Patterns and practices of everyday resistance: a view from below

What is everyday resistance?

The informalities, ambiguities and contradictions that peacebuilding runs into reflect the political nature of the process. These become visible when examined from the everyday practices of the actors involved. In IR the everyday has become synonymous with the makings of actual subjects in their most quotidian roles (Autesserre 2014; Hobson and Seabrooke 2007; Mitchell 2011b; Neumann 2002). This is not so much a new field of study, as it represents a common call throughout the social sciences, and especially from critical theorists, to connect the micro-dynamics of daily life with macro structures and processes, even as a way of embodying them (Bleiker 2000; Davies and Niemann 2009; Enloe 1989; Marchand 2000; Tickner 2005; Wilcox 2015). In peace and conflict studies, ‘practices’ and ‘everydayness’ have always been the epistemological choice. The emergence of peace and conflict was already a kind of ‘everyday turn’ against the focus of strategic studies of the 1960s and 1970s. In the 1980s, authors such as Andrew Mack, David Dunn, Richard Falk and Johan Galtung started shifting the focus of strategic studies towards peace studies. They also advanced the idea of security as relating not to the capacity of the sovereign state to accumulate power and use military means, but to human security, justice and everyday life (Dunn 1985; Falk 1983; Galtung 1969; Mack 1985).

As was pointed out in the Introduction, the everyday in the liberal peace debates has been a methodological pathway to theorise peacebuilding’s content and format. It has also served to contextualise the research, taking into account the more complex texture and depth of the processes societies go through. The focus on everyday resistance has identified a variety of practices ranging from violent responses, protests and boycotts to acts of non-compliance and unintended actions with subversive outcomes. How these different acts relate to each other and to a concept of resistance has remained limited to emphasising how these practices hybridise peacebuilding. Resistance has thus been theorised in relation to an outcome more than in relation to its practices and subjects. The tendency of this critical literature to portray resistance as a response to the
international and liberal nature of peacebuilding has missed important insights from examining resistance as a response to the coercive and extractive practices of state-making.

Everyday resistance is generally associated with the work of James Scott and Michel de Certeau, but they are by no means the only theorists. As Bleiker points out, one can trace the steps back to the satirical writings of Rabelais (Bleiker 2000: 203). Additionally, the intellectual genealogies of the concept have to be traced back to the sources these authors draw on (Sivaramakrishnan 2005). In the case of Scott, these are E.P. Thompson, Clifford Geertz and Eric Wolf, and in particular the concepts of class, hegemony, moral economy, culture and lived experience in these authors. With these, Scott understands resistance as the conflict that emerges from the lived experience of subordination when it is fought for or negotiated with elites to achieve better terms for subordinates and maintain dignity and autonomy. Certeau draws on Bourdieu, Foucault and Freud, but only to turn them upside down. Both Scott and Certeau see themselves as doing an anatomy of the technologies of resistance in the same way that Foucault does of the technologies of power (Certeau 1984: 96; Scott 1990: xv and 20). Foucault, after all, speaks of resistance as a means to conceptualise power. For Foucault, to look at resistance serves ‘as a chemical catalyst so as to bring to light power relations, locate their position, find out their point of application and the methods used’ (2002: 329). And thus, as Banu Bargu states, ‘we lack a convincing Foucauldian theory of resistance’ (2014: 55).

As has already been stated, an all-encompassing theory of resistance is impossible without losing nuance and insight. What is needed is an account that is able to offer a clear delimitation of what resistance is, who the subjects of resistance are, what their object is and what means they use. It needs to provide understanding about the intentions, motivations, acts and actors that resist in a relation of domination. The everyday framework of resistance does that by establishing the pattern of acts of individuals and collectives in a position of subordination against the everyday experience of domination as defining elements. It is not possible to look at resistance outside power relations. This does not mean that resistance cannot break such relationships; it means that to study resistance implies an analysis of power relations. Moreover, it is not limited to studying this or that act but observes patterns of acts (practices) that take place regularly and are repeated over time. The relationship takes place within actors that are unequal both materially and symbolically, thus, as already examined in the introduction, everyday resistance is located in the actions of subordinate actors. This does not deny that elites are also involved in power relations, but just limits what the framework can account for. This is the result, especially in the Scottian version, of placing a greater emphasis on the relationship between actors and their aims than on the actual acts. However, different practices do not account for what resistance is, nor are they decisive in distinguishing
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resistance, rebellion and revolution.\textsuperscript{1} Seen as isolated ‘acts’, slander, denigration, mockery and violence can be dominating strategies too. For these acts to be seen as resistance, they need to be explored as patterns of behaviour in situations of subordination, where their intention is the stopping or the mitigation of material or symbolic claims, whether those be labour, taxes, deference or obedience. In this sense, the intention does not go much further beyond the act itself (evade taxes, mock authority, work less), but the motivation entails a particular understanding of one’s own position of subordination. These elements will become clear in the course of this and subsequent chapters.

Yet the everyday framework also has limitations. Certeau’s notion of resistance is ambiguous and needs a more concrete explanation of how some elements are to be interpreted (e.g. differentials of privilege among resisters and the relationship between intended and unintended acts). He offers an account of subversive acts, but this subversiveness has to be grasped by the outcomes, once the act has taken place. This is a limitation, considering that the outcomes of resistance are often ambiguous, contrary to what they were trying to achieve, or there are simply no outcomes. Scott’s framework provides a definition of resistance that examines common and continuous practices of domination and resistance from a more general angle of class and state–society relations. This book draws more significantly on James Scott than the liberal peace literature has done so far, although making his framework more explicit in connecting patterns, intentions, motivations, acts and actors. Scott’s focus on intent is problematic, although Certeau does not entirely resolve the issue. In both cases, a translation is required between what is observed and how it is described. Whereas non-intentional acts are difficult to analyse, intent per se is difficult to grasp. Other critiques of the everyday framework that need to be taken into account are the difficulty of distinguishing resistance from egotistic acts and the oversimplification of relations of domination. If resistance can be any act, and power relations are complex and intersected, how is it possible to distinguish an act of resistance from any other act? When is it really motivated by the desire to avoid, tame or challenge domination?

The everyday framework of resistance does not offer a measuring tape to ascertain unambiguously which acts constitute resistance and which ones do not. It offers a framework to understand patterns of actions in a particular relationship. In the next chapter, it will be shown that the case of the Great Lakes region, and the DRC in particular, provides a possibility for examining both generalities and particularities, making it suitable to exploring the framework of everyday resistance in a peacebuilding context. The DRC illustrates how the peacebuilding practice of consolidating and extending state authority reflects practices of state accumulation and violence. Pointing out how these practices are resisted should not be seen as stemming from a conception of the world as structured around a binary of domination and resistance. Any
resistance framework has to embrace the ambiguity of the context and the acts. The DRC also introduces the possibility of exploring the relationship between different categories of practices, including the ‘weapons of the weak’ (e.g. mockery, slander/denigration and reworked statebuilding vocabulary), guerrilla warfare and survival tactics that largely subvert elite appropriation.

