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Talking the Walk: Speech Acts and Resistance in Authoritarian Regimes

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Repressive states distort patterns of communication and association that are the basis of mobilization in Western democracies. Models of mobilization based on Western cases take for granted communication among social movement participants, but in authoritarian states free communication and dissemination of political information are not only highly problematic but also carry risks such as interrogation, arrest, blacklisting, and imprisonment. Increased risk combines with the constrained patterns of social organization characteristic of authoritarianism, such as the one-party state and its colonization of daily life, to give rise to innovative oppositional adaptations. At the heart of these adaptations is the centrality of talk as political resistance.

Following Scott's analysis (1985, 1990) of how subordinated populations challenge authority and the work of scholars who have elaborated the role of free spaces in social movement development, I argue that *oppositional speech acts* are key elements of nonviolent political contention in authoritarian regimes. In the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe, in the minority national republics of the USSR, in Basque and Catalan regions of Spain during Francoism, in Pinochet's Chile, the opposition talked a lot. Looking at the long span of oppositional development, and especially early on, it was more what was said than was done that defined the opposition. Indeed, when political opportunities are severely constricted, much of the *doing* of contentious politics is *talking* about it.

A speech act is what one does when speaking rather than what one says. Speaking and doing are related, of course, but a speech-act focus looks at

what is behaviorally accomplished by uttering words—the pragmatic intent of talk instead of the surface meaning. A speech-act perspective draws on the work of linguistic philosophers John Searle (1969) and John Austin (1962) by stressing that interactional goals guide what gets said, and tacitly understood rules guide how it is said. In the nuanced and between-the-lines speech contexts of authoritarian societies, knowing what is intended is crucial to interpreting what is said. Oppositional speech acts are strategic responses to authoritarian distortions of communication and information flow. Moreover, as state repression begins to relax, speech acts and other coded assertions of opposition serve as the basis for mobilizations that increasingly rely on the contemporary modular repertoire. In this essay, I identify the common forms of oppositional talk, where it tends to occur, and several more public processes that also have coded elements.

My observations are based on studies of oppositional politics in several different authoritarian contexts. They come mostly from my own field research in the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic and in Francoist Spain, where, over the course of the last decade, 154 activists and dissidents were interviewed about their oppositional activities under authoritarianism (see Johnston 1991; Johnston and Snow 1998; Johnston and Aarelaid-Tart 2000; Johnston and Mueller 2001). I also base my observations on studies of the Polish opposition, and the opposition in several titular republics of the USSR, in Eastern Europe, and Latin America. The goal is to take a step beyond Scott's observations about oppositional speech in peasant societies and apply them to contemporary authoritarian regimes—to do an initial mapping of contentious speech acts, and their clustering, with the goal of situating them within a broader understanding of antiauthoritarian mobilization.

Oppositional Speech Acts and Free Spaces

Social movement research in Western democracies has recognized the role of less obtrusive contention in movement development but has not accorded it a central theoretical place. In the panorama of the twentieth century's major movements, empirical research about the preparatory labor of premovement groups and activists often is overshadowed by events of greater historical significance. Still, several seminal studies have probed the behind-the-scenes phenomenon of movement seed planting: Morris (1984) has pointed out how *movement halfway houses* helped prime the U.S. civil rights movement; Mueller (1994) has identified the *cultural laboratories* of the women's movement; Hirsch (1990) analyzed the urban community movements' *havens,* and Rupp and Taylor (1987) looked at *abeyance*

structures of feminist politics. The more widely used concept in this literature is free spaces, which describes gathering places where intimate association foments collective identity, shared grievances, oppositional frames, and tactical innovation. Polletta (1999, 13) has reviewed the free-spaces literature and noted that emphasis has been on spatial separateness and intimacy of the networks, at the expense of what get said and done in those networks. Interest in free spaces most recently focuses on how the Internet may be used in mobilization. Yang (2002), for example, looks at the virtual free space of the Internet and its role in the Tiananmen Square protest to draw a distinction between physical space and communication networks.

An opposition accomplishes important cultural work in free spaces: reframing what is possible, defining collective identities, articulating grievances, preserving oppositional norms and values, reshaping mobilization structures through network bridging and network extension. Polletta (1999) identifies three patterns or types of free spaces in which these functions are performed. A *transmovement free space* preserves oppositional values during periods of abeyance and often functions as a "movement midwife," such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation (Smith 1996) or the Highlander Folk School (Morris 1984). An *indigenous free space* similarly nurtures oppositional values and ideologies, but grows out of the unique configuration of the culture and society in question, such as the African-American churches in the civil rights movement. Finally, *prefigurative free spaces* are intentionally formed groups that provide alternative models for what society could be, such as feminist collectives or anarchist communities. They are cook pots of new collective identities for members, and loci of speech acts that articulate grievances and reframe possibilities. Polletta calls for greater emphasis on the performative roles of free spaces and less on their structural characteristics—a focus on what they do rather than on where they occur. This is an important insight because, as is obvious with oppositional activities via the Internet, culture, structure, and space are three distinct analytic dimensions; and we lose purchase by conflating them. It is also a perspective that helps highlight the differences between free-space forms and functions in liberal democracies and those in authoritarian regimes.

The authoritarian state transforms the relationship between the content, structure, and location of free spaces. In contrast to the West, where legal rights permit many radically contentious groups to exist free of overt repression, in authoritarian regimes it is essential that free spaces be shielded from state scrutiny. In the West, a free space might take the form of a small organization with a charter and tax-exempt status, or of an informal autonomous collective. In authoritarian regimes, the constraints of repression

mean that open, free, and structured organization is often impossible. This gives rise to innovative adaptations that tend to cluster according to variable combinations of the space, culture, and structure. For example, Polletta, noting that spatial separation by itself is insufficient to create a free space, observes that no one sees the Boy Scouts as free spaces for social movements (1999, 13). She is right, of course—in the West. But in Communist Poland, Boy Scout groups were indigenous free spaces where oppositional values were passed to new generations (this was also true of Boy Scout groups in British-mandate Palestine and in Francoist Spain). Under the Communists, scouting's lessons about patriotism were coded as Polish nationalism instead of socialist internationalism.

This is an example of a noncontentious organizational structure in a noncontentious space infused with a contentious cultural code that existed alongside scouting's apolitical content. Authoritarian regimes often provide organizational spaces—loopholes of administrative freedom—where contentious words are uttered along with noncontentious ones. As we shall see, it is not uncommon that when an organization's official business is over—a historical society, for example—conversations sometimes can push the limits of acceptable speech. In several Communist states, the shell of what had been the established church often provided place and opportunity for indigenous free spaces to take root. It is not an exaggeration to say that, for a time, the Polish church was the most extensive free space in all of Eastern Europe. In this case, an understood cultural code of opposition led to the occasional duplicitous use of space and organization for oppositional activities.

