



# Civil Resistance as a Foundation of Democracy to Be

The Legacy of Nonviolent Struggle in the  
Democratization of Poland

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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:

- The kind of civil resistance waged the type of democratic transition occurs.

# “How Freedom is Won”

- 50 out of 67 (75%) transitions 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.

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

- 32 of these countries are free (64%), 14 are partly free and only 4 are not free

# 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.

# 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 school of liberty and democracy; 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 a Social Capital

## Elements of social capital (Putnam, Coleman)

- Values, norms, 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 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 (higher index of civiness):**

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

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

## **Acts of Omission (lower index of civiness):**

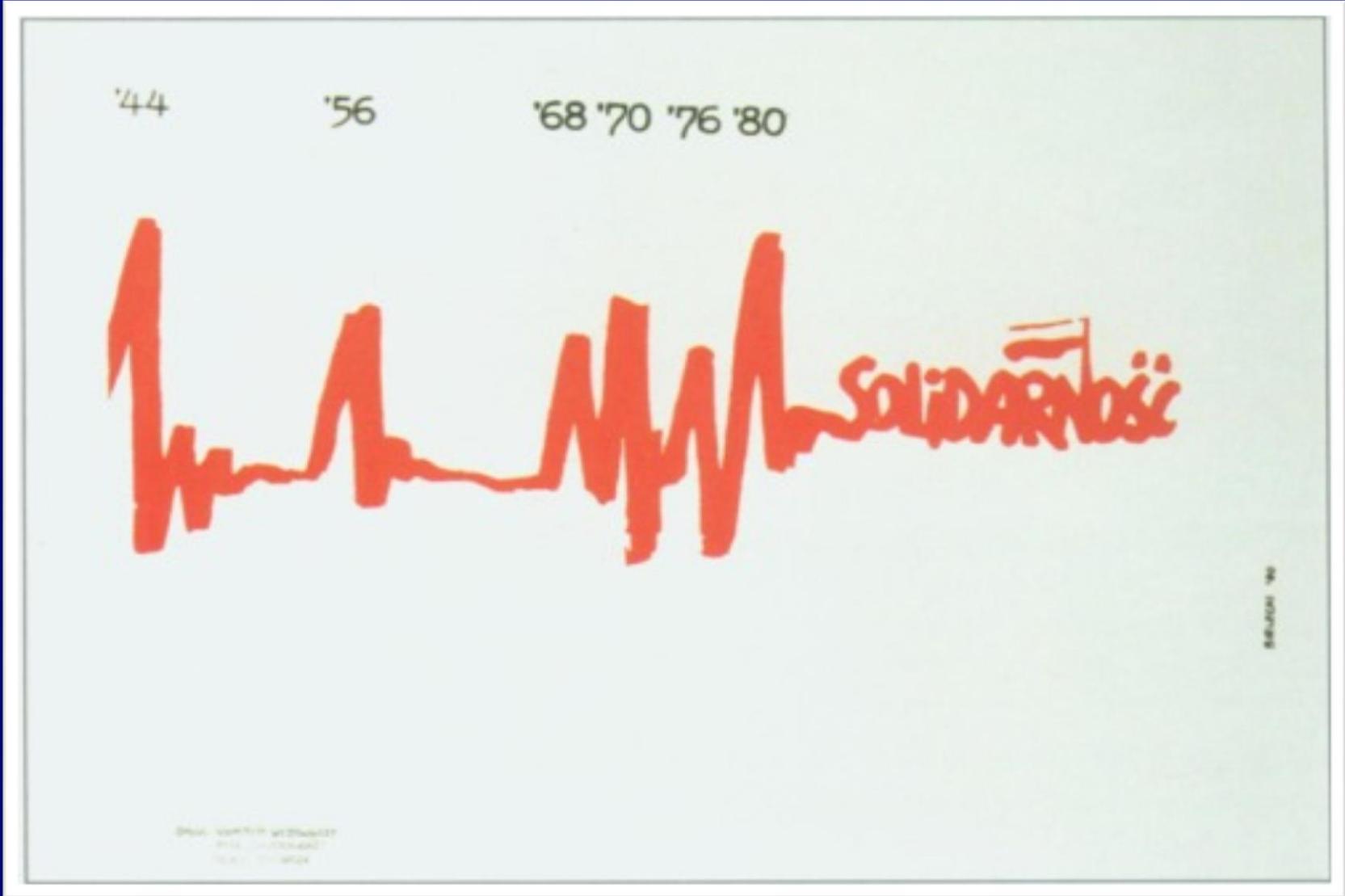
- Acts of individuals with a thinner web of human interactions
- Acts of immediate effects with less institutionalization involved
- Less material resources needed and mobilized