This chapter first explores Scott’s framework as the more explicit and concrete account of everyday resistance. It is followed by a discussion of the critiques leveraged against the everyday framework, discussing both Scott’s and Certeau’s work, and the challenges that a peacebuilding context poses to it. This is done in four subsections that examine, respectively: what is resistance, its subjects, objects and means. Here the notion of claim-regarding acts and self-regarding acts will be explained more extensively. As a guide to the subsequent empirical chapters and in response to a debate that places the complexity of resistance in terms of its existence or not, violence or not, its oppositional nature or not, the last section provides a reworked account of resistance, discussing how some of its elements can be gradated to better grasp its complexities.

The art of theorising resistance

As already mentioned, the turn to resistance in the liberal peace debates has primarily drawn on Michel de Certeau, post-colonial theory and Foucault. This section focuses on James Scott in order to examine closely why his work offers a more concrete framework. James Scott’s theory of resistance has developed over 30 years and four major publications: The Moral Economy of the Peasant, Weapons of the Weak, Domination and the Arts of Resistance and The Art of Not Being Governed. The main line of argument in these works is that resistance is rooted in the daily individual and collective covert acts of opposition and self-help against domination; it does not need recourse to political or labour organisations but, rather, to actions like foot-dragging, mockery and fake compliance. Several other propositions follow from these: that subordinates have their own political agendas which may differ or not from elites’ agendas; that, on those bases, they make political choices about their lives and about the daily experience of different forms of power; that relations of domination have material and ideological bases; and that consent is limited. Scott’s work is mainly driven by a response to a body of Gramscian literature that saw domination as resting on consent, and to those who defined resistance as an area of formally organised and revolutionary activity (Scott 1985: Ch. 6 and 8; 1990: Ch. 4). According to Scott, this literature assumed that subordinate classes acquiesced, that they were relatively disadvantaged in regard to the transmission and absorption of hegemonic ideas and that they were not directly coerced (1990: 71). That Scott misunderstood or misused Gramsci has been an ongoing critique (Greenhouse 2005; Sivaramakrishnan 2005; Smith 1999). In a special issue of American Anthropologist
reviewing Scott’s work, Scott provides ‘a belated apology to the ghost of Gramsci himself’ (2005: 398), acknowledging that all along he would have better spoken of ‘domination’ and not of ‘hegemony’. Still, Scott’s critique that resistance was elitist and partial is accurate. He argues that to see resistance only as a collective enterprise with a revolutionary end is to consign millions of actions to the unwritten records of history (1985: 30–6). Rather, Scott argues that modest, covert actions, concerned with immediate gains and self-help, constitute a permanent layer of resistance in which struggle against domination takes place and in which class consciousness and even revolutions may take root. Scott’s conclusion in Weapons of the Weak summarises these arguments and is worth quoting at length:

Resistance in Sedaka begins as, I suspect, all historical resistance by subordinate classes begins: close to the ground, rooted firmly in the homely but meaningful realities of daily experience. The enemies are not impersonal historical forces but real people. That is, they are seen as actors responsible for their own actions and not as bearers of abstractions. The values resisters are defending are equally near and familiar. Their point of departure is the practices and norms that have proven effective in the past and appear to offer some promise of reducing or reversing the losses they suffer. The goals of resistance are as modest as its values. The poor strive to gain work, land, and income; they are not aiming at large historical abstractions such as socialism, let alone Marxist-Leninism. The means typically employed to achieve these ends – barring the rare crisis that might precipitate larger dreams – are both prudent and realistic [...]. When flight is available – to the frontier, to the cities – it is seized. When outright confrontation with landlords or the state seems futile, it is avoided. In the enormous zone between these two polar strategies lie all the forms of daily resistance, both symbolic and material, that we have examined. (1985: 348–9, emphases in the original)

Scott does not mean that there is no acquiescence amongst the peasantry, or that peasants are all innate revolutionaries, but that there is no evidence to suggest that even when the dominant ideology is to a certain extent internalised, this limits the possibilities for social conflict (1990: 77). Scott identifies working relations, landownership and moral behaviour as the realm in which to observe the daily experience of domination and resistance. This highlights the material basis of resistance while noting that resistance as well as power operate on world-views, symbols and idealisations. Work, land and even social justice agendas are advanced through an idealisation of the past or a future of salvation. These tend to simultaneously project an idea of a good leader or king, the arrival of god or a liberator. All of these are ways of de-legitimising present arrangements or changes implemented and articulating political alternatives. Although Scott’s work on resistance focuses primarily on the peasantry in South East Asia, it has expanded to generalise to other situations of subordination, going from the relatively narrow class relations to state–society relations.
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In constructing these arguments, Scott provided a categorisation of two types of resistance: the formally organised and the everyday forms of resistance. At its core, this typology represents Scott’s response to the literature on hegemony and false consciousness. In establishing such a distinction, he simultaneously outlined the nature of everyday resistance as prosaic, covert, unstructured, individual or collective, informal and focused on modest demands and immediate gains (Table 2.1).

Although Scott later proved that the peasantry have greater ideological commitments and that they make use of all kinds of available figures (whether gods or kings) to think of emancipation and long-term change, his point was that everyday resistance differed from formally organised resistance in that self-centred and immediate gains did not dislodge the political element in these acts. As he argued: ‘[t]o insist on such distinctions as a means of comparing forms of resistance and their consequences is one thing, but to use them as the basic criteria to determine what constitutes resistance is to miss the well-springs of peasant politics’ (1985: 294). Scott was opening the ground for exploring politics and relations of domination not in the open field of structural and formal politics, but in the everyday relations of the workplace, village life and the home.

Nevertheless, in this transition away from a narrow account of resistance, Scott’s version has been seen as stretched (Abbink, Bruijn, and Walraven 2008: 18; Hollander and Einwohner 2004: 534; Vail and Landeg 1986). Sherry Ortner, for instance, wonders: ‘When a poor man steals from a rich man, is this resistance or simply a survival strategy?’ (1995: 175). Beatrice Hibou defines the ‘infrapolitical approach’ to the study of relations of domination as the one that sees ‘resistance everywhere’ (2011a: 18). Underlying these critiques are

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Source: Based on Scott (1985: 33)
questions about how to interpret different practices of resistance, the possibility to grasp intentionality and the complexity of power relations. The debates that the concept of everyday resistance continues to generate demonstrate that this framework is not straightforward. Still, one of the advantages of the Scottian approach is that it provides a clear definition and a framework within which to categorise practices.