Another innovative response to repression is that spatial dimension is transcended by the creation of temporary free spaces. These are the movable feasts of authoritarian opposition, such as renditions of prohibited songs at concerts, or when a crowd politicizes a soccer match through songs, chants, and intense cheering. These temporary free spaces must be distinguished from spontaneous outbursts of protests that occur in the West. Although there is clearly an element of protest in both, they are much less spontaneous in authoritarian states because these event seizures—as I call them—are often planned and initiated by dissident groups in response to a closed political milieu. What looks like spontaneity, say, at a soccer match, in fact reflects planning and strategic instigation. For the mass of bystanding participants, taking part in these temporary free spaces is a relatively low-cost collective action that breaks patterns of fear and continual self-monitoring common to public life.

A third innovation is when both spatial and organizational dimensions are transcended by the creation of diffuse free spaces via oppositional

speech acts. Authoritarian society creates a citizenry that is acutely aware of the split between public and private spheres (Habermas 1984). Social gatherings, neighborhood associations, labor organizations, and so on, bring together a wide variety of people who manage this split in different ways and degrees. The private sphere may break the surface of public discourse and be openly voiced, depending on participants' assessment of the setting's safety and the group's composition. The emergent definition of an interactional setting as safe is basic to the creation of an *oppositional speech situation.* These are a kind of prefigurative free space—to use Polletta's term—in the sense that they augur a future society of free and open communication, but without the structure or fixed location characteristic of those in the West. Moreover, there is an additional authoritarian caveat that spies and agents provocateurs are always possibilities. Much as fog is composed of microparticles of water in the air, oppositional speech situations pervade daily life when the authoritarian state begins to lose legitimacy but maintains social control. They are temporary free spaces in that they are dependent on the moment, defined by the interlocutors, the topic, and the assessment of trust.

In all of the cases on which this report is based, the authoritarian state liberalized prior to democratic transition. During the halting and often recurrent process of internal liberalization, opposition groups develop out of these free-space configurations. When the authoritarian state first eases repression, such as the de-Stalinization campaigns in the USSR or the Polish October of 1956, it is typical that these innovative free spaces condense from the authoritarian fog into the morning dew of proto-oppositional groups and associations. These groupings are composed of people who are willing to assume more risk, and who are more innovative in confronting the state. For example, in the Estonian SSR it was well known that many local history groups had anti-Soviet leanings, or, in Poland, that certain Catholic circles and confraternaties were anticommunist. These compose the tentative structure of an emerging opposition—free spaces in the more typical spatial sense where protest entrepreneurs are schooled to take advantage of the next opening or weakening in the regime. Running parallel with these groups is the intelligentsia, which also benefits from liberalization by gaining new freedoms, better living standards, and more travel opportunities. Some intellectuals become a loyal opposition within the regime, some cultural critics, some dissidents, but they all talk with one another. They seize upon new freedoms and, based on the cases I have observed, never completely relinquish them should the cycle of liberalization contract, as it often does. These circles and associations are islands of oppositional talk,

where talk constitutes most of the action that takes place—because open protest still remains severely constrained.

Oppositional Speech Situations

Away from surveillance by authorities, oppositional speech can occur almost anywhere: the kitchen, the coffee shop, barhopping at night, informal discussions at a book club or a cinema society, and those small circles of friends that linger for hours after the proceedings of more formally structured groups and organizations. Informal politicized talk in kitchens and coffee shops has been frequently commented upon by area scholars but not placed within a broader theory of the authoritarian state (Shlapentkokh 1989; Laba 1991; Taagepera 1993; Ries 1997). For social movement scholars, the tendency is to focus on the volcanic eruptions of protest, rather than the subterranean magma of oppositional speech.

Yet the widespread nature of oppositional kitchen talk suggests that something important is going on. It would be incorrect to dismiss it as mere grumbling of the kind that is ubiquitous in the West because complaints about authoritarian systems carry consequences. Kitchen talk is a twentieth-century urban manifestation of Scott's "hidden arbors" where peasants and slaves speak freely, knowing that they are outside the scrutiny of the master, the landowner, or the police. Drawing on speech-act theory, these places are marked by shared understandings of the situation—specific rules of speech, that is, what is appropriate to say and how far one can go in criticism, how to say it, and to whom. These are not political discussions of the kind that occur in the liberal democracies because partisan and tactical positions are irrelevant, and actual contention for power is not practicable. Nevertheless, sustained criticism against the regime, the party, and/or society is prohibited by the state, and therefore automatically politicized. In the words of one observer of Russian discourse:

> While talk is a central locus of value production in all societies, in Russia it has long been highly marked; consider, for example, the constant references to the "kitchen" as the most sacred place in Russian/Soviet society. There, over tea or vodka, people could speak their minds, tell their stories, and spill their souls openly. . . . The Soviet state was, of course, a critical agent in the continuous sacralization of private talk, since only in these quiet communicative exchanges did most people feel free to communicate honestly and openly. (Ries 1997, 21)

Nancy Ries has documented the varieties of Russian discourse during the late 1980s (see also Pesmen 1995). She observes that litanies of

complaint, suffering, and victimization were common forms of talk in a large repertoire that included husband tales, drinking tales, laments of sacrifice and social breakdown, and sexual jokes. Only a small number, Ries observes, were politicized statements about the system or criticisms of the party or state.

A *speech situation* is a sociolinguistic concept that recognizes that there are understood rules about what gets said, how, and by whom. They are numerous in everyday life, embracing common encounters (such as the polite talk of people waiting in a queue) as well as more specific subcultural encounters (such as an office visit of a student to a professor, or an intellectual chat at the commons with a colleague). For these types of interactions, there are tacitly understood rules that are learned and become part of one's speech repertoire. Similarly, in authoritarian regimes, the rules of oppositional speech situations are learned as part of unofficial, private-sphere socialization. A poignant example comes from an Estonian informant who recounted an incident as a student under the Soviets. A teacher saw a nationalist rhyme written in her workbook ("I am an Estonian, I am proud to be an Estonian, and an Estonian I will ever be") and quietly informed her, "Yes, we all feel this way but we must never say it in public."

Sociolinguistic research informs us that definitions of speech situations frequently change, often in the course of the discussion as new topics are introduced or as new members are added. Also, definitions may change in light of broader political or cultural change. For example, as an authoritarian regime liberalizes, interlocutors recognize that new boundaries for what is said may be possible. Pushing and testing these boundaries is a subtle process linguistically, depending on the composition of the group and perceived levels of tolerance and trustworthiness among the participants. Shifts in speech situations are marked by the introduction of new themes and variations of intonation and prosody (Gumperz 1982), and continual monitoring of these cues is typical. If interlocutors are relatively new and untested, if they voice topics that raise questions about their trustworthiness, others may give cues to indicate their discomfort and caution, or try to change the direction of the conversation. For the most part, participants in oppositional speech situations are known and trusted, but, as regime policies change, during either liberalization or contraction, the rules become more fluid. Respondents have told of cases when a participant openly stated that the discussion should not continue in its present direction because taking part would compromise him.

