

# **Enduring Impact of Civil Resistance on Democratization and Democratic Sustainability**

Polish Solidarity Movement and its Legacy

Face evil without imitating it  
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# Analytical and Empirical Inquiries

## Question:

- Is there a connection between civil resistance and a democratic outcome?

## If so...

- how do we study the *impact* of residual effects of civil resistance on political processes after the struggle ends (analytical inquiry)?
- what are the residual/long lasting effects of civil resistance? (empirical inquiry)?

## Assumption:

- Practice of civil resistance determines trajectories of how a country undergoes democratization and achieve democratic sustainability

# Analytical and Empirical Quandaries

- Challenges in analyzing impact of civil resistance on democratization:
  - Factors other than CR that might have influenced democratization
  - Mechanisms/carriers by which CR makes an impact
- Dominance of structural (long-term horizon) and elite-based (short-term horizon) explanations of democratization
- Civil resistance as cause of democratization and effect of democracy: transition and transformation

# Impact of Nonviolent Resistance on Democratization: First Study

- 50 out of 67 (75%) transitions in the last 33 years: the force of civil resistance was a significant factor

## **Top down transitions (14 countries):**

- only 2 of these countries are free (14%), 8 are partly free and 4 are not free
- 50% experienced moderate/high economic growth\*

## **Bottom up transitions (50 countries):**

- 32 of these countries are free (64%), 14 are partly free and only 4 are not free
- 80% experienced moderate/high economic growth\*

How Freedom is Won. From Civil Resistance to Durable Democracy” – Karatnycky and Ackerman (Freedom House study 2005)

\*“Nonviolent Democratization: A Sensitivity Analysis of How Transition Mode and Violence Impact the Durability of Democracy” - Johnstad (Peace & Change, July 2010)

## Note of Caution

- Out of 32 countries that went through bottom-up transition and are now classified as free, 14 of them come from Central and Eastern Europe: its democratic transformation could have been influenced by factors other than the legacy of civil resistance.

# Impact of Nonviolent Resistance on Democratization: Second Study

- 323 major violent and nonviolent conflicts between 1900-2006. The use of civil resistance increases chances for democracy and civil peace after the struggle ends
- Probability that a country will be democracy 5 years after the successful nonviolent campaign is 51% versus 3% for the successful violent campaign
- Probability that a country will relapse into civil war after successful civil resistance is 28% versus 43% for the violent campaign

# Understanding Civil Resistance

- CR is not a mechanized tactics/strategy formula of how to wage a nonviolent struggle or merely a physical contest between oppressed and an oppressor
- CR can be viewed as an ‘incubator of democracy’; a laboratory within which liberty and democracy are practiced; an equivalence of a rule of law; a ‘force of (associational) life’
- Civil resistance is thus seen as a set of *interactions* between people as well as an *institution* with its own rules and norms and its own autonomous and non-ephemeral impact on the environment

# Civil Resistance as Social Capital

## **Elements of social capital (Putnam, Coleman)**

- Values, norms, principles, codes of behavior, procedures (institutions)
- Human relations (interactions)

## **Types of social capital**

- Bonding Social Capital (getting involved with people like us)
- Bridging Social Capital (getting involved with people who are not like us)
- Linking Social Capital (interacting with people in power to win them over)

*Civil resistance facilitates formation of all types of social capital*



# Size of Social Capital and Civil Resistance Tactics

## **Acts of Commission**

(e.g. strikes, demonstrations, building parallel alternative institutions)

- Acts of sizable collectives with denser human interactions
- Acts of more durable and sustainable constructions
- More material resource needed and mobilized

**Higher index of civicness**

## **Acts of Omission**

(e.g. conscription or election boycotts, tax refusal, boycott of government-controlled media)

- Acts of individuals with a thinner web of human interactions
- Acts of immediate effects with less institutionalization involved
- Less material resources needed and mobilized

