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Revolutionary Amoebas

Political Versatility as the Art of Resistance in Germany

Disertační práce

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Prohlášení

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Summary

This dissertation is interested in what kind of self and techniques of resistance are acquired in order to be a revolutionary in the contemporary West. While I was conducting an ethnographic research between 2008 – 2015 following young activists from Germany in urban spaces of demonstrations, riots, direct actions, jails, the Internet, universities, housing projects, parent's homes in Germany as well as during solidarity trips to Mexico, Argentina, Israel/Palestine, Denmark or Italy, it was discovered that a concept of political versatility may be helpful here. Young revolutionaries are what I call revolutionary amoebas.

Revolutionary amoebas acquire capacities to discuss at universities or public debates, write texts, talk, but they manage to argue beyond the discourse by throwing stones or burning cars in riots, organizing direct actions, smashing corporate properties, beating neo-nazis, attacking ultra-nationalists, or actively defending themselves against the police. As citizens of advanced liberal democracy, they enter public discussions of contested opinions, persuade people with their critical arguments and a few of them even vote, but they as well explore the political terrain considered illegal. Many of them know how to get funded from the state, The EU, and civic foundations, but use these resources to fight sometimes the very same institutions. They are anti-capitalist, but at the same time very productive, reorienting the disciplinary and neoliberal imperative of productivity towards fights against capitalism. Revolutionary amoebas manage to distribute the self through an extensive range of techniques, capacities, actions and human-nonhuman relations in order to be politically active in versatile ways.

Amoebas move forward by changing their shape. Revolutionary amoebas

move forward by changing their political shape. It is precisely the crucial connection between moving and changing shape why the contemporary revolutionary youth in Germany acquire versatile, amoebic self.

Abstrakt

Tato disertace se zajímá o to, jaký druh sebe sama a techniky vzdoru si člověk osvojuje, aby byl revolucionářem na současném Západě. Text vychází z dlouhodobého terénního výzkumu, který jsem prováděl mezi lety 2008 a 2015 a během kterého jsem mladé aktivisty z Německa následoval na demonstrace, do riotů, přímých akcí, vězení, na internetu, univerzitách, domů, do domů rodičů a během solidárních cest do Mexika, Argentiny, Izraele/Palestiny, Dánska či Itálie. Zjistil jsem při analýze, že koncept politické proměnlivosti mi je nápomocný, protože zkoumaní buřiči se dnes stávají revolučními amébami.

Revoluční améby disponují schopnostmi diskutovat na univerzitách či ve veřejných debatách, psát texty, mluvit, stejně tak ale umí argumentovat mimo diskurz házením kamenů, pálením aut v riotech, organizováním přímých akcí, ničením korporátního majetku, bitím neo-nacistů, atakováním ultra-nacionalistů či aktivní obranou před policií. Jako občané rozvinuté liberální demokracie, améby vstupují do veřejných debat, výměn názorů, přesvědčují lidi svými kritickými argumenty a někdy i volí. Mimo to se ale zajímají o politickou činnost považovanou za nelegální. Mnoho z nich ví, jak získat granty a jiné zdroje od státu, Evropské unie, občanských nadací a jak tyto prostředky použít pro boj často proti týmž institucím. Améby jsou anti-kapitalistické, ale zároveň velmi disciplinované, výkonné a neoliberální

imperativ produktivity obracejí směrem k boji proti kapitalismu. Revoluční améby zvládají distribuovat sebe sama do různorodých technik, kapacit, aktivit a lidských i mimo-lidských vztahů tak, aby byly politicky aktivní mnohotvárným způsobem.

Améby se pohybují změnou tvaru. Revoluční améby se pohybují změnou politického tvaru. Je to právě tato mnohotvárnost a spojení mezi hnutím a přetvářením, díky kterým současná si revoluční mládež v Německu osvojuje amébovou povahou sebe samého.

Keywords

amoebic self; techniques of resistance; revolutionary; protest; subjectivity; Germany; political versatility; communication; body; appearance; in/dividuality; post-revolutionary times; post-autonomy; riots; Black bloc; advanced liberalism

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1 Introduction

What kind of self and techniques of resistance one tends to assume in order to be a revolutionary in the contemporary West? What capacities and political actions are acquired in such a revolutionary *Selbstbildung*? While I was conducting an ethnographic research between 2008 – 2015, I was guided by these late Foucauldian questions. When I following young activists from Germany in demonstrations, riots, direct actions, jails, universities, housing projects, parents' homes in Germany as well as during solidarity trips to Mexico, Argentina, Israel/Palestine, Denmark, France, or Italy, I discovered that a concept of political versatility may be helpful here. The young activists are what I call revolutionary *amoebas*.

Revolutionary amoebas dispose of capacities to discuss at universities or public debates, write texts, talk, but they manage to argue beyond the discourse by throwing stones or burning cars in riots, organizing direct actions, smashing corporate properties, beating neo-nazis, or attacking ultra-nationalists. As citizens of an advanced liberal democracy, they enter public discussions of contested opinions, persuade people with their critical

arguments and a few of them even vote, but they as well explore the political terrain considered illegal. Many of them know how to get funded from the state, The EU, and civic foundations, but they use these resources to fight sometimes the very same institutions. They are anti-capitalist, but at the same time very productive, reorienting the disciplinary and neoliberal imperative of productivity towards fights against capitalism. Revolutionary amoebas manage to distribute the self through an extensive range of techniques, capacities, actions and human-nonhuman relations in order to be politically active in a versatile way. The task of the dissertation is to grasp the political spanning of the amoebic self by disentangling it into axes of communication, body, in/dividuality, appearance. Particular attention is devoted to scrutinizing the poles of axis which are imbued with proper and differing techniques of resistance. Amoebas communicate discursively but they as well move beyond the discourse, shape their bodies from indolent to seditious as well as from individual to collective and their appearance ranges from casual to masked. Moreover, these poles correlate with each other – that is on one side the amoebic shape tends to be composed of discursive communication connected to an indolent body of a casually looking individual and from the other side the amoebic entity tends to be shaped as a collective, masked and seditious body communicating beyond the discourse. Besides, when the amoebic self is produced as versatile acquiring different political shapes, then one of the important techniques in such architecture of revolutionary life happens to be the switching between shapes. Amoebas move forward by changing their shape. Revolutionary amoebas move forward by changing their political shape. It is precisely the crucial connection between moving, spanning between particular/correlating poles and changing shape, why the

contemporary revolutionary youth in Germany dispose of their versatile, amoebic selves.

This indicates that there is no one and only, invariant, authentic, and indivisible self. Instead, amoebic self is better understood as distributable into particular directions and assemblatic in different combinations on the axis of political versatility referring to Gell's concept of a distributed person (1998), respectively to Bennett's notion of assemblatic self (2010). Moreover, amoebic self is divisible into parts and units from individual bodies, via human-material alliances to group collectives, referring to Strathern's and Deleuze's concept of a dividual (1988, 1992). Therefore, amoebic subjectivity is understood as decomposable, and revolutionary amoebas are an ethnographic example of a distributed, divisible and assemblatic subject with malleable and transformable capacities to act connected to appropriate techniques of resistance. Furthermore, as I try to show, the amoebic self is a particular revolutionary self for what Pavel Barša and Ondřej Císař called the post-revolutionary epoch (2004) in the 21st century Europe.