The concrete topics of oppositional speech situations are potentially innumerable, but certain themes can be identified: criticisms and complaints

about the party, leaders, and state; ideological debate about society and the economy; discussion of emigration, of world events, of situations in open societies; ethnic-national issues; the secret police and repression; nonofficial, nonpropagandized information about contemporary society or historical events. A common element is underground humor, which embraces these topics and more, but which also performs key functions in the developing definition of oppositional speech. A scholar of Soviet jokes notes that "jokes were told eagerly in people's homes and kitchens. . . . Political jokes acquired such wide currency, despite the fact that before the collapse of the Soviet Union *anekdoty* were never circulated via official media and were never uttered by comedians [on the stage]" (Krylova 1999, 246).

Psychologists see jokes as escape valves for various kinds of repression and/or anxiety. It is plausible that this in part accounts for why political jokes are widespread in repressive regimes. But a speech-act approach focuses our attention not on the psychology of jokes, but rather on what they accomplish within the context of broader discourse. In oppositional speech situations, jokes can be part of the substance of talk, but not all of their tellings indicate that oppositional speech situations are present. Linguistically, jokes and humor perform two pragmatic functions: They foster solidarity and trust between the interlocutors by pointing to shared frames of interpretation and signaling goodwill. They also are useful conversational devices for saying things indirectly because they are deniable. The teller can always invoke the defense, "I was only joking" (Tannen 1986, 69). This defensive quality means that jokes can be used strategically in conversational settings to gauge the trustworthiness of participants before full-blown oppositional speech begins. If there are doubts, mildly political jokes that test the waters can be diverted, for example, to sexual jokes. It makes sense, therefore, that political jokes represent the first budding of contentious speech, and often mark tentative steps into oppositional speech situations. Because of their deniability, political jokes are less risky than full-blown oppositional speech, and seem to perform prepolitical, secondary, and/or antecedent functions in the development of oppositional speech situations.

The Network Structure of Oppositional Speech

Interviews in post-Soviet Estonia and Francoist Spain point to a network structure of oppositional speech situations that cuts across webs of friendship, neighborhoods, and occupational groups. The concept of preexisting mobilizing networks has been widely applied to authoritarian oppositions (Lipski 1985; Johnston 1991; Laba 1991; Opp and Gern 1993; Mistzal and Jenkins 1995; Flam 1996), but mostly regarding identifiable groups such

as dissident circles, samizdat cells, theaters, and church groups. Opp and Gern (1993) cite informal networks as the basis of groups that formed Neues Forum in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Johnston and Aareleid-Tart (2000) found a reticulated structure of contacts among the Estonian national artistic elite. Although oppositional speech situations do not have formal structure, four characteristics are relevant to developing opposition insofar as they lead to more formally structured collectivities.

First, oppositional speech situations frequently bring together people with diverse occupational and ideological positions vis-à-vis the state and party. On the one hand, this imparts a pluralistic quality to the discussions of ideology and strategy. Debates are sometimes intense, although, practically, the stakes are small; but interlocutors are united by a common understanding of a shared oppositional frame. On the other hand, several respondents reported to me that participants were sometimes linked to the regime and party, and that these party connections were especially important as the opposition developed. These people were internal contacts who had access to resources and procedures of issuing pemits that are essential for more organized and public contention.

Second, there is an individual element to oppositional speech in that, within the segment of the disaffected population, some are willing to incur more risk than others. Some are innovative in how they think about opposition and/or may have a more opportunistic view of the political structure. The diverse and crosscutting structure of oppositional speech networks means that these more contentious souls come into contact with friends and acquaintances who are less outspoken, either because their toleration of risk is lower or their perception of opportunities is narrower. Through these linkages, the more radical members can disseminate their own activist orientation and spur others to action. In particular, their personal influence comes to fruition as state repression eases and some of these more militant members move to what I call hit-and-run protests.

Third, in the long term, oppositional speech situations tend to cluster in certain locales as the authoritarian state liberalizes. The more assertive interlocutors in what had previously been diffuse oppositional speech gravitate and/or create emerging free spaces—well-known coffee shops and bars, or the duplicitous groups and organizations that I discuss later. As these groups form, key activists establish new linkages, often based on more contentious goals, but this does not mean severing old ties. In network terms, these activists become more central in the diffuse oppositional milieu of contentious talk. This is a slow process, but not necessarily an incremental one. The opening of political opportunities in authoritarian states is never

unidirectional and linear but represents the complex interrelation of internal regime factors such as elite conflict, resources, and policy issues in the economic and strategic realm. It makes sense that the clustering of speech situations in specific locales and the emergence of movement entrepreneurs follows the fits and starts of state policy and can be linked with specific kinds of changes in the regime (a fruitful line of inquiry for the future, but not the focus of this essay).

Fourth, in the absence of open media, these network-central activists serve as transmitters of information linking disaffected and alienated citizens at different levels of militancy. Networks of oppositional speech situations provide communicative channels whereby information not available in the official media is disseminated. As testified to by the widespread occurrence of samizdat publications in Eastern Europe and the titular republics of the USSR, this information function is critical in the development of an opposition movement against authoritarianism. These networks represent verbal samizdat channels prior to when samizdat publications are distributed, and which continue to function in tandem with them afterwards.

In sum, Soviet and East European scholars in the early 1980s interpreted the growth of dissident activities among intellectuals and the new middle classes as representing widespread dissatisfaction with the Communist system: the tip of the iceberg (Korbonski 1983; Kusin 1983; Sharlet 1983; Zaslavsky 1979). In the repressive context, oppositional speech acts are a less demanding and less risky form of collective action, standing for a part of the iceberg below the waterline but linked to those above it by networks of oppositional speech. In the West, conscience constituencies and potential social movement participants can sign petitions, donate money, attend meetings, stuff envelopes, carpool, and take part in numerous forms of less risky collective action that are essential to public performances such as marches, strikes, and sit-ins (Oliver and Marwell 1993). In authoritarian regimes, these activities are not available, and oppositional talk in these quasi-public situations functions as a low-risk proxy.

Duplicitous Organizations

In Eastern Europe, in the titular republics of the Soviet Union, and in the Basque and Catalan regions of Francoist Spain, some groups and organizations assumed a duplicitous character by using their official status as an excuse to gather, talk, and sometimes take part in activities that pushed the limits of what the regime defined as acceptable. These groups were not social movement organizations. They filed official budgets and political reports, and met in public buildings. Often they clustered around certain

activities that stressed national identity or had roots in earlier periods of independence or democracy, which imparted oppositional symbolism to their activities. Many who were quiet opponents of the regime flocked to these activities, compounding their oppositional quality and making them places where oppositional speech situations frequently and densely clustered. It is significant that Estonian and Spanish respondents had no trouble identifying groups and organizations known for their mildly oppositional milieus.

Three categories of duplicitous groups can be identified that are generalizable across authoritarian regimes (see Johnston and Mueller 2001 for a fuller discussion).