**Defining resistance**

For Scott, resistance is

> any act(s) by members(s) of a subordinate class that is or are intended either to mitigate or deny claims (for example, rents, taxes, prestige) made on that class by superordinate classes (for example, landlords, large farmers, the state) or to advance its own claims (for example, work, land, charity, respect) vis-à-vis those superordinate classes. (1985: 290)

In this account, resistance is defined not so much by the particular ‘act’ used (which could be ‘any’) but more by its intention, that is, by the conscious use of that act to mitigate, deny or advance an agenda. The advantages of this account, which Scott already notes, are the identification of both material and symbolic underpinnings of class relations and of relations of domination, which are present in both claims of authority and resisters’ agendas (Scott 1985: 290–1). Resistance can be both individual and collective, and does not need to be organised or politically minded. The emphasis on intent is to point out that resisters may not be successful in their attempts. However, Scott also acknowledges the ‘enormous difficulties’ in proving intent (1985: 290). Intentionally mitigating a claim does not mean the existence of a developed class-consciousness; nor does it mean that these acts entail a struggle against capitalism or for socialism in the abstract. As such, intention is gathered from the actual practice of, for example, avoiding tax or increases in land rent (Scott 1985: 296). For Scott, these acts are political and their significance goes beyond not having paid the tax or having avoided rent increases. These practices do not exist in a vacuum, they represent the ways in which everyday mechanisms of domination and resistance operate.

Although *Weapons of the Weak* was written as an account of class relations, Scott later extended this definition to a general theory of resistance, arguing that ‘similar structures of domination, other things being equal, tend to provoke responses and forms of resistance that also bear a family resemblance to one another’ (1990: 21). The context of gender, racial and state–subject relations would foster similar responses. For Scott, then, a superordinate position, and more generally, domination, entailed a material and symbolic extractive capacity (land, rent, labour and taxes, as well as prestige, honour, deference) as well as a productive capacity delimiting the realm of what is possible (to do, to aim or to
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achieve) and not possible (delimit ‘the realm of idle dreams [and] wishful thinking’) (1985: 326). These are not ‘given’ categories, nor do they represent a permanent state of being, but are firstly rooted in the historical experience of the actors. For Scott, as for E.P. Thomson, class is not so much a structure as it is a relationship. A fundamental element to understand resistance is to locate it in power relations. It is this element that requires not the disambiguation and homogenisation of actors but the understanding that their resistant actions do not fully define who they are, and that these actions can be contradictory to other sets of actions in similar or different relations. As discussed below, critics see in this account unambiguous categories in a binary of domination and resistance that do not grasp the complexity of everyday life. Nonetheless, Scott’s framework is developed with close relationships in mind, allowing for a significant degree of ambiguity.

The political significance of these individual acts of self-help is not due to their capacity to change the structures of domination that they aspire to mitigate or deny, but to their widespread prevalence and their amenability to the largest working class in the world: the peasantry (Scott 2005: 396). These forms are prosaic, and thus ‘[t]o understand these commonplace forms of resistance is to understand much of what the peasantry has historically done to defend its interests against both conservative and progressive orders’ (Scott 1985: xvi). So everyday forms of resistance have a historical and present value for their prevalence, but they also have a future value. Later Scott said that everyday forms of resistance are a pre-history of revolution (1990: 203). They are significant in themselves as the permanent layer of resistance that illustrates the relative success of domination and limited consent.

The problem is that, while opening the ground for an account of commonplace forms of resistance, it simultaneously becomes harder to account for what is not resistance, or as Ortner noted, distinguishing between resistance and simple egotistic acts. In this regard Scott argued:

To ignore the self-interested element in peasant resistance is to ignore the determinate context not only of peasant politics, but of most lower-class politics ... When a peasant hides part of his crop to avoid paying taxes, he is both filling his stomach and depriving the state of grain ... When such acts are rare and isolated, they are of little interest; but when they become a consistent pattern (even though uncoordinated, let alone organized) we are dealing with resistance. (Scott 1985: 295–6, emphasis added)

Scott argues that the aims to be achieved are not selfless but, by definition, self-centred. Avoiding a tax, stealing part of the crop, denigrating or slandering authority does not advance a collective agenda of ‘the working class’ or of ‘liberation’; yet they are individual representations of class struggle. Scott’s definition, nevertheless, by equating ‘agenda advancing’ with ‘mitigation’ and ‘denial’
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does not sufficiently recognise that pursuing an agenda is not just another aim but a permanent motivation. From Scott’s definition, ‘agenda advancing’ is resistance because it does so at the expense of elite claims. Hence, agenda advancing necessarily mitigates and denies elite claims. This agenda has embedded the values and modest goals that Scott describes, which tend to do with land, work and pre-existing arrangements. Therefore, agenda advancing, which provides an account of motivations, needs to be understood alongside intentions. Ultimately, what is important is that beyond intentionality, these acts are not accidental, at the discretion of one opportunistic individual; they become the individual opportunistic representation of the patterns in which everyday resistance takes place.

Critical analysis of the everyday framework

One of the limitations in the way the hybridity literature has used the everyday framework of resistance is that it has not sufficiently addressed the critiques that the framework has received. Not only are these critiques important to articulate resistance in the context of peacebuilding, they also need to be addressed to assess the suitability of the framework in each particular context. There have been four main critiques, directed primarily to Scott: (1) The category of resistance is too broad, unable to differentiate resistance from coping strategies or whingeing without particular political significance (Geschiere 2000; Haggis et al. 1986; Hibou 2011a: 18). (2) Intentions are ungraspable (Ortner 1995). (3) Scott pays insufficient attention to peasant agendas, providing univocal readings of certain acts as resistance (Bayart 1992: 14; Membrebe 1991b: 106; 2001: 110; Ortner 1995). (4) Scott conceives reality only through a binary of domination and resistance, over-simplifying the dynamics and relations of power (Ferguson 2005; Hibou 2011a: Ch. 1; Membrebe 2001: 103–30).

These critiques overlap with the challenges that emerge from applying this framework to a particular context. The context of the DRC poses three other challenges: how to conceive of violence and the use of different oppositional or non-oppositional practices; how to articulate resistance in a context of plural authorities, where authority is ambiguously represented and where peacebuilding is not a process of social transformation; and how to grasp resistance in a context characterised in much Africanist literature by ambiguity and conviviality. In response to these challenges, as has already been argued, this book proposes that any account of resistance needs to connect those who resist, their intentions and motivations with patterns of social and political interaction around extraction, violence and privilege. This raises many questions about the interpretation that each one of these elements is given within an account of resistance. Rather than examining the critiques one by one (a discussion that has been held over many years), this section analyses how the framework applies
and how these challenges can be addressed in the different elements of the definition of resistance, its subjects, objects and means.

*Binaries, ambiguities and pluralism: what counts as resistance?*

The focus on power relations and the fact that resistance can be any act could imply a reading of the social and political world as a binary of resistance and domination, where resistance can simply be anything that subordinate subjects do in front of authority figures. This critique has been raised particularly against Scott, as Certeau has focused more on transformations from multiple acts. Three issues summarise the critique. Firstly, in order to understand the nature of political power and the post-colonial state, it is necessary to understand the heterogeneity of social and political relationships and how power operates not just from above but also horizontally and from below (Ferguson and Gupta 2002). Secondly, the extent to which any strategy of resistance could position anyone out of the reach of power is questioned, arguing that power relations are ambivalent (Hibou 2011a: 19, 140–6; Mbembe 2001: 110). Thirdly, Scott’s framework may not be applicable to a context where the state cannot be conceived in the ‘high-modernist’ terms of Scott’s own account.