My main conceptual points of reference permeating the whole dissertation are the work of Michel Foucault and the anthropology of resistance, protest, and social movement, particularly the part concerning the subject, subjectivity, and self. Chapter 2 provides an insight into the subjectivity in the history of anthropology of resistance and protest. Chapter 2 presents the founding conceptual pillars. Chapter 3 anchors the studies of amoebas historically, in a particular connection to Germany and Foucauldian and anthropological studies of revolution in order to lay ground for one dimension of my argument – the contemporary self of amoebas in so called post-autonomous times differs from older revolutionary selves in Germany after 1970s. Chapter 4 to 7

document amoebic spanning of political versatility with each of the chapters tackling recent or contemporary debates around subject and resistance. Chapter 4 grasps amoebic communication as ranging from talking to argumentation beyond discourse in riots, distributed and assembled in different human-nonhuman relations. Chapter 5 conceptualizes the amoebic body on the corporeal axis spanning from an indolent to a seditious body with different kinesthetic, affective and re-cognitive registers, and bodily techniques. Chapter 6 moves on to tackle yet one more amoebas' bodily axis ranging from an individual to a collective body. Chapter 7 scrutinizes the last axis of appearance, shaping amoebas as casual as well as masked. The last Chapter 8 outlines the switching between amoebic shapes as a technique with a particular focus on the switch leaking beyond legal/illegal domain. Furthermore, it is argued that the amoebic self constitutes a particular variation of revolutionary pragmatism in the post-revolutionary times. The Conclusion sums up the main findings about the amoebic self and political versatility in connections to the newly emerging fields of anthropology of protest and subjectivity.

2 Subjectivity and Anthropology of Resistance and Protest

Subject and resistance are tightly intermingled in social anthropology. They have always been. The task of this chapter is to outline crucial conceptual pillars and developments considering subjectivity in the history of the anthropology of resistance in order to introduce in the last passage relevant debates, concepts and problems discussed in my own research of revolutionary amoebas.

Subjectivity has been conceptualized ever since the anthropology of resistance embarked on its turbulent voyage at the turn of 1970s and 1980s. Embedded in different analytical frameworks of variable theoretical streams, subjectivity was connected to diverse concepts from collective agency via identity to (false) consciousness, hegemony and active consent, intention or modes of subjectivation. Sometimes more central, sometimes rendered secondary, subjectivity witnessed the fascinating boom of resistance studies

in 1980s, a breakdown after the harsh criticism of the concept of resistance in 1990s as well as its second breath resuscitations coming from the 1990s on with calls for understanding resistance more in terms of protest and social movements.

Emerging resistances associated with new phenomena like urban protest, horizontal democracy, occupation, alter-globalization/global justice, anti-austerity mobilization, hacktivism, on-line protest, The Arab spring, anti-authoritarian revolution, or critique of neoliberal policies keep generating emerging subjectivities. These subjectivities not only remain an integral part of the anthropology of resistance until today, but one can even register growing interest in ethnographic studies of the self and subject production in protest. A recent conference at the University College London titled “The War of Worlds: The Self and Society in Social Movements” seems to be symptomatic of this trend. The aim of the conference was to extend the focus dominated by “‘*practice-based approach*’ (Juris 2008: 11), *documenting the ongoing processes through which movements pursue alternative projects,*” with the scrutiny of “*the alternative selves and societies that movements envisage, those not necessarily concentrated in collective process, but which lie in a total reconfiguration of the everyday.*” (Peacock and Potts 2015) The production of the *subject* and the *praxis* of resistance remain bounded together in this call – only the research and analytical entry-point to the question seem to move closer to the subject position. The subject is intelligible through action – the amoebic self in my research is no exception to this epistemological position.

2.1 Domination and Resisting Subject

The question of subjectivity in the anthropology of resistance at the end of the 1970s was the desperate search for a revolutionary subject. „*Revolution [as] organizing principle [didn't succeed]*“, as Arturo Escobar points out, because „*people failed to behave in the ways predicted by dominant theories...nor did they jubilantly and decisively join revolutionary struggles, as Marxist analysts had prognosticated.*“ (1992: 402) How did it come that the subordinate class and the potential revolutionary subject did not follow the historically inevitable path designed in the canonical texts of Karl Marx? What went wrong when, instead, they seemed „*to accept or at least to consent to an economic system that is manifestly against its interests when it is not obliged to by the direct application of coercion or the fear of its application?*“ (Scott 1990: 71) This question wasn't new – to the contrary, as Graeber and Shuakatis point out: „*The entire history of Western Marxism, from Lukács through Gramsci and the Frankfurt School, has been a series of attempts to explain why the proletariat in the most advanced industrial nations did not rise up in arms.*“ (2007: 17) And for the most part the explanation was searched for in the logic of domination and especially in its cultural sphere of worldviews, beliefs, ideas, and values. Simply, people are subordinated symbolically as well. Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx use the term false consciousness to catch how the proletariat is kept mystified concerning relations between classes and they mention that the ruling class manages to make their ideas the dominating ones to which the subordinated class is subjected (Marx 1998). Antonio Gramsci (1971) follows up and writes about hegemony, through which the values, worldviews, and beliefs of the ruling class become justified, imposed, and accepted by a majority as the

universal and natural norm. Hegemony penetrates the state as well as the civil society and is anchored in a balanced combination between enforcement and active consent of the dominated over their domination. As such it stabilizes status quo and makes counter-hegemonies of rebellious consciousness and oppositional ideologies hardly available.

With these explanations, resistance and resistive subjectivity of subordinated people seemed extremely rare. But was this really so? What if the problem partly lied in a narrowed understanding of rebellion as an open and mass revolution? James C. Scott entered the debate with arguments backed up in his ethnographic fieldwork among peasants in a Malaysian village Sedaka, which was soaked in the turbulent changes of capitalist development. Agency understood as „*consciousness - the meaning [people] give to their acts*“ (Scott 1985: 38) remains a central axis of interest. Scott was dissatisfied with simplistic and polarized explanations of subordinated people's agency concerning resistance. One could either be an organized revolutionary or dominated via active consent because of the hegemony. This perspective would strip any resisting agency of every peasant avoiding open rebellion and would reduce them to non-agentic „sacks of potatoes“ (Marx 1994). James C. Scott was interested in in-between positions, in the infrapolitics. For most peasants, the open rebellion would be a suicidal mission because of their unequal power relations with the state or landowners. But that does not mean that they actively consent with their subordination and do not resist at all. To the contrary, they are capable of imagining an alternative social world as well as all-or-nothing conflict, but they manage to resist differently. Peasants from Sedaka move between public posture of conformity to gain „everyday victories“ and off-stage authentic selves using less organized, everyday forms

of resistance, so called „weapons of the weak“ such as dissimulation, false compliance, feigned ignorance, slander or codes, and euphemisms (Scott 1985, 1990). What seems as a deference due to hegemony could be only feignedly appearance of hegemonic positions by the artful peasants. Instead of the polarized notion of either counter-hegemonic revolution or consent to hegemony, Scott demonstrates how hegemony can be played out by the dominated ones and offers to speak about different transcripts of peasants' conduct towards their domination. There are public transcripts for on-stage behavior, hidden transcripts for behavior where the power-holders cannot see or hear and their variable combinations, transitions and advancements.

