own interests and life through building up power. During this time when there are no human institutions outside mutual struggle, 'a state of nature' reigns whereby the only important dynamic is consistent struggle. Hobbes points out that people desire an escape from this state of consistent war and voluntarily submit their power to a great ruler who will guarantee order and life. What interests us is that the ground zero of politics for Hobbes is a situation of mutual, interlocked fierce struggle. Order and law is only something that comes after the fact to prevent its negative effects (Chapters 14 – 17). For Machiavelli and Hobbes, struggle forms the very basis of political life.

While Machiavelli and Hobbes demonstrate the foundational nature of struggle in political life, they were less specific about the inter-relationships involved in this struggle. This task fell to Hegel who demonstrates how struggle occurs *between* two subjects. The subjects involved are not independent entities who clash. Rather they are mutually dependent on their partner in struggle for their own sense of being. Perhaps nowhere is this better explicated than in Hegel's (1807: IV a) famous discussion of the master and the slave. In this section, Hegel investigates the process through which we come to be conscious of ourselves. Instead of this being a process of the exploring within ourselves and gradually revealing what is there, Hegel argues that we come to know who we are through a struggle with another person. Hegel is clear that we only develop self consciousness to the extent that we are recognized by another person: 'Self consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only by being

acknowledged or "recognized" (p.229). Here he demonstrates that our own sense of who we are can only be found through and in interaction with another person. The nature of this interaction with another person for Hegel is struggle. He notes that two individuals enter into a 'life-and-death struggle' to 'bring their certainty of themselves, the certainty of being for themselves, to the level of objective truth' (p.232). This life and death struggle is exemplified by the struggle between the powerful Lord and the dependent Bondsman. The Lord feels that they are independent of the Bondsman because they have control over them and can tell them what to do. In contrast the Bondman experiences himself as dependent upon the Master because they are often simply an extension of the Master's wishes. Hegel shows us that both these figures, at least initially, are dependent on the other for their sense of who they are. The Master would not be a Master without the Bondsman to recognize him as such and do his biddings. Similarly, the Bondsman would not have an identity without their recognition and fear they experience in the face of their Master. Hegel goes even further by noting that the Bondsman has a relationship, which is independent of his relationship with his Master. This is his relationship with the object of his work. It is through this struggle with the object of work that the Bondsman develops a sense of recognition and self-consciousness that is independent of the master. The central point we can take from Hegel's argument about the relationship between the Master and the Bondsman is that each of these figures only has an existence to the extent that they stand in relationship to one another. What is important for our purposes is that Hegel shows us how through political struggle between two actors (whether they be individuals or social collectives) each group gains their sense of identity and existence. This suggests that actors do not just arrive on scene preformed and then engage in struggle. Rather it is through the very process of struggle that they develop a sense of themselves as actors.

The vital nature of struggle in any social relationship was picked up in the sociological thought of George Simmel (1955). In much of the early sociological thought struggle was thought to be a disruption or break down of sociality and organization. To put this crudely, the more struggle, the less sociality. Simmel however suggests the direct opposite. For him *Kampf* (which is translated as conflict, but also means struggle) "is a way of achieving some kind of unity, even though it may be through the annihilation of one of the conflicting parties" (p.13). For Simmel struggle is a vital ingredient of social reality because a completely harmonious social situation is "not only empirically unreal, it could show no real life process" (p.15). Like Machiavelli and Hobbes' before him, Simmel argues that "natural hostility as a form or basis of human relations appear at least side by side with their other basis, sympathy" (p.28). Instead of treating struggle as the opposite of sociality, Simmel argues that struggle plays at least three vital social roles. First, struggle gives an actor a sense of agency. By engaging in struggle, an actor is reminded that they are not merely slaves of circumstance. This ultimately builds self-esteem and conviction that an actor can indeed act upon the world and make a difference. Second, struggle often promotes social interaction within a group. This is because "one *unites* in order to fight, and one fights under the mutually recognised control of rules and norms" (Simmel, 1955: 35). For instance, it is often reported that an organization under the threat of a takeover by a corporate raider will show less social disputes within the organization. Finally, struggle paradoxically promotes social interaction with the group who one struggles against. For instance, if one department of an organization is in fierce competition with another, then they are more likely to copy and mimic each

other than if they are completely alien to one another. The central insight we can take from Simmel is that struggle not only constructs how an actor understands himself or herself, but also deepens social relations between actors. For Simmel, the very bonds of sociality and perhaps even our confidence as social actors are produced through, by, and within struggle.

