



Interface

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Movement practice(s)

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Cover art

Photo credit: No Somos Delito. No Somos Delito organised the world's first hologram protest against the "Ley Mordaza" (Gag Law) restricting citizens' rights to freedom of assembly, protest, information, and speech in front of Spain's Parliament . Madrid, April 10, 2015.

About Interface

Interface: a journal for and about social movements is a peer-reviewed journal of practitioner research produced by movement participants and engaged academics. *Interface* is globally organised in a series of different regional collectives, and is produced as a multilingual journal. Peer-reviewed articles have been subject to double-blind review by one researcher and one movement practitioner.

The views expressed in any contributions to *Interface: a journal for and about social movements* are those of the authors and contributors, and do not necessarily represent those of *Interface*, the editors, the editorial collective, or the organizations to which the authors are affiliated. *Interface* is committed to the free exchange of ideas in the best tradition of intellectual and activist inquiry.

The *Interface* website is based at the National University of Ireland Maynooth.

Movement practice(s): how do we “do” social movements?

Cal Andrews, Laurence Cox, Lesley Wood

How do we “do” social movements? And how can we do them better? Do you mean the same thing by “better” than I do? When we talk about “we”, do we have the same people in mind? Do we agree that what we are doing is a social movement – and do we mean the same thing when we say that?

In one way or another, questions like this are an inescapable part of organising, particularly when we set up new projects, reflect after a setback or strategize for the longer term. Whenever new people become involved or different networks and groups come together in new formations, communities, places or spaces; whenever our traditional ways of doing things aren’t working, or we endeavour to imagine taking them further; whenever new resources and opportunities open up, or new intra-movement dynamics begin to emerge, we are prompted to think about our practice as movement participants, or the various practices and aspects of activism that we engage in (Ganz 2000, Krinsky 2008). While the overall shape of social movements has remained consistent over the past few hundred years, within the larger framework there is struggle (Tilly 2008).

Put one way, social movements are inherently contested: their boundaries, identities, languages, frames, theories, issues, philosophies, purposes, strategies, goals, tactics, allies, participants and so on, are always to some degree the subject of arguments – in fact it is often these kinds of complex, internal struggles that define different behavioural tendencies, factions, parties, and coalitions within a movement (Conway 2004).

Put another way, most of us are not born knowing how to be involved in social movements in effective ways (and being strongly socialised into a movement culture can at times be a disadvantage as well as a strength). Movements are dynamic, conflictual learning spaces, where different organising cultures and political memories, different social, perceptual, or emotional experiences and personal histories, different narratives, beliefs, and ways of thinking and talking bump up against each other in the backstage work that goes into making what – for a while, in a particular time and place – comes to be “just how we do it”.

Interface and movement practice/s

Interface came partly out of the recognition of this situation, seeking to bring together some of the many different ways in which social movements have learned to operate and to think about what they are doing. Thus we have recognised different political traditions and forms of activist theorising, as well as different academic disciplines and approaches, as representing different ways

of talking about what it is that we do in movements, but also in some ways representing different kinds of activity. What some socialists may call class struggle, some anarchists may consider convergence. Some feminists may use the language of intersectionality, while others talk about transformative politics. Similarly, different social movements and organisations have different traditions of practice as well as different languages for discussing that practice; the same is true for different regions of the world. Even the definition of ‘violence’ or ‘non-violence’ varies from one context to another.

Our commitment to dialogue across these various barriers has both a practical and an intellectual dimension. The time and energy required to engage in critical reflection is usually limited in movement practice; and the pressures of everyday oppression and exploitation, the conflict with our external opponents, and our own internal tensions, all mean that it is quite an achievement to sustain spaces for this kind of practical dialogue – whether training workshops, theoretical discussions, strategic arguments or refining tactics. Given this, “learning from each other’s struggles” has much to recommend it: intellectually, we can understand (and develop) our own practice far better when we can stand outside it and imagine doing something else. This not only benefits the current and next generation of movement practitioners, but contributes to the richness, diversity, and accessibility of research and writing within and beyond the university.

Hence *Interface* has sought to bridge the gap between theories and practice; to publish critical perspectives; and to nurture a healthy exchange of diverse ideas for the benefit of activists and academics alike, working in different movements and contexts around the world. Importantly, the journal continues to make space for the (often undervalued) wisdom that comes from the lived experiences of activists across time and space. This special issue of *Interface* puts a spotlight on some of the more practical challenges and opportunities in translating different understandings of ‘how we do activism’ today. It explores, furthermore, some of the consequences at personal, institutional, and movement levels, especially through the eyes of activists.

Thinking movement practice(s)

In focussing on movement practice(s) in this issue, we might distinguish between practices and practice. Practices are the specific things that we do – how we make decisions online, how we consult with wider communities, how we organise an event, how we describe ourselves, how we handle confrontation, how we support each other, how we respond to the media, and so forth. Some would call this repertoire, or action, or tactics. In contrast, our *practice* would be the larger picture within which we do all of this: what it is we think we are up to in the wider scheme of things, why we do the specific things that we do. Sometimes this is called ideology, or praxis, or strategy.

How we arrive at particular practices, or a particular kind of practice, is - if not quite a mystery - then certainly a complex, multidimensional, and at times highly creative process of "movement learning and knowledge production". We can at times act as though we are taking a particular tool, or orientation, "off the rack" - from our own movement's history and culture, from a particular training or skill-share, from our reading and so on - but there are many different ways to "do" something as seemingly singular as taking minutes, using consensus decision-making, practicing prisoner solidarity or seeing the personal as political.

At times we find ourselves creating practice and practices in a slow collaborative process of situated learning, articulating our "tacit knowledge"; at other times we are very conscious of the difficulties we face and the choices involved, and discussion and theory are at a premium. At other times, still, events move so fast and new people are mobilising so quickly, that it is perhaps only in retrospect that we realise how creative we have been. Our decision-making around all of this can reflect the unintended effects of practical responses, the unconscious momentum of internal inequalities or unspoken assumptions, highly-formalised procedures that mask the real choices being made or moments of high drama.

All of this is particularly hard to manage when movements change: when hitherto-unpoliticised people take to the streets, when movements and communities that have previously ignored each other start to work together and try to speak across boundaries, when we start to create new kinds of facts on the ground, or the goalposts shift and we find ourselves in situations we never expected.

If any practice can be seen as grounded in and expressing a "we", a "community of practice", that "we" can be a small and closely-knit "beloved community" or a broadly "imagined community" whether based on nation, class, gender, sexuality or otherwise. It can exist primarily face-to-face or online, be grounded in the shared conditions and relationships of everyday life or in a common ethical commitment. We may have the opportunity to meet outside of the struggle, refine our practices and reflect on practice, or these may only exist in unusual moments and fall into latency the rest of the time.

Problematising "practice" and "practices", then, is another form of learning: looking more closely at what it is we do, how we do it, why we have come to do it that way, and whether it is in fact having the effects we intended for it. If in the heat of action we often have to rely unreflectively on the grammar and vocabulary of our particular practice/s, the reverse is true in less intense situations, where there is everything to be gained by slowing down and considering what we are up to and how we are going about it.

In this issue

For this special issue, we asked activists and scholars to reflect on the theme of “how we do activism” and for pieces addressing one or more of the following:

- What actually makes for good activism? How do activists evaluate strategy?
- What are the challenges (or benefits) of putting various understandings of “good activism” into practice and translating these strategies into tactics, coordination and communication plans, at organisational and movement levels?
- How have organisations and movements integrated personal experience, reflective practice, theory and research (or not), in day-to-day operations, training, recruitment, and evaluation procedures? What have been the outcomes and broader implications of such integration?
- How do activists effectively balance competing demands at personal, organisational, or movement levels? How useful are existing resources and support networks, and where are the gaps?
- Other questions relevant to the theme of “practice” and how it intersects with diverse issues, movements and approaches.

The articles we accepted on this theme move the conversation forward.

The Gezi Park protests in Turkey saw a flourishing and cross-pollination of movement practices. We have three pieces which all engage with the innovative art and performance practices used during the Gezi Revolts, suggesting that certain events might foster climates of innovation and spaces where power, resistance, and direct democracy might be articulated in new ways.

Balca Arda’s action note discusses “the politics of apolitics”, arguing that there is not only a crisis of representative democracy but also a crisis in oppositional politics, which needs to re-imagine its own forms of sociality. Ece Canlı and Fatma Umul’s article discusses the reclaiming of public space in the protests by women and LGBT individuals who have suffered oppression through gendered bodies and asks how this can shape future politics. Silvia Ilonka Wolf’s article on the Istanbulian nonhuman animal rights movement explores how cross-movement networking and ‘cosmopolitan activists’ can help mitigate what might otherwise manifest as tensions or inconsistencies between progressive grassroots groups.

