'Evolution from the inside out':

Revisiting the impact of (re)productive resistance among ultra-orthodox female entrepreneurs

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Abstract

How can resistance produce substantial social changes without becoming detrimental to those resisting? Drawing on qualitative study of diverse social and business Jewish-ultraorthodox female entrepreneurs (JUFE) in Israel, we demonstrate how JUFE's resistance turned productive by advancing different issues related to women's status and rights, leading to greater gender equality in their community. In struggling against their community's patriarchal power, women's resistance acts resulted in multilevel gendered social changes related to embodiment, home equality, economic well-being and women's rights. JUFE's resistance was intermingled with compliance, thus allowing them to engender change processes in an ultra-religious social environment while maintaining their community membership and belonging.

Our contributions is threefold: First, by uncovering resistance forms in social contexts subjected to authoritarian power regimes, we argue that religiosity serves as a *resource* for women not only in resisting gender power relations, but also in promoting broad, gendered social changes without becoming victimized as social outcasts. Second, we uncover the complex dynamics between diverse aspects of domination, the resistant acts invoked in response, the respective compliant practices intermingled with these acts and the perceived risks involved. Third, by demonstrating how JUFE's resistance led to significant, evolutionary modifications in different aspects of an extant social order, while reproducing the hegemonic power relations and social circumstances it aims to modify, we highlight that resistance may become productive *because* it is reproductive of the social order it seeks to change, not despite it.

Introduction

A central debate in organizational studies is concerned with the role and impact of resistance in and around organizations. Scholars have directed attention to 'productive resistance' as the concrete actions and processes offering alternative practices that can influence and modify managerial decisions and change existing power relations (Courpasson et al., 2012; Courpasson, 2016), or as 'facilitative resistance' which promotes organizational change (Thomas & Hardy, 2011). In recognizing the complexity of productive resistance, recent studies have pointed toward a more ambiguous and fluid understanding of resistance outcomes, showing that resistance can both facilitate and impede the ongoing workings of organizations (McCabe, 2018). Hence, resistance, it is argued, 'can be understood to be simultaneously productive and oppositional' (McCabe, 2018, p. 270).

While studies have provided important insights into the diverse and ambivalent outcomes of resistance, little is yet known about how resistance can result in 'real' and significant change, without it becoming detrimental to those resisting. The potential risks of resisting can take diverse forms in different settings, varying from negative implications on one's ethics and loyalty at work, to different types of workplace abuse, layoff, or critical questioning of one's believes and values that "may estrange the individual from the tradition that has formed his or her very subjectivity" (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992, p. 447). In the context of an authoritarian power regime, the various costs of individuals' ability to produce multifaceted, comprehensive social change without being cast out from their social environment are yet to be fully discovered. These issues become particularly relevant to understanding resistance among women from marginalized groups, who are subjected to patriarchal control, in their struggle to promote gender equality through work. The increasing participation of religious female employees in the contemporary job market is particularly intricate, since these women are subjected to community control mechanisms which, being designed to regulate their interactions with men and ensure their piety (Erogul et al., 2016), are often in conflict with Western work norms (Tracey, 2012). Thus, these studies have focused on the ways these women negotiate religious demands in their daily work life outside their community (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2020).

Under these circumstances, some women who adhere to religious demands establish independent entrepreneurial activities (Verduijn & Essers, 2013). Organizational scholars have begun to explore the different

practices by which Muslim entrepreneurs have resisted religious control at work (Essers & Benschop, 2009; Essers, Benschop, & Doorewaard, 2010), yet they have largely concentrated on the individual practices exercised by these women for negotiation of religious and masculine dictates. Therefore, the conceptualization of how work-related resistance can serve as a means for women under religious patriarchy to advance gender-related social changes in their community without becoming social outcasts has remained understudied.

We address this gap by examining qualitative data concerning the impact of diverse social and business initiatives established by Jewish-ultraorthodox female entrepreneurs (JUFE) working in Israel. We explore how JUFE's resistance turned productive by advancing different issues related to women's status and rights, leading to greater gender equality in their community. In struggling against their community's male domination, JUFE's resistance acts, manifested through their entrepreneurial work, resulted in multilevel gendered social changes related to embodiment, home equality, economic well-being and women's rights. Women's resistance was intermingled with compliance, thus allowing them to engender change processes in an ultra-religious community while maintaining their community membership and belonging.

Our contribution is threefold. First, we advance the understanding of the role and impact of resistance in promoting significant social changes by offering a gendered societal-level analysis of women's struggle for greater agency and equality against religious patriarchy. We demonstrate how women's work-related resistance may trigger progressive developments in their community, including improving their status and rights, or modifying domestic gender power relations. By uncovering resistance forms in social contexts subjected to authoritarian power regimes, we argue that religiosity serves as a *resource* for women not only in resisting gender power relations, but also in promoting broad, gendered social changes without becoming victimized as social outcasts.

Second, we uncover the constitutive resources of resistance by illustrating the complex dynamics between diverse aspects of domination, the resistant acts invoked in response, the respective compliant practices intermingled with these acts and the perceived risks involved. Our study illustrates that various power-resistance couplets (Fleming & Spicer, 2007) are linked to respective forms of compliance behaviors that result in diverse forms of *power–resistance–compliance triplets* deployed together which eventually produce transformative social changes. Moreover, inspired by previous discussions regarding the impact of resistance beyond management

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(Courpasson, 2016; McCabe, 2018) or individual organizations (Russell & McCabe, 2015), we show how resistance is productive at different levels simultaneously, carrying multi-level social implications (individual, family, community, institutional).

Third, our study broadens the conceptualization of productive resistance. While we acknowledge the ambivalent and contradictory outcomes of resistance (McCabe, 2018; Ybema & Horvers, 2017), which renders productive resistance as simultaneously reproductive, we further argue that resistance may become productive *because* it is reproductive of the social circumstances it aims to alter, not despite it. Specifically, we illustrate how JUFE's resistance becomes evolutionary, leading to substantial modifications in different aspects of an extant social order, since it is also reproductive of the hegemonic power relations and social circumstances it seeks to change.

Productive resistance and change

Critical management scholars have examined the impact of workplace resistance directed against managerial power, debating whether resistance can lead to 'real' change. Highlighting resistance's transformative dimension, some have shown the extent to which resistance may challenge organizations' power relations (Hoy, 2005), claiming that resistance makes a difference and is thereby productive (Courpasson, 2016; Daskalaki & Kokkinidis, 2017; Marsh & Sliwa, 2021). Others have conceptualized resistance as an apolitical 'safety valve' (Fleming, 2013), referring to the limited influence of isolated, hidden resistance acts that eventually preserve the hegemonic status quo in organizations (Alvesson et al., 2009; Fleming & Spicer, 2007), or direct attention to its doubtful, uncertain consequences (McCabe, 2018; Piderit, 2000). Overall, research on the impact of resistance has grappled with two interrelated aspects: the outcomes of resistance, and for whom these outcomes are productive.

Exploring its impactful outcomes, resistance was claimed to be potentially efficacious for management in promoting organizational change (Ford et al., 2008; McDermott et al., 2013). For example, 'facilitative resistance' was argued to enable organizational change processes based on the transformation of knowledge (Thomas & Hardy, 2011) or on strong networks of relations and reciprocity (Park & Lunt, 2018). Thus, rather than a hindrance to change, resistance was integrated into organizational change processes, thereby enhancing the organization (Erwin & Garman, 2010).