A common image of struggle is that it is a destructive process that actors pursue for individual gain, often resulting in mutual destructiveness. Indeed, this image of struggle appears throughout Simmel's book on the subject. However, a tradition of late ninetieth century and early twentieth century thought reminds us that struggle is not only destructive, but it is also a vital force of creativity and development. Probably the foundational insight here can be located in Karl Marx's theory of social class. According to Marx and Engels, society was driven forward by the struggle between social classes. They famously declared in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) that:

> The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master₃ and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes (Marx, 1848: 2).

This creative dynamism is a theme that has been developed in countless studies of class struggle. Perhaps most notable for our purposes is E. P. Thompson's (1967) historical study that maps out how various trades and types of work were able to constitute themselves as a single identifiable class through the development of a working class identity and 'class consciousness' during the 18th century. What is so interesting about this study is that it demonstrates the creative pressure of social struggle. Thompson shows that through their struggle with the appearance of early capitalist industries, the working class was able to create an identity, a way of life and a whole series of institutions like clubs, trade unions, political parties and religious movements.

At the heart of the creative dynamics of struggle is *communication*. Indeed, it is the mutual communication of at least two actors that creates new possibilities and potentialities. We find this point made in the philosophy of Karl Jasper. For Jaspers, our being is always a being in relation to other people. Our sense of who we are only comes into existence when we confront another person *and* open ourselves to this person through engaging in meaningful communication with them. The fact that we communicate with them opens up the possibility and necessity of difference. That is, the other person will and should call our claims, ideas and even identity consistently into question. Through communication we are constantly called into question and struggle arises. Perhaps struggle is central to our very being because "I cannot be without bringing (struggle) upon myself. There is no way in which I might hold back, since by merely existing I take part in (struggles) constitution" (Jaspers, 1932/1970: 204)[1]. Jaspers (p.204-206) argues that we engage in three kinds of successive

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[1] In this sentence Jaspers is referring to both struggle and guilt, but for the purpose of this chapter I have focused on struggle

struggles, each of which build upon each other. First, we struggle for our bodily existence where we attempt to secure our own bodily life through expanding our 'living space'. Second, we engage in a struggle for the *agon* of minds which involves the process of debate, discussion and questioning ideas. This struggle for Jaspers is a 'font of creativity'. The final kind of struggle is what Jaspers calls 'the loving struggle' which involves the continuous process of two people putting 'each other totally in doubt, so as to get at the roots by way of truth resulting from inexorable mutual illumination' (p.205). The important point for us at this stage is that at the heart of the process of struggle is the process of increasingly frank communication between two different people.

The relationship between communication and struggle is further developed by Jasper's one-time student and life-long friend Hannah Arendt (1958, 1970). As we explored in Chapter 1, Arendt suggests power comes from our ability to act in concert. For her, "power is never the property of the individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is 'in power' we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. The moment the group, from which the power originated to begin with (*potestas in populo*, without a people or group there is no power), disappears, 'his power' also vanishes" (Arendt, 1970: 137). While Arendt is clearly using the concept of power here rather than struggle, she puts the idea of struggle right at the centre of what power means. For her, power is only the outcome of a group coming together and communicating. Power is the result of a communicative struggle. In the *Human Condition* (1970), politics is action taken to reorganise the relations between people through speech, and perhaps more precisely debate. In her history study of totalitarianism, Arendt shows that when the spaces for actors to engage in communicative struggle are closed down, power begins to drain away and is replaced with hollow brute force. In her study of revolutions, revolt springs up when actors withdraw their communicative struggles from existing institutions. Like Jaspers, Hannah Arendt shows us that struggle is first and foremost about communication.