(e.g. conscription or election boycotts, tax refusal, refusal to cooperate with a government)

# What Social Capital Can Civil Resistance Generate?

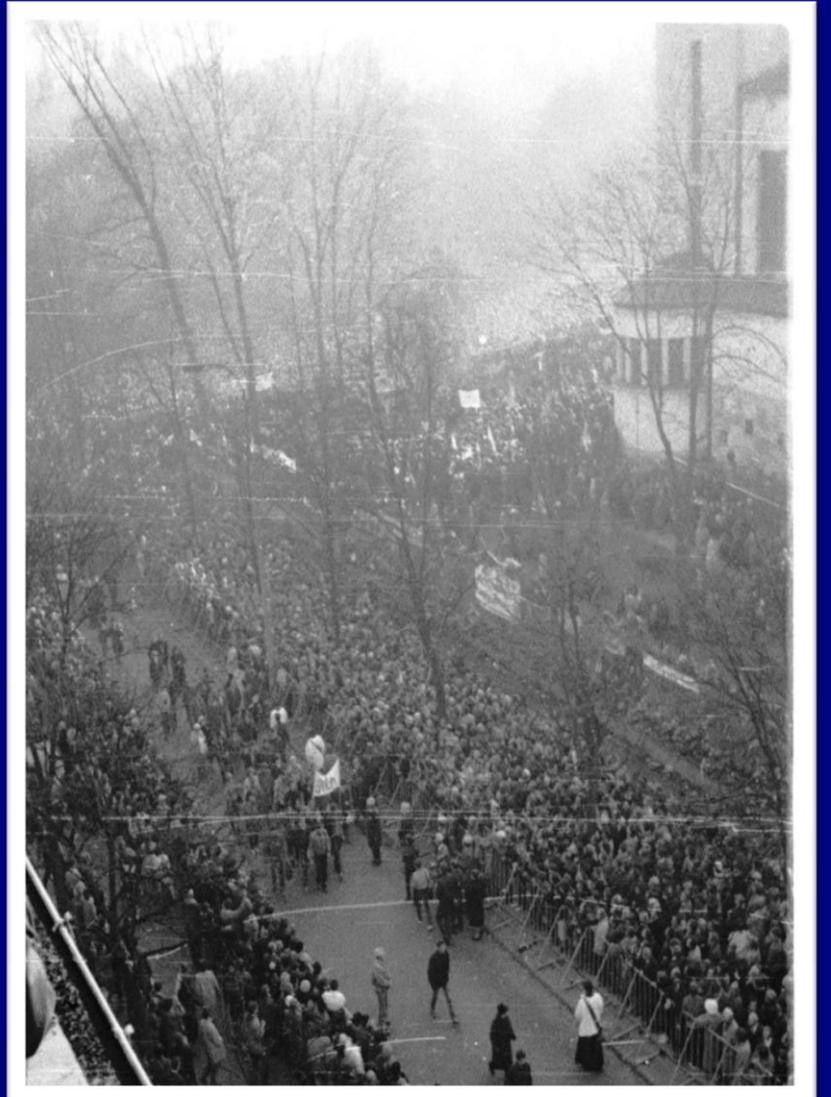
- Social capital (SC) of decentralized and pluralistic governance: a template for future power arrangements;
- SC of self-organization: a template for future institutionalized practices in civic realm;
- SC of individual empowerment, and civic and economic entrepreneurship;
- SC of collective actions: a template for waging nonviolent actions in the future;
- SC of moderation and self-limitation, a “locked-in” path of a contentious behavior;
- SC of worldviews: a template of collective identities.