With ethnographic means, James C. Scott rebuked and challenged Gramscian theory of hegemony. His work introduced the notion of the resisting subject and grounded the anthropology of resistance. With such constituent position, it caused diverse debates. Concerning the question of subjectivity, Timothy Mitchell (1990) detects non-problematized Cartesian/Western separation of mind and body in Scott's attempt to picture subordinated peasants as political subjects. Person is understood „*as unique self-constituted consciousness living inside physically manufactured bodies*“ (1990: 545). These dual peasants may loose their physical freedom, but they keep their mind and consciousness internally autonomous and non-colonized by the forces of domination. This would mean that worldviews of the resisting subjects are independent of and non-contaminated by socio-political and historical power relations. Such external concept of power is a direct antithesis of Foucault's understanding which Mitchell incorporated into his critique and which I will discuss later. Moreover, Susan Gal (1995) criticizes another binary fixity in Scott's work – the one leading to the assumption „*that the subordinate and*

the dominant are always clearly definable, unified, and separable groups, unambiguously opposed to each other“ (1995: 417). In such perspective, the differences between them are exaggerated. Sherry B. Ortner (1995) problematizes as well *„a single, unitary, subordinate“* (1995: 175) which is created through the process which *„sanitize the internal politics of the dominated“* (1995: 179) embracing a romantic and exotic view on the subaltern groups resisting already by the virtue of their subordination. Instead of homogeneity, Ortner is interested in variable internal divisions and complexities and even dominations. Almost two decades later, Dimitrios Theodossopoulos (2014) intends to advance Scott's concept of resistance, but instead of intact consciousness of subordinated people he is interested – on the example of anti-austerity indignation in Greece – in local meanings of hidden transcript.

Taking it all, James C. Scott established the discipline by ethnographically documenting the weak sites of Gramscian theory of hegemony and introduced a resisting subject to prove that dominated people are not passive and are disposed of their agency to disagree. As virtuous and necessary as it was then, it left us with very a limited conceptual toolkit unable to analyze internal differences between subalterns, blurs and ambivalences between dominant and subordinate or endurances, modifications and failings of resistance and its relation to neighboring acts of collaboration, compliance, cynicism, or lethargy. Furthermore, too much importance is bestowed, considering subjectivity, to the level of consciousness, knowing consent, ideology at the expense of a body¹, considered detachable from its mind.²

1 This Cartesian split in Post-Marxist social science is most resolutely challenged by Pierre Bourdieu with his notions of the bodily knowledge (2000).

2 The emphasis on the level of consciousness is reconsidered by a social theorist Jon Beasley-Murray (2010) who writes about *„post-hegemony“* in which social order is not secured anymore by consent, ideology, and knowing, but by habit and affect.

2.2 Foucauldian Turn

Michel Foucault was rather sceptical about the Marxist understanding of power and resistance because it „*presupposed a human subject... endowed with a consciousness which power is then thought to seize on.*“ (1980: 58) Instead of an autonomous subject he famously claims „*Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power*“. (1978: 95) Not even can one separate ideology from power in a way of speaking truth to power from some non-contaminated position. Foucault's power and resistance are not external to each other as presupposed in Scott's hidden transcripts, but all-penetrating, productive, and always in relation to each other. With the Foucauldian optic, it is impossible to understand power as a form of possession separable to clearly bounded spheres of dominant power-holders and powerless people in subalternity.

Michel Foucault dissects subjectivity through so called modes or techniques of subjectivation constituting the subject's mode of being. They are fully comprehensible only as a part of the whole Foucault's conceptual grid. He was curious about how problems appear – be it madness, criminality, disease, or sex. In order to understand these problematizations one needs to put techniques of subjectivation in the intersection with modes of veridiction and forms of governmentality. Veridiction means formations of knowledge in truth regimes of discursive (scientific, legal,...) practices. Governmentality replaces power understood as domination with power as a field of procedures and techniques „*by which one sets about conducting the conduct of others*“

(2010: 4) and produces frontiers (1982). The trinity of Subject – Knowledge – Power constitutes Foucault's matrix.

Concerning subject formation, he is interested in „*the different forms by which the individual is led to constitute him or herself as subject*“ (2010: 5) which implies two intermingled modes of subjectivation – technologies of power/government and technologies of self wherein their contact zone sets up the terrain of governmentality.³ Human material is transformed into subject through „*determining the conduct of individuals and submitting them to certain ends*“ (Foucault 1988: 18). Here, different knowledge apparatuses and power mechanisms interconnect in the technologies of government. Such production does not mean a mechanic formation of the subject; it only ekes out an appropriate field of possibilities where technologies of the relation to self operate towards subject formation. These technologies „*permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being...*“ (ibid.). In other words, they enable selves to differ, transgress, mutate and resist. To better understand this relative freedom of subject formation, Foucault turns from 1980s on to the Antiquity and scrutinizes historically particular aesthetics, ethics and techniques of existence, skills or arts of living which one cultivates, acquires, reflects, masters, changes and styles around how to live and govern oneself/others (e.g. Foucault 2001, 2005). Late Foucault asks “*what modes of subjectivation are articulated with forms of the government of men, either in order to resist them or to inhabit them?*” (paraphrased by Frédéric Gros in Foucault 2011: 350) It

3 Although first translations of Foucault's *asujettissement* stress predominantly the level of technology of government by using the term “subjugation” and “to subjugate”, Paul Rabinow opts for a neologism “subjectivation” and “to subjectivate” which better captures the formation of subject in the contact zone of interdependent relation between governing self and others (Rabinow and Foucault 1997: XLIV).

is precisely this dimension of aesthetics, ethics, and techniques of life in modes of subjectivation, which enlarges as well as enables to guide oneself through the field of possibilities of subjects to conduct oneself and others in ways deflecting somehow from reprinting to oneself a complete set of rules and forms of actually existing government.

There is a correlation between the historically particular modes of governmentality and revolts of conduct appropriate to them, which Foucault terms insurrections of conduct or counter-conduct (Foucault 2007). As Arnold I. Davidson points out „*Conduct and counter-conduct share a series of elements that can be utilized and reutilized, reimplanted, reinserted, taken up in the direction of reinforcing a certain mode of conduct or of creating and recreating a type of counter-conduct*“ (Davidson 2011: 27). These revolts are of conduct and as such they differ from political rebellions against sovereign power as well as economic rebellions driven for example by hunger. Nevertheless, Foucault admits that counter-conducts “*are always, or almost always, linked to other conflicts and problems*” (2007: 261) from an economic and/or a political sphere. Revolts of conduct such as protestant ethic in the Middle ages, army desertion, or different forms of political dissidence are forged „*with an aspect of the pursuit of a different form of conduct: to be led differently, by other men, and towards other objectives than those proposed by the apparent and visible official governmentality of society.*“ (2007: 265) “*They are [as well] movements,*” Foucault stresses “*that also seek, possibly at any rate, to escape direction by others and to define the way for each to conduct himself.*” Different subjects are formed in a counter-conduct – not purified from power, not external to it, but not the same as subjects formed through a dominant conduct.

Concerning Michel Foucault for the anthropology of resistance and subjectivity, his inspiration differs from the Gramscian or Scottian approach as it is summed up by John Gledhill: „...*Foucault has led us... towards a more complex account in which 'resistance' can be recognized but its effects on power relations more subtly diagnosed*“ (2012: 7).

Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson understand resistance as an „*experience that constructs and reconstructs the identity of subjects*“ (1997: 19). The forms of power are understood as making individual subjects by „*categorizing the individual, marking him by his own individuality, attaching him to his own identity*“ (1997: 20). Within this setting, resistance as experience produces effects, which may either transform, reconfirm, or even strengthen the existing identities of subjects. But what is resistance and what is not, remains unclear since what matters and differs are the effects produced by the resisting experience.

Saba Mahmood discusses the latter problem and criticizes the „*teleology of progressive politics on the analytics of power*“ (2005: 9) typical for post-structuralist feminism (see Abu-Lughod 1990). The liberal self is switched into a liberatory self where resistance is understood „*as to be free from relations of subordination*“ and through „*the narrative of subversion and reinscription of [dominating] norms*“ with freedom being naturalized *telos* and universal desire (2005: 10, 29). Resistance is anchored here in liberatory cosmology and thus reduced to mean opposing norms in order to be liberated. This is only a historically particular understanding which bypasses many more practices and meanings of resistance in different settings. Therefore, Mahmood's task is to move resistance beyond liberatory universalism and forge conceptual tools which are capable of embracing particular conditions

and meanings of resisting acts. Ten years after Sherry Ortner, Saba Mahmood repeats the call for an ethnographically informed, local, and contextual understanding of resistance.

In search for different analytics, Mahmood turns to Foucauldian subject formations where „*agentival capacity is entailed not only in those acts that resist norms but also in the multiple ways in which one inhabits norms.*“ (2005: 15) This fundamental switch from the subject resisting domination to productive and creative subject formations in resistance allows us „*to conceptualize agency not simply as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action that specific relations of subordination create and enable.*“ (2005: 18) Such perspective strips resistance of the only automatic, predictable and thus boring answer to the question of relationship to the norms, which may as well be welcomed, inhabited, driven at, lived, etc. From the other side, one can resist not only by opposing norms but by inhabiting them as in the Mahmood's ethnographic case. The move from the resisting subjectivity to subject formations in resistance opens doors for the studies of variable actions such as surviving, suffering, collaborating, being apathetic, resignating, self-blaming, etc. in complex connections to resistance and protest – all depending on the particular setting of ethnographic cases. Mahmood's turn is capable of answering Ortner's call for „*appreciating ways in which resistance can be more than opposition... [and is sensitive to] the multiplicity of projects in which social beings are always engaged*“ (1995: 191).

2.3 Towards Anthropology of Protest and Social Movement

In the 1990s the anthropology of resistance was going through a crisis. The

concept of resistance itself which was on fire in the 1980s came instead under fire – for meaning everything and nothing, for being over-used and over-generalized (e.g. Brown 1996, Gupta and Ferguson 1997), for not being properly documented ethnographically and being presented too „sanitized“ and at the expense of complexity (Ortner 1995), or for being romanticized, exoticized, pathologized (Abu-Lughod 1990, Theodossopoulos 2014).

One of the key scholars struggling to resuscitate it with a second breath was Arturo Escobar. His early call (1992) repeated twenty years later by John Gledhill (2012) to focus on „*more organized forms of collective action or social movements*“ (1992: 399) challenges the discipline. A courting between anthropology and open protest started – so when huge alter-globalization clashes emerged during the millennial turn and the 2011 revolts a decade later, there were many young anthropologists nearby and within ready to study them. Whereas the Foucauldian turn moves from the subject resisting domination to subject formation in resistance, the focus on social movements is another way to guide anthropology out of the crisis of all-encompassing resistance – this time towards the studies of protest which define the contemporary anthropology of resistance.

Arturo Escobar elaborated the concept of collective identity borrowing it from the sociological theories of new social movements (e.g. Edelman 2001, Fominaya 2010) and emphasizing „*cultural struggles over meanings as much as over socio-economic conditions*“ (Escobar 1992: 412, Alvarez, Dagnino and Escobar 1998, Escobar & Alvarez 1992). In the proliferation of cultural-political identities in the 1990s, the production of difference and the process of articulation were crucial. The new collective subjects were constructed through the politicization of difference, so called alterization – as was the case

with *comunidades negras* in Pacific Colombia (Escobar 2007, 2008). Crystallization of these communities as distinct political subjects bounds a new singular identity defined in ethnic terms with collectivity and enables „*activists unambiguously describe their actions in terms of the right to cultural difference and to a black or indigenous identity*“ (2008: 10). The political identity is constructed through the practices of articulation. When certain discursive conditions are met, new identity regimes emerge through partial fixation of meanings and identities around particular nodal points such as cultural rights, autonomy, and difference as in the case of Escobar's research.

Arturo Escobar forged the analytical tools of the emerging anthropology of protest on a rather classical anthropological object of inquiry – the marginalized, subaltern community in the rural area of global periphery. With alter-globalization protests hitting the stage in Seattle 1999, Prague 2000, and Genoa 2001, an ethnographic focus spills over towards urban centres where white middle class youth prevail, although not exclusively. With this extension, the researched politics of difference changes fundamentally its quality followed by a revision and resurgence of the conceptual apparatus. In Escobar's community, one single issue and identity were politicized through alteration. In the alter-globalization movement „*no one unity [is] applied to all movement actors, no single vision/goal, no single adversary, no single identity [is] shared by all movement actors*“ (Maeckelbergh 2009: 7). The driving engine of this “movement of movements” is its capability of embracing all the differences. What is seen is the „*transformation of difference as division into difference as unity*“ (2009: 20, Juris 2008).

This is echoed most compactly in one of the movement's key reflections in

political philosophy and revolutionary theory – in Hardt's and Negri's concept of multitude. Multitude as an emerging collective subject of change is imbued with multiple vectors of differences – be it around gender, class, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, styles of life, opinions, values, desires, beliefs, forms of labor, etc. The power as much as the task of a multitude does not lie in unifying these multiplicities, but in an effort „*to manage to communicate and act in common while remaining internally different*“ (2004: xiv). One can see that some issues from Gramscian debates take another breath here. Understanding the politics of identity as a discursive articulation of difference opens again doors for readdressing counter-hegemonic issues of ideology, knowledge, and consciousness. Moreover, the question of a collective subject of change comes back to life after being derailed with devolution from the Marxian subject to Foucauldian subject formation (e.g. Graeber and Shuakatis 2007: 24). Practices, commons, and designs become crucial, because in the multitude „*the democratic elements... are pushed further in the network form, and the organization becomes less a means and more an end in itself.*“ (Hardt and Negri 2004: 83) The change does not come with seizing the power of the state in the future, but with practicing radical, horizontal democracy in the networks of multitude here and now. The question of *who* is the revolutionary subject is extended and reconfigured into *how* is the subject of change since „*ideology of anti-globalization movement,*“ as David Graeber states „*is embedded in its practice*“ (2009: 10-11). Ideology moves from the consciousness to the level of prefigurative action.

2.4 Prefiguration and Anthropology

Developed as a political strategy in the civil rights movement in the 1960s

and spreading within the autonomous movement of the 1980s, prefiguration reaches the world scale with the alter-globalization movement, respectively with many 2011 revolts. Prefiguration is a political strategy, within which social movements and people put right here and now in the practice of administrating of selves, protests, decision-making processes, infrastructures emancipatory principles of revolutionized world (world “after” the Revolution). As Marianne Maeckelbergh points out, there are two crucial steps in the prefigurative process: *„One is the step of challenging and confronting current political structures and the other is constructing alternative structures to take their place.”* (2011:14)

Even though studied from different entry points, the dominant perspective in the anthropology of prefiguration is what Juris calls a ‘practice-based approach’ (Juris 2008: 11) that focuses predominantly on analyzing either practices of direct democracy, horizontal decision-making processes such as consensus, community building, decentralize organizing, direct action planning, logics of networking, and aggregation (Graeber 2009, 2013; Juris 2008, 2012; Maeckelberg 2009, 2011, 2012), or, to a lesser extent, practices of confrontation and conflict (Krøijer 2010; Scholl 2012; Starr, Fernandez and Scholl 2011). Practices matter. Subjectivities in prefiguration are mostly of the secondary interest. Nevertheless, variable conceptualizations of the latter emerge as well.