The function of this communicative struggle is a theme picked up by Pierre Bourdieu (1992) in a remarkable and dense essay that showcases some components of his vibrant social theory. Bourdieu argues that what he calls 'symbolic struggles' involves the attempt to change and order our perceptions of the social world. This involves a process of what Bourdieu (drawing on Nelson Goodman, 1978) calls 'world-making'. This occurs when we apply particular schemes of classification onto the world that distinguishes one group from another. This happens through 'objective' and collective representations such as the official naming of a group, granting of titles or even official shows of strength and size (for instance through a protest). It may also occur through more 'subjective' or individualized processes whereby classification schemes are actively used, mobilized and negotiated on a daily level through "insults . . . gossip, rumours, slander, innuendo and so on" (Bourdieu, 1992: 239). At the heart of any struggle is not just communication, but a communication which classifies people and things into particular social categories and provides an evaluation of these categories. His empirical masterpiece *Distinctions* (Bourdieu, 1984) shows exactly how this process operates in class relations. The book identifies how categories of tastes are used by actors to position themselves in a broad class structures. For instance, light and dainty food is often used by the upper classes to distinguish their

'fine tastes' whereas hearty, heavier food is used by peasants and the working classes to distinguish their 'earthliness'. Therefore, "the struggle over classification is a fundamental dimension of class struggle. The power to impose and inculcate a vision of divisions, that is, the power to make visible and explicit social divisions that are implicit, is political power par excellence. It is the power to make groups, to manipulate the objective structure of society" (Bourdieu, 1992: 242).

The preceding analysis has identified six definitive feature of struggle. First, struggle lies at the basis of *political change*. This directly contrasts with the common assumption that struggle represents stalemate and entropy. Second, struggle constitutes the *self-consciousness* of actors involved in the struggle. This contrasts with the common assumption that struggle is the result of self-interested actors with predefined ideas about what they want competing. Third, struggle produces the *sociality* of actors in terms of their ability to socialize with themselves (what we might call self-esteem), their ability to socialize within groups, and their ability to socialize between groups. This contrasts with the common idea that struggle leads to the breakdown of sociality. Fourth, struggle is a *creative* in that it brings forth new identities, institutions and social arrangements. This contrasts with the common assumption that struggle undermines the ability to create. Fifth, struggle occurs through *communicative* action. This contrasts with the common assumption that struggle is founded on the inability to communicate. Finally, the communicative struggle involves a process of *categorization*. This contrasts to the common idea that struggle results in the distortion and/or contradiction of categories.

Rethinking power and resistance as struggle
Now that we have systematically unpacked the concept of struggle, we can now return to the issue of power and resistance. We want to suggest that the dynamic that we identified above between power and resistance can be understood as a single process we call struggle. To put this another way, power and resistance are manifestations of a more basic and fundamental process of struggle. As we have seen in Hannah Arendt's political thought, power is the result of processes of communicative struggles. When these struggles disappear, so too does power and simple tyranny reins. Similarly, resistance is also a manifestation of deeper processes of struggle. It also springs forth from the collective, communicative struggle that Arendt depicts. Less grandiose forms of 'micro-resistance' also rely on the same kind of collective communicative interaction and classification. Indeed, Scott's (1990) study of the various forms of 'infra-politics' (or underground resistance) amongst repressed groups shows that these modes of resistance always flow from collective communication and tactic building on the part of subordinates.

In the context of organizations, we treat struggle as a multi-dimensional dynamic that animates the *interface* between power and resistance. This is a process of ongoing, multiple and unpredictable calls (power) and response (resistance) in which power and resistance are often indistinguishable. The interface is one of mutual constitution in which power is never without resistance and vice versa. As a social engagement, struggle with entail political change, communication and categorization, constitutive self-consciousness and creativity. We can identify struggle in the various forms of power and resistance relationships discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Recall that in these chapters we identified four couplets of power and resistance: coercive power and resistance as refusal, manipulative power and resistance as voice, dominative power

and resistance as escape, subjectivity power and resistance as creation. Instead of seeing each couplet of power and resistance as opposing forces, they can be approached as fundamentally interconnected forms of struggle. Let us work through each of these couplets and identify the type of struggle animating each.