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Courpasson and colleagues (2012) have expanded the discussion on the consequences of resistance by defining productive resistance as the concrete actions and processes that influence managerial decisions and change existing power relations. In this view, resistance is not merely an oppositional response to organizational change, nor does it presuppose management's approval. Rather, resistance becomes productive when it is characterized by different goals vis-a-vis forms of domination embodied through overt initiatives that create eventual change (Hoy, 2005). For example, resistance was shown to trigger broader cognitive shifts among peers, thus altering existing organizational power relations and fostering the development of alternative managerial practices (Courpasson & Dany, 2009), or forcing the organization to compensate its former employees, thereby altering the employer–employee power relationship (Courpasson, 2016). Overall, these studies indicated resistance's potential for leading change processes that are largely beneficial to organizations and their managers (Thomas & Hardy, 2011; Courpasson et al., 2012).

In unpacking the concept of productive resistance, more nuanced conceptualizations of resistance outcomes incorporating a consideration of ambivalence (Piderit, 2000), indicated the limitations of resistance in invoking significant change. Resistance was thus shown to have limited impact on triggering changes in worker–management relations, since employees were found to have limited capacity to influence management's decisions in their struggles against exploitive work by negotiating compromises over hourly rates (Hodson, 1995), which resulted in their limited ability to exercise freedom of action (Anteby, 2008).

Resistance was further argued to yield complex and contradictory outcomes that might be simultaneously productive and oppositional rather than simply beneficial to organizations. Scholars have highlighted that whereas resistance may result in the rise of alternative individual identities and systems of representation within organizations that challenge the status quo, it does not engender significant transformations in organizational power structures (Alvesson & Willmott, 1992; Sveningsson & Alvesson, 2003). McCabe (2018) demonstrated that employees partially disrupted the organization while seeking to produce stable collective resistance and a resistant subjectivity by organizing a ceremonial rally. Thus, 'resistance both utilized and reproduced conditions that facilitate ongoing organizational life, while also seeking to disrupt and challenge it' (McCabe, 2018, p. 270). Illustrating the fluid and complex resistance outcomes was also apparent in acts that took a different, more 'sporadic, pervasive, ambiguous, less focused or organized' form (McCabe et al., 2019, p. 8) and were spawned

by various organizational actors. Therefore, since resistance often operates under the radar, it can both facilitate and hinder organizations' operations, carrying ambiguous, ambivalent, and unpredictable outcomes (McCabe et al., 2019). Further, by directing attention to different, often-conflicting implications of productive resistance, resistance was argued to be productive for both employees and managers (McCabe, 2018), and even beyond individual organizations (Russell & McCabe, 2015).

Discussing the ambiguity of resistance outcomes coincides with the extensive debate on compliance–resistance dialectics through which productive resistance might manifest. Whereas resistance intermingled with compliance was often deemed to be passive, harmless, and thus inconsequential, as it does not proactively subvert power relations or fundamentally challenge the extant order (Fleming & Sewell, 2002; Mumby, 2005), such acts were nonetheless shown to carry meaningful (Baikovich & Wasserman, 2020), effective consequences (Collinson, 1994; Courpasson, 2017). For example, employees' resistance through 'making out' while still expressing outwardly voluntary acceptance helped them to evade the daily demands of work (Burawoy, 1979). By exercising resistance–compliance blends, employees effectively managed to de-legitimize and delay organizational change processes (Ashcraft, 2005). Further, employees' use of distance and persistence strategies, mixing consent, compliance, and resistance against discriminatory selection practices in organizations, turned out to be relatively effective for both employees and employers, leading to modifications in organizational discriminatory selection and promotion (Collinson, 1994). Similarly, engaging in 'consenting resistance' enabled employees to decrease management's control over their daily work life (McCabe, 2014). Thus, rather than being oppositional, compliance-resistance dialectics were influential precisely because resistance was unnoticeable and thus unmanageable (Wasserman & Gabel, 2019).

Yet, uncovering the ambivalence of productive resistance not only addresses the nature of its outcomes in enabling workplace changes, but also relates to the repercussions of resistance acts for the individuals involved, particularly regarding the risks incurred for resisters aiming 'to transform, not just to cope' (Courpasson, 2017, p. 4). As such, employees were found to be willing to risk their lives to alter management's employment decisions (Courpasson, 2017), whereas others exercised different resistance forms to alleviate the risks involved in resisting, as well as its insecurity and instability. These included, for example, the deployment of an organized ceremony as a resistance form (McCabe, 2018) or strategically blending open and subtle resistance strategies to

impede management's change processes (Ybema & Horvers, 2017). However, understanding the ways by which resistance might lead to significant social change processes involving a progressive evolution in a society's social order without endangering those involved is yet to be fully discovered. This is particularly pertinent in exploring resistance implications directed against other sources of power that are non-managerial or are external to organizations, such as religious patriarchy. Women from religious social environments, wherein gender and religion are highly influential in shaping everyday work life, are often depicted as having limited ability to resist and change the power regime they are subjected to without being condemned by their community.

Resistance among religious women: The role of entrepreneurship as a means for social change

The literature on religious women from non-Western social groups has been inspired by transnational feminism (Mahmood, 2001), which poses important challenges to Western feminist theory. Focusing on the diverse experiences, desires, and views of women from various socio-cultural contexts and statuses, studies spotlight women's subjective interpretations of what they consider oppression or agency/resistance (Fotaki & Harding, 2018). Specifically, an act considered mundane and insignificant in a Western society can be perceived as provocative—even subversive—in a traditional society. Thus, women from these societies often simultaneously accept patriarchal religious authority and express their agency and potential resistance toward aspects of male disciplinary power (Mahmood, 2001).

The discussion on whether and to what extent religious women have agency while resisting the male domination and religious dictates they are subjected to emerged mainly in studies on Muslim women. Scholars debated whether the veil is a symbol of women's repression or, instead, reflects a colonial intention aimed at rescuing these women and aiding their empowerment (see review in Macdonald, 2006). Hence, consistent with the dialectics presented in resistance studies, the victimization/agency dichotomy was seen as oversimplifying the complex understanding of religious women's experience in contemporary workspaces, since even as subordinate players, they always play an active role both as subjects of domination and active subjects of their own visibility (Erdreich & Rapoport, 2006).

Examining other religious groups in different social contexts showed that Jewish-ultraorthodox women expressed agency by discursively traversing the boundaries between public/work and private/home in their communities, while adhering to the religious patriarchal structure (Kook & Harel-Shalev, 2020). Jewish-

ultraorthodox female hi-tech employees found alternative ways to comply with their expected gender roles while engaging in micro-emancipatory acts that challenged patriarchal power relations (Wasserman & Frenkel, 2020). Yet, existing literature has largely focused on the various changes led by these women at the individual level, designed to cope with and negotiate religious and masculine demands in everyday work life. Therefore, understanding how religious women's resistance can lead to broad social changes within their social environment without being victimized as resisters remains undiscovered.