**Lower index of civicness**

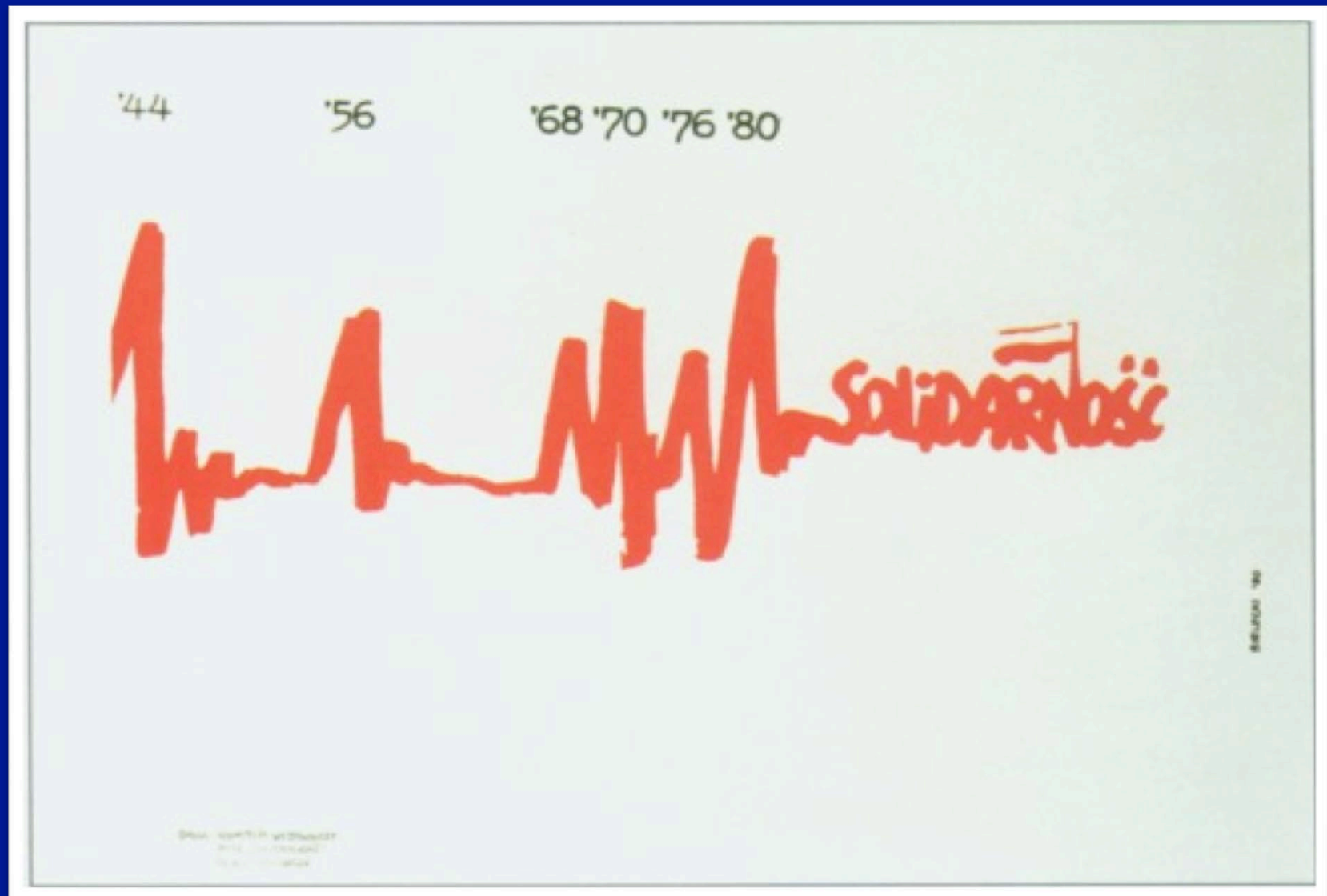
# What Propitious Social Capital Can Civil Resistance Generate?