Coercion and refusal
The couplet of coercion and refusal is underpinned by a fundamental struggle around *action*. The focus of this struggle is the 'doing' of the imperative that A communicates to B. This would correspond with Dahl's (1958) focus on observable actions and decisions regarding 'what is to be done'. An analysis of this kind of struggle would analyze the interplay of force and blockage evoked when one is directed to do something that they would otherwise not have done. A simple example of this kind of struggle in the workplace is the struggle over carrying out a particular task in a certain manner (see Chapter 8). The activity might be either not undertaken, or done is a different manner to that which was desired by A. Each intervention communicates a political statement and creates a certain creative tension that constitutes identities and social rituals.

Manipulation and voice
The couplet concerning manipulation and voice is underpinned by the more fundamental struggle around *inactivity*. This is because the focus of this struggle is on what is not to be done, and may involve the imposition of voice as an intervention that disrupts the systematic silencing of issues. This would correspond with Bachrach and Baratz (1962) focus on issues that are rendered non-decisions. An analysis of the struggle around inactivity (as it is played out through manipulation and voice) would involve highlighting how certain actions are made impossible – such an impossibility my be reconstituted as an option if voicing politics is successful (see Chapter 7). A simple example of this mode of struggle is the various attempts to ensure employees do not deviate from a standard related to Total Quality Management protocols and the ways employees may speak up about such manipulation in union-management meetings.

Domination and escape
Domination and escape is underpinned by a more fundamental struggle around *interests*. The focus of this struggle is the goals of action. This corresponds with Lukes (1975) focus on the manipulation of interests. An analysis of struggle around interests would identify the ways in which groups try and change the goals we aim to achieve when we act (or do not act). In the struggle over interests parties are constituted as political subjects, just as the self-consciousness of management and workers are created when conflict arises over change initiatives. A simple example of this struggle in the contemporary workplace concerns the promotion of goals like 'being loyal to the company and customer' through culture management and the escape attempts employees use to avoid subjective identification (see Chapter 4).

Subjectification and creation
The couplet of subjectification and creation is underlined by a more fundamental struggle around *identity*. The focus of this struggle would be around who controls the means of identity construction in the confines of the workplace (and beyond as well shall see in Chapter 6). This corresponds to Foucault's (1978) investigation of the construction of subjectivity and the types of identity-politics that correspond with this

form of power. An analysis of struggle around identity would examine how managerial discourses of enterprise and empowerment attempt to constitute our selfhood in order to make us more amenable to the post-industrial organization (see Chapter 5). Such a study would identify the contested nature of identity management, and how the process of struggle allows alternative counter-selves to emerge.

Each of these modes are flexible conceptual constructions that are not meant to be mutually exclusive. We feel they describe a more complex set of relationships that animate the dynamic between 'power and resistance'. Research of modes of struggle may find various mixtures and connections between these modes, or a situation where one predominates dominant form of struggle. For instance, so-called knowledge work may be heavily characterized by struggles around identity (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). In contrast, certain types of repetitive manufacturing work may be more characterized by the struggle around action and non-action (Braverman, 1973), or perhaps even interests (Burawoy, 1979). We will describe in the forthcoming chapters how these (and other struggles) may be 'stacked' on top of each other in contradictory and unpredictable ways. There may be cases where one mode of struggle will take centre stage, while other potential struggles remain a latent influence. Moreover, a struggle around one dimension such as economic interests may influence other dimensions of politics in unpredictable and sometimes self-defeating ways. In Chapter 5 we will show how struggles around sexual identity and economic interests can confound each. The 'progressive' politics of workers striving to address economic inequality deployed a rather 'regressive' identity politics of homophobia. There may be attempts to form strategic links between struggles - this is evident in situations where one group has an advantageous position because they are able to connect a number of struggles together in a mutually supporting fashion. For instance, the labour movement at the height of its powers was able to link together struggles around what is done (such as the allocation of jobs in a factory), what is not done (shifting the boundaries of what was thinkable in the work-relationship), interests (by aligning workers interests with the union), and identities (by constructing a common workers identity). Parties may also attempt to shift the ground of struggle to gain strategic advantage. For instance, the development manager may find that her struggle to get employees to identify with the company is failing, so shift the basis of struggle away from identity towards interests and goals. The point in each example is that struggle is not only multifaceted, but this multifaceted nature provides certain advantages and disadvantages that are resources in the struggle.