Social media, in particular, have opened up new spaces for new types of practices. Kathleen Rogers and Willow Scobie illustrate how Inuit activists reframe the high-profile Canadian anti-seal hunt ‘selfies’ campaign with ‘Sealfies’ as a expression of indigenous sovereignty and identity. Stewart Jackson and Peter Chen’s event analysis of March Australia (organised entirely through social media, including Facebook) shows how effective these new platforms can be in mobilising mass grassroots action (even among older participants) and facilitating ‘swarming’.

E.T.C. Dee and Galvao Debelle reveal how repression of political squatters in London and Barcelona is typically reinforced through negative stereotypes and discourses in mainstream news media - but also how activists sidestep these discourses, create new ones and at times win the battle for public opinion.

New 'hologram' technologies have also offered a new venue for dissent for Spanish activists fighting the government's new repressive "Gag Law" on dissent, as an interview with researcher Cristina Flesher Fominaya explains. Alberto Arribas Lozano's essay rethinks the weeks and months following Spain's extraordinary M15 protests (2011), which as he observes "marked a before and an after" in relation to movements in Spain, and demand new ways of practicing collective agency.

How activists organize mass actions is the topic of two 'practice notes'. Claire de la Lune draws on the reflections of activists in evaluating the experimental process through which several mass actions were organised for Reclaim the Power, which involves dividing participants into affinity groups; recommendations for strategic organising in future are also provided. In a similar vein, Chris Hermes and Ezra Nepon share their insights on the innovative (and successful) strategic campaign to raise funds for protests and legal defense in the context of the 2000 Republican National Convention, highlighting key messages for other organisers.

Christina Jerne's article explores the changes in anti-mafia activism in Italy from the nineteenth century up to the present day, identifying a shift from older models focussed on heroic acts of individual resistance to a contemporary mode of resistance centred around civil society organisations constructing an alternative market.

Focusing on LGBTQ organising, Daniel Cortese's study demonstrates that our understanding(s) of 'activism' (especially 'good' and 'bad' activism) are not static and monolithic, but inherently fluid and contested. Restricting definitions (in theory and practice) to the mythical 'perfect standard', moreover, risks neglecting important processes of identity and boundary construction that occur at the micro-level. Tommaso Gravante combines fieldwork with personal experience in commenting on anarchist practices (especially in Mexico and Italy), while emphasising the intellectual, heuristic, and emotive common ground with grassroots movements generally.

Another practice note, by Michael Loadenthal, elucidates some of the pedagogical and personal challenges encountered while broaching 'terrorism' at a prestigious North American institution. Finally, Heinz Nigg's beautifully-illustrated piece on refugees and undocumented migrants' 2014 "March for Freedom" from Strasbourg to Brussels documents the march's confrontational progress both on the ground and online, giving voice to participants and showing its political impact despite apparent weakness.

Each issue of *Interface* includes general (non-theme-related) pieces alongside the themed items. We start with two pieces on anti-austerity protest in Ireland where, despite media clichés, social movements are not absent. Mary Naughton's article on protest since the bailout documents this and shows that contrary to mainstream political science expectations, recent protests have not remained restricted to local and particularist concerns but have increasingly focussed on national and industrial issues arising from the costs of Ireland's "bailout" by the Troika. Rory Hearne's action note documents the massive movement against the imposition of water charges, including a level of non-payment and direct action which the state is struggling to deal with.

Selina Gallo-Cruz's piece discusses the US military's "School of the Americas" target of a long-running protest movement and accusations of involvement in torture and assassinations. She shows both the movement's impact in delegitimizing the institution and the institution's subsequent strategy for reinventing itself in a form intended to immunise it against protest.

This section is wrapped up by Eva Gondorová and Ulf Teichmann's report on the summer school "Social movements in global perspective". This ten-day event covered a very wide range of issues in social movement research; particularly worth noting are debates around the tension between Northern-dominated research and a global reality, and the encounter between historians and social scientists.

Finally, we have a bumper crop of reviews in this issue. Ana Cecilia Dinerstein reviews Cristina Flesher Fominaya and Laurence Cox's *Understanding European Movements: New Social Movements, Global Justice Struggles, Anti-Austerity Protest*. Gerard Gill reviews JP Clark's *The Impossible Community: Realizing Communitarian Anarchism*. Lika Rodin reviews Peter Dauvergne and Genevieve Lebaron's *Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism*. Jamie Matthews reviews Alexandros Kioupkiolis and Giorgios Katsambekis' *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today: The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People*. AT Kingsmith reviews Stefania Milan's *Social Movements and their Technologies: Wiring Social Change*. Niamh Mongey reviews Anna Schober's *The Cinema Makers: Public Life and the Exhibition of Difference in South-Eastern and Central Europe since the 1960s*. Finally Nils C. Kumkar reviews Donatella della Porta and Alice Mattoni's *Spreading Protest: Social Movements in Times of Crisis* and Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzelini's *They Can't Represent Us! Reinventing Democracy from Greece to Occupy*.

The diversity and richness of the works reviewed testifies both to the diversity and richness of contemporary social movements and to the reviving and inspiring dialogues taking place between research, theory and action within movements, universities and a wide range of other spaces. Our practice and

practices as writers and activists, theorists and organisers, may compete at personal, institutional, and movement levels, but they enrich our understanding of what it is we are up to as we try to open up space for a better world to flourish.

New editors

Lastly, this issue we welcome three (!) new editors. In South Asia Radha d'Souza and Kasim Tirmisey have kindly agreed to join us and in Western Europe Eduardo Romanos. We look forward to working with them and to deepening our connections with movements and researchers in those regions.

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Call for papers volume 8 issue 1 (May 2016) Open issue

The May 2016 issue of the open-access, online, copyleft academic/activist journal *Interface: a Journal for and about Social Movements* (<http://www.interfacejournal.net/>) will be an open issue with no themed section. We hope to receive submissions on any aspect of social movement research and practice that fit within the journal's mission statement (<http://www.interfacejournal.net/who-we-are/mission-statement/>). Submissions should contribute to the journal's mission as a tool to help our movements learn from each other's struggles, by developing analyses from specific movement processes and experiences that can be translated into a form useful for other movements.

In this context, we welcome contributions by movement participants and academics who are developing movement-relevant theory and research. In addition to studies of contemporary experiences and practices, we encourage analysis of historical social movements as a means of learning from the past and better understanding contemporary struggles.

Our goal is to include material that can be used in a range of ways by movements — in terms of its content, its language, its purpose and its form. We thus seek work in a range of different formats, such as conventional (refereed) articles, review essays, facilitated discussions and interviews, action notes, teaching notes, key documents and analysis, book reviews — and beyond. Both activist and academic peers review research contributions, and other material is sympathetically edited by peers. The editorial process generally is geared towards assisting authors to find ways of expressing their understanding, so that we all can be heard across geographical, social and political distances.

We can accept material in Afrikaans, Arabic, Catalan, Croatian, Danish, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Maltese, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Zulu. Please see our editorial contacts page (<http://www.interfacejournal.net/submissions/editorial-contact/>) for details of who to submit to.

Deadline and contact details

The deadline for initial submissions to this issue, to be published May 2016, is 1 November 2015. For details of how to submit to Interface, please see the "Guidelines for contributors" on our website. All manuscripts should be sent to the appropriate regional editor, listed on our contacts page. Submission templates are available online via the guidelines page and should be used to ensure correct formatting.

Apolitical is political: an ethnographic study on the public sphere in the Gezi uprising in Turkey

Balca Arda

Introduction

On the 31st May of 2013, the Gezi Park protests were launched in Turkey in order to protect Gezi Park from being razed and then converted into a shopping mall. These protests marked the first spontaneous mass movement, resisting the state apparatus, in Turkey's political history and involved the participation of diverse groups. Former left movements and organizations in Turkey remained limited to class politics which did not provoke much political interest in challenging gender, ethnic or religious based discrimination and the problems of diverse minority identities in Turkey. Even though leftist political protests, especially Mayday, had been able to amass a substantially large number of participants during the wave of radicalization since the late 1970s, Turkey has never before experienced a two week long continuous demonstration with millions of participants as in the case of Gezi Park. Since the Ottoman era of 1908, Turkey has had a tradition of parliamentary rule and 50 years of multiple parties. The dominant opposition has always been able to find its voice in the parliament. It was not until Gezi emerged that people were able to realize that no representational presence, party or group could adequately articulate their critiques within parliament or outside of parliament in the public sphere.