Social and Recreational Groups

Officially sanctioned groups that focused on the national histories and traditions often carried a vague oppositional meaning for participants: folk-dancing groups, ethnographic study groups, folk-music groups, local historical societies, drama clubs, and so on. Choral societies in Estonia, which had its "Singing Revolution" in 1991, played a major role because there was a repertoire of prohibited songs associated with the independent republic (1918–40). The same was true in Catalonia, where a repertoire of national songs (in the Catalan language) from periods of autonomy drew participants. In Estonia, beekeeping societies and horticultural groups were traditional peasant activities that asserted independence from the kolkhoz system, and therefore were widely recognized as having a vague independence from the Communist state. In Euzkadi and Catalonia, excursion groups, outing groups, and geography associations that explored the national countryside had mild oppositional milieus. Activities walked a tightrope of toleration and repression. When activities crossed the line of acceptance or when regime policies tightened, these groups were sometimes closed down, and the leading members fined, but rarely were they imprisoned or deported.

Churches and Religious Groups

Authoritarian regimes are commonly confronted with a contradictory situation regarding religious practice. In some cases, the regime draws legitimacy from its association with the church, as was the case in Francoist Spain, Pinochet's Chile, and Brazil under military rule (Johnston 1989). This presents opportunities for lower levels of the ecclesial hierarchy or parts of the church organization far from the capital to act independently and contentiously. In Eastern Europe, the free spaces for churches were much more constrained, although this varied among countries. In general,

the Communist states exercised close administrative control over officially recognized churches and were intolerant of grassroots religious practice. Repression of believers, co-optation of church hierarchy, and covert actions by secret police were common. Nevertheless, the organized church played key oppositional roles in the GDR (Rein 1990), and, to a lesser extent, in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. The Catholic church in Poland occupied a position that was unique in all Eastern bloc countries. In the early stages of Solidarity, churches were used as meeting places (Szajokowski 1983; Borowski 1986). Several chapters of Rural Solidarity grew out of the militant sectors of the Catholic Oases movement (Mucha and Zaba 1992). Solidarity itself drew upon religious imagery and, in its early stages, church resources. In the USSR, the Catholic church was an important free space in the Lithuanian SSR, which published the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania* between 1972 and 1982, the most important samizdat publication for the dissident community. In other titular republics, national churches played oppositional roles, as in the western Ukraine (Hvat 1984, 280–89), and in Georgia and Armenia to a lesser extent.

It is important to recognize that religious practice and opposition to the state overlap only partially and for periods when political opportunities are relatively closed. Because churches are the only social institutions outside of party and state control, they can function as free spaces where resources such as meeting places, copy machines, and communication networks are furtively made available. Nevertheless, the main focus of church organization is religious faith, which can become politicized when the state denies freedom of practice. Most people opted for less risky strategies. Several Estonian respondents mentioned that religious faith was maintained in family practice and celebrations rather than public worship, and it makes sense that this was true in other national republics. One measure of this might be that a high proportion of underground political jokes from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have religious themes.

Intellectual and Cultural Groups

Because the repressive state stifles the exchange of ideas and creative freedoms on which art and literature thrive, it is common that some literary and fine art intelligentsia networks are loci of contentious talk. In Estonia, a reticulated structure of contact was discernible among artists in the capital of Tallinn and the university city of Tartu. For example, artists whose abstract impressionism challenged socialist realism gathered at each other's homes, or took summer vacations together in the country. Within official groups too, such as the creative unions of writers, artists, and musicians,

there were cliques of members whose work was more avant-garde and innovative. Union officials had to balance support for these members with the demands of watchdog party officials in the culture ministries.

The groups and circles are numerous. I found that many were informal, such as jazz circles, literary salons, book clubs, and language study groups, especially in non-Communist authoritarian states, where there was more free space for civil society (such as small classes in Catalan and Euzkerra during Francoism, or theater clubs in Santiago de Chile under Pinochet). But informality has liabilities in terms of resources, and some cultural and intellectual associations assumed formal organization to take advantage of state and party resources. Theater groups and cinema societies were common free spaces in the titular republics of the USSR. In Estonia, the English Language Circle and the Book Lovers Club provided opportunities to gather in a mildly oppositional milieu. One member of an English Language Circle recounted how the group enjoyed summer retreats at resorts, paid for by the state. She told how they dutifully filed their reports and practiced English, but when they gathered, there was a freedom of discussion where, "under the surface was the truth."

Like social and recreational groups, members had to be careful about what they said because their words might carry to untested ears. Penalties were not severe for crossing the line: groups could lose their charter, have budget cuts, lose vacation or outing privileges, or have spies placed among them to rein in their activities. Artists might not have their work displayed, or, under extreme circumstances, could be expelled from the union, which meant that they had to earn a living doing other things. In Estonia, artists sometimes ended up as boiler tenders or farmworkers if they pushed too far.

Dissidence

Dissidence as a form of contention arises when individuals, many of whom come from intellectual and scientific communities, reframe what is possible for their oppositional talk to achieve. Contentious speech is the lifeblood of dissident activities, as men and women gather in private homes to ideologize and strategize ways to challenge regime policies (Flam 1996, 1998). Indeed, a great proportion of antiauthoritarian dissidence is dissident talk—to be differentiated from the talk of artists or folklorists who actively monitor and limit their public performances. Dissidents, in contrast, "openly proclaim dissent and demonstrate it in one way or another to compatriots and the state" (Medvedev 1980). There seem to be two key reasons for this shift: first, dissident talk breaks the surface of public life when authoritarian regimes take small steps toward liberalization; second, dissident figures

draw upon their own elite, sometimes international, status as intellectuals and/or scientists to insulate themselves from severe retribution. Dissident activities were especially characteristic of the 1970s and 1980s in the Soviet bloc, when cracks in the repressive system allowed these men and women to gain a notoriety (Joppke 1995); but dissident circles can be identified in Latin American authoritarianism, and were present in Catalonia and Euzkadi under Francoism, suggesting that dissidence is a common genre of antiauthoritarian opposition.

The varieties East European and Soviet dissidence can be traced to the Sinyavsky–Daniel show trial in the Soviet Union in 1965 in which two authors were tried for publishing works abroad that "maligned and slandered" the Soviet system. Intellectuals, artists, and scientists who under Khrushchev had enjoyed relative freedom saw these charges as heralding a return to Stalinism and rallied to support them. Many of those who spoke out were members of the Communist Party. Their challenges were wholly reform-oriented and within the Communist worldview. They encountered an especially heavy wave of repression between 1966 and 1972, reflecting the hard-line, inflexible response to the 1968 Prague Spring.

In the East bloc, dissidence sometimes developed out of frustrated reform initiatives within the Communist Party, and sometimes out of claims of continuity with pre-Leninist society—especially in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Baltics. Flam's study of Polish dissidents (1996) points to a hierarchy of status in dissident circles. High-visibility elites faced great risks, but their fame often mitigated punishment. In many cases, they had come to terms already with loss of jobs, expulsion from the party, and denial of any privileges for themselves and their families. Fear permeated the lower levels of the hierarchy, whose participants often did the legwork, such as passing papers, making contacts, and gathering information. These activities could lead to prison, or, for young men, immediate drafting into the military. Passing information to the Western media could mean exile or psychiatric punishment.