Representing these critiques, Béatrice Hibou argues that the exercise of domination is part of the common ‘desire of normality’ in which the pursuit of a ‘constellation of interests’ may involve the co-production of domination by dominants and dominated alike (2011a: 16). This echoes Mbembe’s arguments about domination operating through people’s self-subjectification, and the dynamics characterising the post-colony, as seen in the previous chapter. It is remarkable that from different perspectives all of these critiques translate heterogeneity, ambivalence and ambiguities into a framework of relative acquiescence. ‘Conviviality’ in the case of Mbembe, ‘symbiosis’ in the case of Bayart and ‘accommodation’ in Hibou accentuate the consensual rather than the conflictual elements of the political space (Bayart 2009: Ch. 6 and 8; Hibou 2011a; Mbembe 2001). Even so, if complexity means the denial of resistance, there might be a problem with the methods and frameworks employed. However, to deny the relevance of resistance or claim its ungraspability is a disservice to the heterogeneity that needs to be captured.

Analysing resistance as a political category entails an exercise of simplification, and hence a trivialisation of society. Scott captures the fluidity of social interaction to a certain extent. The context of *Weapons of the Weak* is a small village, Sedaka, which is in many ways a cohabited context. Village politics entails much tacit consent (something that is not far away from Hibou’s ‘accommodation’) not only of ‘poor’ to ‘rich’ but of ‘rich’ to ‘poor’. For instance, receiving and giving charity is, for Scott, an exercise of power and resistance. Charity benefits the poor, yet it reproduces their subordinate condition, glorifying the
generosity of the rich. While poor villagers dislike being patronised, if the rich do not give charity they are systematically the targets of a moral attack by the poor, who call them stingy and arrogant (Scott 1985: 197–204). Charity here represents a shared world of moral values which not only does not impede class conflict but also facilitates it through the stretching of its interpretation, subverting the nature of the obligation that such values entail and advancing subordinates’ agenda on the basis of these values (Scott 1985: 204–8). Negotiating the conditions of subordination to one’s advantage, including avoiding repression or upholding dignity is, for Scott, a signal of everyday resistance. Scott’s idea of the ‘third realm’, or the ‘pose’, and Certeau’s idea of ‘trickery’ will provide in Chapter 4 the basis for observing the peacebuilding discourse as a platform on which power and resistance operate. Ambiguities are therefore not a reason to deny the existence of resistance, but the space to explore between consent and opposition.

This is particularly useful to bear in mind in a context where the state-making process is not characterised as aiming towards turning citizens into producing and consuming taxpayers. Yet, the ways in which the population are ignored, expelled from their lands, contained and repressed if perceived to be rebellious, or used in order to provide social services, represent continuities and change in exercising domination. This is seen in the militarisation of rural communities; in the indirect discharge enacted by both the government and international actors through the different statebuilding programmes; and in the relative authority exercised by MNCs in some mining sites or in the areas where state revenue and expenditure are focused. Thus, patterns of extraction and violence in building state authority are enacted by myriad of actors, who lay symbolic and material claims on subordinate classes.

In later works, Scott also advanced that both forms of governance by state authorities and forms of resistance could also be seen as a form of ‘reticence’ (2009: 32). As such, not just engagement but also disengagement, and negotiation as well as imposition, are fundamental to grasping the full picture of state-making and resistance in the DRC. In Weapons of the Weak, Scott argued that ‘only those survival strategies that deny or mitigate claims from appropriating classes can be called resistance’ (1985: 301). In Seeing Like a State, high modernism and its failure were also characterised by ‘state-initiated social engineering’, which was ‘transformative’, ‘muscle-bound’, ‘coercive’ and ‘authoritarian’ (1998: 4–5). The Art of Not Being Governed, although opening with a paragraph in which ‘would-be conquering administrators were determined to subdue a recalcitrant landscape and its fugitive, resistant inhabitants’, advances a framework not only of mutual reticence but also of mutual dependency (2009: 1). This later work captures better the current DRC context. For Scott, flight, oral history, nomad agriculture and remote settlement were all strategies to ‘keep the state at arm’s length’ (2009: x). This connects with Certeau’s ‘ways of operating’
by which people trick the state, shaping the environment to their needs (1984: xix).

Self-provision of security and strategies of survival could be seen as bridges towards this end of state evasion. They allow subordinate classes to mitigate poverty, taxes and a militarised environment and also allow avoiding or bypassing the state. The experience of the state as a predator, as partly absent and as another armed group generates a reliance on personal solidarity networks and relations of reciprocity. The family, the clan, the ethnic group, the neighbourhood and INGOs allow for covering certain needs without turning to the state. Yet, survival and armed struggle are determined by an unequal, violent and extractive context as much as by reciprocity and solidarity. Exchanges, especially amongst unequal parties, can involve deceit, scamming, abuse and coercion. But this may in turn generate increasing social conflict. If relations are muddled by an exchange in conditions of ‘conviviality’, ‘horizontality’ and ‘co-habited space’, they may be open to interpretation, but do not rule out resistance (Ferguson 2005; Mbembe 2001). Everyday forms of resistance establish a framework that connects subjects, objects and means as they take place in the regular patterns of behaviour within power relations. That is, it is more a framework to theorise and think about resistance than it is a rigid definition, establishing categories of acts and actors to delimit unambiguously every single act. That said, as will be explained below, the everyday framework offers some limits to treat resistance as a helpful analytical category. Let us first go through the critiques to observe what other limitations and advantages this framework offers.

Multiple agendas, multiple subjects? Who is the subject of resistance?

In the liberal peace debates, everyday resistance has been applied to elites and non-elites, as was mentioned in the Introduction. Resistance has been used to observe the transformations and challenges that the liberal peace has experienced. In turn, these debates have not only afforded a hazy account of resistance. As already examined, this is partly the result of drawing primarily on a thin study of Michel de Certeau as well as of seeing resistance through the paradigm of locals against internationals. Taking material and symbolic privileges into account is a necessary step not only to getting out of this binary but also to having a more nuanced understanding of resistance.

Judith Butler criticised certain streams of feminism for having made ‘women’ the ‘subject’ of feminism. For her, ‘the feminist subject turns out to be discursively constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate its emancipation’ (Butler 2006: 2–3). Feminism and the feminist movement were themselves involved in the reproduction of the dominated subject. This critique could apply to the argument that the subjects of everyday resistance are subordinate subjects (they are the subordinated element of class, gender, race, ethnic
and age relations). In this sense, opening up the framework to examine the transformations caused by resistance, regardless of the subjects that undertake it, could be a way to expand the notion of resistance rather than constrain it with the difficulties and contradictions that ascribing subjectivity entails.

Yet, in the case of everyday resistance the ‘representation’ of subordinates as its subject is not a claim for the emancipation of such subjects, but a critique of precisely the condition that the ‘juridical systems of power’ have created (cf. Foucault cited in Butler 2006: 2). Narrowing down the account of resistance to subordinate subjects means to be more precise about what their objectives are and the means they have available to challenge their condition. The framework understands that resistance originates in the subjects’ reading of their position of subordination and exploitation. This does not imply seeing these subjects in a permanent state of being, nor as ‘victims’ or as such subjectivity being exclusive of others. Quite the contrary, it is a way to establish these subjects in their temporal and plural contexts. They have multiple subjectivities and they too create their own oppression. Workers, peasants or women shall not evoke a universal common identity among those. Contrary to the universal category of ‘woman’ that Butler criticises, to focus on subordinate subjects is to highlight the intersectional identities and experiences they have according to their class, race, ethnicity, gender, age and other sources of power.