One of the common means used by religious women to gain agency against male domination and to resist control was found to be entrepreneurial work (Essers & Benschop, 2009). Entrepreneurial activities were also claimed to empower women in non-religious contexts (Ahl & Marlow, 2012) by using a feminized discourse of difference and a contrasting masculine discourse of professionalism in identity construction processes (Lewis, 2013), or by illustrating how women's enterprises offer self-employment opportunities that contribute to their social inclusion and empowerment (Datta & Gailey, 2012). While neoliberal studies have viewed entrepreneurship as an individual activity aimed at producing personal profit (Hardt & Negri, 2017), gender and entrepreneurship scholarship has acknowledged that entrepreneurship is embedded within socio-cultural norms (Welter et al., 2014). Comprised of individuals' ongoing attempts to seek autonomy and break free from authority, efforts to take ownership, as well as independent declarations designed to create change through removal of constraints, entrepreneurship was viewed as a form of micro-emancipation aimed at setting one free from others' power. In this sense, entrepreneurship is a tool for pursuing freedom and autonomy, one that disrupts the status quo and changes women's social position (Rindova et al., 2009).

These insights are particularly relevant for religious women who have become increasingly engaged in entrepreneurial activities to forge a path into the contemporary work environment. Exploring female entrepreneurs' subjective work experiences has largely focused on their socio-cultural and structural barriers to access opportunities (Erogul et al., 2016), such as lack of male support and permission (Erogul, 2011), limited access to funding and informal networks, and confinement to motherhood responsibilities (Tlaiss, 2014). Studies illustrated the construction of alternative identities among Muslim female entrepreneurs allowing them to conduct diverse entrepreneurial activities and resist their environment's status quo (Essers et al., 2010; Verduijn & Essers, 2013). Muslim female business owners were shown to use various cultural repertoires to negotiate between

conflict and compliance with family norms and values designed to reinforce their position in the public domain (Essers et al., 2013). Similarly, Emirati female entrepreneurs engaged in 'strategic obedience' both to resist and comply with the established boundaries of their religious social context (Barragan et al., 2018).

However, while studies illustrated how Muslim female entrepreneurs resist and comply with patriarchal religious structures, they focused mainly on women's subjective experiences and individual acts (Essers et al., 2013). In this view, women's oppositional goals were largely presented as efforts to evade male domination and promote personal interests, rather than promoting broader change processes. Therefore, the conceptualization of the outcomes of women's resistance to religious patriarchal control on advancing gender equality and women's rights in their community—without risking their denunciation by that same community—have remained understudied. To supplement the existing literature, we concentrate on productive resistance acts exercised by social and business JUFE in everyday work.

Methodology

Case study

The Jewish-ultraorthodox community, an isolated social group comprising 10% of Israeli society, constantly demarcates its boundaries against other Jewish groups through diverse religious rules and restrictions. Promoting religious studies over participation in the labor market, most men devote themselves to full-time religious studies, while women are the breadwinners of their large families (Friedman, 1991). Due to the community's growing poverty, women have been compelled to join the secular labor market seeking higher salaries (Malachi & Abramovsky, 2019). Consequently, there is a growing tolerance within the ultraorthodox-Jewish community of women who establish their own enterprises in different industries. The case of JUFE in Israel is particularly relevant for the study of women's resistance and its role in promoting social changes, since these processes reflect similar developments affecting women in other developing communities worldwide (Tønnessen, 2019).

Given the community's patriarchal domination, whereby women are subjected to male authority and constant surveillance of their behavior, JUFE are targeted by rigid religious rules dictating women's anticipated behavior and restrained presence in the public sphere. These include chastity rules regulating women's bodily appearance through a strict dress code (long skirts, dark tights, high-neck and long-sleeved tops, head coverings, no colorful

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nail polish or extravagant makeup), and gender segregation that serves to avoid any interaction with men in daily work life. Further, women are expected to display modesty in everyday life, including being content with their lot, while refraining from personal and professional ambitions, or from pursuing financial growth or business success apart from earning one's livelihood. Since women's entrepreneurial work is designed to allow their husbands to focus exclusively on religious studies, entrepreneurship is viewed as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

According to the community's hierarchical structure, JUFE are further expected to serve as their husbands' helpmates by submitting themselves to their husbands' decisions, focusing on taking care of their families, and being solely responsible for their homes. Subjected to the distinct gender roles of spouses and mothers, women are required to remain in the domestic sphere and refrain from any presence in the public sphere. Hence, while women are expected to adhere to docile gender roles within their community, they are simultaneously closely regulated throughout their entrepreneurial economic activity in the public sphere. As members of an ultra-authoritarian community, women are further forced to comply with groupism, or the overall social orientation of collectivity and unified behavior. Religious authorities' attempts to enforce these demands in everyday life are multifaceted and ubiquitous, encompassing numerous individual and collective sanctions: public denunciation of women's immodest appearance, removal of children from the community's educational institutions, public ostracism of members who deviate, etc.

Seeking to avoid liberalization, the Jewish-ultraorthodox community views any interface with the secular Israeli sector as illegitimate, spiritually dangerous, and an actual threat to its extant social order as an enclaved society. While some of JUFE's business initiatives are conducted in the secular public, their interactions with this sector are driven merely by business interests, holding no oppositional goals regarding the Israeli general public. The community is often subjected to criticism by Israel's secular society, which disapproves of the community's strict lifestyle, its treatment of women, and its cultural separatism from the general society.

Data collection

To study how JUFE manage and resist religious demands posed on them at work, we used an inductive, qualitative case study methodology designed to explore the subjective point of view of individuals operating within

an examined frame of meaning (Ybema et al., 2009). Based on the interpretations and experiences of diverse JUFE, we explored women's forms of resistance and their outcomes.

We gathered our qualitative data in 2016–2018, through 30 interviews with JUFE working in assorted fields in Israel. Interviewees were selected through snowball sampling, relying on self-identification as Jewish-ultraorthodox owners of enterprises. Despite interviewees' relative homogeneity, we attempted to reduce similarity biases by sampling 13 social and 17 business entrepreneurs (e.g., software development, online marketing, fashion, education, social welfare, legal services, accounting, etc.) from different religious affiliations (Hassidic, Sephardic, and modern-ultraorthodox), and with diverse entrepreneurial experiences. Interviews were semi-structured, lasting 1–2 hours on average. We examined how JUFE experienced religious demands in everyday entrepreneurial work, the relationship between their work and religious authorities, the relationship with their community and the secular business environment, the ways in which they spoke about themselves, their work practices, and the meanings they attached to their ongoing entrepreneurial activities. Interviewees' preoccupation with women's empowerment and gender equality was raised of their own accord. We also reviewed religious and secular media coverage, press items, research reports, and state policy documents to follow recent changes in the Jewish-ultraorthodox society and to corroborate our findings.

Data analysis

We approached our study with a broad interest in JUFE's experiences of religious demands at work. Data analysis took an interpretative approach and a hermeneutic reading that searches repetitive patterns to decipher concealed meanings (Age, 2011) and to provide a rich case description that could assist in drawing broader theoretical conclusions. Our analysis is grounded in a meticulous comparison of how interviewees positioned themselves internally, by conforming to their religious leaders and norms, and externally, by seeking to gain legitimacy from their business environment as individual entrepreneurs.

Collecting data from interviews allowed us to build a grounded theory that emerged from the field (Charmaz, 2014). Our methodology involved sifting, charting, and sorting material by key themes, and it enabled new issues and theoretical framings to emerge from the data. This open-ended yet systematic approach allowed us to transcend induction and an iterative process of data collection to reconsider our theoretical framework and to

consider productive resistance as our main analytical framework. After realizing that JUFE's resistance practices are designed to promote gender equality, we classified all quotes into four categories, labelled as different types of gendered social changes. In each level we examined the distinct dynamics between the different components (Table 1).