Apparently, new subjectivities are supposed to blossom in prefiguration as one of its political outcomes. Jeffrey Juris (2008) detects an important role of networks in alter-globalization protests. Networks became its foreseen and practiced political ideal resonating with anarchist-inspired principles of global justice movements such as self-government, autonomy, diversity,

horizontality, or free flow of information. Moreover, so called “networking subjectivity” was produced in the movement on the intersection of its norms, forms, and technologies. Both Jeffrey Juris and Marianne Maeckelberg see alter-globalization subjectivities as constituting collective actors through communication and coordination. Juris stresses their constitution according to the logic of networking and Maeckelberg (2009) is interested in the agency of the alter-globalization movement as composed of merging and connecting between divisible parts of people and collective agents – that is as stemming out of the communicative connectivity of the collectives where agents are understood divisible and complex rather than as a result of individual actions. Prefigurative subjectivity is not produced only in building alternatives, but as well through practices of confrontation. Stine Krøijer (2010) detects the synchronicity and bodily affect of activists emerging in temporal moments of street interactions with the police such as riots or kettle where activists become one moving organ or as she puts it “*one body acting together*” (2010: 144). Such compressed “*bodily figurations of the future*” transform “*the experiential state of the body, [its] bodily form and state of vitality*” (2010: 147) through intensification and synchronization of collectively distributed affects such as mutual solidarity, strength, horizontality, rage, hope, and freedom.

The networking focus differentiates alter-globalization subjectivities from community building subjectivities evolving around the 2011 movements. The first emerged out of several days of intensive protests and the latter was forged during weeks of occupation when alternative ethics, aesthetics, politics, and logistics in temporal utopian communities were established and maintained in occupied public spaces (see Juris 2012). As Werbner, Webb

and Spellman-Poots highlight such „*emergent collectivities transcended their social heterogeneity through a shared aesthetic, and through everyday practices of living together, maintaining hygiene and clinics, cleaning rubbish, sharing food, endless talk and joyful celebrations*“ (2014: 7).

The processes generating prefigurative and other forms of life are loaded with vibrant and intense affects such as feelings of *communitas* (despite or due to diversity), freedom, effervescence, trust, love, as much as they enable practicing and reimagining other forms of sociality. Jeffrey Juris uses the term „*affective solidarity*“ to describe the corporeal glue through which occupy camps stick together and new people are easily attracted to the protests and cultivate their belonging. Asli Zengin notices on the example of in Gezi park in Istanbul that “*sensorial conditionings*” of participants shifted within “*an affective and intimate economy of encounters, touches, and dialogues that have opened bodies and lives to new, unpredictable becomings*“ (2013). While erupting and in their initial phase, these protests generate landscape of strong and pleasant affects with such intensity that people connect through them to the concrete cause, to broader ideas such as radical democracy, to occupied space and to each other and even decide *en masse* to live in occupied camps or return there on a daily basis.

The global justice protests were largely organized as solidarity parties of the global north with poor parts of the global south. In the 2011 occupations, however, many of the northern activists discovered that unemployment, precarity and crisis hit their own lives with full force. Misery became direct experience for them and not only imaginary description for the long-distance problems of others. It is precisely this so called „subjective turn“ (Razsa 2013) from solidarity with others to „*the radicalization of personal*

experience“ (ibid.) which drives people from Occupy Slovenia towards collective efforts to become otherwise and towards “*forms of open-ended subject making that are embedded in and constitutive of collective struggle*“ (Razsa and Kurnik 2012: 241). People researched by Razsa and Kurnik meet each other in networks of Direct Social Work and embark on the process of subject remaking via intersubjective understanding of shared experiences and in direction to direct democracy. Direct democracy is understood here not as a prefiguration but as lived experience of a never-ending liberation struggle – a process of becoming with the capacity to transform oneself and others, to cultivate selves as different kinds of subjects, to be ready to confront one's conditions of living etc.

Emerging collective subjectivities in transnational networks of protest are imbued with many differences from age, race, gender, to geopolitical origin, communicative skills and class – particular movements differ in approaching them. To shed analytical light on them enables anthropologists to ask the old question of complexity, ambivalence and inner differences in protest in a new way. Dominated mostly by white middle class urban youth, the problem of differences wasn't such urging in global justice movements, although existed. As Juris et al. point out, there were movements „*powerful networking ethic of coordination across diversity and difference* [which]...*allowed them to grasp internal differentiation*“ (Juris et al. 2012: 436, Juris 2013). On the other side, even though presented as the unified „99%“, there are internal differences and exclusions in the Occupy movement leading Juris et al. to accentuate on the example of Occupy Boston how relationships, positions, and identities are soaked with unequal power relations and as such constantly contested and negotiated. A different organizational logic of aggregation made it more

difficult to even recognize and address internal inequalities in Occupy, not to mention to overcome them and to be more accessible for working-class people and communities of color (for an example of internal conflicts in a rather classical setting of rural communities see Gledhill 2014).

As the affects in the prefigurative protests of Europe and North America are conceptualized mostly through the lenses of pleasant emotions, other protests such as the Arab Spring or the Gezi park demonstrations in Turkey invite scholars to thematize rather uncomfortable affects such as fear, pain, suffering, sorrow or grievance as well as the earthly fragility of the body. Occupied public spaces like Gezi park in Istanbul or “midan” in Cairo brought together many profound and long-term neglected grievances of all kinds and from different groups of people. As Judith Butler (2009) emphasizes there are power-loaded divisions in the world around the question of whose lives are grievable with personal stories, media attention, and proper investigation and whose lives won't be transformed into the statistical registers of dead. Under one of the claims “to be present- to exist”, the Gezi resistance managed to provide *„the visibility of those whose lives aren't grievable“* (Gambetti 2013). Moreover, protests are meetings with tear gas, rubber or metal bullets, clubs, thugs, violence, stampede, exhaustion, adrenaline, paranoia, torture, wounds, chaos, mourning, masculine pride, risk, determination, caution or danger. Violent encounters with police and thugs in and around Cairo's „midan“ are intimate contacts of bodies with clubs bludgeoning them and thus coproduce new socio-political and corporeal modalities of subjects in the revolution. The Egyptian state directly inscribed their opinion on the revolution into protester's bodies through harassment, injuries, rapes, tortures, killings, and physical liquidations. With people being

violently annihilated during protests, the question of life and death is brought up in the protests and open to reconfiguration. Ayse Parla (2013) notices a paradox on the example of the Gezi park protests – on the background of dying and death bodies and while exposing fragility of the bodies facing armored vehicles, protesters reinforced their faith in their own invincibility, which was necessary for them to keep or strengthen their commitment to struggle. This may be connected to the issue of martyrdom heavily presented in Egypt where living after death emerged on a large scale as dead bodies were transformed into post-visceral figures of martyrs. As Werbner, Webb, and Spellman-Poots point out „*mourning of the dead in the Arab spring uprisings became key moments of solidarity*“ (2014: 8).