By the end of the peak period of the protests, the urban project of converting Gezi Park into a shopping mall was dismissed. However, the AKP government remained in power and won the local elections in March 2014 even though the primary reason behind the popularization of the Gezi protests was a widespread dissatisfaction with the AKP's increasingly authoritarian rule. The ultimate question following this reality must be: Did the Gezi uprising only gain Gezi Park? Can contemporary global political struggles bring social change or are these constituent uprisings to be dismissed as apolitical without any obvious productive agenda? In this article, I would like to explore what kinds of insights we can gain from this sort of activism. The challenge ahead is to understand what kind of a resistance structure and terms of operation are created within these protests and are able to reach people without any activist history.

For this purpose, I aim to explore the specificities of the Gezi uprising in Turkey with the help of ethnographic data and interviews with the Gezi protesters one month after the forceful eviction of Gezi Park by the police. My interviews were conducted in Istanbul with 12 participants who had no activist experience before the Gezi period. Interviews were selected through snowball sampling, and asked open-ended questions for a period of 45 minutes to 4 hours. I quote the English translation of the interview responses throughout this analysis. My

aim here is to give voice to the protesters without over-generalizing what they say and without pretending to represent their demands for direct democracy. Many mainstream analysts have tried to summarize their voices, while others dismiss them as apolitical because of their difference to earlier activists groups and movements. Some analysts insist on describing the Gezi movement as a mere secularist reaction against the moderate Islamist government, one unable to provide an alternative to the dominant neoliberal ideology.

However, I argue that the practice of the Gezi uprising gives us clues about not only the current global crisis of representative democracies, but also the crisis in traditional oppositional politics and resistance. The oppositional front must imagine alternative ways of sociality in its own operation in order to go beyond neoliberal, capitalist, representative governance and competition for interests within the political realm.

Beyond the Left and the Right: the apolitical is political

Why did politics suddenly become so popular to the masses during the Gezi Uprising? Why did so many so-called “apolitical” people become protesters? Even though old leftist groups, unions and political parties were in the first ranks of barricades, the massive presence of self-organized and networked protesters impacted the evolution of the protests and prevented the Gezi protests from being marginalized or contained within small-ranged activist groups. Thus, unlike the Occupy protesters in New York or Toronto, the Gezi protesters avoided becoming marginalized thanks to the mass-participation within the demonstrations and the coming together of already organized left-wing groups, labor unions, NGOs and first-time so-called “apolitical” protesters. During the Gezi period, one of the major achievements of the first-time protesters, who made up the great majority of the demonstrators, was their success in avoiding the lead or domination of a single group, such as traditional left-wing organizations or labor unions, while collaborating with those groups.

When I asked such ‘apolitical’ people why they became Gezi protesters they answered that they did not consider the Gezi protests “political” because they did not think that any party, association or alternative counter-organizations in public sphere could truly represent them. However, most of these first-time protestors still vote during election time¹:

Gezi is not political that is why I participated in it – Gezi does not belong to any party. I am an apolitical person and that is why I am a Gezi protester.
(manager in the private sector)

Somebody slips into my hand a manifesto. She said that's enough with the system and so forth... I slowly put aside the brochure she gave me and got away to talk with my friends in Gezi.

¹ All interviews were conducted in Turkish and translated into English by the author.

I have not participated before in any protest. I do not have any affiliation with any party, to a leftist and right-wing group or any youth activist part of these associations. I do not have any political formation that I feel I belong in. I just marched one time in the Pride March to support them. Then, there was Cihan, I waited for him in Caglayan Court to support his cause. It was always for other people. No, I did not join any Mayday. (Law Student)

I joined some protests with my friends. I did not join Mayday. Sometimes I do not even go to Taksim Square because of the Mayday protests. It is dangerous because of state tyranny. But Gezi Protests are also very dangerous to be in but we were there anyway. Since I know people there in the Gezi Protests, they are just like me; I am not alone in Gezi. So I am sure other protesters are going to support me and help me there. (Visual artist)

People were there for their freedom. But the political associations were there for using it. I do not want to march under a political flag of CHP (Republican People's Party) or something else; I do not have such an allegiance for any group. (Student)

One of the interviewees admitted that even though he graduated from the highly politicized Istanbul University, he had never joined any political protest before Gezi:

I looked to the leftist groups in Istanbul University. Most of them are enclosed inside some firm patterns. They have already refused some things and they do not give permission to talk about the alternatives. Oh men, right-wing ones were starting to talk from the particle of grapefruit in the canteen and telling us through this example of grapefruit how the universe was created by God's wonders. As you can see, there is no great difference between them. They both have these fixed boundaries.

The bravery of the leftist comes from his being beaten. In fact, the only aim of the leftist is resisting the police and being the victim. I never voted for a right-wing party in my life but I also do not see myself inside the limited vision of the left.

Here two important critiques stand out regarding the understanding of politics and the traditional leftist forms of resistance. In the first place, the term "politics" possesses negative connotations of partiality and the "political" is imagined as antagonistic amongst specific identities with particular benefits or static revolution schema. Most leftist or right-wing associations look like hierarchical organisations where individuals become the "Other," to be guided. In this sense, they do not offer an alternative to the present power network or a communal system in their processing but instead another potential oppressor.

The terms “Left” and “Leftist groups” do not evoke freedom but the desire to seize power for most of the protesters who transformed the Gezi uprising into a mass protest. Most of the political parties, groups, and organizations were considered as another agent of oppression and as anti-democratic bodies.

To be sure, the horizontal practices of the Gezi Movement provoked the spread of the movement beyond the scope of small leftist pre-existing groups and transformed a small environmentalist protest into a mass movement. Many people who did not come together or for the same reasons became fellow protesters in the Gezi movement. Autonomism created a free space to escape from hierarchical organizations, processes of delegation and collectivity building which result in a sense of group belonging and othering both present in governmental and oppositional bodies in the existent system. In this sense, many of my interviewees argued that if the world was dominated by the traditional leftist politics, hierarchy would still prevent freedom. The leftist activists’ common notion that people need to be guided and enlightened about the terms of their exploitation is illusionary, because the first-time participants of the Gezi protests, who composed the great majority of the demonstrators, are perfectly aware of the fact that the leftist agenda does not offer a different way of being together beyond representational politics. That is why the “apolitical” does not mean to be disinterested in politics or assimilated to neoliberal culture, losing revolutionary power, but rather, it means rejecting the ways in which politics is traditionally conducted.

Jacques Rancière has argued that ‘consensus’ consists in the reduction of politics to the “police”, which therefore reduces people to the sum parts of the social body, and the political community to the relations between the interests and aspirations of these different parts (Rancière, 2010: 41). On the one hand, consensus frames among sensory data, and hence, indicates what is to be discussed as an issue of politics. On the other hand, Rancière’s term of ‘dissensus’ signifies a form outside of the “consensual landscape of the visible, the sayable and doable” (2010: 149). Thus, the policing activity of consensus allows or does not allow specific subjects to speak about the data chosen to appear in the public sphere. Yet, “dissensus” indicates a surplus, an abnormality, to the consensual system in the sense that it does not have a bargaining point with the present regime of interest-representative governmentality. The supposed apolitical aspect of the cycle of constituent global uprisings, in terms of possessing a clear political aim, interest, collective identity and so forth, means the inability of the political realm to define the popular dynamic of direct democracy. Thereby, the activist agenda must surpass or reform the range of potentially progressive movement dynamics such as labor, civil rights, community organizing, identity politics, feminism, disfranchised communities, and so on. More importantly, the reproduction of hierarchical community structures and the indirect decision making apparatus of the present system, including the oppositional groups, must be remedied by the activist agenda in order to reach the people who are demanding direct democracy and alternative sociality.

The politics of apolitics

The notion of the apolitical realm consists of what is outside of the agenda of dominant political claims and also who is outside of the scope of people envisioned as exploited or marginalized and not interested in engaging with activist groups. Hence, according to the dominant activist discourse, apolitical people can either be cynical, indifferent or ignorant; otherwise they can be the beneficiaries of the existing power structure. The fact that a major constituent of Gezi protesters came from the middle-classes demonstrated that potential political divisions such as ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and religion cannot totally account for some of the current dynamics in the age of the globalized police state and the highly-competitive environment of capitalist enterprises. Today, nobody is secure in the job market although they may not be completely exploited in economic terms. Besides this, there is no longer a “pure citizen” that cannot be suspected of terrorism. Hence, in the case of the recent global mass uprisings, such as the Gezi uprising, there is a great opportunity to engage in an analysis of the new terms for political engagement, as well as the need for alternative methods for progressive organizing. What is not seen in the political realm and labelled as “apolitical” in fact produces space in which social change can occur. In the following section, I will explore the traits of what I call, an alternative sociality, that people engaged in during the Gezi protests. I will argue that, the traits of this public experience indicate what is missing in both camps of the present political realm.