During data collection and analysis, we attempted to consider our identities as secular women while acknowledging unavoidable cultural differences. Consistent with feminist methodology (Reinharz & Davidman, 1992), we acknowledge the inevitable power relations in which our study is embedded. We attempted to resolve these issues by ensuring that participation in our study was grounded in informed consent, while acceding to interviewees' preferences regarding the interview's place and time, and the questions they felt comfortable answering. To protect confidentiality, all interviewees were assigned pseudonyms. Moreover, although some entrepreneurs expressed overt criticism of their community, we have not published our findings outside the international academic stage in order not to jeopardize women's community membership, or potentially damage their initiatives' impact in their community which we as secular, feminist researchers view as highly significant in promoting gender equality.

Findings

Although being subjected to religious patriarchal control regime and highly prescriptive religious rules, JUFE engaged in productive resistance designed to promote gender equality by advancing social change processes concerning different aspects of women's status and rights in their community. These changes took four main forms (see Table 1): producing an embodied self (individual level); producing home equality (family level); producing economic well-being (community level); and producing awareness and protection of women's rights (institutional level). The different gender-related changes led by women's resistance varied according to the level of their implications, pointing to different recipients for whom they turned productive. Extending the concept of power as domination (Spicer & Fleming, 2007), these processes were directed against different aspects of gender domination prescribing women's appearance, their behaviors in the public and private spheres, and basic rights. In response to these dictates, JUFE engaged in different types of resistance acts designed to promote gendered societal developments.

However, JUFE's engagement in such resistance acts were thought to be risky behaviors. Invoking feminist social changes in the Jewish-ultraorthodox context, wherein disobedience and nonconformity might be detrimental for those involved, required women to resist in ways that would not victimize them as social outcasts in their community. Therefore, women's interpretations of the various risks involved in their resistance shaped their deployment of respective compliance practices designed to retain their community membership while leading to impactful outcomes.

Table 1: Findings summary table

Dimensions of analysis / What type of social change is being triggered? Level of implications	What aspect of gender domination do JUFE resist?	How do JUFE resist?	How do JUFE comply?	What is the perceived risk?	To whom is resistance productive for?
Producing an embodied self: Individual level Exposure to bodily alternatives	Bodily control	Embodied transgressions	Submission to bodily discipline within community boundaries	impious	Female entrepreneurs
Producing home equality: Family level Balancing gendered labor division Gaining legitimacy in the secular public sphere for an equal domestic gender division in their community	Control of distinct gender roles Control over presence in public sphere	Active involvement and presence in the public sphere	Enactment of the 'ideal' spousal role	Inappropriate/improper spouses and mothers	Ultraorthodox women in the domestic sphere (home)
Producing economic well-being: Community level Improvement of people's socio-economic well-being Reduction of poverty rates in the ultraorthodox community	Financial control over economic wealth and business success apart from earning one's livelihood	Financial spanning of breadwinner role	Sanctification of breadwinner role	Immodest/immoral /greedy	Entire Ultraorthodox community (men and women)
Producing awareness and protection of women's rights: Institutional level Promoting taboo issues previously prohibited and excluded from discourse or practice in their community Advancing women's rights and status through accessing important decision-making areas within the ultraorthodox community	Control over women's rights	Establishing feminist initiatives	Submission to religious authority Getting legitimation from institutional/religious authority	Feminist	Ultraorthodox women

Producing an embodied self: Individual level

In response to the Jewish-ultraorthodox community's gender domination, wherein women face bodily control and physical gender segregation, JUFE resisted the strict chastity rules to which they are subjected through embodied transgressions—namely, the subversion of their pious dress code. Apparent among business and social JUFE, embodied transgressions included strategic violation of the woman's disciplined, chaste appearance by situationally defying their pious dress code to overcome obstacles related to religiosity at work outside their community. Yona, a fashion entrepreneur who often travels abroad for business, stated:

> I'm 20 years in the fashion business. My conservative appearance has remained the
> same, so people in the community respect me. Going abroad for business travels with my

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husband, we drew so much attention with our appearance, [so] I changed my headcover
to a wig and I asked him to change his [appearance] too, so we won't be that distinctive.
People used to take photos of us! My business partners in Madrid or London have never
seen people like us, they have no idea.

When business interests surfaced, JUFE questioned the necessity of continuously maintaining their chaste body outside of religious inspection. To adjust their external distinctiveness as Jewish-ultraorthodox entrepreneurs facing secular partners, women deviated from religious dictates by re-appropriating their bodies strategically in pursuit of diverse work opportunities. Examples include changing from their traditional attire of a tight headkerchief into the more modern headcover of a wig, or by traveling abroad alone to conduct business meetings with male partners, thereby challenging body regulations regarding interaction with other bodies in the public sphere. These actions were productive for the individuals involved, since they enabled women to conduct their entrepreneurial activities independently, without standing out in the secular work environment.

However, besides their practical benefits, JUFE prompted a progressive change process wherein their display of embodied alternatives expanded to other women in the community through gradual exposure to their acts. Yehudit, a marketing entrepreneur, stated:

Jewish-ultraorthodox women who are less strict about their bodily appearance, dressing
more fashionable or extravagant, are often perceived [as] less pious. As if they slack off in
other religious practices. I use red nail polish, I wear a longer wig (over the shoulders) and
a knee-length skirt, but I am still very devoted. I value chastity and I keep the redlines.
People who know my work know that about me.

Through these multiple acts of de-legitimization, JUFE's embodied transgressions of chastity rules led other women to acknowledge that piety should not be determined exclusively based on dress code, in turn empowering them to autonomously decide how and when to follow chastity rules, and whether individual bodily adjustments are required for work-related purposes. Although women's resistance manifested outside their community, away from religious leaders' surveilling gaze, their peers and other Jewish-ultraorthodox women observed it. Consequently, these actions turned productive because they exposed other women to alternatives they can follow as individuals, thus leading to 'moderniz[ing] without losing the Jewish-ultraorthodox character'. Adina, a fashion entrepreneur, elaborated:

In our sector there is a phenomenon called OWS—One Woman Said. The best
promotion method. One woman sees how I dress at work and says: I want to get dressed
like that too. Then it spreads…as she tells her neighbor, sister, cousin, etc., and it
becomes less rare and more common. People open up. There are more and more
women like that in the community.

In this sense, JUFE attempted to bring about new social circumstances through their actions as individual entrepreneurs (Rindova et al., 2009), wherein women's bodily adjustments gradually modified the relationship between their bodies and associated individual behavior in the public space (Harding, Gilmore & Ford, 2021), and religious leaders as its exclusive owners.

Yet, while JUFE resisted religious chastity requirements, they did not abandon them altogether, often stating that 'being pious is all about what and how you dress, otherwise it's bad for business'. Balancing compliance and resistance (Ashcraft, 2005; Ybema & Horvers, 2017), women attempted to manipulate the strict chastity rules for work purposes, but without undermining the essence of chastity in everyday life. Seeking not to endanger themselves by being considered impious and disrespectful in their community, JUFE commonly acknowledged the need to 'maintain religiosity'. Women's interpretations of the risks involved in their resistance conducted in the presence of secular business partners and away from religious authorities' gaze were therefore accompanied by the display of a disciplined, chaste body inside the community, where religious regulations prevailed. These behaviors took an ad-hoc/local, separate and reactive form, which was synonymous with women's resistant oppositional goals designed to accomplish instrumental/pragmatic, individual work-related goals. Overall, JUFE's intermingling of resistance and submission to their bodily discipline was characterized by ongoing manipulation, wherein they attempted to actively decide how and when to craft their bodily appearance, while simultaneously maintaining their chaste appearance and community membership.