# Historical 'Cardiogram' of Civil Resistance in Poland

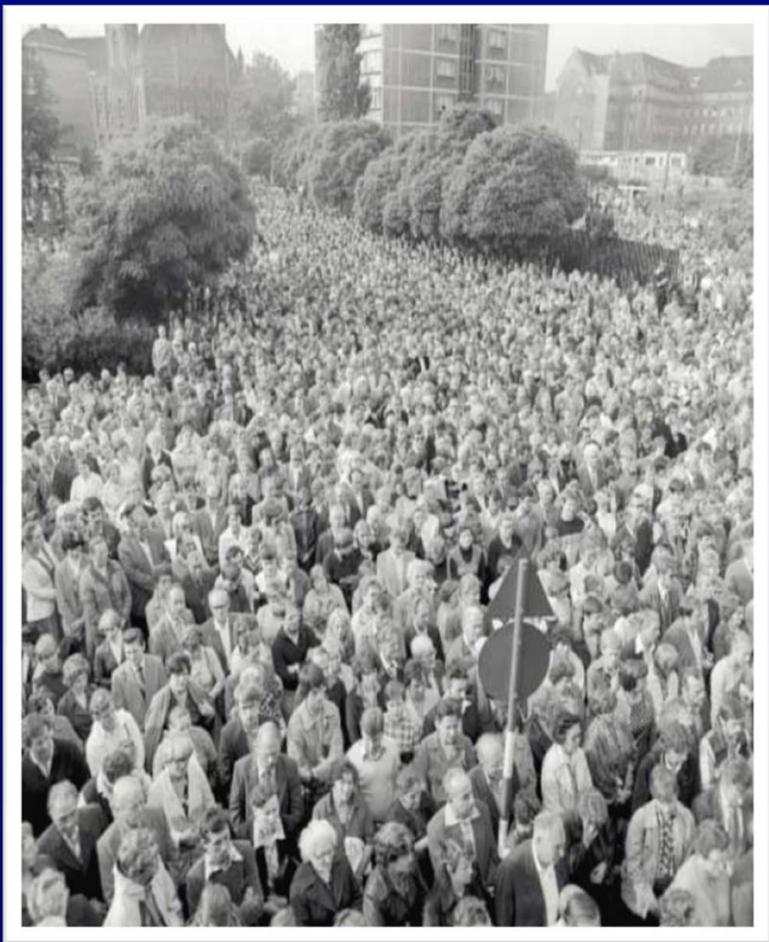


# 1970s: The Rise of Organized Nonviolent Resistance in Poland

- “Set up your own committees instead of burning down party committees” – building a parallel polis
- 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
  - 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