“Art” as non-commoditized labor was one of the most popular activities that Gezi protesters participated in. Images and videos of artistic production and performances in the Gezi commune were widely performed and shared without the expectation of economic gain. The visual communication of the artistic scenes in the Gezi movement formed a new hierarchy of value demonstrating that Gezi protesters were capable of art, and hence, they were worthy of having a voice. Prime Minister Erdogan, once claimed that Gezi protesters were “looters”. But Gezi protesters were not “looters,” nor a drain on the global society: what they produced was valuable although it did not bring material profit. Many of these artistic images were intended to oppose to the AKP’s interpretation of the Gezi Protesters as unproductive people whose demands were insignificant for the running of the Turkish economy. This art countered the argument of the AKP government that labelled the Gezi Protesters as the agents of some so-called hostile foreign powers that aimed to harm Turkey’s economic power. For the government supporters, the AKP’s eleven year administration of successful neoliberal development for Turkey’s economic growth was unquestionable. However, Turkey’s annual economic growth rate remained around 5% during the AKP’s leadership. This number was far from being the miracle that AKP supporters touted it as, and was indeed close to the average growth rate (4.5%) in Turkey since the foundation of the Republic in 1923.

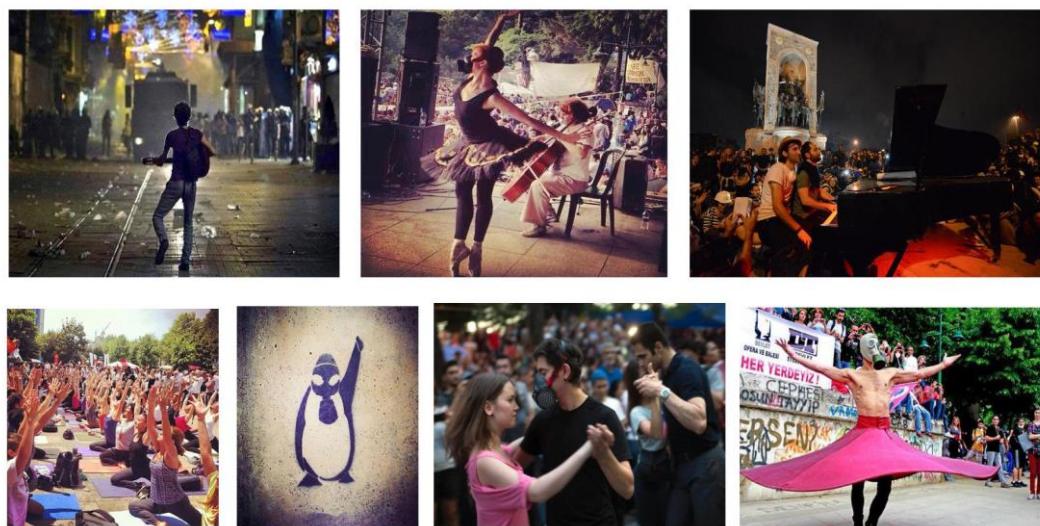


Figure 1 – Examples of art productions during the Gezi protests

As Gezi evolved, numerous illustrations, images and graffiti circulated online and offline that prioritized cultural development and production, and promoted the free exchange of the artistic creations and performances. The practice of art or sport as part of protest emphasized another way of life that allowed the public to rethink the concept of time not as an exploited resource to gain more capital but as a resource to enrich the soul. Music played a significant role in this rethinking. Songs were written and performed by the Jazz Group of Bogazici University, a new album by the rock music group Duman was dedicated to Gezi, and the piano performance of Davide Martello and Yigit Ozatalay on the night of 13th June 2013 in Taksim Square were shared on social media, countering the AKP's naming of Gezi Protesters as people who had nothing valuable to contribute to Turkey or the world. These positive messages of art, music and sport during the Gezi protests stood in sharp contrast with the mainstream media's portrayal of the Gezi protesters as violent groups or people without precious labor to add Turkey's economic production. One example of this contrast occurred when the police were demolishing the Gezi commune², one artist initiated the "Standing Man" protests by simply standing there in the middle of the Taksim Square for several hours without moving. The news of the "Standing Man" became the top-shared image among protesters. Other Gezi protesters joined him or replicated "Standing Man" protests in other parts of Istanbul and Turkey. Nonetheless, the mainstream media then depicted Gezi protesters as people who were against the development of Turkey and as people

² The protesters formed the Gezi commune in Gezi Park to prevent the police from destroying the Park. Between June 1st and June 15th, Gezi Park was governed by direct democracy and consensus. In the Gezi commune, people shared everyday life and all facilities without the mediation and the dictates of the state or the police.

who were satisfied by merely standing, while the government and its supporters tried to compete in the global market for progress and economic growth. The practice of producing and sharing artistic products without the expectation of economic gain through social media involves divergent definitions of the term “progress” and “product” that Gezi protesters appropriate in contrast to AKP’s understanding of the “good” in the neoliberal value system.

Gezi protesters, looters in the rhetoric of the AKP government, were considered as nearly useless in the capitalist world of speed since they want to escape from the logic of functionality and challenge the necessity of representational governance to communicate personally amongst each other. As Paul Virilio (2006) emphasizes, the political economy of wealth is not the sole driving force of cultural and social life in capitalism but instead it is the tyranny of eternally intensifying acceleration, an increasing speed that a developing country -such as Turkey- has to follow to compete in global capitalist system. Hence, this supposed necessity of competition and speed dominate social relations among people in their everyday lives in the “developing” Turkey. Not only in economic affairs but also in the social and political spheres relations amongst the people are understood in terms of antagonisms, othering and interest struggle. For example, one of my interviewees mentioned:

This country was so bad before, since there was not this experience of Gezi. Everybody was in solidarity in Gezi Park, helping and protecting each other. Before this, we were losing it, everybody became hostile, competitive, you always think badly of the other. Gezi Park looked like a Smurfs’ Village.
(manager in private sector)

After telling me about her experience of being shot with a tear gas shell during the protests, another interviewee told me:

Every time I go to the court, I do not trust the security people. The police do not protect people. People are protecting People. My heart usually beats fast in the crowds but I was in peace when I was in the Gezi Protests. I used to not believe in the possibility of being side by side with some of the people, but I did... I used to be prejudiced before. (Lawyer)

Other interviewees put emphasis on the presence of high profile professionals in the Gezi resistance. Some of them stated that they were gathering together after work to go together to the Gezi protests, or that they were passing time in Gezi Park during lunch breaks. They also stated the wide price range for gas masks on the faces, all of them together in the protests:

I know them from my previous job. They are CEOs. First I could not recognize them because of the gas masks they were wearing. Their monthly salary are 50 000 Turkish Lira at least. I asked why these people are also walking there.

Business people were coming after the end of workday with a family from Malatya with their thermos bottle of tea. Some people with high heels are coming just for curiosity.

I have some friends who did not speak of politics ever before...I learnt that they are making barricades there. They called us and they said they are all right but suffering from chemical water that was flushed from police forces. They are from very wealthy families. They use to go to private schools. But they do not care.

Not only economic impoverishment but social impoverishment can lead people to revolt and fight for an alternative sociality that is free from the need for speed or for economic development and interest-based competition. A public sphere free from capitalist motives is attractive for people who suffer from the competitive drive of capitalism such as my interviewees above.

Several interviewees also mentioned the position of the “Street’s Children” in the Gezi Protests. Street’s Children consist of young male children between the age of 8 to 18 years old, who are living on the streets in and around the Taksim area:

The Street’s children were really important there...They first wanted to not wait in the food line with self-interested mode since they were so accustomed to be in survival mode for so long. But then, they understood they can get the food there anyway. They started to appropriate Gezi Park. They were in the first rank of barricades because they did not want Gezi to be over. Nobody gave importance to them until the Gezi protests I guess. They looked like happy to be there.'

Both the children of the protesters and street’s children were there together in the play atelier of Gezi Park, famous artists were collecting the rubbish with other ordinary people.