Subjectivity emerged throughout the historical development of anthropology of resistance in various conceptual grids. Considering my own research, the task is not to stick to one of the above-presented conceptual schools while ignoring other ones, but to activate the problems and concepts out of them which are suitable for the analysis of my ethnographic material. The aim is to get them into epistemological interaction over the amoebic self and political versatility with the concepts of distributed, dividual and assemblatic self developed outside of anthropology of resistance.

Although anthropology of resistance is not interested *per se* in how to advance towards the revolution, it seems to me that its research interests are influenced by changes in political debates about the revolution. Therefore, the Marxist question built into the first debates of the anthropology of resistance

about *who* the revolutionary subject is, was extended and transformed in later anthropology into *how* to advance towards the revolution with the prefiguration being an example. This change frees the collective subjectivity from the Marxist eschatology and enables to ethnographically document and analyze with different conceptual tools various political collectivities in their formations, becomings, and practices. Moreover, the collectivity is no self-evident – to the contrary, as it strives to emerge and exist, it also dissipates. Therefore, it is possible to scrutinize the process of becoming a collective and capture self and subjectivity as floating between individuality and collectivity. Moving beyond Marxist eschatology, desperately searching for the revolutionary subject anywhere “at the bottom”, is further supported by the shift from the focus on the marginalized others in the rural peripheries in the “study up” debate (Nader 1972, Gusterson 1997, Ortner 2010, Kurik 2013). The studies of subalterns in resistance were reoriented from the millennial turn on to studies of protest practices like those of the alter-globalization movement where urban middle class youth prevailed. This extension embracing politically active youth from geopolitical centres converged resistance with more particular meanings of organized protest.

My research intends to shift, or, better, switch the accent, and conceptualize primarily an emerging self around prefiguration. Moreover, considering two pillars of prefiguration according to Maeckelbergh (2011), the research of amoebas leans away from constructing alternatives to interest in confrontation. To be more precise, I capture the self of militant activists in contemporary Germany, who build their resistance on the top of a prefigurative infrastructure established by older, autonomous movement, but sprout from it to a public sphere and neighborhoods to communicate, even via

confrontations, their political messages. Although the prefigurative protest in Europe and USA is portrayed usually as imbued with pleasant affects, rioting amoebas are far away from it, facing fear and experiencing pain in the streets. Furthermore, the research interest extension beyond subaltern peasants may have consequences for anthropological studies of hegemony elaborated originally on examples from the classical setting like Scott's Sedaka village in Malaysia. Urban, young and many times well-educated activists from the middle class milieu of the "global North" invite scholars to ethnographically reevaluate notions on hegemony and above all counter-hegemony as studied classically for example by Arturo Escobar with his focus on discursive articulation, partial fixation of meaning, and politics of difference. Moreover, this may be widened with corporeal studies as Jon Beasley-Murray opened the door for bodies, habits, and affects to matter aside from ideology, knowledge, discourse in securing the hegemony.

Bourdieuian sociology dominated my research questions in the beginning. Well trained by my supervisor Yasar Abu Ghosh in Bourdieusian thinking, I wanted to disentangle the middle-classness of young activist habitus in Germany as standing in their lifetime on the crossroad of social reproduction and possible trajectories. But as time passed by, I developed closer and closer attachment to the work of Michel Foucault which culminated during my 2013/2014 stay at UCLA where I discussed his work and partial findings and conclusions from my research with anthropologists such as Sherry B. Ortner, Akhil Gupta or Chris Kelty. I arrived to UCLA as a Bourdieusian apprentice with a Foucauldian overlap and returned as a Foucauldian apprentice with a Bourdieusian overlap. Generally speaking, I wanted to stay practice-oriented, but I moved beyond post-Marxist sociology perfected by Pierre Bourdieu

towards an anthropology analyzing resistance-power-subject beyond the specific notion of domination, exploitation, misrecognition, class and capitals, and Foucault was the choice. Apart from this general epistemological reorientation, when re-analyzing the research with Foucault I discovered that his concepts, analysis of the West and ways of posing problems actually help me to get interesting insights into the research, to see unexpected relations, and to interpret the revolutionary amoebas in better way. Although the dissertation presents only one part of the research with several Foucauldian findings left behind, it is still tightly anchored in Foucauldian concepts and post-Foucauldian thinking.

First of all is the Foucauldian connection between the self formed through practices, procedures and techniques. As it is argued in the next chapter, Foucault provides very interesting and insightful conceptualizations of revolutions through lives, techniques, ethics and aesthetics of revolutionaries. Whereas Foucault analyses the techniques of subjectivation on the contact zone between the technologies of self and technologies of power, my dissertation enters this zone prevalently from the site of the self and its techniques and touches the contemporary mechanisms of power shaping amoebas only remotely.⁴ Moreover, Michel Foucault understands life as a journey through which one navigates oneself with proper techniques, that is as an art to be cultivated, apprenticed, and mastered. As such it is opened to various research strategies. I decided not to focus primarily on the process of appreciation, learning, and acquiring particular techniques. Instead, the task I set for myself was to present an ethnographic crosscut and spanning of techniques of the amoebic self, grasped mainly in their acquired way (with

4 Narrowing the dissertation to this particular focus, some Foucauldian issues tackled in my research such as contemporary technologies of policing revolutionaries are left untouched and elaborated elsewhere (Kurik and Stieber 2015).

several exceptions as seen for example in chapters 5 or 8). Furthermore, these techniques are understood after Mahmood as the techniques of resistance constituting amoebic self and endowing it with capacities to protest. Finally, resistance is anchored in power and the anthropologist's task is to disentangle and ethnographically document the particularities of this anchorage and capture contemporary arts of life and self in resistance.

As I show in the next chapter, Foucault in his later work got interested in studying arts of life and techniques of self on an example of modern revolutionaries. It is as well his proposals on how to study revolutions which guided me towards my research question (see page 14), my interest in a recent history of revolutionary selves in Germany (see the next chapter) and the ethnographic interest in the emerging self of revolutionaries and techniques of resistance in the contemporary Germany (see from chapter 4 on).

Due to a content sensitivity, the author requested a concealment of this dissertation part.

Conclusion

Revolutionary amoebas in contemporary Germany dispose of their versatile self which moves forward by changing shapes with appropriate techniques of resistance. The amoebic self redistributes and reassembles oneself on four axis of political versatility which circumscribe the spanning of the amoebic action radius. In the dissertation, I focused mostly on documenting poles of these axis.

First, amoebic youngsters communicate the revolutionary message discursively, as well as beyond the discourse – with riots and direct actions. Political versatility on this axis implies re-assembling different human-material as well as whole-part relations, capacities to act, and techniques and skills of resistance into different shapes of communication. To be more precise, the amoebic toolbox of arguments ranges from talks to riots.

Second, the amoebic self comprises of different corporeal registers – that is, it ranges from the indolent body to the seditious and disobedient body. The indolent body is dominated by the discourse production, the contemplative separation between words and deeds, and by an effort to keep and maintain

the body in a temperate state. On the other hand, the disobedient corporeal pole, termed the seditious body, operates through a so called rioting sixth sense and entails a different kinetic modus. This sense strives to keep and maintain the fragile balance among different dexterities, techniques, and senses such as the sense for situation, one's place in it, the vigilance, the combination of evaluation through body and discourse, and the particular economy of affects such as fear.