Producing home equality: Family level

Subjected to the community's domination over the gender labor division, which binds women's presence to the domestic sphere, JUFE resisted through active involvement and presence in the public sphere, both in their community and in secular society. This included participating in public, work-related activities, including various governmental forums and social committees; leading senior executive forums and engaging in executive-level decision-making processes; promoting large-scale business development efforts; making presentations in local and international forums; and fostering joint ventures between different governmental and business bodies. Ruchama, a business entrepreneur, described:

> We learn in school [i.e., religious institutions] from a very young age that women are insignificant. That they need to be submissive, stay under the radar and in the shadow of

> their husbands. To be a successful businesswoman is always difficult, but in our community it's even more complicated because we are out there with the things we do, and that threatens Jewish-ultraorthodox women's designated role.

Women's involvement in various public platforms challenges the Jewish-ultraorthodox patriarchal domination, which demands that they remain primarily focused on their households, subordinate to their husbands and the community collective. Through these acts, social and business JUFE resisted their spousal power relations and their anticipated gender roles.

Becoming proactively engaged both in their community and in the wider, Israeli secular public significantly violates the community's strict rules of public/private segregation, which exclude its members (especially women) from the Israeli secular public, that generally criticizes the segregated, patriarchal Jewish-ultraorthodox lifestyle. Illustrative of such resistance is JUFE's recipient of various public awards (e.g., 'Innovative Businesswoman of the Year', 'Most Influential Female Activist') and their participation in secular ceremonies (e.g., torchbearers in a national ceremony), while being glorified as 'heroines' in the local secular media. Being acknowledged through these public awards challenges JUFE's distinct gender role as mothers and spouses who are required to stay at home, away from any public recognition, thus contributing to a more balanced gender labor division in the domestic sphere. Further, by accepting the secular public's appreciation for their activities, JUFE rejected religious dictates to condemn secular Israeli society and avoid any interaction with it. Ronit, a social entrepreneur, explained:

> Jewish-ultraorthodox women don't just stay at home [anymore], raising kids. We do important things. Being an entrepreneur means that I always look for ways to make the present into something new, something bigger and better. Be active, think and learn new things that I wasn't familiar with before. I must get exposed, not stay in my comfort zone in the community.

Widely acknowledged for their outstanding entrepreneurial accomplishments and influence in various fields, JUFE have attained broad legitimacy in Israeli secular society for an equal domestic gender division in their community. Such public acknowledgment is undervalued in the Jewish-ultraorthodox community, whose leaders attempt to preserve its distinct fundamentalist regime and are thus concerned with the resulting exposure of women to secular ideas and thinking—such as feminist notions of equality and women's rights—that might endanger the extant gender power relations at home.

JUFE's active involvement in the public sphere has turned productive for Jewish-ultraorthodox women in their daily routines at home, since it has invoked a change in the domestic gendered labor division and enabled

them to temporarily withdraw from domestic roles that had been exclusively theirs. Chana, a hi-tech entrepreneur, stated:

> [Because we are busy] husbands have recently become much more involved, participative at home. Nowadays you can see men who take their kids in the mornings, since their wives leave early for work. This indicates the husbands' high devotion. Without it, all of this wouldn't have happened.

JUFE attempt to redefine the family's core values, their respect for domestic life, and its related housekeeping practices as no longer strictly the purview of women, but now including men as well. Actively involving men as the 'executive partners at home' and as their 'right-hand, valuable helpers' not only challenges the Jewish-ultraorthodox patriarchal spousal power relations wherein women must serve as their husbands' helpers. It also benefits Jewish-ultraorthodox women by exempting them from their distinct gender roles as mothers and spouses, and from the traditional gendered labor division dictating their domestic presence.

Moreover, JUFE's resistance has been productive for Jewish-ultraorthodox women in the domestic sphere, having inspired an ongoing, widespread discourse in the public media directing attention to women's traditional disadvantaged position in their families and their increasing influence within their community (David, 2015; Wagner, 2015). Thus, it has had significant implications for advancing women's status at home vis-à-vis their husbands, promoting greater home equality in their community.

However, being actively involved and present in the public sphere carries the risk of being considered inappropriate spouses and mothers. Rina, a hi-tech entrepreneur, explained:

> When you come back home from work at 8:00 pm, neighbors look at you and talk behind your back about what a bad family person you are.

JUFE's interpretation of the potential risks involved in resisting shaped their efforts to balance their disobedience of their anticipated domestic presence and gendered labor division by deploying compliance practices. Discursively presenting their behaviors as complementary rather than contradictory to their anticipated docile role, Pnina, a social entrepreneur, observed:

> Many Jewish-ultraorthodox women who run big companies say: 'I stay at home; my husband is everything and I just follow him." Does that make sense?! You conduct one-million-dollar business transactions, but he is responsible for it?! It's said to subdue the internal conflict between who they really are and the education they received about who they should be, the ideal Jewish-ultraorthodox woman. In effect, the gap is very big, and to solve it, women prefer to separate things, by saying that they are not feminists. Instead, they behave as feminists—close deals of millions or chair huge corporations outside the community—but then ignore it…because how can you let your husband lead when you're the one doing everything: provide for your family, manage an enterprise, give birth, raise kids, etc.

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Women used the hegemonic, patriarchal discourse enacting their ideal spousal role designed to reinforce the domestic power relations vis-à-vis their husbands. Expressing full commitment to their anticipated docility and social marginality, they rejected notions of feminism, independent action, and influential power, despite their overtly subversive actions, to sublimate their defiance of religious dictates. Seeking to mitigate their public legitimation in the secular sphere, where they were often presented as their community's feminist social change agents, JUFE displayed their activities as accommodating and consistent with the Jewish-ultraorthodox patriarchal social order, while presenting themselves as submissive and inferior to their husbands. Thus, by combining their subversive presence in the public sphere and their compliant enactment of their spousal (gender) role, women sought to compensate their husbands and to sustain the outcomes of their acts without becoming social outcasts.

Producing economic well-being: Community level

The third form of productive resistance concerns the impact of JUFE's efforts to provide economic well-being for their community. Struggling against the Jewish-ultraorthodox regime, which glorifies poverty as the ideal standard of living, along with community restrictions pertaining to women's entrepreneurial efforts to earn a modest livelihood, JUFE have financially expanded their breadwinner roles. Women engaged in oppositional, profit-driven behaviors, including business development, cultivating investor relations and business networking, closing large-scale business transactions, and providing marketing presentations to potential investors and business partners designed to propel their enterprise toward financial success. Mostly apparent among business entrepreneurs, JUFE have undertaken business practices that undermine rabbinical dictates, frequently viewing them as 'irrational', 'wrong', and thus 'unnecessary'. Malka, a businesswoman, said:

> Most Rabbis firmly object that women develop a personal career or manage a successful large-scale business. There is no prohibition that pertains to the *Halacha* [Jewish law]. It's not a *kosher* [religiously proper] or an ideological reason, but rather because of political or business motives. They want to keep women uninvolved and inside the community, so they can get more power and money.