From this point of view too, what becomes fictitious is to examine resistance from the discursive category of ‘the local’, although, as Butler rightly indicates, being a product of discourse does not foreclose the possibilities for agency (2006: 195). Identifying the ways in which interventions have created a default bulked-up identity of ‘locals’ can be a pathway to understand the power that such interventions exercise. However making the ‘local’ the subject of resistance is too broad and vague a signifier from which to establish a study of resistance, let alone derive a framework of resistance more broadly. Resistance needs to be contextualised. This goes for who the subjects of resistance are, as much as for the context they are embedded in. The everyday framework of resistance additionally requires an account of the forms of material and symbolic domination in a disaggregated manner. It requires an examination of the positionality of the subject and how that affects agency. Once again, it is not that subjects at the top of the hierarchy cannot be agents of resistance; it is an imposed limit of the framework to highlight that the positionality of the subject affects power relations and that resistance needs to be contextualised to make better sense of it. Resistance should be a way to observe acts and behaviours of real people, beyond abstract and aggregated categories.

This is important for International Relations as it has a tendency to macro accounts in which actors are generally abstract. As Bleiker states ‘[t]o get closer to the objective of theorising the practical dimensions of discursive and transversal forms of dissent it is necessary to remove one more layer of
abstraction [...] from mobile subjectivities to the practices through which they turn into vehicles of dissent’ (2000: 200). However, while Bleiker states that we have to move beyond the levels of problem analysis, in focusing on ‘forms of thought and action that not only transgress, but also challenge political order’ he leaves the actors ambiguously defined (2000: 9). They can be individuals, groups, networks, and for him it is not bodies and people that embody such forms of dissent but their discourses: ‘[l]anguage embod[ies] the relationship between people and their environment’ (Bleiker 2000: 218). Lack of attention to the positionality and role of different subjects within the building blocks of state power and international order produces a view of resistance that erases important elements in power relations.

Connecting intentions and motivations: the object of resistance

The relation between intentions and motivations needs to be established. Intent may be defined as the aim of denying or mitigating an authority claim or the effects of domination. Motivations are the reasons, justifications and agendas behind those aims. Both have been raised, determinant to establishing what is and what is not resistance. Abbink, Bruijn and Walraven argue that ‘resistance must be defined not so much as a set of concrete acts but by the intent of those acts, with the object of defending preexisting sociopolitical situations’ (2008: 22). They note how the historiography of African resistance changed from studying nationalist elites in the 1960s to studying unorganised individual resistance, including silences and dreams, in the 1970s. The inclusion of unintended and unconscious acts had broadened the definition of resistance ‘too much’ (Abbink et al. 2008: 17). In the early debates in anthropology, in the 1980s, for instance, Brian Fegan (1986) already argued that intent was a necessary element of resistance.

Although Scott also defines resistance in terms of intent, he is less categorical. Scott draws attention to the fact that despite these acts failing in their intent more often than not, they are politically significant. These aims may or may not be expressed that way by the actors; the acts themselves are a way to gather intent (Scott 1985: 296). The intent of tax avoidance may be no more than not paying tax, but it denies the state its taxes. The intent of an insult might be denigration or delegitimisation, but it denies authority deference and legitimacy. Additionally, cultural and historical elements may be more important than intention. For instance, Homi Bhabha argues that ‘[r]esistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention’ (1994: 110). Scott is close to Bhabha, in that intentionality should be seen not as reflecting an already formulated ideology against power, but as a collective memory and a culture of insubordination to authority. The meaning of ‘practice’ itself reflects that historical legacy.
However, this also raises a tension that is most distinct in Certeau’s analysis. Certeau’s notion of consciousness partly originates as a critique to how Foucault and Bourdieu understood power as pervasively present, even in the minuscule aspects of the accent acquired in speech or bodily control in prison. Certeau criticises Bourdieu for painting his subjects as having ‘no intention’, living in an ‘assumed world’ and their actions being simply a *habitus*, ‘a repetition of the past’ (1984: 56). For Certeau, Bourdieu compromised his work, leaving subjects without agency, history or decision-making capacity. He reproaches Foucault for providing little distinction between rationalities, mechanisms, dispositifs and apparatuses, resulting in a set of ‘scattered technologies’ and creating a false problematic ‘dichotomy between “ideologies” and “procedures”’ (Certeau 1984: 45). For Certeau, discourse does not require practice and not all discourses are based on practice. However, it is possible for discourse and practice to be the same thing (Certeau 1984: 46, 1988: 147–8). For Certeau it is important to understand what procedures might respond to other logics, outside or even subverting the logic of power. Certeau’s concepts of practice and resistance rely on the meaning of tactics. They are a ‘calculation’, hence conscious, but they are also millenarian and hence ingrained in the subconscious, provoking simultaneously an unconscious use. They are a form of subversion of the logic of power, more than an attack. Walking following one’s logic or writing a letter to a friend in ‘company time’ are conscious activities in the sense that they are done in full knowledge of the agent (Certeau 1984: 50–60). Certeau draws attention to the possibility of seeing resistance as a self-regarding practice, where authority claims may not be directly confronted, but ignored, reappropriated or subverted.

The difficulty of gathering intent and linking with the debates about motivation was the core of the critiques of Scott that were made within anthropology studies in the 1980s. Ortner, a primary representative of these critiques, argues that resistance studies are limited because they lack ethnographic ‘stance’ – a commitment to grasp the ‘thickness’ and ‘depth’ of complex relations (1995: 174). According to Ortner, ‘[r]esistance studies are thin because they are ethnographically thin: thin on the internal politics of dominated groups, thin on the cultural richness of those groups, thin on the subjectivity – the intentions, desires, fears, projects – of the actors engaged in these dramas’ (1995: 190). The critique is that resistance studies simplify reality excessively by not considering the web of relations where subjects are embedded. Following on from this, Ortner argues that scholars disregard how practices and meanings evolve for both resisters and scholars, and thus how ambiguous and subjective these acts are (1995: 175). Ortner ends up with a final objection, to the category of resistance more generally, which resonates with Africanist critiques seen above (Hibou 2011a; Mbembe 2001: Ch. 3; Mbembe in Weaver Shipley 2010: 666). Because resistance, and especially its intentions, is ambiguous, Ortner proposes to
account for the multiple ways in which practices can be ‘creative and transformative’, yet be the result of contradictory and mixed intentions (1995: 190–1). By this account, intentions may not be central and may provide a richer account of other aspects in everyday human relations, but doing away with intention undermines an account of agency against the experience of domination.