In other words, other ways of interaction were promoted among Gezi protesters in Gezi commune. This not only means that alternative behaviours gained the meaning of “valuable”, but also that the terms of public appearance changed when the system of delegation lost its validity. Every protester was involved in the protests through her/his own personal commitment, without the label of identity, class or any group affiliation since these notions of entity do not resume their being there in the sphere of Gezi commune. This indicates the emergence of a new “common”, and the production of divergent social relations diverging from the existent system. Thus, as Massimo De Angelis puts it, it is

through the production of the commons that new value practices emerge and divide-and-rule strategies dividing the social body on the basis of material interests can be contrasted. Thus, De Angelis determines, the “common” of capitalist production as sharing rules and practices reproduces the antagonisms amongst the producers of community within an endless race to succeed and survive in the market (De Angelis, 2007).

The Gezi uprising constructed a seductive other world. Our misery does not only derive from our lack of wealth and resources, but also from being separated from each other in the capitalist world based on efficiency, immediacy, urgency and the representational way of being together without personal experience in public.

Concluding thoughts

What is called “apolitical” cannot find a place for itself in the current capitalist system and that is why it contains the seeds for the demise of the status-quo. On the one hand, the political begins with what is assumed to be apolitical. On the other hand, autonomist movements are frequently criticized for occupying everything except the parliament. These kinds of critiques are construed narrowly because the understanding of power central to them is that of possessing a central apparatus such as the state, parliament, mainstream media, with an assumption of the totality of the relations of power. In the case of the global popularization of middle class revolts, activist agendas must acknowledge the results of a shrinking safety net and socio-political life for every segment of the community across the world. Following this mobilization trend and the growth of the police state, activist organizations can begin from organizing in the social realm from what is assumed to be apolitical. This is not a teaching job but a learning moment for activism.

Today, both the existent consensual system and traditional oppositional organizations do not offer a new type of sociality beyond the representational paradigm of participation. However, contemporary political struggles popping out all over the world provide a divergent way of sociality and indicate the desire for a different kind of relating with each other in the global community. These mass uprisings must guide our imaginations as new understandings of the oppositional front are developed.

The fact that the Gezi protests or other examples of constituent mass uprisings could not survive in the long term does not mean that autonomism does not provide endurance to resistance, but rather that the institutionalization of these autonomist uprisings must follow the operational principle of the protests and the logic of personal commitment to engage in direct democracy. Today, records of the new protest tactics are still spreading through social media and help to create new and diverse prospective activist formations beyond the representational public experience. In the Hong Kong protests beginning at the end of September 2014, the protesters used similar tactics as those in Gezi,

while also mimicking the “hands up, don’t shoot” gesture to refer protesters in Ferguson, Missouri over the killing of unarmed teen Michael Brown³. It is not already-organized activists but the ordinary first-time protesters that lead the demonstrations and raised their demands for more democracy, justice and equality.

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³ “In Hong Kong, Protesters Say ‘Hands Up, Don’t Shoot’” MSNBC, September 28, 2014.
<http://www.msnbc.com/the-last-word/riot-police-tear-gas-pro-democracy-demonstrators-hong-kong>.

Bodies on the streets: gender resistance and collectivity in the Gezi revolts

Ece Canlı and Fatma Umul

Abstract

In summer 2013, Istanbul was shaken by an enormous public protest which, besides its afflictive traces, engraved a great image of solidarity and change in the political history of Turkey. Whilst this solidarity comprised diverse groups of different political ideologies and identities, some of the most outstanding actors of the revolts were women and LGBT individuals who have been suffering from state oppression as gendered bodies. The Gezi Park occupation not only enabled them to experience new forms of mobilization but also altered the perception of gender on a greater scale during the revolts. Starting with an overview of the driving forces of the Gezi Park riots, this paper focuses on this practice of mobilization and the question of how gendered bodies could build a collective identity through the immediate moments of solidarity via reclaiming public space as politicized bodies during the revolts. It also addresses the potential ways in which these newly learnt strategies can be used for the future politics. These inquiries draw on our personal observations and oral testimonies of the protestors in interviews. Lastly, it hopes to provoke further discussions about the future politics of gender activism in Turkey.

Keywords: Collective identity, Gezi Park revolts, LGBT rights, solidarity, women's movement

Introduction

“Nobody, none of us has become purified in Gezi. But something happened, beyond telling and understanding. Something that have never happened before and that would have never happened, we thought. What happened in Gezi was convergence [...] Can you just think a moment and bewail for why there was nothing to believe, but poetry; a poetry that experiences to converge to your tough and arid consciousness as a brand-new and fresh way of knowing and communicating?” (Halavut, 2013: 21)

The summer of 2013 bore witness to one of the most extensive demonstrations that burst in the heart of Istanbul and spread all around Turkey in a couple of weeks. Beside the fact that during the last years the world has been hosting increasing street protests and demonstrations that have permeated from one to another across countries and cross-continents as a result of the neoliberal politics of global states which have resulted in ever-increasing unemployment, precarity, gender discrimination, privatization of public spaces, gentrification,

neo-fascism, detention of refugees and border controls - and that Turkey could be considered as one of the terminal points of these protests - what happened in Istanbul needs a close-up with respect to its recent history and its internal driving forces. It is equally important to acknowledge the outcomes and great impacts of demonstrations that have left incontrovertible impressions on both institutional politics and spatial politics in everyday life.

These after-effects and impacts ensue from an immediate and immense uprising that was organized in only a few weeks and conveyed from one person to another by creating an immersive living environment, almost an utopian habitat in Gezi Park.¹ This system does not refer to any pre-planned order that was taught before. Nor were demonstrations, tactics and reactions against police violence predetermined by thousands of protesters, most of whom had never participated in such an action before. This affirms that the Gezi Park experiences were built through a collective and informal process transferred among individuals and groups. Furthermore, it is crucial for this knowledge to be relayed to upcoming generations in order to maintain and transform this spatial and temporal experience into a new form of politics that could be exercised by anyone who has a say.

Undoubtedly, the knowledge and experience shared in mobilization was deployed among groups who have been exposed to long-lasting oppression, exclusion and neglect including women, LGBT groups, ethnical minorities, radical left wings and even Islamist groups². Although all these groups experienced different but related kinds of mobilization and learning process according to their internal claims and issues, 'gendered' groups left their mark on the protests as a result of both their awe-inspiring resistance against recent discriminative politics of the government and of their political strategies of mobilization, demonstration and manifestation during the actual events.

The Gezi Park protests are quite significant at this point, not only for the activists, but also for women and LGBT individuals who had not been active on the streets, nor participated in any political movement, but took part in this process of mobilizing and acting together during the protests.

¹ Following the daily police intervention with extreme violence, from the 1st of June to the 14th of June, there was a solidly independent and autonomous life form in Gezi Park which was built by both dwellers and visitors of the park. Until the police intervention on the 14th of June, Gezi Park had its own library, pharmacies, free food spots, kitchens, toilets, a vegetable garden, a playground for children, education spots and stages for musicians with participation of thousands of people every day. This is one of the reasons why most of the people called it an utopia, a stateless place that maintained itself without any institutional support, but through people's will and responsibility.

² Radical Islamists or people belonging to other religious orders also confronted the conservative AKP (Justice and Development Party, the ruling party of Turkey since 2002) despite their former religious common roots. Anti-capitalist Muslims, for instance, were one of the most active groups and played a crucial role in revolts, challenging the government's capitalist and neoliberalist strategies from privatization to expropriation.

This paper aims not only to take a closer look at the practice of constructing collective identity among gendered groups in the context of the Gezi revolts, but also to stimulate discussions about the motivation of their engagement by touching upon particular incidents that brought them together. Moreover, it is equally significant to highlight the new tactics that emerged during their solidarity and potential strategies and that can be perpetuated by collective-political-gendered bodies in the reclaimed public space. As a supportive method to this contextual framework underpinned by theories germane to the issue, testimonies and narratives of the protestors interviewed during the process are used as well as our personal observations and memoirs based on our own experiences.

Nevertheless, in order to conceive both the aforementioned contextualization better and the reason why the Gezi revolts were particularly substantial for the women and LGBT movement in Turkey, it is important to sketch out the main driving forces of the protests and a partial backstage view of the massive participation. This overview will hopefully depict the profile of recent conservative state politics and the ways in which these repressed women and non-normative sexualities by rendering them marginalized, deprived and foreclosed from public space.