Third, amoebic shapes range on the axis between individuality as a unit and collectivity as a unit. From one side, the researched rebellious youngsters are shaped as individuals, clipped to one physical body with an appropriate legal name and a documented civil ID when they are politically active as voters or when they are processed as graded and certified students in the structures of official education. From the other side, amoebas are reassembled and redistributed through multi-layered techniques of adjustment as a collective body, such as an affinity group or a Black bloc, which becomes a new kind of unity beyond an individual body. This third axis reveals the amoebic militants to be divisible into different units – from their individual bodies, via tandems and affinity groups, to bigger organs, alliances, and confederations of a Black bloc.

Fourth, the appearance of contemporary revolutionary youth constitutes the last axis of political versatility and is circumscribed by two poles, casual and masked. Around one pole, the revolutionary amoebas appear casually, indistinguishable from their fellow citizens and mostly resigning on the discriminative visage of music subcultures like punk or hardcore. Around the other pole, they appear masked in a Black bloc, indistinguishable from fellow rioters and striving to be stripped off any individualizing elements.

The research focused mostly on the pole frontiers indicating that combinations of amoebic shapes are multiple but not unlimited. Moreover, these poles of four horizontal axis tend to correlate with each other vertically and stabilize the amoebas in these borderline shapes – that is on one side the amoebic shape tends to be composed of discursive communication connected to the indolent body of casually looking individuals, and from the other side the amoebic entity tends to be shaped as a collective, masked, and seditious body communicating beyond discourse. The correlations, however, are only tendencies, because different axis combinations such as discursive communication of the seditious body occur as well.

One part of my argument has a historical layer, since I try to show that revolutionary amoebas are the contemporary variation of the militant self for post-autonomous times, and is different from older variations of the militant self in Germany such as was the Marxist-Leninist, New Left, or urban guerilla self. As the term “post-autonomous” indicates, amoebic youngsters are rooted in and somehow close to the autonomous politics which, however, they managed to transgress. Capturing differences rather in a language of simplistic tendencies, how does the post-autonomous self differ from the autonomous self? The autonomous self tends to be in daily life a militant and angry troublemaker with tattoos, piercings, and dreadlocks, from squat and dressed in black. To the contrary, one mostly cannot distinguish a post-autonomous self from a student at first glance – stripped of subcultural signs, s/he wears colourful clothing, eats from time to time at McDonald’s, and only when it is tactically appropriate, these students reassemble into the shapes of a masked collective body of the Black bloc and riot. An autonomous person tends to despise systematic intellectual work and prefers unambiguously

politics of practice. A post-autonomous revolutionary strives to be skilled in discursive argumentation, theoretical work and talks people outside the scene over to the revolution. Whereas an *Autonom* tends to refuse everything from the 'system' – be it outside the world or inside themselves, the *Post-Autonom* tends to reorientate their anchorage in the 'system', including the state resources towards the revolutionary struggle and fighting the very same 'system'. After all, the post-autonomous attitude towards resources proved to be problematic mostly for the state. Therefore, the former Minister for family affairs, senior citizens, women, and youth, Kristina Schröder even initiated in 2011 so called *Extremismusklausur* – a loyalty to the Constitution form, which had to be signed when one applied for state money in e.g. anti-racist, anti-fascist sphere of work. Nevertheless, this clause didn't take hold and was cancelled in 2014.

On the other side, there are many resemblances in particular techniques of resistance of amoebas with older militant subjects – mostly with the New Left and autonomous self. With the New Left, amoebic youngsters share the scepticism towards organizing the struggle through party politics or towards the working class as the revolutionary subject. Moreover, contemporary militants tend as well to be skilled in abstract discourses backed up in thoughts of intellectuals like Karl Marx or Antonio Gramsci as radical students from 1960s as much as they consider universities to be one of the spaces of struggles. Amoebas combine this *Außerparlamentarische* Marxism of discourses with several tactics, practices, techniques of resistance and styles of life stemming from the autonomous movement, although it is upgraded for the post-autonomous times. First of all, they are connected to the autonomous and prefigurative infrastructure of centres, bars, info-shops,

housing projects, as well as they consider relevant to emancipate oneself here and now in everyday life in questions like polyamory or gender relations, but on the other side this is not a sufficient goal for the amoebic militants, who strive to distribute the prefiguration beyond the scene infrastructure. Furthermore, versatile rebels take over and evolve autonomous techniques of resistance like affinity groups, direct actions, riots or a Black bloc, but considering the latter, they rather use as a post-autonomous tactic than autonomous lifestylism.

Through the perspective of genealogical tracks of these particular practices of resistance, ecclesiastic amoebas epitomize a historical *mélange*. What makes them unique is the amoebic way of reassembling selves throughout these practices into different political shapes as they are distributed in spans demarcated by the poles of those four axis of political versatility. When revolutionary amoebas change their shapes while moving forward, then one of the crucial techniques of resistance turns out to be the technique of switching among shapes, which actually enables the moving. The flagship switch takes place when the amoebas dis/appear as a Black bloc – not only because it ruffles all the axis, but because it reveals most clearly the switching to be the technique for amoebic movement in a political terrain encompassing activities of the researched youngsters considered legal as well as illegal. The switching technique increases the possibility to keep the disconnected unrecognisable and non-documented collective body of a Black bloc from the civil ID of an individualized body. In other words, the art of switching mitigates a risk to be traceable, captured, punishable, and increases a possibility for revolutionary youth in West Germany to perpetuate operating and being politically active by more means, in more shapes and on more

fronts.

Considering anthropological theory in the dissertation, my area of reference was anthropology of resistance and protest, particularly in a connection to subjectivity and self. Whereas, generally speaking, the conceptual task was to challenge if and how my own research communicates with the paradigmatic approaches to subjectivity in the sub-discipline of anthropology, the conceptual backbone of my analysis lies in the analytical grid of Michel Foucault mixed with concepts of distributive, assemblatic and divisible self, which appear to me to be very promising for anthropology of resistance in emergent times.

Michel Foucault understood and analysed subjectivity as made through procedures, techniques, and practices in the contact zone between technologies of power and technologies of self. While in the second half of the 1970s, he tackled the zone mostly from the former with researches on disciplinary power, in the first half of 1980s he approached the problem from the latter as he was interested in aesthetics, ethics, dramatics, techniques of self in the Antiquity and early Christianity. It was in the 1980s when he reformulated the question about revolution to the question of revolutionary self. It is precisely here, where my own research enters to the Foucauldian conceptual toolkit and from where I tried to analyse with ethnographic means what kind of self and techniques of resistance one tends to acquire in contemporary (Western) Germany, when one wraps their life around the revolution. And it was discovered that post-autonomous youngsters acquire the so called amoebic self, which moves by redistributing and reassembling oneself – that is by changing shapes on a scale of political versatility designated by four axis. Therefore, the amoebic self of revolutionary youth is

best understood as the distributive, assemblatic, and divisible self. This is where Michel Foucault meets Alfred Gell, Jane Bennett, Marilyn Strathern, or Gilles Deleuze in my research as the latter provides tools to analyse the contemporary variation of the revolutionary self conceptually and historically outlined by the former.