By earning hefty wages, JUFE violated religious demands that proscribe their pursuit of financial development of their enterprises as the foundation for economic wealth or for cultivating professional careers. Assigned the role of family breadwinner, unlike other traditional social contexts, JUFE have resisted the Jewish-ultraorthodox patriarchal domination that sought to limit women's potential economic power and status in an effort to perpetuate

the community's existing gender–power relations. Moreover, women's engagement in money-making business practices, viewed as greedy and hence religiously inappropriate, has undermined religious dictates constraining women's entrepreneurial activities. Renana, a hi-tech entrepreneur, commented:

> As a startup founder, I need to make my own money, I always have to expand financially. I have enough money to provide for my family, but that's not enough to hold a sustainable business. I've always been eager to have my own business, learn new things professionally and seek opportunities to develop my own initiative.

Financially, JUFE sought to expand their entrepreneurial activities and garner profits. Through these acts, they have resisted rules of religious modesty prescribing their role as breadwinners who are expected to modestly provide for their learning husbands and large households.

Women's resistance has inspired two interrelated change processes. First, despite rabbinical dictates to be content with one's lot, JUFE have advanced their individual beliefs about what is an acceptable entrepreneurial role to other women in their community. As a result, they have often been viewed as 'role models', motivating other Jewish-ultraorthodox women to act similarly. Shifra, a hi-tech startup founder, said:

> I help other Jewish-ultraorthodox women who wish to succeed businesswise. I'm invited to give related lectures at different forums. I became someone that women can think about and feel: "If she's successful, we can all do this!" It really empowers others to do the same. It means a lot to me, it's very rewarding.

Drawing on the traditional, Jewish-ultraorthodox socio-cultural notion of mentoring, according to which one follows a publicly acknowledged senior teacher (i.e., religious leader/rabbi; Friedman, 1991), JUFE have not only reframed the prescribed boundaries of their breadwinner role. They have also reconstructed their work as religiously acceptable and thus socially normative for other Jewish-ultraorthodox women. Rivka, a software entrepreneur, explained:

> For Jewish-ultraorthodox, learning from others who are successful is very significant. Seeing someone who had a business exit and remained religiously devoted, both as a good wife for her husband and as a community member. And personally, that she is satisfied with her achievements and thus serves as a better mom for her kids. Understanding that someone has developed economically, earned a lot of money and still stayed 'alive'.

By engaging in profit-oriented business activities, JUFE showed other women that their anticipated roles as mothers and spouses are not in conflict with their desire for an independent, successful business, which might threaten Jewish-ultraorthodox gender power relations. Specifically, they managed to engender perceptual shifts among Jewish-ultraorthodox women in their community regarding their outstanding business accomplishments,

commonly viewed as 'reliable evidence for one's religiosity', or as a confirmation that 'becoming wealthy or having a comfortable life is not an indication of one's religiosity'.

Second, JUFE's resistance carried broader implications for the entire community regarding a highly controversial social issue: the value of money and the work ethos in Jewish-ultraorthodox society. Women's profitable business practices offered an alternative model of economic well-being and a better quality of life, despite religious authorities' demands to choose a life of material poverty in favor of religious studies (Friedman, 1991). By challenging the religious poverty ideal with that of a profitable, financially comfortable life, JUFE realized their community's desire for a better life, which no one in their community previously dared to pursue. This significant social impact of JUFE's resistance is reflected in the continuous decline in poverty rates within the Jewish-ultraorthodox sector, due to JUFE's profitable entrepreneurial activities (Malachi & Abramovsky, 2019).

Moreover, women's resistance has fueled a series of debates within their community against religious dictates for economic scarcity, over which religious leaders had no control. This included professional peer groups' discussions, informal conversations with neighbors and family members, and formal interviews that women provided for the general media and business magazines outside their community. These processes were institutionalized through organized forums, various professional networks, and structured mentoring programs established by JUFE to leverage the leadership and economic success of motivated and capable Jewish-ultraorthodox women in Israel's labor market.

Nevertheless, JUFE's resistance was often experienced as precarious for those involved. Pursuing business success and profit-driven practices often perceived as immodest and greedy in the community might be associated with low morals. Understanding the ethical risks involved in their actions, JUFE sought to render their business practices as religiously legitimate by juxtaposing their subversive behaviors with expressions of full commitment to the religious demands they resisted. Shifra, a hi-tech entrepreneur, illustrated:

> I sold my first startup because I wanted something bigger, professionally. People told me: 'You should be careful, it's too much. All you really need to do is to provide for your family'. Overall, I know I just fulfil my role. I'm doing all this to provide for my family, my home, and to enable my husband to study. Since I sold my first startup and established my recent one, my husband wrote three additional books! Whenever my dad sees me, he says: 'You're a great woman'. My family supports me; they realize how much I succeed.

Emphasizing their orientation toward sacred goals (religious studies), women cast their financial success in compliant terms (to 'fulfil my role') to sanctify their entrepreneurial activities. By derogating themselves from the

personal economic accomplishments and business successes considered violations of their expected modest entrepreneurial work, women presented their submission with their anticipated role as breadwinners to purify their business practices as a means of serving their husbands' designated religious duty (as learners). Thus, JUFE sought to reconcile their individual aspirations for business success and professional development with their Jewish-ultraorthodox membership, while simultaneously keeping them separate and distinct. The combination of sanctifying JUFE's breadwinner role while overriding its financial boundaries indicates women's strategic cooperation with religious dictates regarding their expected modest entrepreneurial work and their gender (economic) role, while leading the resistance against religious dictates of poverty life.

Producing awareness and protection of women's rights: Institutional level

Regulated by a Jewish-ultraorthodox patriarchal regime that deprived women of their fundamental rights and entitlements, JUFE resisted women's oppression by initiating controversial institutions designed to protect women's basic rights and evoke their awareness of these rights. Such initiatives included the establishment of a treatment center for at-risk female youth, legal and emotional counseling for divorced women, legal assistance for sexual assault victims, women's health awareness programs and mental health services, sex education workshops, and the formation of a women's political party. The substance of these social enterprises undermined religiously mandated social issues, which were prohibited and silenced by religious leaders to preserve the community's collectivity and homogeneity. By challenging religious leaders' hegemonic efforts to supress these topics in the community, JUFE activities violated prevailing religious demands for conformist social orientation and standardized behavior.

Other initiatives focused on higher education for Jewish-ultraorthodox women, including segregated academic programs, designated fellowships, or professional programs offering updated knowledge and skills required for well-paying jobs or senior career-oriented occupations in the general labor market. These initiatives were banned by religious leaders, who commonly claimed that 'women should not be more educated than their husbands'. Mendy, an educational enterpreneur, stated:

> Getting a university degree is more than just education, it's about high-quality employment and empowerment. It's my contribution back to the community. This is the channel to change the discourse. To have more Jewish-ultraorthodox women, and gradually more men, out there, in schools, at work, not only in Israel's 'backyard'.

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JUFE opposed religious rules of docility according to which women should serve as their husbands' helpmates by submitting themselves to their husbands' decisions, while refraining from personal empowerment or self-fulfillment through acquiring professional knowledge or higher education, which might jeopardize the community's male domination.

JUFE's resistance acts were productive, since they provided alternative, organized services and institutions for Jewish-ultraorthodox women that protected and advanced their rights in the broad socio-cultural context wherein these activities were embedded. Lending prominence to topics considered religiously unacceptable through their feminist initiatives, JUFE ultimately altered certain aspects related to women's status and rights in the prevailing, taken-for-granted, oppresive Jewish-ultraorthodox social order. Significantly, they advanced taboo issues that were prohibited from discourse or practice in their community to empower women from their oppressed social position. According to Pnina, a social entrepreneur:

> Our community must understand that Jewish-ultraorthodox women, like all other women, deserve dignity and are entitled to have their rights, both according to the law and the *Halacha* [Jewish law]. To deprive women [of] emotional support after being abused or from getting out of a harmful marriage because it challenges fundamentalist demands for social collectivity and obedience to religious leaders is merely against basic women's rights.