The implications of Ortner’s argument are that to claim that a category of resistance is irrelevant because one cannot grasp all desires, hopes, cultural constraints and aims in an individual, let alone in a collective, is to reduce resistance to a psychological category and to empty it of its historical, political and social meaning. Additionally, the existence of a myriad of agendas, and of a self-centred element, do not necessarily point to ‘conviviality’ or to a lack of conflict in relations of domination. Similarly, the absence of principled motivations does not rule out resistance. It becomes necessary to link intent with motivations, that is, the reasons, agendas and justifications behind those acts. Often, practices have both self-centred and selfless motivations.

**Self-centred and selfless acts**

Self-centred acts may not necessarily entail self-gain, but the prioritisation of one’s own agenda in detriment to the fulfilment of authority claims. In Certeau’s account, where intent is not present, prioritising one’s self suggests ‘an alternative socio-political ethic’ that antagonises the logic of profit, whether represented in the factory or in patterns of consumption. The examples Certeau discusses (pilfering ‘a lathe to make furniture at home’ or ‘writing to a friend while at work’) imply a loss considering the impact that being caught would have (1984: 25). This makes more meaningful the fact that this ‘risk’ is taken not out of a logic of self-profit but out of solidarity with one’s friends and family (1984: 25). Behind this account, and similarly to Scott, is the fact that resistance is not just the realm of public, collective and seemingly selfless agendas but also the realm of quotidian self-help acts.

The problem is that whereas the former seems to be straightforwardly amenable to inferring a political argument, the individual covert, self-centred acts are not. Yet by looking at the interaction between self-centred and selfless motivations as examined in resistance studies, the lines are blurred even in revolutionary organisation. Wolf, for instance, in his studies of peasant revolutions in the twentieth century, argued that peasants ultimately acted for themselves and that they carried a deep sense of injustice (Wolf 1971, 1982). Barrington Moore also argued that battles over land and its uses symbolise battles over power, morals and ideas about how society is best organised (1978). Similarly, Scott thought that peasants tend to be more radical at the level of ideas than at the level of action (1985: 331). Self-serving acts may not go as far as envisioning a new society, but they do not preclude it. They could, rather, be
seen as underlined by an idea of what is legitimate and an interpretation of one’s own position of subordination. The presence of an aspiration to change the effects of domination is a marker of resistance.

**Heterogeneity and ambivalence of the practices: violence, hiddenness and subversion as means of resistance**

The fact that resistance should be understood as a practice – a pattern of acts – makes ‘acts’ central to the account of resistance. Yet ‘acts’ on their own do not define resistance; in fact, as previously noted, acts are ambivalent – they can serve both the purpose of domination and resistance. What makes an act of resistance is the fact that it is embodied and represents the challenge of a position of subordination. It follows that different types of acts, whether confrontational, violent, subversive, covert or evasive, can account for how resistance takes place.

One of the ways in which Scott’s account provides both guidance and flexibility to analyse resistance is the idea that ‘any act’ can be resistance if fulfilling certain criteria. However, this requires putting both power and resistance in relative terms. With the example of discourses, Scott clarifies that:

Power relations are not, alas, so straightforward that we can call what is said in power-laden contexts false and what is said offstage true. Nor can we simplistically describe the former as a realm of necessity and the latter as a realm of freedom. What is certainly the case, however, is that the hidden transcript is produced for a different audience and under different constraints of power than the public transcript. (1990: 5)

More than the boundaries between these two transcripts, the real conflict takes place in the space in between. Scott premised his central argument on the existence of a ‘third realm’, a ‘pose’, where the ‘politics of disguise’ and ‘double meaning’ are a hint to understand the ambiguity of resistance (1990: 18–19). Previous applications of this framework to the study of peacebuilding have analysed the dynamics of domination and resistance while representing the levels of ambiguity and complexity of the context. Heathershaw, for instance, deploys a Scottian framework to observe how multiple public transcripts represent multiple selves that create and recreate statebuilding and peace, despite its failures (Heathershaw 2008, see also 2009). These transcripts provide knowledge and shape practices, whose contradiction of the rhetoric is a feature rather than a problem or a deviation of peacebuilding as such (Heathershaw 2008: 331). This is what Heathershaw captures with the idea of peacebuilding as a ‘simulation’ (Heathershaw 2008: 346). The high-modernist rhetoric of protection and social change is a pose on which both agendas of state authority and resistance are premised.
Patterns and practices of everyday resistance

Violence/non-violence

The relationship between resistance and violence has not been well explained in the liberal peace debates. For scholars such as Mac Ginty, Mitchell and Kelly, resistance can imply violence (Kelly and Mitchell 2012; Mac Ginty 2011; Mitchell 2011a). Richmond, by contrast, has equated everyday resistance with non-violent practices. Richmond’s account of resistance as hidden and disguised leads to identifying what he calls emancipatory forms of critical agency with non-violent forms of resistance. Like Scott, Richmond does not argue that everyday resistance is literally invisible (2011a: 89, 94). He sees resistance as covert discourses and non-confrontational activities against the standardised, locally unaware promises of the international community (2011a: Ch. 3). Case studies include local NGOs which refuse to be compliant with the dictates of the peacebuilding vision of civil society and are marginalised as a result in their lobbying efforts towards reform and welfare demands (Richmond 2011a: Ch. 3). These often non-violent forms of resistance, as they are developed in Richmond’s work, resemble more the politics of organised movements than the infrapolitics of the weak that Scott developed (2011a: 117). For Scott, who has analysed the possibility of violent resistance more than Certeau, hidden acts and the politics of disguise, or the ‘pose’, have to do with the politics of repression and the relation that resisters have to power, not to an ethic of non-violent resistance.

Nothing captures better the meaning of hiddenness and the infrapolitical than the Ethiopian proverb with which Scott opens his *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. It reads as follows: ‘When the great lord passes the wise peasant bows deeply and silently farts’ (Scott 1990: v). That before authority those in a subordinate position may act as showing respect to such authority should not be mistaken for acquiescence or consent. Rather, the scripted roles in which authority and subordination are enacted in front of each other should be contrasted with the ways in which actors behave when they are among their equals. These acts are visible, even public, but not confrontational. Yet, taking violence out of resistance provides a Manichean analysis. Richmond’s political agenda ends up creating a good and bad peacebuilding and a good and bad form of resistance. However, this does a disservice to the analysis, for not only can resistance not be sanitised, as violence is a central aspect of the constitution of state authority, but violence cannot be excluded from either power or resistance in this context.

The Brechtian or Schweikian forms of resistance Scott identifies are those generally available to the ordinary peasant: ‘foot dragging, dissimulation, desertion, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so on’ (1985: xvi). They are covert, latent and unorganised, using informal channels and avoiding direct confrontation with authorities, but that does not necessarily mean non-violent.
Everyday resistance needs to be read in a continuum of different practices of resistance, which reflect the larger political context in which they are embedded. It is therefore problematic to equate everydayness with non-violence. While Scott was writing from a pacific context of South East Asia, he did not mean to outline a framework of pacific resistance. He noted that ‘low-grade, hit-and-run, guerrilla action’ was not unusual in everyday resistance (1985: 241), and also made clear that peasants were ready to oppose landowners and employers, violently if necessary, to stop changes in property law, salary losses, social arrangements and living standards (Scott 1985: 98, 254–9). In later work, Scott explored the ways in which peasants engaged in armed rebellions, violent actions, banditry and crime as a form of resistance (Scott 2009: 146–50). Similarly, analysing violence as amenable to the practice of resistance does not necessarily equate or reduce ‘violence’ to dynamics of power and resistance.