Dynamics of Struggle
The most significant aspects of struggle is the fact that it is an ongoing, live, tense and overwhelmingly dynamics process. This means that it is by no means sufficient to identify what struggle is, what modes of struggle exist, and how these modes of struggle relate to one-another. To have a proper understanding of struggle it is vital to consider how struggle is actually taken forward, and what the dynamics of engaging in struggle are. Clearly any empirical analysis of struggle will reveal a whole panoply of different tactics that are actually used in dynamics of struggle. This tactics would involve attempts, within a given strategically configured relation of struggle, to gain a temporary advantage (De Certeau, 1984). For instance in the struggle over action, a group may use a whole range of tactics such judiciously following the rules of the workplace to temporarily block or at least slow down the process through which an action will occur. We should note that these tactics are not only used by dominated or

less powerful groups. Rather, tactics are the stuff of all political struggles and they are used by all groups. Indeed, those who are particularly good at engaging in political struggle are also particularly good tacticians. We will not venture a list of different tactics here. All we will say is that there are whole panoply of tactics that remain to be identified and discovered through careful empirical study.

While the tactical aspect of struggle is vital, what is perhaps even more important for our purposes is the kind of cycle of interaction evident during a struggle. Because any struggle is a two way process that involves a dynamic of give and take, a particular cycles of struggle arise. These cycles occur through a process of mutual reinforcement whereby an initial action on the part of one actor will provoke a certain response of the part of another, which will then be responded to in a particular way and so on. This is particularly clear in the case of labour disputes where the action (say, management changing working conditions) is responded to by the union (through a threatened strike) which is responded to by management (through the hardening of their position) which then provokes a reaction from the union (calling its members out on strike). Through this endless cycle of reciprocal 'tit-for-tat' intractable conflicts arise whereby groups are locked in a conflict that they simply cannot move forward in. What this points to is how struggle involves a certain dynamic of interaction between the different parties. In what follows we would like to identify some possible dynamics of struggle.

Perhaps the most obvious dynamic of struggle is the destructive one. This involves a situation where the actor involved in a struggle seeks to destroy their opponent through absolute victory. The struggle becomes a kind of zero sum process whereby my gain is the other's loss. This is what Karl Jaspers calls the struggle by force. It is 'coercive, limiting, oppressive, and conversely space-making: in this struggle I may succumb and lose my existence' (Jaspers, 1932: 206). For Jasper's there are two possible reactions when we are locking in this kind of struggle. The first is simply disgust and absolute rejection of the struggle and all the various gains it brings us. This involves 'non-resistance' and giving up on struggle. This would means we would be swayed by the smallest and most base demands that others make on us. The result according to Jaspers is self-destruction. This is because we give up on the struggle which actually calls us into being in both an existential sense and a more basic material sense. The second option that Jaspers identifies in the destructive struggle is an utter will to power. This involves the enthusiastic grasping hold of this struggle for power and engaging in a ceaseless fight for the eventual victory over all. This absolute struggle 'would end with a lone destroyer of conquerer of all the rest. He (sic) would not know what to do with his limitless conquests: he has a task only while he has something to crush. The tendency to rule or ruin everything, to remove all limitations on one's own power, consistently ends in despair at having no one to fight anymore' (Jaspers, 1932: 209). The result of a destructive struggle is therefore either utter victory of utter annihilation. While such a cycle of struggle is most vividly portrayed in the case of war, it occurs frequently within organizations. For instance, particularly bitter battles between unions and management are sometimes based on attempt by one group to utterly annihilate the other (such as in de-unionization drives). Similarly, a struggle between two senior managers for the position of chief executive officer may frequently lead to utter destruction of one candidate. Perhaps the most extreme example of this battle can be found in Gibson Burrell's (1996) argument that organizations function on the principle of utter destruction and always

terminate in death. While this is clearly an over-statement, it does remind us that organizations are indeed founded upon struggle and this struggle, in some cases at least, involves a dynamic of destruction and at times physical death.