Typical dissident activities were the drafting of open letters and petitions, defending activists' actions, disseminating information about arrests and illegal police activities, proposing new laws and democratic reforms, challenging official history and economic theory, passing information to foreign media, or giving interviews. Samizdat publication was critical because dissident activity could only assume political importance insofar as it was disseminated to the larger public. In general, the trajectory of dissidence is partly determined by the party's tactic of trying to manage internal dissent, and partly by the inherent contradictions of state administration of

intellectual and creative production. Periods of liberalization raise expectations and spur creativity and debate. When party apparatchiks judge that innovation has gone too far, new freedoms are tenaciously held on to and can spur tactical innovation by dissident circles. Severe repression, such as exile and prison for dissidents, may quell the public arena but drives dissent temporarily into less public oppositional forms, such as oppositional speech in duplicitous organizations. When political contexts opened under Mikhail Gorbachev's programs of glasnost and perestroika, dissidence as a repertoire became increasingly outdated, although dissidents themselves did not. Indeed, public awareness of their risk-taking behaviors and quixotic campaigns at times when penalties for such behaviors were still severe frequently imparted a notoriety that advantaged them when the opposition moved into more open forms of contention along the lines of the Western repertoire, and later when political competition broke out in full. The list of countries is long—Estonia, Lithuania, Chile, Ukraine, Latvia, Georgia, Catalonia—in which prominent dissidents occupied positions of political leadership after the democratic transition.

Hit-and-Run Protests

Hit-and-run protests are often the first buds of public contention. They are intended to catch the eye of casual observers and passersby before the police dismantle, eradicate, or obscure the traces of the action, which is typically very soon. They are less based on speech acts than the previous examples, but preserve continuity with the coded talk of clandestine gatherings in two ways. First, the public manifestations of opposition are often not direct but symbolic, that is, meaningful to those who can draw upon an unstated interpretative frame to grasp the full meaning of oppositional content. In this sense, they are an elaboration of the between-the-lines readings characteristic of some oppositional speech acts. Second, hit-and-run actions are done by small circles of young men and women who have "talked their way to action." My fieldwork in Spain and Estonia provides evidence that the duplicitous groups mentioned earlier are hatcheries of these small, clandestine actions. In several cases, protest entrepreneurs were schooled and nurtured in these groups. One legacy of long-lived repressive states, especially the Communist regimes of Eastern Europe, is the absence of experienced compatriots. In this vacuum, duplicitous groups are incubators of innovation. They are places where friendships and solidarity mitigate the risks of going public. Although many hit-and-run actions superficially appear to be spontaneous one-person events, my interviews suggest that most are planned and executed by small circles of activists who discuss logistics, material re-

quirements, timing, and division of labor in oppositional speech situations. Moreover, as part of their education, these activists seek information about protest actions from outside sources (such as during international youth conferences in the USSR). These experiences frequently position these activists to become actors in the emerging social movement organizations when the opposition takes off. Based on my fieldwork and on secondary sources, several patterns of hit-and-run protests can be identified.

Graffiti

Probably more than the other hit-and-run tactics, graffiti appear to be the work of a single person, but it is my contention that this is usually not the case. In Francoist Spain, *pintadas* or painting sprees were commonly organized by youthful activists. I was told that select members of a Catholic youth group frequently organized to paint anti-Francoist slogans in Barcelona. As Francoism eased in the late 1960s, political graffiti were a common sight in Barcelona, Bilbao, Madrid, and other cites. At the minimum, short graffiti containing one or two words, such "Free Pujol" (supporting a jailed Catalan activist) or "Charter 77," require a lookout. For more elaborate graffiti, such as the painting of a prohibited Basque or Estonian flag, more lookouts are needed. The more elaborate the graffiti, the more time is of the essence, and the more likely several artists participate based on prior planning.

John Bushnell (1990) studied Moscow graffiti during the late Soviet period, most of which was youthful fan graffiti for sports teams and rock groups, and not coded oppositional acts. One specific genre, however, had political connotations, namely, the graffiti of entry 6, No. 10 Bolshaia Sadoviaia Street. This entryway led to apartment 50, where the writer Mikhail Bulgakov lived in the early 1920s and which he incorporated into in his novel *The Master and Margarita.* Written in the 1930s but not published until 1965–66, the book is a complex commentary about Stalinist society. Bulgakov uses a group of supernatural characters, led by Woland (Satan) and Behemoth (usually appearing as a giant cat), who expose the corruption of Moscow through magic pranks. Bulgakov also incorporates religious themes in sections about a conversation between Jesus and Pilate. Much of the graffiti carried an obvious political message (Bushnell 1990, 184). References to the novel were common: "Woland, come back, too much crap has piled up." Many graffiti were intricate paintings of the novel's characters, most commonly the giant cat, Behemoth, and Woland. Many statements were long quotes. Although Bushnell does not have information about who the writers were, except in the few cases when they

were signed, or how the graffiti were done, it is plausible that much of it was done in small groups composed of the graffiti artists, text writers, lookouts, lantern holders, and others along for the excitement.

Clandestine Placements

A common hit-and-run tactic, again usually symbolic, was nighttime placement of flowers, flags, crosses, and candles. This happened in Poland with placement of flowers to commemorate the workers killed at the Gdańsk shipyard strike. Flowers appeared overnight at the gates of the shipyard and at the square where the workers were killed on the anniversary of their deaths. Similarly, in Catalonia, at the site of the statue of Rafael Casanovas, a hero in Catalonia's struggle for autonomy, flowers appeared regularly on the national day, September 11. The location was in the center of a traffic circle, and another hit-and-run tactic was to circle the site several times that day, honking auto horns and yelling "Visca Catalunya!" In Tallinn, Estonia, at the site of a statue of a national hero demolished by the Soviets in 1940, flowers sometimes appeared on the anniversary of the republic, February 24. The statue stood across from the Reaalgümnaasium School. Rumor was that the flowers were placed by groups of youth at the school. Also in Tallinn, students placed candles on Christmas Eve at the grave of Julius Kuperianova, a hero of Estonia's war of independence against the Russians (1918–20). In downtown Kanaus, Lithuania, students regularly placed excrement in the outstretched hand of a Lenin statue. A loaf of bread was placed in the hand he held behind his back.

In both the Basque region and Catalonia, the placement of the respective national flags was a political statement against the centralizing authoritarian Francoist state. In the course of fieldwork, I interviewed older militants who nostalgically recalled youthful escapades with their friends, climbing to rooftops in order to raise the Catalan national flag. Usually they were torn down by 10:00 a.m. the next day, but for people on their way to work these flag placements were symbols of the opposition and reminders that there was an active resistance. It is a suggestive proposition that these symbolic actions had their greatest effect as markers for the larger population of cracks in the regime's legitimacy. In Lithuania, there was a continual battle between the secret police and dedicated Catholic groups who placed crosses at the mountain of Sinuali—the police regularly tore the crosses down, but they were replaced in a matter of days.

Like graffiti, some of these placements were surely done by isolated individuals, but my interviews suggest that the majority were carried out clandestinely by small circles of activists. Also, it was common that activists

encouraged others to participate, by reproducing and distributing clandestinely reproduced notices. In Barcelona a campaign like this was organized to protest the Francoist newspaper *La Vanguardia.* One respondent told of carbon-copied (this was 1954) ribbons of paper lying on the ground appealing to people to rip up their copies of *La Vanguardia* the next day in protest against the Francoist chief editor. For a week, strips of the destroyed paper blew around the city. Eventually, a boycott campaign was organized, again using similar notices, and which eventually ended in the dismissal of the editor.