The choice of acts deployed for resistance is determined by the possibilities available to political action. Everyday resistance is ultimately carried out in the safety of anonymity and at the lowest risk of repression. Selbin, who has examined the relationship between resistance, rebellion and revolution, argues that the covert – ‘I obey but I do not comply’ – type of acts ‘often form the basis of resistance’ (Rowe and Schelling cited in Selbin 2009: 11). For Selbin, whereas revolution is rare, resistance is commonplace, integrating acts that defy authority, mostly in covert ways. However, as in the debates around intent, lack of confrontation has generated doubt as to whether these acts can be seen as opposing domination, and, indeed, as resistance. On the contrary, emphasis on the hidden, latent and covert nature of everyday resistance has created a tension between the everyday framework and more confrontational, even violent practices.

Still, this raises the question of the extent to which resistance should necessarily be an act of opposition in the form of a direct attack, or whether it can also be grasped in its subversive capacity. Subversion may be understood as a form of aikido, meaning ‘self-defence [or self-help] using the strength of the dominant group’ (Bigo 2011: 233). Seen from the differences between Scottian ‘acts’ and Certeau’s ‘tactics’, different practices may have different referents. For Certeau, resistance tactics are ‘innumerable practices by means of which users reappropriate the space organized by techniques of sociocultural production’ (1984: xiv). Resistance is not so much an attack against and a confrontation of power as a transformative force that produces its own outcomes. For Scott, ‘acts’ are intended to mitigate or deny domination.

This means that whether the primary referent of an act is ‘opposing’ a claim, or whether the primary referent is one’s self (individual or collective), they can be seen both as ways of denying or mitigating those claims and as the effects of domination. The condition of relative statelessness of the population in the high plateaux of South East Asia, described in The Art of Not Being Governed, was
due to their long historical patterns of escaping state power (Scott 2009). Here, residents have managed to preserve a way of life that is relatively protected from state interference by using tactics including escapism, agricultural nomadism, oral history and, when necessary, armed resistance. It follows that resistance does not always need to be an attack, let alone in a violent form, but, rather, an ‘act’ upon one’s position of subordination. Yet, as context and availability of means are determinant, everyday resistance is not necessarily always covert, especially in militarised contexts.

Three important consequences follow in order to develop a framework of everyday resistance in peacebuilding. First, putting together Certeau and Scott’s framework provides a good foundation, although with a critical analysis. As previously noted, any framework needs to connect patterns, intentions, motivations, acts and actors. This does not mean to pre-empt a particular account, but it requires justification for its core elements. A final consequence is that resistance cannot be conceptualised in terms of all or nothing. As will be explored in the next section, some elements of resistance such as intentionality, the intensity and exposure of its acts, and how directly authority claims are targeted can be gradated in order to provide a rich account that captures the complexity and ambiguities of resistance.

A reworked account of resistance: gradients of intentionality, intensity, exposure and engagement

Bearing the above in mind, the account of resistance that I propose in this book is as follows: ‘Resistance is the pattern of acts undertaken by individuals or collectives in a subordinated position to mitigate or deny elite claims and the effects of domination, while advancing their own agenda.’ This definition establishes resistance as a practice (a pattern of acts). It follows Scott in identifying both individuals and collectives in a position of subordination as the bearers of this practice, thus presenting it as part of a relation of domination. This means that, similar to Scott, those acts are directed towards elite claims and the experience of domination, and it adds an explicit link between intent (denial or mitigation) and motivations (agenda advancing). It does not represent any kind of permanent position that individuals are in, nor does it claim to capture all daily interactions that take place in a complex environment like peacebuilding in the DRC. However, it represents resistance as an analytical and political category.

The definition also sets some limits to what counts as resistance. Resistance is not an effect; it is a patterned practice, and unintended acts sit at the edges of its scope. This is different from accounting for the fact that self-regarding actions may have a less clear intent. What it means is that, for instance, forgetting to pay one’s taxes could hardly be seen as resistance. Similarly, random acts that do not target authority claims or the effects of domination do not qualify as
resistance. However, as mentioned above, the discussion is rather unhelpful if couched in terms of the actual existence or absence of resistance. This definition is not intended to provide an all-or-nothing measure of resistance; rather, it identifies the core elements of an account, some of which can be gradated.

Hollander and Einwohner propose not to become trapped in futile definitions and to account for resistance directly through a typology. The one they provide follows what they consider to be the pith of cross-disciplinary debates on resistance: intention and recognition. In their typology, they combine resisters’ intentions and the recognition of resistance by resisters, targets and observers. Hollander and Einwohner categorise seven activities according to whether the resister intended there to be resistance, and how this is recognised by the targets and the observer (Table 2.2).

One of the greatest achievements of this typology is to represent ‘the fact that the concept of resistance is socially constructed [...] and that resisters, targets, and observers all participate in this construction’ (Hollander and Einwohner 2004: 548). Nevertheless, the typology reflects more the relationship between the practices and the literature than the nature of resistance. Hollander and Einwohner see resistance as concerning primarily action and opposition,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of resistance</th>
<th>Is act intended as resistance by actor?</th>
<th>Is act recognised as resistance by Target?</th>
<th>Observer?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overt resistance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covert resistance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwitting resistance</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target-defined resistance</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Externally defined resistance</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed resistance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted resistance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not resistance</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Hollander and Einwohner (2004: 544)
and fundamentally as a relational concept. As they argue, ‘the interactional nature of resistance also highlights the central role of power, which is itself an interactional relationship, not a characteristic of individuals or groups’ (Hollander and Einwohner 2004: 548). It is precisely this interactional nature that categories should attempt to grasp. Despite the basic conceptual framework provided, based on ‘action and opposition’, Hollander and Einwohner’s typology does not reflect this, nor does it show what makes each actor or the observer recognize the act as resistance. There is still a need to provide an account for the ‘acts’ themselves; however, Hollander and Einwohner’s proposal of categorising acts according to different aspects of resistance and levels of intent can set the basis for a typology that encapsulates both the conceptual framework and these different aspects.

Taking stock of the core arguments advanced in this chapter, and as an introduction to how different practices of resistance will be discussed in the following chapters, Table 2.3 categorises the different elements of resistance and their gradients. Whereas all the elements (patterns, intentions, motivations, acts and actors) need to be present, these can be categorised and display different gradients (clarity of intentionality, intensity of acts and how directly claims have been opposed). Categories in the table respond to the now familiar arguments: elite claims and resistance can be symbolic and material; resistance practices may attempt to deny the claims entirely or mitigate them partially; resistance can be individual and collective, and use different acts. Gradients reflect both Scott’s and Certeau’s accounts; they can affect intentionality, appearing to the observer in a visible or less visible form. Acts can have different gradients of intensity, as they confront authority ‘face to face’, in an overt manner, or even violently. The different ways in which Scott and Certeau understood resistance as a practice of engaging against authority claims or as a practice that follows self-logics illustrates two different kinds of practices: (1) those that engage against authority claims more directly (claim regarding) and that take the form of a more oppositional form of resistance and even of attack; and (2) those that mitigate or deny claims by a self-serving action or in the form of ‘aikido’, actually using the claim to one’s advantage and generally taking the form of subversion (self-regarding).