Before it all

“Gezi was not only a youth’s movement, but also a women’s movement in its all wide-ranging aspects. Gezi meant the number of children, the issue of abortion, the remarks saying “not equal”, ever-increasing/never-ceasing femicides, rapes, unlegislated laws and impunity that have already been on top of women.”
(Amargi Feminist Tartışmaları, 2013:4)

The main departure point of the Gezi revolts took place on the day that government’s construction vehicles attempted to cut down some of the trees in Gezi Park: a park located in the centre of Istanbul as almost the only green space around the neighbourhood. Cutting trees in order to widen the driveway was only a small part of a grand transformation project in the district that government dictated despite the long-lasting professional adjudicators by Chamber of City Planners and Chamber of Architects. Even though the project that comprised pedestrianization of Taksim Square along with the numerous gentrification and privatization interferences all around Istanbul had been objected to by Taksim Solidarity Group for two years with an insufficient support and a poor public attention, the very attempt to cut trees in Gezi Park encountered enormous public reaction. The reason justifying the magnitude of this backlash was not only that the government intended to deprive people of the only green space around the neighbourhood by disregarding legal

procedures and to build a retro-construction against the urban fabric³, but also AKP's, mainly Tayyip Erdoğan's, repressive politics and untenable restraints over people who are not in favour of his power. Furthermore, the extreme police violence which followed immediately after the public reaction and lasted more than two months cannot be denied as an impulse for hundreds and thousands of people to flow into the streets of Taksim Square.

The restraints and oppressions by an eminently conservative power, a power that embodies a paradoxical combination of Islamic doctrines and neo-liberalist ideologies, render excluded people even more suppressed and disfranchised. This complexity first and foremost awakened the youth, a generation regarded as depoliticized, digitalized and detached from reality and raised with the advice of their elders who experienced the disappointment of the 1980 military coup and have therefore decided to stay away from any political debate or preoccupation (Gürbilek, 1992). Notwithstanding this, the Gezi Park protests turned all these labels upside down and gave an enormous space for bodies to be manifested, including young people and most importantly women and LGBT groups who have been dramatically affected by the regime.

Women, as one of the foremost groups suffering in Turkey from economic, physical and psychological suppression⁴, have received their share of the restrictive regulations and policies of AKP government in recent years. These anti-human and anti-women's rights acts revealed in many occasions as hate speeches by 'all the president's men' - ministers, majors, academics – and even as a law or a regulation always intervening around women's bodies, lifestyles, decisions and private - thereby social - lives.

³ The government and municipality, whose position was mostly stated in Erdoğan's public speeches, wanted to make a modernist replica of Topçu Kışłası, the historical barracks that was built in the 19th century in the square where Gezi Park is located today and demolished earlier in the 1940s. (Alioğlu, 2013) The idea was to rebuild it by chopping down all the trees in Gezi Park and to use the new barracks as a shopping mall and an archipelago of cafes for modern conservative bourgeois.

⁴ Contradictorily, Turkey is proud of equality between men and women because it is one of the prominent countries that enacted early women's suffrage of women. However, this law represented only a symbolic equality, as seen by the fact that the main women's organization was banned just after suffrage was accepted. (Kandiyoti: 1991) Before and since then, women's gathering and mobilization in public space have been seen as a threat for the male-oriented sovereignty. Moreover, according to Kandiyoti, in modern states, women have been always used as a symbol of liberation in society, almost as a criterion for democratic reforms. The problem of gender equality was either used by governments in order to prove equality through suffrage or symbolic laws that are not exercised practically. (Kandiyoti, 1991) In other cases, women have most of the time been considered as physical supports for anti-governmental actions; however, after male citizens' demands are fulfilled, women, again, have been doomed to be domesticated and closed to their private space whilst public space remained belonging to only men's interests (Kandiyoti, 1991).

Despite the difficulties of depicting the whole picture of abuse of women's rights during the AKP's time in power, remembering some recent events can shed light on what triggered thousands of women to hit the streets for protest, although many of them had never been in a demonstration before.

Since the last elections (2011), which brought the AKP government to power once more, Erdoğan has been treating women as a means of implementing AKP's neoliberal economic policies and capitalist structures. These structures are to make women housebound via new regulations for families, cheap labour, decreasing women's employment and insufficient social services for mother employees (Osmanoğlu, 2009). Especially applying their conservative paternalist ideology on both judiciary and daily practices, they strive to invalidate woman's position by identifying and subordinating them to family as a sacred and "safe" place.

One of the cases that received a major public attention was the name change of the Ministry of Women to the Ministry of Family and Social Policy in 2011.

Prima facie, such small changes would seem harmless for nonconversant observers; nevertheless it provides a nominal and ostensible democracy that safeguards the institution of family in which women are being imprisoned through their household missions. Erdoğan strongly defended the change by sanctifying women as mothers, meanwhile repudiating LGBT rights in the same issue, stating that "homosexual coupling is immoral"⁵. Moreover, the conservatism of the AKP government accompanied by strong nationalist tendencies is approved with Erdoğan's call for three children from each Turkish woman for the future of the nation - in his last call the number of children demanded increased to five.⁶ This clear declaration is just another strategy to domesticate women as baby-sitters who take care of their husbands and children, having no time for other needs and thereby being deprived of any political or social activity.

Another important breaking point for women that turned into a massive protest in recent years was the draft law proposing strict restrictions for the right of abortion. Since 1983, abortion is permissible by law up to ten weeks; Erdoğan and his pro-life followers wanted to limit this to four weeks by claiming that "abortion was nothing short of a murder."⁷ Although the proposal was withdrawn as a result of massive protests, the underlying meanings are important to analyze. Firstly, the state has the right and power to control women's body from clothing to giving birth; and secondly, even if they do not

⁵ <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/lgbtt/145282-erdogan-escinsel-cift-ahlaka-ters>

⁶ <http://www.haberturk.com/dunya/haber/776812-3-az-5-cocuk-yapin>
http://www.radikal.com.tr/politika/erdogan_sezaryene_karsiyim_kurtaj_cinayettir-1089120. Furthermore, the Minister of Health promised that in exceptional cases like rape the state will take care of newborns.

⁷ http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/bakan_akdag_tecavuz_bebegine_devlet_bakar-1089651

succeed in implementing their ideology in the form of law, they can find other ways of imposing their rules such as blacklisting women in the hospitals or intimidating them in ‘conviction rooms’ that dissuade women from their decisions (Özkul, 2013).

Even though these anti-human policies occurred before the Gezi Park protests, they continued in different forms afterward, just as the speech of the President of Religious Affairs that was held in the following days of the protests. In his speech, he prescribed to women's organizations that they should rather strive around violence against humanity than violence against women.⁸ The speech demonstrates that conservative politics on women's bodies are relativized by those who hold the power. Moreover, the extent of discrimination against LGBT individuals is also visible within this statement insomuch as lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans*people are not even a subject in society. Yet physical and psychological violence against LGBT people in public space is ignored, just as their bodies are neglected.

Following these brief insights about the recent but long-standing history of gender oppression and invisibility of women and LGBT people in Turkey, it can be said that these were important factors that dragged them to the streets by June 2013. As activists and academics, our interest is to inquire how such an incredible amount of people could gather as one big organism regardless of their ethnicity, political view, religion, status and socio-economic background; and more importantly how they practiced their political presence in the process of this mobilization, which paved the way for an enormous resistance against power. What made this possible was neither authority nor any form of educational system which all pledge for democracy as a symbol of “politics”; but *the people* and their socially and politically so-called effaced bodies. The next sections embark on looking at these political bodies in the public space where they become the subject again and their emergent collective identity from a theoretical perspective.

From political to collective bodies on the streets

“We can no longer allow others to repress our fucking, control our shit, our saliva, our energies, all in conformity with the prescriptions of the law and its carefully-defined little transgressions. We want to see frigid, imprisoned, mortified bodies explode to bits, even if capitalism continues to demand that they be kept in check at the expense of our living bodies”. (Guattari, 2007: 209)

Guattari’s words perfectly echo what women and LGBT people in Turkey shouted in response to their exposure to the long-standing repressive policies of

⁸ “Kadına karşı şiddetle uğrasıcağınaza...” Radikal Newspaper, 23 August 2013
http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/kadina_yonelik_siddetle_ugrasacaginiza-1147355.

the government in combination with other “state apparatus” such as education, law, family institutions (Althusser, 1970); thus increasing police violence as stated before. Just as other excluded and disenfranchised groups that have been reduced to “bare life” (Agamben, 1998) by sovereign powers regarding their identities and socio-economic status, women and LGBT people demanded their rights back and tried to find ways to reclaim them when there was no interlocutor. This demand, in fact, is intrinsically a political stance; but in order to fulfil the demand, there has to be a political action that would remind sovereignty of people existing even if they are ignored.