- Social capital (SC) of decentralized and pluralistic governance: a template for future power arrangements/redistribution of political power;
- SC of self-organization: a template for future institutionalized practices in civic realm;
- SC of individual and group empowerment: a template for civic activism and/or economic entrepreneurship;

# What Propitious Social Capital Can Civil Resistance Generate?

- SC of collective actions: a template for waging nonviolent actions in the future;
- SC of a contentious but self-limiting behavior: a template for moderation in political contention;
- SC of worldviews: a template for outward-oriented collective identities.

# Historical 'Cardiogram' of Civil Resistance in Poland

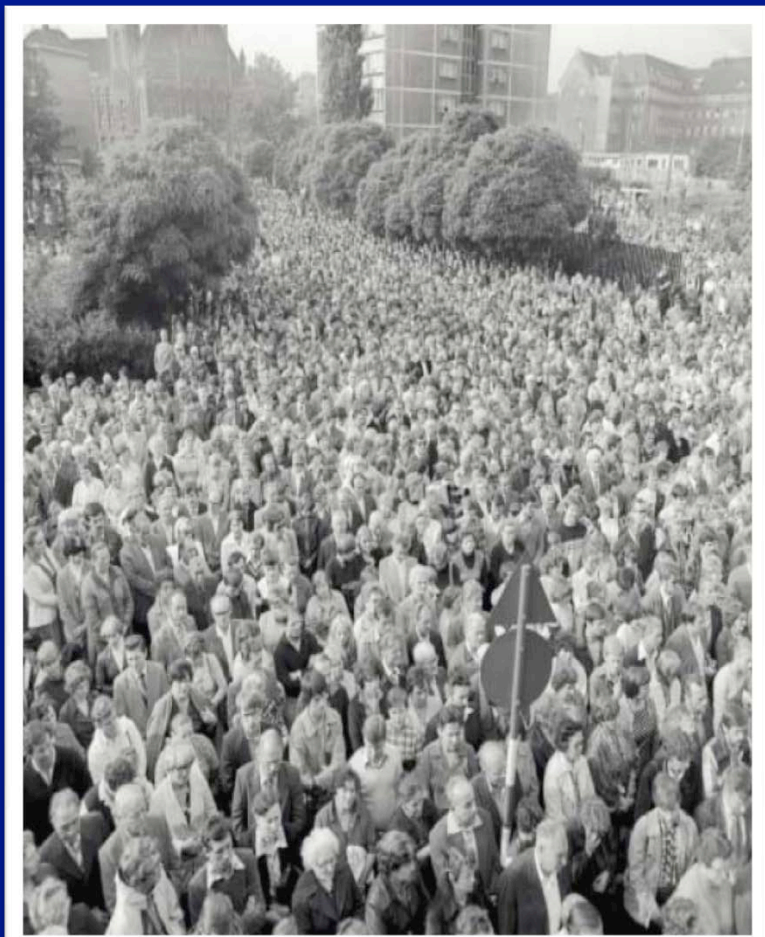


# 1970s: The Rise of Organized Nonviolent Resistance in Poland

- “Set up your own committees instead of burning down party committees” – building a parallel polis – underground society liberated from the control of the government without overtly and directly challenging it
- Growth of organized mass opposition: intelligentsia, workers, priests, peasants, students, professional groups
- Catalytic events: constitutional amendments in 1975; workers’ strike in 1976; a killing and a funeral of a 21-year old student; election of the Polish pope, Helsinki process
  - Committee for the Defence of Workers
  - Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights
  - Association for Academic Courses (underground flying universities)
  - Independent Student Association
  - Autonomous peasants ‘ associations







Widok z dachu pałacu Łazienkowski w Warszawie z czołowego 1979 r. (Holografia, głębokość w 1979 r. i zarysem publikacji). (Fot. Ralf-Walter - CAI)