By developing alternative institutional infrastructures, JUFE managed to raise the entire community's awareness of women as full-fledged community members. This impact manifested in the emerging legitimacy attributed to their social initiatives exercised in the community, demonstrating not only the religious visibility and legitimacy of these initiatives, but also the wider acknowledgment of Jewish-ultraorthodox women's needs and basic rights. JUFE's resistance turned productive, since it altered the dominant, hegemonic discourse in their community. Rinna, a legal enterpreneur, referred to these changes:

> Working from the inside fosters a growing awareness of issues that [we] previously were not allowed to talk about in the community. For example, there are online reports covering sexual assaults on Jewish-ultraorthodox websites, but things are not yet reported in our printed media. That's the next step.

Through their initiatives, JUFE prompted religious leaders to accommodate opinions and goals that were usually suppressed regarding women's rights. By providing knowledge, professional tools, and personal support—symbolic goods hitherto restricted to Jewish-ultraorthodox men—JUFE triggered what they commonly referred to as 'an evolution from the inside' in their religious environment. Specifically, they achieved substantial feminist

progress that enabled both significant improvement in women's status and greater gender equality, which ultimately contribute to the entire community.

Correspondingly, JUFE's resistance turned productive as they became partners in central decision-making processes that were not previously open to them. Women participated in governmental forums and committees that discussed formerly taboo social issues pertaining to Jewish-ultraorthodox women and their sector (e.g., education, employment, women's rights). Referring to JUFE's influence on such broad processes from which they were previously excluded, Etty, a wellfare enterprenur, said:

> Being involved in different round tables together with our Rabbis, the state attorney's office, Israel's police and welfare services, to jointly discuss sexual assaults is extremely significant and transformative for our community. This cooperation and direct contact between rabbis, rabbinical judges, and key public figures from the general Israeli society and its government is a transverse, fundamental change in awareness that didn't happen beforehand. These issues were banned from public discourse for years, within and outside the community.

JUFE's influential role in promoting gender equality in their society enabled them to express claims and interests that had previously been ignored. This kind of productive resistance allowed JUFE to be heard by religious authorities and other powerful actors (including governmental authorities), ultimately leading to cooperation in producing significant social change.

The establishment of such initiatives was considered dangerous for the resisters. Through these acts, JUFE run the risk of being commonly perceived as 'feminists' or 'female fighters'—a derogatory labeling in their community that engenders their individual well-being and the comfort of their husbands and children who participate in the community's institutions. Therefore, aiming 'to trigger an evolution rather than revolution' in their community, JUFE drew on their community's patriarchal structure by strategically recruiting community leaders as a resource that enabled them to 'do things quietly', 'from inside'. Specifically, women continually consulted with religious leaders to gain their approval, demonstrating the religious visibility and legitimacy of their initiatives through the tailoring of their enterprises to Jewish-ultraorthodox customers' distinct lifestyles and needs. Commonly referring to their compliance with community leaders in a calculated manner ('I need to be smart to get what I aim for'; 'We must convince them [Rabbis] that our work is no threat'), women's conformity appeared strategic and selective. Tzila, a social entrepreneur, explained:

> Our community must develop in some respects. As a Jewish-ultraorthodox I can't change our society or its public sphere. That's why I must get Rabbis' approval and support to change things. I don't always consult with Rabbis, not about everything. Whenever it's

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necessary. I know that if I want to promote meaningful change processes about anything in our community, it must be in cooperation with our leaders.

While exhibiting the docility and overall collective behavior demanded of their gender role when interfacing with religious leaders, women drew on leaders' approval as a strategic resource in achieving power, legitimacy, and autonomy in running their social enterprises. Like this, JUFE engaged in 'patriarchal bargains' (Kandiyoti, 1988)—an exchange wherein they traded their submission to religious authority by selectively consulting with rabbis, with gaining the acceptability and independence required to operate their feminist, subversive enterprises in and outside their community. Overall, by using various means to resist and comply in different contexts, JUFE continued their subversive behaviors without experiencing inconsistency across their competing social roles (breadwinners, spouses, mothers). These dialectics also allowed them to induce gender-related social changes in a community characterized by a culture of conformity and collectivity without being denounced by it.

Juxtaposing resistance with compliance, these findings follow scholarly claims that resistance is complex and ambiguous (Collinson, 1994; McCabe, 2018). Yet, in our case, JUFE managed to advance women's rights and enhance their status and public presence through their activities *because of* their use of various compliance practices that partially reproduce the Jewish-ultraorthodox gender inequality they struggled against. Therefore, JUFE's resistance becomes productive because it is concurrently reproductive, as it both preserves and rejects the gender power relations wherein these acts are embedded.

Discussion

This article has examined how women's resistance against patriarchal domination serves as a means to advance gender equality. We demonstrated that women's work-related resisting is productive, since it sparks broad gender-related change processes in their community that pertain to different aspects of women's status and rights. To produce substantial social changes concerning women's work, family and community life, women's resistant acts are intermingled with respective compliance practices which partially reproduce the extant patriarchal regime they resisted.

These findings offer three overarching insights into resistance scholarship: the significance of resistance in promoting gender-related social transformations, the constituents of resistance in facilitating multilevel change, and the interdependence of productive and reproductive resistance.

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The significance of resistance in promoting gender-related social transformations

Our study broadens the conceptualization of the role and impact of resistance by offering a gendered, societal-level analysis of women's struggle against religious patriarchy. Women's resistance through entrepreneurial work resulted in substantial socio-cultural consequences that advanced gender equality and women's empowerment without victimizing those engaging in it. Whereas studies have concentrated on senior managers' resistance (Thomas & Hardy, 2011; Courpasson et al., 2012) or on employees' resistance as productive (Daskalaki & Kokkinidis, 2017; McCabe, 2014), we focus on doubly-disadvantaged actors such as minority-group women who, despite their underprivileged social status, invoke profound gendered social change processes in their community. Therefore, resisting through work, we argue, not only makes a difference for struggles against organizational power (Courpasson et al., 2012; McCabe, 2018) or organizational change (Ford et al., 2008;) Rather, it can make a difference in struggles addressing other sources of power that are non-managerial and are external to organizations, such as the religious patriarchal control regime.

In our case, JUFE managed to lead substantial gender-related transformations in their community without becoming social outcasts as resisters. These included a growing exposure to bodily alternatives, balanced domestic labor division, overall improvement of people's socio-economic well-being, advancement of taboo issues previously prohibited and excluded from discourse or practice, and access into important decision-making areas within their community. By promoting such outcomes, our analysis further indicates the importance of entrepreneurial work as a tool for triggering socio-cultural change processes (Rindova et al., 2009).

Further, our study indicates the role of religiosity in women's resisting in an enclaved, ultra-religious social context. Whereas religion has been viewed as a tool for maintaining male domination in regimes characterized by patriarchy and strict social hierarchy (Macdonald, 2006), we illustrate how religiosity is recruited as a *resource* not only to resist gender power relations, but also to promote broad, gendered social changes. Thus, our analysis follows transnational feminists' calls to examine traditional social contexts to uncover diverse resistance practices in environments often characterized by specific gender power relations (Fotaki & Harding, 2018).