Event Seizures

An event seizure is protest action that relies on the risk taking of a few militants and the spontaneous participation of bystanders who are not initiated into the action but whose support is assumed. Militants risk personal safety by precipitating the action, and hope that others will see that risks are low (there is safety in numbers), join in, and transform the occasion into a significant protest event. Event seizures are important in the developing anti-authoritarian opposition because they give a taste of protest participation to a previously quiescent mobilization potential. A second effect is that these events often serve as markers for reframing oppositional possibilities for the wider population because they involve a relatively large number of people. Superficially, event seizures seem to be spontaneous outbursts of opposition, and although sometimes this may be the case, most are planned by small groups of activists. Scattering small notices or leaflets is often important to prime the potential supporters for action. However, many event seizures require secrecy up until the last moment, which makes prior notice impossible. Although tactics may vary, five types of event seizures are common across authoritarian regimes.

1. Symbolic songs and anthems. In 1964, the audience at the Barcelona Music Palace sang a prohibited Catalan anthem at a concert attended by Generalissimo Francisco Franco. The action was planned by several anti-Francoist militants, all members of duplicitous groups associated with the Catholic Catalan opposition. Several militants had placed themselves throughout the audience and at a prearranged point began to sing the song. Several others, for whom the action had been passed by word of mouth, then joined in. The result was that most of the audience understood the significance of what was happening and also began to sing, so many that the police were able to do nothing. The generalissimo walked out, scandalized; and news of the action rapidly spread. It led to the arrest of one of the leaders, Jordi Pujol (later president of the Catalan autonomous government),

and the printer of a satirical flyer protesting Franco's visit to Barcelona, written by Pujol but which did not mention the action, for obvious reasons. These events at the concert and Pujol's arrest precipitated a graffiti campaign to free Pujol that lasted several months, and signaled a more militant collective action frame for the opposition.

Planning to sing prohibited songs at public events is a common event seizure. It happened throughout the Baltic republics of the USSR during the late 1980s, where choruses are a strong cultural tradition. In 1987, at the Baltic Nights festival in Tallinn, militants began to sing the prohibited anthem of the independent republic. In Poland, the prohibited anthem "Pose cos Polska" (God, who saves Poland) was often heard during the millennium celebrations in 1966 (Kubik 1994, 128).

2. Concerts. Related to the hit-and-run intonation of prohibited anthems are oppositional performances by well-known singer-composers. As censorship eases, it is common that a handful of performers acquire oppositional stature by virtue of veiled regime criticism in their songs. Lluis Llach and Raimón in Catalonia, Kwold Biermann in the GDR, and Boris Grebenshchikov in Moscow come to mind. Each country in the Eastern bloc had a collection of daring singers, composers, and performance groups. Among respondents in Francoist Spain and Estonia, the lore about how performers circumvented and tricked censors was frequently recounted. I was told of concerts in Barcelona in which toned-down repertoires were submitted to censors with the intention of adding more contentious songs on stage. Another variation was that performers played only the music of their prohibited songs, but the audience sang the words, which had been committed to memory because of their daring. Under these circumstances, there is little that the police can do except sanction the performers, which only increases their popularity. The folklore of the opposition had stories of red-faced police frustratedly waving hands and screaming at thousands in the audience to stop.

3. Parodies of official events. Activists may take advantage of official gatherings, such as state parades and commemorations, to stage counter-demonstrations. Because these are public, they are risky; but they use irony and parody to lessen the risk. Repression is more difficult because the manifest actions mirror the official ones, and because there is often a sense of goodwill. The Orange Alternative (Alternatywa Pomaranczowa) in Poland was a clandestine group that was especially adept at using irony.[1] On the forty-fourth anniversary of the Civic Militia in 1988, demonstrators took to the streets with signs proclaiming "Long Live the Military," "Democracy is Anarchy" and "The Youth is with the Party" (Uncensored Poland News

Bulletin 1988b, 3). Similarly, on the eve of the October Revolution anniversary the group marched in the streets shouting, "Lenin is with us" and "We love the police." Notice of these actions was passed by leaflets or by word of mouth. The text of a flyer for this action gives a sense of the irony:

> Comrades, dress up in your best, in red. Put on red shoes, red hat, red scarf. . . . We Reds (red faces, red hair, pants, and lips) will stand fast at 4 pm under the clock.
>
> Comrades, let us meet at the rally to honor the Revolution!!! The ideas and practice of Leninism and Trotskyism live on!!! (Uncensored Poland News Bulletin 1988a, 17)

4. Sporting events. Sporting events are sometimes seized and given symbolic political connotations. This most commonly happens with soccer matches, in which uncommonly intense crowd enthusiasm, chants, and songs (including prohibited ones) impart a clear sense to authorities that something beyond fan support of their team is occurring. A match between the USSR and Czechoslovakia, held in Tallinn after the 1968 Soviet invasion to quash the Prague Spring, invoked especially strong support for the Czechs. Similarly, matches between Russian teams and other national teams in the Eastern bloc sometimes were seized this way. The matches between Real Madrid and Barcelona were often politicized. These matches also became part of the oppositional folklore, invoked in the course of interviews as measures of anti-Soviet, anti-Russian, or anti-Castilian sentiments in the population. I have not interviewed respondents who confirm that they instigated chants or songs at soccer matches, but I believe that these occurrences are common enough that at least some are provoked by activists to make political points.

5. Diversion of funerals. This hit-and-run genre typically redirects the funeral of a well-known dissident from its manifest intent, burial and mourning, to overt political symbolism. Contemporary images show this frequently in the politicization of funerals in Gaza and West Bank, but the deaths of (sometimes martyred) dissidents were occasions for politicized funerals in Poland, the GDR, and South Africa. Similarly, in Francoist Barcelona, the casket of a well-known opponent to the regime, Don Aurelio María Escarré, was seized by mourners and diverted from the funeral route to the main streets of Barcelona.

Hit-and-run actions represent a middle stage in the progression from oppositional speech to mass protest. They have fewer participants than duplicitous organizations, but are more audacious, and, because they are public, bring a wider audience into (perhaps their first) oppositional actions.

They presage future mobilizations through reframing what is possible for a wider audience and by schooling cadres of oppositional activists in tactics and organization.

Symbolic Mobilization

To be precise about terms, I take true symbolic protests to be events that are manifestly about one set of claims but that also serve as proxies for a direct political contention against the regime. In other words, the coded and indirect elements characteristic of oppositional speech acts are reflected in the content of protest events before direct antistate political contention occurs. Symbolic protest takes place when the authoritarian state has eased repression enough that openings are presented for collective action on certain issues. These mobilizations are about peace, ecology, or women's issues that the party and state chose not to repress for ideological reasons or for reasons of international politics. Organizers go through official channels, apply for and receive permits to use parks and squares, and reserve the right-of-way for marches: there are strong similarities to the contemporary Western repertoire. However, paralleling the activities of duplicitous organizations, these protests focus on one theme, but simultaneously are given a more general oppositional meaning by many participants—not all, but many. Like songs and poetry that must be read between the lines, the antiregime subtext is coded, invoked by widely recognized symbols, and interpreted by applying the tacitly understood rules of the antiregime code.