# 1980-81: The Rise of Solidarity

- Aug 1980 – workers' strikes & citizens' protests
- Sep 1980 – legalization of Solidarity
  - 9-10 million people joined
  - Solidarity in state institutions
  - Communist party loses 2-3 million members



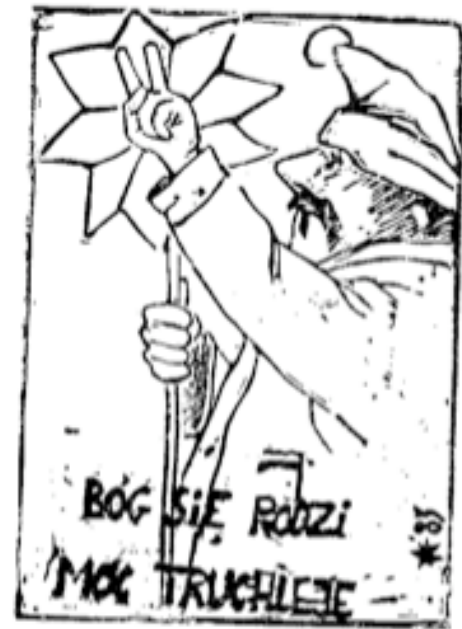


# Phenomenon of Solidarity

- Solidarity – a **collective experience of living within the truth**
  - mutual responsibility, trust, loyalty
  - decentralized self-organizing, democratic and participatory decision-making, local autonomy
  - egalitarianism, individualism, solidarism
    - Independence, liberation tradition
    - internalized nonviolent discipline
    - supreme confidence in ultimate victory

# Walesa- soft leadership

- Walesa as everyoneman





Richness of strategies and tactics of nonviolent resistance (some examples):

- protest, leaflets, protests, marches, funeral, catholic masses
- slow-downs, occupation strikes with a catholic mass, hunger strikes, "Polish strikes"
- civil disobedience (e.g. against media censorship; communist holidays)
- underground socio-cultural institutions: radio, alternative music, films
- underground education: 'flying university' and libraries
- underground press: 2000 regular samizdat publications with millions of copies distributed, literature on how to strike, protest, and scheme/plot,
- commemoration of banned anniversaries,
- humor, jokes about security forces, and communist regime
- internationalization of Solidarity struggle
- emigration

# 1981-89: Developments Continue

- Dec 1981 – martial law – Solidarity goes underground (3000 arrested; 10.000 in 'preventive detention')
- 1983-86 – Solidarity leaders released
- 1982-89 –deterioration of economic situation
- 1987-88 – ongoing anti-communist civil resistance: strikes, demonstrations
- 1989 – round table discussions (Feb 6 – Apr 5)