Such political actions like Gezi Park, which take place autonomously and spontaneously, entail a “space of appearance” which renders people visible to each other, in the sense that one needs to be seen by someone in order to exist (Arendt, 1958). Butler further elaborates Arendt’s term by stating that presence is not enough for space of appearance which ignores illegals, foreigners, slaves, people in colour, women and trans*people; but it is actualized when people act against, stand for or go out of the boundaries of state rules (Butler, 2011). So, even in the risk of facing aggression of the police or threat of governmental authorities, multitudes appear in/in front of public, gather and manifest themselves as in reciprocal relation between each other. As she puts it,

“No one body establishes the space of appearance, but this action, this performative exercise happens only ‘between’ bodies, in a space that constitutes the gap between my own body and another’s. In this way, my body does not act alone, when it acts politically. Indeed, the action emerged from the ‘between’.”(Butler, 2011: 3)

In parallel, where the action emerges, ‘between’ bodies, is also the very space where politics is being exercised. Borrowing Arendt’s terms, actions create their own space, which is deployed between other bodies (Arendt, 1958). So this means that such correlated and interdependent relationship between body, action and space, which together brings about political exercise, becomes possible only via plural action that has freedom and power to create action and space for politics (Arendt, 1958; Butler, 2011). Or in other and wider terms, the exercise of politics is only possible in the conditions where bodies assembly to claim their rights; thus in this very action of claiming - including physical resistance against police violence and occupation of the physical public space - it builds a collective will that political beings act upon in their space of public that they create. It is also a confrontation and defiance of people against state, thereby a manifestation of “we the people” (Butler, 2013).

This revival of “we the people” paves the way for Snow’s (2001) “we-ness” and “collective agency” in the process of weaving the threads of solidarity. As della Porta and Diani state, collective action cannot emerge without a “we” identified with common characteristics and particular solidarity (della Porta and Diani, 2006). Therefore, following the Arendtian and Butlerian standpoint of creating political space in between bodies and reclaiming their agency as being publicly

manifested, this plural subjectivity transforms into a collective being, a form of collective identity: an identity that “includes a sense of mutuality and solidarity” (Hunt and Benford, 2004: 434) as well as “common interests, values, feelings, and goals exist in time and space beyond the here and now” (Hunt and Benford, 2004: 450).

When considering the conception of collective bodies into account and convey them to practice, Gezi Park was a remarkable embodiment of the theories above in terms of people’s assembly, stance, interaction with other anonymous bodies and resistance together in a plural action. Alongside their verbal and textual claims, their bodies and voices appeared to each other and reproduced a new form of public characteristics in their common physical environment (Butler, 2011) with an undeniable rapport. Especially women and LGBT groups were distinctively effective at mobilizing people and triggering motivation and energy in Gezi Community, even during the police interventions. This process of building solidarity enabled them not only to conceive how to organize and reactivate their spaces in Gezi Park and Taksim Square, but also to experience new ways of being woman, gay, lesbian, trans or queer as a political actor via mobilization (della Porta and Diani, 2006).

Nevertheless, it is crucial to remember that what was created in Gezi Park was not a taken-for-granted collective identity that is seen in existing political anti-state movements, but a “multiple identity” (della Porta and Diani, 2006) that was woven during the protests as a result of “common cause and fate [that were] shared.” (Hunt and Benford, 2004: 439). Similar to Polletta’s and Jasper’s accounts on collective identity of being “fluid”, “relational”, “emerging out of interactions among a number of different audiences, rather than fixed” (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 292;298), during the Gezi Park protests, the new collective identity against state power functioned as a big erratic living organism that was shaped during the triggering events. It is important to analyze such events in order to understand the greater ways of mobilization, solidarity and collective action which altered the existing condition of gender resistance in Turkey.

The forms of mobilization in the Gezi revolts

The noteworthy visibility of women and LGBT individuals during the protests corroborated with intimacy and solidarity is quite important in terms of both its influence that created strong bonds among people and its potential for creating new strategies for future politics. It is equally significant to underline two important driving forces that engendered this collective action and its expansion. The first was the expropriation and privatization of people’s common public space as well as the existing oppressive politics of the government; the second was the extreme physical police violence underpinned by state violence in discourse.

To exemplify the argument, in the first days of the protests, the majority of thousands of protesters did not have knowledge of how to resist such a dreadful physical violence, involving tear gas weapons and cannons. However, the more

the police increased their ferocity, the more people started being organized and working in accordance by putting barricades while others were confronting with the police at the front or helping injured people. This new form of division of labour was not learnt by telling or directing, but was developed with insights and experiences on the streets driven by the need for resistance and survival.

Being exposed to preposterous physical violence, people started understanding the ways of dealing with gas attacks, cannon waters and rubber bullets and developing new ways of struggling with them. Jasper (1997) calls such instantaneous driving forces of solidarity as "moral shocks" which can lead people to mobilize from one moment to another. For instance, after the first police interventions, people got to know that under extreme tear gas attacks, panic was not a good way to respond, particularly in a park containing hundreds of people. Also, they realized that the removal of children from the park had priority, as well as awareness of breath, how to walk and how to decrease the pain. Furthermore, thousands of street insurgents developed new strategies for sustaining disobedience: people resisting in the forefront were getting tired and taking turns with those coming to the front, in order to get rest and turn back - and the circulation worked. After a while, it was tacitly realised that tear gas must be immediately thrown somewhere else further from people to avoid the gas spreading. Moreover, in one week, people became almost expert on what medical solution should be used for what kind of gas attacks. There was a circulation there as well: While some were in the forefront, others were waiting with the medical supports and taking turns with the others.

Women and LGBT people at this point, as groups that are subjugated to a paternal state and always considered as vulnerable and weak in confrontations, were one of the most important parties of the physical resistance. Although at the beginning they were told to be away from the chaotic environment of the revolt by male protestors, afterwards it was proven that political strength was not about physical and sexual conditionings. Women and LGBT people became the symbol of the resistance with their bodies and existence⁹. It was very important for them to gain courage and to learn how to resist in the streets against violence that was just another form of the violence they have been exposed to by husbands, fathers, brothers, bosses, lovers and homophobic or transphobic aggressors. The more they saw each other in resistance - in the 'space of appearance', the more they conveyed their courage to each other and intuitively conceived the strategies which would be adapted into their daily struggle as well. For instance, the long-lasting problem about police stations and detention rooms was brought to the agenda back by dint of the Gezi revolts

⁹ Especially pictures that became the representation of the revolts: the woman with the red dress whose face was sprayed with tear gas by a policeman from one foot away; a woman holding a cannon's water on her chest; a gay standing upright on top of barricades and waving the LGBT flag to the police fire.

during the mass and immediate arrests¹⁰. Women and LGBT people are especially forced to go through a naked body search when they get arrested, despite its incompatibility with human dignity. This issue was unfolded after some surveillance camera captures of women being compelled to get undressed and being groped were disclosed. The voice of women and trans*people in particular fuelled the discussions about human-rights abuse and harassment in custody which brought about awareness and consciousness on the issue that many people mobilized for.

No wonder that the violence aspect was crucial for bodies to make them gather in space, act together and shout slogans in unison, but it was not the only one. The other important aspect was nonviolent interaction between people during the occupation of the park. Helping each other, working together and living in peace as if dwelling in a utopian commune; people realized that even demarcations between opponents and prejudices were melted down in the pacific atmosphere of the park and the streets. In a country of patriarchy, machismo, homophobia and misogyny, Gezi Park became almost the only sterilized public place where both women and LGBT people felt sexually and mentally emancipated to the point of being surprised by not being verbally and physically harassed. Although, indeed there are no statistics about the rate of harassment in Gezi Park or in the streets during the protests, it was genuinely experienced that people in gender were much more confident, free and 'themselves' without the need of omnipresent guards. Furthermore, even though the exaggerated optimism that was considering Gezi Park as a purified place was delusional, the fact that women and LGBT people gained the knowledge of living in a patriarch-free space was indisputable as an experience that is to be transferred to other people and generations.

Another important moment for women particularly in constructing a collective identity took place in Taksim Square when the Governor of Istanbul appealed to mothers to call their children back home¹¹. However, instead of doing so, hundreds of mothers hit the Istanbul streets and started demonstrating in Taksim Square with lots of joy, strength and stance against the police.

"On the contrary to what was expected, mothers joined to the protests with their children. It broke the judgement that women will never get a free area which is independent from their husbands and children. A canonical model of motherhood is now altered from someone who redresses her child to someone who encourages her child, because she is protesting with her child. The importance of change on the concept of woman in a country where decisions are

¹⁰ Many people were arrested and charged just because they shouted slogans, visited the park or just casually passed through the streets even without having any relationship with the protests.