True symbolic protest is a common form of opposition in the later stages of the authoritarian state: campaigns for language rights (in Catalonia, Euzkadi, titular republics of USSR); ecology protests (the Basque campaign against the nuclear power plant in Lemoiz, Guipúzcoa; the Estonian antimining campaign); memorial campaigns (remembrance of Stalin's victims in titular USSR republics, campaign for a memorial to slain workers in Gdańsk; campaigns to make public the Molotov–Ribbentropf pact in the Baltic republics of the USSR). Finally, Polish Solidarity began as a working-class movement but, of course, became much more. Nevertheless, its early essence as a labor movement symbolically challenged the party's leading role, and many workers knew it. So did a great many Poles as the union branched into spheres of society far from the shipyard and industrial shop floor.

Symbolic protests, like hit-and-run actions, are the schools for protest experience as the opposition shifts from talk to action. A representative example is the Estonian antimining movement that began in the late 1980s. Large-scale mining of phosphorites had seriously harmed the ecology of northeastern Estonia. In 1987, a new mine was planned by Moscow to

exploit recently discovered deposits. The mine was located on the watershed and threatened to contaminate water supplies for a large portion of eastern and central Estonia. A group of Estonian scientists issued a protest in March 1986, and later that year the Estonian Writers Union publicly spoke against the project. The importance of these groups is that many members were embedded in networks connected with duplicitous organizations and some dissident circles. In my research, the same names came up again and again, suggesting a link between earlier organizations that were loci of oppositional speech and the antimining movement. There was an unspoken subtext in the ecological theme, namely, that this was a plan hatched in Moscow, and that it meant the importation of ten thousand non-Estonian workers to eastern Estonia, further Russifying the region linguistically and culturally and diluting the native Estonian population. Ecological issues were intertwined with cultural and national ones, and opposition to the mining operations was also symbolic of a broader challenge to Soviet dominance for many participants.

The symbolic quality of the campaign was also crucial for the developing opposition because it enabled numerous official groups to support it. Less duplicitous and more tentative organizations could participate, such as the Estonian Naturalist Society, and Komsomol at Tartu University. Articles in state-supported magazines appeared, and even debates occurred on state TV, suggesting support by editors and media managers. There were event seizures at the May Day demonstrations. Street protest increased during the spring and summer. By October, the Estonian CP withdrew its support for the mining project. According to one observer, many Estonians

> learned how to test the unknown gray zone between the allowed and the forbidden in a way that allowed for tactical retreat but also unexpected advances. They practiced focusing on one specific issue at a time. They discovered that many others shared their secret yearnings, while outwardly all of them had gone through the same proregime motions. Above all, the mood of "It cannot be done" changed into "We'll do it anyway." All this new experience could be applied to other issues besides ecology. (Taagepera 1993, 124)

Discussions of symbolic protest usually stop at descriptions of innovative practices, and do not attempt to situate them in the broader sweep of antiauthoritarian mobilization. On the surface, these protests seem to be only secondarily related to the white-hot mobilization periods prior to the fall of the regime. But their widespread occurrence suggests that these protests are a key link in the progression from talk to action. In some cases,

there is a straight-line progression of activists as they move from being participants in event seizures and painting sprees to activists in language campaigns or ecology protests. In other cases, the mechanism of contention works via the creation of an oppositional milieu through talk, which emboldens others to action, again depending on the claim. Paralleling how oppositional speech acts created networks that frequently congealed in the form of duplicitous groups, it is often through symbolic protests that mildly oppositional groups shed their duplicitous character, and that contentious groups and organizations become interlinked through activist members.

Finally, the coded and symbolic character of these mobilizations is also suggested by the almost unanimous membership of their constituent social movement organizations (SMOs) in the broad umbrella movements that bridge the transition for antiauthoritarian opposition to pluralistic politics. These broad oppositional fronts, such as the Estonian Popular Front, Sajudis in Lithuania, Assembly of Catalonia, or Ruhk in Ukraine, carve the emerging topography of partisan competition in the final months of the authoritarian state. A significant proportion of their membership is made up of women's groups, peace organizations, ecology SMOs, and antinuclear activists.

Conclusions

Based on a wide range of cases, I have described several patterns of unobtrusive and coded oppositional action against authoritarian states. Speech acts occurring in the hidden arbors of authoritarianism—kitchens, coffee shops, card games—are the basic templates for this kind of opposition: namely, collective acts that are private, coded, indirect, rule-governed, and continuously monitored for surveillance. These kinds of actions are the most common in authoritarian states, but probably do not represent the entire spectrum of resistance. The ones I have identified are widespread, but usually neglected in contemporary social movement research.

This essay began with speech acts as the first tentative constructions of a collective opposition. At a later point, we encountered the clustering of interlocutors in duplicitous groups. Dissident circles also appear. KOR (Committee for Workers Defense) and ROPCiO (Movement for Defense of Human Rights and the Fatherland, or Ruch Obrony Praw Czlowieka i Ojczyzny) in Poland, the Heritage Society in Estonia, Ethnographic Circles in Latvia and Lithuania, and Centre de Recerc i Investigació in Barcelona are just a few examples of these kinds of groups. This sequence suggests a pattern of increasingly public and contentious actions, a pattern that is not unidirectional or without setbacks, but that, from a long-term perspective,

is suggested by all of the cases. Alhough the processes of regime liberalization and its causes have not been the focus of this essay, they are fundamental to understanding the development of antiauthoritarian oppositions: KOR in Poland was formed in 1976, not 1956; prohibited Estonian songs were rarely sung in 1955, but often in 1985; respondents did not speak of between-the-lines meaning of poetry under Stalin, but they did under Khrushchev; Basque Itaskolas (clandestine language schools) formed in the early 1960s, not the early 1940s, right after the Spanish civil war. Certainly, high levels of repression constrain oppositional speech and increase the risks that some groups must face, just as they do in protest actions.

I close this discussion by tentatively proposing a general map of the topics discussed—a schema to guide future elaboration of antiauthoritarian resistance. A fuller treatment must include the relation of these topics to regime dynamics, such as elite divisions and alliances, policies of civic responsiveness and regime access, policies of intellectual and cultural production, international contact and exchange. Extraneous factors such as international pressures, and cross-national diffusion of strategies and repertoires, will also prove to be determinants of how the prepolitical opposition is configured. For present purposes, the shape of this opposition can be correlated to general characterizations of regime repressiveness and political opportunities. The greater the political space for the developing opposition, the less the opposition focuses solely on speech and its free spaces, and the more it focuses on collective action—less talk and more walk. This is summarized in Figure 5.1.