Although the German militants are largely approached throughout the dissertation via the techniques of self, their amoebic way of life is unravelled as well as produced on the interface with technologies of power – be it their indolent body as disciplined through schooling to an obedient body; their singular body as individualized at universities or in elections and co-produced as individuality with a legal name and documented certificates; their productivity as being disciplined to deliver a lot of political work; their talking heads and writing hands as advocating the revolution when guaranteed freedom of speech or as seeking public funds in ordoliberal Germany; their almost marketing and PR attitude as entering the war of pictures and communicating the political message. For Foucault, resistance was not outside of and in automatic opposition to power. This notion was later elaborated ethnographically by Saba Mahmood (2005) who criticized the founding understanding of a subject in anthropology of resistance as a subject resisting domination for being embedded in liberatory cosmology, where resistance automatically means opposing norms and power means domination. Instead, Mahmood called for ethnographic studies of resistance in particular local settings, where it can mean something very different – including as in the case of her research inhibiting norms. In this sense, the particular anchorage of the amoebic subjectivity in the contemporary set of power mechanism strives to document the local relations of power and

resistance beyond presumptions of externality, opposition or the subject resisting domination. The anti-capitalist amoebas provide the actual ethnographic example of ways how protest is embedded in advanced liberalism. As examples from my research of discipline, productivity or state funding reorientations towards the struggle indicate, the emerging architecture of relations between resistance and power resembles rather reorientations than externalities.

Furthermore, ethnographically documenting the amoebic self as a contemporary variation of a revolutionary self sheds interesting light on the question of the revolutionary subject of change, which accompanies anthropology of resistance from its very beginning. First, James C. Scott opposed with ethnographic means the dominant explanation at that time of non-existence of this subject because of hegemony. His peasants from Sedaka did have agency – but instead of becoming the revolutionary subject in an open struggle, they turned to covert and everyday forms of resistance. Then, Arturo Escobar transformed the studies of non-existence of the subject of change, everyday resistance and hegemony into ethnographic studies of an organized protest and counter-hegemony documenting how *comunidades negras* emerged in Pacific Columbia as a new identity regime in practices of discursive articulation and partial fixations of meaning. Then the generation of ethnographers of urban protests came, like David Graeber, Jeffrey Juris, or Marianne Maekelbergh, who stopped analysing the classical revolutionary or anthropological subject of the marginalized communities and people (be it proletariat, peasants, subalterns) and shifted the attention to urban middle class youth. Moreover, with them, the anthropology of prefiguration emerged transforming the question about who the subject of change is into practices of

how to proceed the change. It is within this development of the question, where my research of the versatile self of amoebic revolutionaries from Germany may resonate.

First of all, since the amoebic self is comprehensible through techniques and practices of resistance, the dissertation extends the research interest of dominating “how-practices” back to the question of subjectivity, subject, and self. Practices of resistance remain important but as a composing self. Moreover, the amoebic body of human-nonhuman collectives in assemblatic riots invites to anthropologically analyze the old issue of a collective agency in protests beyond revolutionary eschatology of Marxists and beyond the desperate search of the collective subject of change. Focusing rather on an ethnographic documentation of protesting collectivity or agency in protests than the revolutionary theory of change, it was unveiled that agency emerges in riots rather as a quality of the whole assemblage and situation, which is redistributed on various levels, shaping different collective entities with proper agential capacities – be it affinity groups, tandems, ad hoc clusters of rioters, Black blocs. In other words, there are nodes like affinity groups with a proper capacity to act, which stream through swarming riots with assemblatic agency of its own. Furthermore, the former refers to the agency understood by Saba Mahmood as a capacity to act when she argues for a conceptual transition from a subject resisting domination to the subject formation in resistance. Amoebic bodies augment and distribute their capacity while they are forming themselves into human-material coalitions of particular shapes – be it a rioting group throwing stones, building barricades, protecting itself with gas-masks or an individual spreading words and circulating leaflets. Besides, there may be a tension in anthropology of resistance between the

subject understood as a collective and the subject understood as one person. The research of versatile individuals avoids and overcomes this dilemma by ethnographically documenting both, and amoebic self as leaking between them. As I showed, amoebas are formed as individualized shapes with one physical body being an unit as much as they are formed as group shapes transgressing individuality into the forms of collectivity constituting a unit. Finally, the amoebic self research ethnographically tackles the issue of hegemony, counter-hegemony, and the world of discourses and ideas, which seems to be rather in a defensive position. After all, Jon Beasley-Murray is one of the scholars introducing the term post-hegemony, which prefers affects and habits over ideas and active consent in explaining how social order is secured. Does that mean that the world of ideas is not important anymore? It is argued in the dissertation that discourses remain relevant in protests and instead of either-or and general claims about which component secures the order more and/or make protest relevant or irrelevant, it is more challenging to ethnographically track the discourses gravitating around resistance in particular local contexts beyond their exaggeration and underestimation. As being educated at universities mostly in social sciences, criticizing anti-intellectualism of *Autonomen* and coming from the middle class and from Germany self-promoted as *Land der Ideen*, amoebic youngsters believe in the power of words. Post-autonomous militants communicate in a Habermasian public sphere talking people over to the revolution and enter the counter-hegemonic struggle, striving to spread the message of critique and a revolutionary alternative. However, counter-hegemonic discourses are many times invisible or considered not worth taking into account, not to mention the power inequalities of a public sphere. Therefore, amoebas change the shape of

communication, acquire seditious and disobedient bodies with different affective and kinetic registers, and argue as well beyond the discourse through direct actions and riots in the streets. Riots are then transformed into a discursivity as an articulated political message to be circulated in a public sphere.

What entails to be a revolutionary changes in time and space and requires various techniques and skills of resistance and different self – from an agitator among workers skilled in the rhetoric art, via a bomb-throwing anarchist dexterous in explosive making, rural partisan knowing the terrain very well, to a revolutionary student from the 1960s making one's life a locus of a prefigurative change. Moreover, a revolutionary life is timely and spatially variable considering the issue of risk. As Michel Foucault described, the modern revolutionary faced the risk of death when they were fighting for a better world. What does it mean nowadays in post-revolutionary Europe at the threshold of 21st century to be a revolutionary, and what kind of risk does it bear? I studied this question on the example of contemporary revolutionary youth from (Western) Germany and discovered that these militant youngsters avoid the risk of dying or either-or question of life and instead they are embedded in a sort of a revolutionary pragmatism of post-revolutionary times where the risk is moderated and mitigated. This is visible in the amoebic self these post-autonomous rebels acquire. Amoebas move forward by changing their political shapes and in order to do so, they cultivate the technique of

switching, which is especially important when dis/appearing as a Black bloc. With this technique, the versatile militants strive to keep separated their individual, talking, and casually looking shape with the indolent body from their masked and collective shape with the seditious and rioting body. This increases the security and the anonymity of the latter and enables the amoebas from a longer-term perspective to perpetuate fighting – on one side beyond the defeatism and resignation on revolutionary politics, but on the other side beyond the heroic optimism and victorious illusion.

It is precisely this amoebic character of post-autonomous youngsters which mitigates the risk of being captured and imprisoned and enables them to perpetuate and continue what they do in more shapes and on more fronts. Amoebic life avoids either-or questions concerning the revolutionary path. This distinguishes the contemporary *Post-Automen* from a one way road to illegality known from the RAF times. If the revolution is still postponed a couple of years or even decades, the amoebas tired or incapable of shaping can rest and take a deep breath while they are living their comfortable lives. Their back up doors remain open.

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