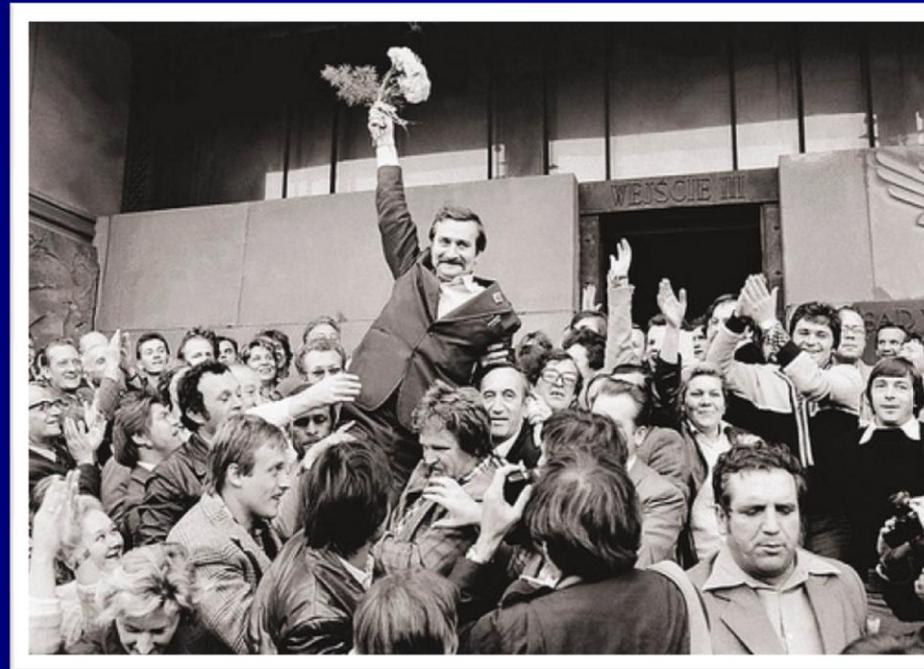


Wielki zjazd na placu Wolności w Warszawie 2 października 1979 r. (Fotografia obłożona w 1979 i zakazem publikacji). (Fot. Ralf-Walter - CAJ)



# 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, local autonomy, egalitarianism, individualism, solidarizm, nonviolent discipline, independence tradition, democratic and participatory decision-making. Included people from all walks of life
- Rich tactics of resistance: protest, leaflets, flags, vigils, symbolic funerals, catholic masses, protest painting, parades, and marches, sanctuary, slow-downs, occupation strikes with a catholic mass, hunger strikes, “Polish strikes”, underground socio-cultural institutions: radio, music, films, satire, humor, alternative education and libraries, 2000 regular samizdat publications with millions of copies distributed, including education literature on how to strike, protest, and scheme/plot, underground education, alternative libraries, commemoration of banned anniversaries, emigration, internationalization of Solidarity struggle

# 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

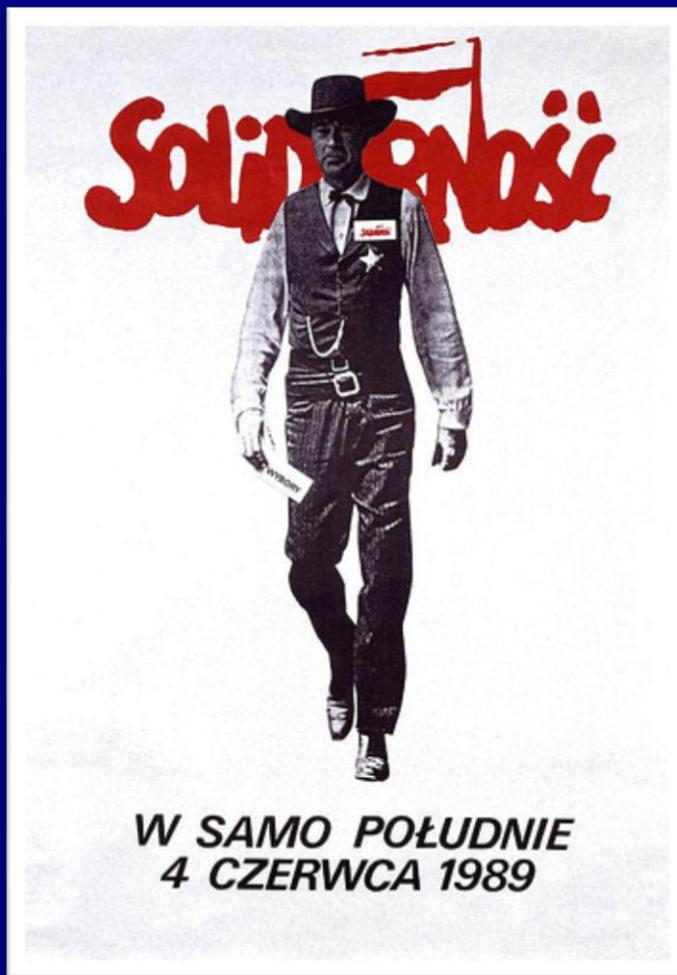
## Moderation and Self-Limitation

- 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 aim at a new system of governing but at specific policies

# 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**

- Fragmented political scene - 29 parties after the 1991 elections
- Fragmentation did not weaken democracy but strengthened it by increasing a (parliamentary) space for representing/voicing diverse interests in the democratic process of deliberation & decision making in the first crucial years of transition

# 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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