The second cycle of struggle that is possible to identify is the dynamics of resentment. In contrast to destructive struggles, those involved in the struggle do not either give up on the possibility of resistance or aim to utterly annihilate their foe. Rather, they seek to show their unhappiness at begin dominated, to express their dissasifaction, to drag their feet. In short they seek to show their resentment. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in Scott's (1990) study of forms of underground resistance amongst peasant groups. The forms of resistance which Scott documents in this study rarely pose a wide-scale challenge to the system of domination. Rather, they are merely attempts to make the conditions of domination more tolerable and attempt to give the oppressed a sense of control and perhaps to open up small spaces of freedom. However, this ultimately locks these self-same resistors into a kind of sick dependence upon the dominant group in involved in struggle. By only going so far, these groups are only able to express their resentment towards a system of domination. When locked in this cycle of resentment, they are patently unable to fundamentally change the kinds of struggle they are involved in. This means that they become locked into what Nietzsche calls 'slave mentality' – that is the assumption, wish and even desire to have someone to dominate us. Through being dominated, they are afforded the illicit joys and pleasure of being resentful, being able to 'bitch and moan' about the state of affairs, while at the same time not seeking to change these. Indeed why should they, for by giving up their resentment, they would give up on their (albeit limited) sense of dignity and agency given to them by the fact they can 'see through the lies' (Sloterdijk, 1984). By giving up their resentment, they would give up their own sense of being, their own identity as 'one of the oppressed'. This would open a dangerous and uncertain world where we would have to take responsibility for our struggle and recognise our implication within struggle. It would open up a world where we would be thrown back to either having to make the active decision to be absolutely passive and accept any form of domination, or adopting the attitude of being absolutely against – whereby we would seek to ceaselessly fight and destroy our enemies.

Is passivity, destruction, of resentment the only options? Are these the only way which we might engage in struggle? According to Jaspers they are not. He identifies another form of struggle which he calls 'the loving struggle'. For Jaspers (1932: 206) 'a loving struggle is non-violent, jeopardizing without a will to win, solely with a will to manifestation'. At the centre of the loving struggle is the recognition of the right to exist of our partner in struggle. The loving struggle would involve the attempt to affirm, extend and glorify each actors existence through the mutual and consistent process of calling our partner in struggle into question. It is through this process of questioning and being called into question we come to know ourselves and know our partner in struggle. Through this mutual calling into question we extend each other and the struggle more generally. In this struggle 'there is no victory or defeat for one side; both win or lose jointly . . . the fight is possible only as one simultaneously struggle against both the other and myself' (Jaspers, 1932: 213). Indeed, this process of loving struggle involves struggle *with* someone rather than struggling *against* them. The example Jaspers intuitively relies on is long-term intellectual friendship or perhaps even a 'good marriage' where each partner consistent calls the other into

question in an affirmative and expansive fashion, in a way that is not destructive or resentful. Examples of this affirmative struggle are replete in organizations as well. For instance, a research and development team may struggle with each other and their materials during the development process. During this struggle their own ideas about each other and themselves would consistently be called into question. Similarly, a union and management may struggle with each other to develop just and productive employment relations at work. The point in each of these examples is that each of these relationships is not based on absolute agreement. Rather they are based on negotiation and struggle. The point is however that the nature of this struggle is not resignation, destruction or resentment. Rather it involves a process of mutual affirmation where creation can occur.

What is so striking about Jasper's formulation is that he reminds us that struggle is not something which we can escape from, or something which there is more or less of. Rather, struggle is at the very heart of being human. If this is so, it becomes a question of taking responsibility for one's struggles. The only questions we should ask about struggle is 'where to find a power position and to profit by it, where to give and to suffer, where to fight and dare?' (Jaspers, 1932: 212). For us it becomes a question of recognising what kinds of struggle that one is locked in. In the struggles of organizing it involves the process of recognising the mode of struggle one is engaged with (is it acts, nonaction, interests, of identities) and kind of cycle of struggle one is involves with (is it destructive, resentful or affirmative). True action would then involve not only engaging within these struggles, but actively attempting to make an effort to take responsibility for and decide about what struggle to engage with (the mode of struggle) and how this struggle takes place (the cycle of struggle). Taking responsibility for struggle and deciding about the struggles we are involved is not only an important analytical step for researchers to make, it is also an important ethical and political step for us all to make in our own struggles.

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