Table 2.3 illustrates how these different categories and gradients relate to the practices discussed in the empirical chapters. Although, as stated, outcomes are not relevant to an account of resistance because acts may have no impact or may result in the opposite of what was intended, the table offers a category of possible outcomes, which also reflects the relationship between claims and resistance practices as discussed in the next chapters. These do not exhaust other practices that may be more prevalent in other peacebuilding contexts.

These examples and the way they are interpreted above are not meant to be read in absolute terms, implying for example, that in all situations an
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Nature and object of claim</th>
<th>Nature of practice</th>
<th>Nature of intent</th>
<th>Is the intent visible?</th>
<th>Has there been ‘face to face’ confrontation?</th>
<th>How directly has the claim been opposed?</th>
<th>How intense is the practice?</th>
<th>Actors involved</th>
<th>Possible outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insult/slander/denigration</td>
<td>Symbolic – legitimacy/deference</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Directly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Discursive attack</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Intended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mockery</td>
<td>Symbolic – legitimacy/deference</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Directly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Discursive attack</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Intended</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meaning subversion</td>
<td>Symbolic – agenda setting</td>
<td>Mitigation</td>
<td>Indirectly</td>
<td>Less visible</td>
<td>No – ‘users’</td>
<td>Violent subversion</td>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>Intended/none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mai Mai attacks</td>
<td>Material and symbolic – authority, monopoly of violence</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Directly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – militias</td>
<td>Physical attack</td>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>More repression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Mai Mai for security</td>
<td>Material and symbolic – authority, monopoly of violence</td>
<td>Mitigation</td>
<td>Indirectly</td>
<td>Less visible</td>
<td>No – ‘users’</td>
<td>Violent subversion</td>
<td>Collective</td>
<td>Intended/none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax evasion</td>
<td>Material – tax levy</td>
<td>Denial</td>
<td>Directly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Material attack</td>
<td>Individual/collective</td>
<td>Intended/none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land defence/re-appropriation</td>
<td>Material – extraction</td>
<td>Mitigation</td>
<td>Indirectly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Material subversion</td>
<td>Individual/collective</td>
<td>Intended/none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military rule negotiation</td>
<td>Material and symbolic – authority</td>
<td>Mitigation</td>
<td>Directly</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Political subversion</td>
<td>Individual/collective</td>
<td>Intended/none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survival and self-management</td>
<td>Material and symbolic – social and political organisation, extraction</td>
<td>Mitigation</td>
<td>Indirectly</td>
<td>Less visible</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Political subversion</td>
<td>Individual/collective</td>
<td>Intended/none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Patterns and practices of everyday resistance

‘insult’ may be more overt than slandering or self-management. Ultimately, as there are no unambiguous acts of resistance, and there are plural intersecting relations of domination, which are changing and contingent, any framework of resistance needs to embrace heterogeneity and ambiguity and to be contextualised.

The way forward

We have come full circle in that, as stated in the Introduction, one of the most problematic aspects of the accounts of resistance in the liberal peace literature was that they provided a series of arguments about its practices, its nature and how it affected peacebuilding, without having fully elaborated what resistance is. Methodologically, it has been stated that while focusing on practices is a rich ground for theorising, generalisations have to be limited. The practice of state-making and resistance is, as seen in Chapter 1, necessarily affected by the political space of which they are a part. This means to acknowledge that practices of resistance in a peacebuilding context are not peculiar to this context, but are the continuation of practices of resistance that were in place before, except that a series of peacebuilding actors are now part of the claimants and the claims tend to be justified as advancing peace, statebuilding, democracy and development.

As such, although certain features of resistance may apply generally to all cases and certain practices will be similar, they will recover meaning once they are contextualised.

From the above, there are two important ideas to retain for the empirical chapters. Firstly, an everyday framework of resistance is not necessarily one of non-violent invisible action but, rather, an account of the quotidian practices of subordinate individuals and collectives that deny or mitigate domination. This quotidian element means that these practices aim to be repression-proof and easily applicable without the need for a special political organisation. Despite their self-help character, they represent a political category. They can have different gradients of intensity, exposure, engagement against claims and intentionality.

Secondly, Hollander and Einwohner’s point that resistance is ultimately socially constructed needs to be borne in mind. Having a conceptual framework becomes imperative for any account of resistance. Only through the discussion of how the observer sees patterns, intentions, motivations, acts and actors as interrelating, necessary, prevalent or gradated can one account for resistance and be able to respond to the different challenges that theorising and researching everyday life generate. Despite the complexities and ambiguities that theorising resistance entails, it is a necessary category in order to understand social relations in any political process, and particularly during peacebuilding and the reconstruction of state authority.
NOTES

1. E.g. Eric Selbin argues that what distinguishes resistance from rebellion and revolution is its less-threatening character in relation to power, and its actions’ being linked to long-term processes and to societies’ memories of social struggle. Rebellion, by contrast, is ‘a type of insurgency or uprising which rarely seeks to change the entire system’ but manages to threaten it generally with violence. Revolution is a ‘dramatic upheaval involving a group of united people overthrowing their government’ (Selbin 2009: 11, 12 and 13).

2. In Seeing Like a State, Scott (1998) outlines a theory of ‘practical knowledge’ about state-making, where resistance is present but is not the central focus.

3. The name given to the small village in Malaysia where Weapons of the Weak’s fieldwork takes place.

4. Especially developed in Domination and the Arts of Resistance and in the Art of Not Being Governed.

5. From the exclusive, narrow focus on Malay and Burmese peasantry in The Moral Economy of the Peasant and Weapons of the Weak, to an overall argument about subordination in Domination and the Arts of Resistance. State–society relations are explored most notably in the Art of Not Being Governed and in Seeing like a State.


7. E.g. at the peak of Africa’s World War, 80 per cent of the DRC’s revenue was put towards the war effort (ICG 2000: 41).

8. With reference, respectively, to Donald Crummey and Achille Mbembe (Abbink, Bruijn, and Walraven 2008: 17).

9. Similar formulations can be seen in: Browdy de Hernandez et al. (2010); Selbin (2009: Ch. 3).

10. I am simplifying here Bourdieu’s notion of habitus and Certeau’s critique of it. The essence of the critique is that Bourdieu has stripped the individual of consciousness, decision-making and transformative agency.

11. Underlying Certeau’s use of the unconscious is Sigmund Freud (Certeau 1984: 2–6).

12. Das (2007: 78) argues that violence is part of everyday life experience and that this daily experience has surpassed a narrow framework of power and resistance. This is the framework adopted by Mitchell (2011a, 2011b).