# Round-Table Talks: February 6 – April 5, 1989



# Civil Resistance Capital

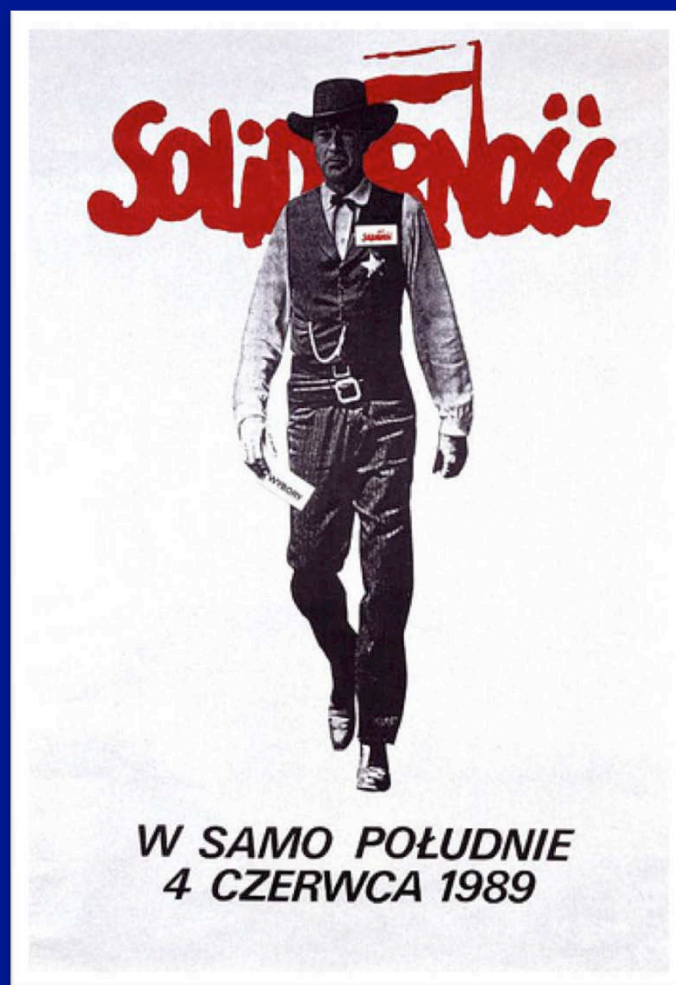
## **Moderation and Self-Limitation**

- Nature of Solidarity rooted in coalition building, compromise, dialogue, and negotiations: led to a pacted transition initiated by a round-table talk (Feb-Apr 1989)
- Solidarity gave a hope to those on the government side that there is a life for them after communism

## **Self-Organization**

- first open election campaign since 1945. Importance of self-organizing experience from civil resistance, including writing/publishing/marketing skills in winning parliamentary elections on June 4, 1989

## High Noon – June 4, 1989



# Civil Resistance Capital

## **Individual Empowerment and Entrepreneurship**

- Societal desire for economic freedoms (a sizeable second economy under communism)- push for free market economic reforms in 1989/1990 and its eventual success
- High public support for market economic reforms throughout the painful transition: democratization did not unleash anti-marketization forces
- Poland considered more liberal in its economic outlook than France and Germany when it joined the EU in 2004



# Civil Resistance Capital

## **Collective actions and their moderate nature**

- Emergence of a self-limited “Rebellious Civil Society” in Poland after 1989
- 1989-1993 – the largest number of protests among all Central and Eastern European states – weak conventional means of channeling public views (parties & interest groups)
- Self-limited nature- a moderate, nonviolent character of the protests that did not challenge legitimacy of new political system or direction of general economic reforms but aimed at specific policies and its outcomes. They were *reformist protests* by large.
- Solidarity-dominated government was remarkably tolerant, selective and soft in the use of more coercive measures against protesters

# Civil Resistance Capital

## **Decentralized Governance & Decision-Making**

- The 1989 decentralization reform and the establishment of self-governing rural and urban communes with important local competencies and later regional consolidation. A civic organization was made responsible for training and education in governance of local representatives

## **Political empowerment and central power diffusion**

- Fragmented political scene - 29 parties after the 1991 elections
- Fragmentation did not weaken democracy but strengthened it by increasing a political space for representing/voicing diverse interests
- Semi-presidential system: popularly elected president but his powers are limited and do not take precedence over the PM/government prerogatives

# Civil Resistance Capital

## **Civic empowerment and self-organization**

- A rapid rise of a number of civil society organizations: from 50 per year in the 1980s to 300 annually at the beginning of the 1990s
- Solidarity empowered women - women's growing engagement in opposition after 1981. Foundation for a rapid rise of the Polish feminist movement in after 1989.

# Civil Resistance Capital

## **New Worldview: Poland's European Identity**

- Solidarity – a return of Poland to the European community of democratic nations; a thousand year of a cultural linkage with Europe
- 1989- re-discovering of a new Polish identity within the European one - a strong European direction in the Polish foreign policy
- Solidarity surmounted a narrow-ethnic Polish nationalism by a wider appeal to more universal principles such as freedom, human rights, international peace, solidarity and community of democratic nations

# QUESTIONS?

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