The constraints of graphically summarizing the process may mislead readers to think that liberalization in authoritarian regimes is an incremental process. It is not, as I have indicated. To reiterate, opening political opportunities occur in fits and starts according to internal competition in the party and state, economic factors, and international pressures. Moreover, authoritarian states and their agencies of repression are not unitary actors (White and White 1995). The relation between the opposition and the state is a dark dance—each tactically responding to the other according to past experience, current perceptions, incomplete information, and the idiosyncrasies of what agency confronts what dissident circle (see Kurzman 1996; Rasler 1996). For some agents of repression, it is a job, not a calling, that creates openings that depart from policy. For the opposition, it is a calling; and they seize advantages and hold them tenaciously. A useful metaphor is that liberalization proceeds by two steps forward, one step back. Activists creatively force and seize upon new liberties and do not relinquish easily. As one anti-Francoist militant told me, their strategy was "palos a las ruedas,"

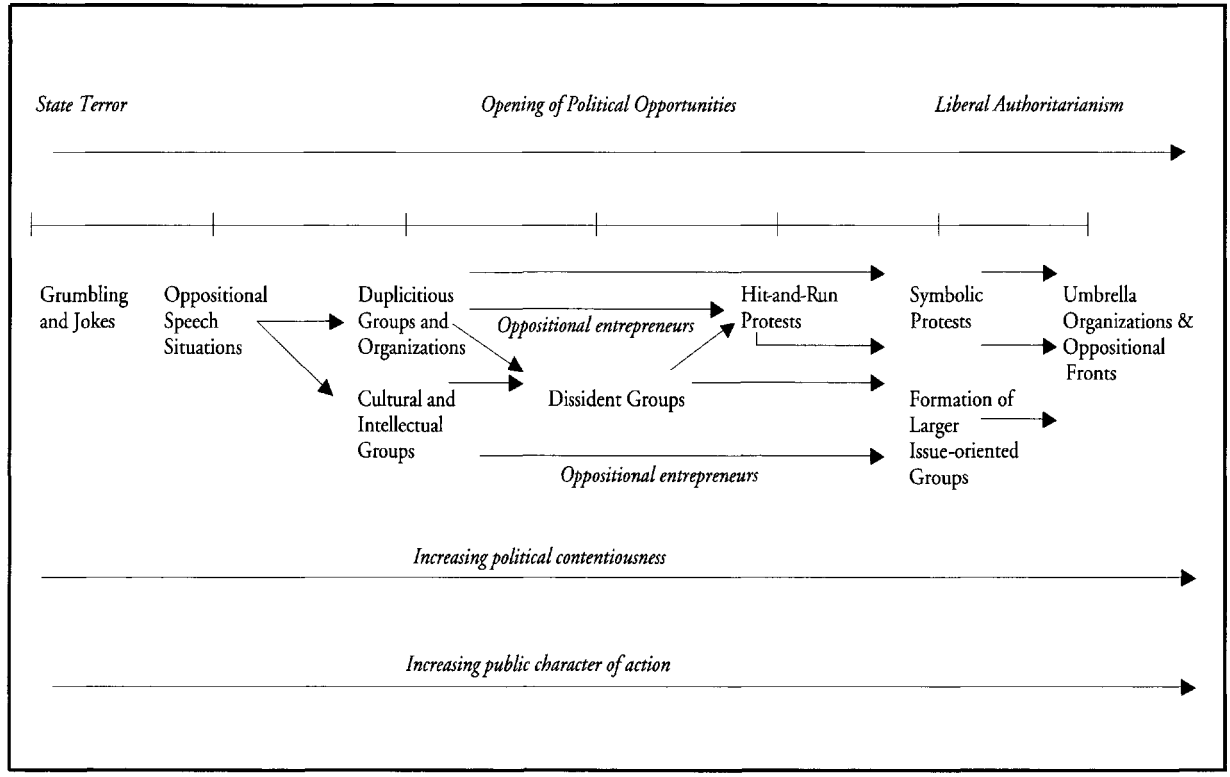

Figure 5.1. Relationships among forms of unobtrusive contention

meaning putting wooden planks behind the wheels of a wagon so that it does not roll back.

As Figure 5.1 depicts, oppositional speech acts tend to predominate when repression is strong. They continue to exist in more open regimes, but here there are opportunities for other, more public forms, such as duplicitous groups and hit-and-run protests. The arrows suggest network linkages that are possible paths of influence among different forms, but not full determinants by any means. Policy change and political opportunities do not occur in vacuums, and it is important to recognize that diffusion and strategic borrowing occur across authoritarian regimes, as happened among Eastern European states. Strategic innovation in one country or region can diffuse to others where the political context may be more repressive. The mechanisms, timing, and empirical generalizability of these processes await further research.

The socialization and emergence of protest innovators occurs as political opportunities open. This is represented by the two arrows labeled *Oppositional entrepreneurs,* located at the center of the figure. As changes in regime policy occur, some members of duplicitous organizations take greater risks and acquire notoriety for their opposition. Interviews in Spain and Estonia point to networks of protest innovators who first came to know one another through a variety of links in duplicitous oppositional groupings. Some move on to circles that stage hit-and-run actions, which function as schools for protest innovation. Their hit-and-run actions are typically the initial notice to the broader population that a de facto opposition exists where, de jure, it is illegal. Taken together, these unobtrusive forms of collective action help define anew what is possible in challenging the state and party—a master oppositional frame adapted to the constraints of authoritarianism.

Dissidence is a phenomenon that requires a minimal opening of free space in the public sphere. It is located at the center of Figure 5.1, paralleling the appearance of more openly oppositional duplicitous groups, and performs functions similar to hit-and-run protests, namely, contributing to the master collective action frame. But dissidents are known for their concrete ideological and tactical work (see Oliver and Johnston 2000 for a discussion of frames versus ideology). They disseminate their ideas in samizdat publications and signed letters. Selected interviews (with the foot soldiers, not the dissident stars) indicate that membership in dissident groups overlapped with duplicitous groups. Respondents spoke of how they managed what they said because their participation in dissident activism might compromise the duplicitous groups. Also, those groups were less trustworthy—

speaking of dissident activities incurred risks. Looking forward, it was not unusual that key dissidents participated in the broad oppositional fronts that later developed and became leaders of political parties.

Growing mass protests build upon the hit-and-run repertoires and increasingly seize official and unofficial opportunities to gather. It is common that mass protests at this point pose indirect challenges to the state, such as the antinuclear protests in the Basque region, anti-shale-mining and environmental protests in Estonia, the peace movement in the GDR, protests for economic devolution in the Soviet Baltic republics. Many hit-and-run protest innovators typically are visible, which gives them broader notoriety and situates them for leadership in the broad oppositional fronts that eventually form. Risk-taking party members begin to relinquish their cards, some in recognition that change from within the party is impossible, others for more Machiavellian reasons.

These broad oppositional fronts represent the beginning of the end of the authoritarian state, with their organizational base, coalitions, conflicts, and proto-party structure composing the next chapter in oppositional development against authoritarianism. They fall between unobtrusive contention, which I have analyzed here, and the white-hot mobilization that is closer to the Western repertoire. These processes too need systemization, for they fall just prior to the broad literature in democratic transition.

Notes

1. Colin Barker kindly provided information about the activities of the Orange Alternative.

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