Specifically, JUFE did not entirely reject religious dictates but rather deployed their religiosity in different and often contradictory ways to facilitate social changes from within their community—in cooperation with its

patriarchal regime—without being cast out. An illustration is JUFE's use of the religious gender role distinction by overdoing their breadwinner role (e.g., by becoming financially successful) designed to support their husbands' religious studies, whereby they managed to improve their community's socio-economic well-being despite religious dictates for poverty. In this way, women deployed religion as a double-edged sword, using it to serve as a tool for women's empowerment rather than their subjugation.

The constituents of resistance in facilitating multilevel social change

Our analysis advances the understanding of *how* resistance can result in multilevel social change processes by highlighting its constitutive resources. Resisting is comprised of diverse aspects of power, the resistant acts invoked in response, the respective compliant practices intermingled with these acts and the perceived risks involved (Table 1). We extend the conceptualization of 'power as domination' coined by Spicer and Fleming (2007) to include four aspects of patriarchal domination that women are subjected to concurrently, showing that each domination aspect triggers different resistant acts which manifest through different means. By resisting their individual religious bodily regulation, JUFE exercised embodied transgressions which violated chastity rules by making independent choices regarding their bodily display for work-related purposes. Or, by rejecting the community's control over their public presence and their distinct gender role as mothers and spouses, JUFE withdrew from their family duties to become involved in the public sphere outside their homes.

Moreover, we exemplify that the various couplets of power/domination and resistance are also linked to respective forms of compliance behaviors combined with them. While studies have acknowledged the complex, multifaceted nature of resistance by showing how resistance is intertwined with compliance (Ashcraft, 2005; Fleming & Sewell, 2002), we detail the types of compliant practices that are combined with certain resistance acts. In exposing these different compliant patterns exercised to resist, we broaden the conceptualization of power-resistance couplets in organization studies (Fleming & Spicer, 2007) to include complex dynamics comprised of diverse forms of *power-resistance-compliance triplets* exercised together (Table 1).

Illustrative of these power-resistance-compliance triplets is JUFE's struggling against the community's domination over their basic rights and entitlements. JUFE negotiated their submission to religious authority by selectively consulting with rabbis to gain the acceptability and independence required to operate their feminist,

subversive enterprises in and outside their community. Similarly, women's resistance to the religious financial control that invoked women's financial spanning of their expected boundaries of modest entrepreneurial work, along with their acceding to the religious demand for a life of poverty by sanctifying their breadwinner role for religious goals.

The complex dynamics between such power-resistance-compliance triplets are shaped by the perceived risks involved and their implications for the resisters. Whereas scholars have directed attention to the risks associated with resistance acts (Ybema & Horvers, 2017; McCabe, 2018), we provide a detailed and nuanced depiction of the diverse types of risks involved in resistance acts (e.g., being perceived as impious, inappropriate spouses and mothers, immoral/greedy, or as feminist) and how these shape particular compliance-resistance dialectics. Resisters' perceptions of the risks involved in their actions shape their compliant behaviors, intended to partially balance for some the elements of power they resist. In other words, the perceptions of the risk associated with resisting shape the particular aspects of power/domination that individuals resist, and the aspects of power they comply with. For example, JUFE's interpretations of the risks involved in their unchaste, embodied transgressions conducted when interacting with secular business partners shaped their compliant display of a disciplined, chaste body inside the community. Correspondingly, to mitigate their risky public legitimation in the secular sphere, JUFE displayed their activities as accommodating and consistent with their community's patriarchal social order, while presenting themselves as submissive and inferior to their husbands.

Our analysis further indicates that the dynamics between the different resistance constituents produced substantial social changes, which proved to be productive for different audiences at each level (individual, family, community, institutional). JUFE's embodied transgressions became productive for individual entrepreneurs; their active involvement in the public sphere benefited ultraorthodox women in the domestic sphere; women's financial expansion of their breadwinner role improved their entire community's socio-economic welfare; and the establishment of feminist initiatives impacted ultraorthodox women at the institutional level by providing alternative practices and organizations.

By directing attention to the different social change processes led by women's resistance, our study demonstrates how resistance that occurs at multiple levels might become more impactful than resistance acts enacted separately on one level (i.e., collective, group, or individual). Resisting different aspects of power

simultaneously, we argue, impedes the ability of those in powerful positions to identify and control individuals' resistance acts, and to ensure their full subordination to the control regime.

The interdependence of productive and reproductive resistance

This study broadens the conceptualization of productive resistance by advancing our understanding of how productive and reproductive resistance are interrelated. Drawing on scholarly claims regarding the complex and ambiguous nature of resistance, often holding ambivalent and contradictory outcomes (McCabe, 2018; Ybema & Horvers, 2017), we argue that resistance may become productive *because* it is reproductive of the social order it seeks to change, not despite it. As Edwards and Collinson (2002, p. 274) note, 'empowerment is not the absence of control, but an effort to generate disciplined autonomy within a clearly understood set of expectations and priorities'. We show how resistance can produce substantial, evolutionary modifications of different aspects of an extant social order, since it is performed in ways that reproduce hegemonic power relations. This is particularly important in social environments under an oppressive and/or authoritarian control regime wherein resistance cannot arise without being reproductive of the social circumstances it seeks to change. Thus, while JUFE's resistance both preserves and rejects the Jewish-ultraorthodox gender power relations in which these acts are embedded, its impact on various aspects pertaining to women's rights and status in their community is paramount and transformative because it is performed through an intermingling of resistance and compliance. Specifically, by displaying their public activities as accommodating and consistent with their community's patriarchal social order, JUFE sought to reproduce the appearance of their submissive and inferior position vis-à-vis their husbands. Similarly, women derogated themselves from the personal economic accomplishments and business successes considered violations of their expected modest entrepreneurial work as a means to reproduce their breadwinner role and their husbands' designated religious duty. In other cases, when seeking to promote taboo issues that were explicitly silenced by community leaders through their feminist initiatives, JUFE reproduced the religious patriarchal regime and its leaders' authority by consulting with their rabbis and getting their approval for such initiatives.

In conclusion, we argue that the segmented and processual impact of resistance must be taken into consideration, with the understanding that the ambivalent, complicated nature of resistance might serve as a

resource for motivating substantial evolutionary change from the inside, in the context of an ultra-religious power regime. Aiming to generalize from our case study to other cultural contexts, we argue that a relational view of resistance should not only focus on whether actions are interpreted as conforming to or dissenting from a given power structure (Hoy, 2005), but should also define *what* is being resisted, and *how* resisters can effect social change while remaining members of their specific socio-cultural setting.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

Our study's limitations pertain to the cultural embeddedness of its findings. Whereas other authoritarian religious power regimes are characterized by similar patriarchal control and gender power relations, our research was conducted in a particular socio-cultural, political environment, which might limit the ability to generalize from our findings. Specifically, we demonstrated how religiosity is recruited as a resource not only to resist gender power relations, but also to promote broad, gendered social changes within the Jewish-ultraorthodox community. Yet, it is difficult to predict whether such social changes could be triggered through resistance acts under a different religious patriarchal regime. To fully understand the impact of resistance on social transformations in a religious social context, further research is needed to examine the ways and means by which resistance can lead to change in such a context without victimizing those resisting.

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