¹¹ He agitated the situation by claiming that young people who are our future and precious had no life safety in Gezi Park, so it was mothers' task to convince them to recede.

<http://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/147482-mutlu-gezi-dekilerin-can-guvenligi-yok>

taken by men who impose stereotypical gender roles on women, alongside with the reinforcement of mainstream media that reproduces it, is not something to be overlooked." (Üstek and Alyanak, 2013)

The analysis of Üstek and Alyanak also goes along with what Butler (2011) expresses: to experience new ways of being a woman as a political actor and to get the opportunity at this very social moment to be able to create a peculiar space between other bodies (Arendt, 1958). This enabled the common stereotypes about the mother identity to be deconstructed and redefined. As Levent, one of the protesters stated, the resistance enabled women to regain the legitimacy and to break the rooted norms (Kızıldağ and Sevik, 2013).

In addition to collective acting process, there are some incidents that happened within the groups as gaps, but transformed into a positive heterogeneity. Taking different parties, different ideologies and different bodies coming together into account, Yelsalı Parmaksız (2013) describes the phenomenon that feminists with Kemalist¹² approach were formative for the second wave women's movement in Turkey until now. The Gezi revolts demonstrated that this may not be limited within this perspective. Yet the paradigm of Kemalist feminists has changed: especially intolerance of Kemalist feminists against Kurds and women wearing headscarves (Yelsalı Parmaksız, 2013) due to the Kemalist secularism that rejects Islam as a visual image and its nationalist racialism that excludes other ethnic groups or languages. Nevertheless, after all the women from different ethnicities and religions came together, Kemalists overcame the prejudices of diversity and embraced women regardless of their 'identity'. This is a turning point for women's solidarity as a significant approach to convey to the next generations. It is also interesting in its pedagogical aspect: although human-rights and consciousness about anti-discrimination are taught in all the levels of education which is supposed to create non-discriminatory individuals, they are so immersed with Kemalist doctrines since their childhood that they cannot include any 'other' parties for the sake of secular-democratic country. However, Gezi Park broke the mould and made Kemalist women embrace their fellows just as woman-beings and sisters. It means that the process of standing shoulder to shoulder works differently in so much as that it can change a hundred-year perspective through experiences and collective moments. This incident set a precedent to what della Porta and Diani says:

"To identify with a movement also entails feelings of solidarity towards people to whom one is not usually linked by direct personal contacts, but with whom one nonetheless shares aspirations and values. [...] motivations and expectations behind individuals participating in social movements are, in fact, much richer

¹² Kemalism, also known as Ataturkism, is the main ideology of Turkish Republic which follows the principles of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the secular and "Westernized" Turkey.

and more diversified than the public images of those movements" (della Porta and Diani, 2006: 95; 98)

On the other hand, the peaceful atmosphere of the Gezi utopia and solidarity among different groups were occasionally interrupted by old traditions of protesting manifested in the language. Racist, sexist, homophobic and ethnic discriminations are so rooted in society that they have been used as a matter of insulting and humiliating the 'others' in Turkish. Not surprisingly, this old habit was brought to Gezi protests by white-Turkish-middle class-male protesters although they were marching shoulder to shoulder with non-white-Turkish-middle class-men against the same authority. Protesters in slogans were despising the men in power by using feminine attributions and the word 'queer' as an insult without thinking that queers and women were just acting with them in solidarity.

A great reaction against this habit came from feminist groups. Women activists immediately mobilized an action of wiping sexist slogans out from the walls written during the revolt. They started painting over sexist slogans street by street and wall by wall with the colour purple, sometimes by changing insults to something creative and sometimes transforming words into the symbol of Venus. This important action was rewarded as a moment of awareness for male protesters. For instance, the anarchist group Çarşı which is the supporters club of the soccer team Beşiktaş revealed its solidarity with the criticism of feminists and also decided refraining from calling sexist slogans. As the feminist magazine Amargi describes:

"Everyone witnessed the success of feminists who were intervening to sexist slogans, cleaning street writings [because of their sexist discourse] and trying to transform them. They marched together when they heard that women with headscarves were beaten." (Amargi Feminist Tartışmaları, 2013: 7)

The action of "painting over the sexist scripts with the colour purple" was followed by the placards and slogans that appeared all around Istanbul: "Don't swear at women, queers and prostitutes!" By doing so, feminists and LGBT groups have particularly demonstrated that they also have right on the space of resistance and are as visible as the other demonstrators (Korkman and Açıksöz, 2013). Furthermore, they not only actualized the conditions of 'space of appearance' with their political stance, but also paved the way for re-questioning the language of protests and realizing the mistakes - especially for male participants. This incident is fairly mentioned in the analyses of Korkman and Açıksöz:

"Here, what feminist criticism has taught us is this: The reality that is reflected on the wall of the resistance; the reverse of sexist ideology on from its *camera obscura*. The fact that profane phallic slogans target on Erdoğan's masculinity

signifies being uncomfortable with his dominant male performances. So to say, the problem is Tayyip's masculinity¹³. The sun side of the picture is that the long-standing feminist struggle has contributed to this feeling of discomfort about Tayyip's masculinity and his attitudes as if he is father, husband and brother of the whole society." (Korkman and Açıksöz, 2013)

These *eureka* moments are important, for in the history of Turkish feminist movement political actions and strategies implemented by feminist groups were most of the times considered unnecessary or insufficient. However, with the rise of the Gezi protests, their critique of patriarchal structures was understood; meanwhile perception of gender has changed as a result of new understanding of feminists' actions. The epitomic success became possible because the processes of mobilization allowed the notion of gender - as well as race and class categorizations - to lose its fundamental aspects for the common resistance. It does not mean that people appeared in the public space without their identity; on the contrary, they did not avoid exposing their identity, but it did not bring obstacles for a common solidarity. Thus, most importantly, the long-running feminist struggle regained its dignity.

As mentioned before, the examples on different angles of gender resistance and mobilization during the protests given above are not processes that can be formalized as systematic methods. Yet, it is important to pay attention to the voices of resisters from the first hand in order to comprehend what and how they experience their collectivity and motivation. They were able to represent themselves via their own wills through their actions by being present in the very time and space of the Gezi revolts on the contrary to the conventions of Turkey representing gender in media, in art and in institutional politics with its patriarchal and dominating language.

Having been interviewed during the occupation of the park both by us and by other reporters, protestors answered the questions about their feelings and thoughts on how the Gezi Park utopia took place around 20 days in the Gezi community and how it can turn into reality. In this utopia where people belonging to different political opinions lived through during this period in a non-hierarchical but structure-based organization, they could perform communicative and deliberative negotiation processes in solidarity. This storm of experiences, thoughts and knowledge of Gezi Park, were also stated in the voice of women and LGBT individuals, underpinning the importance of assembly of bodies and learning process for emancipation.

¹³ Masculinity is translated from Erk'ek. In Turkish, ERKEK means male/man and ERK means power/force. In general, in gender discourse, it is written as ERK'EK in order to emphasize the problematic root and relation between man and power.

Voices in-situ: testimonies from protestors¹⁴

The narratives and personal convictions recounted by some of the women protesters in the interviews not only depict their personal motivations, but also highlight the different, but common remarks on collectivity, solidarity and hope for the future. They, moreover, express the importance of being politicized bodies on the streets by heralding and celebrating their collective action in solidarity. To listen to one of the witnesses who identifies as feminist:

“It is a good dynamic in the park. People feel strong now. [...] I get a good motivation. In future we will clearly say NO if something wrong happens. As women, we felt more pressure in the society. We experience this often. We, as women, know what does not being heard mean.” (Hatice, age 35)

Elif, a young student protestor, who had not participated in any political action before, similarly states:

“I feel so good when I see people here with great solidarity.[...] We are fighting for freedom here. Besides the feeling of freedom I felt the first time in my life that I am fighting for something. [...]I am here. To feel that I am here with my body gives me power.” (Elif, age 20)

Likewise, another protestor, Nur, with an apolitical past, touches upon the aforementioned police violence functioning as “moral shocks”, as well as the magnitude of resisting in the public space with other political bodies:

“Right now, on the 16th day of the occupation, I feel that the violence from the police is getting more aggressive. [...] Whenever we thought that the police was not able to attack because so many people were around, we saw that the police was violent and that it did not matter that so many people were resisting. [...] Now I feel no fear because so many people are here. No fear. We also learnt how to deal with teargas.” (Nur, age 29)

She continues by emphasizing the power of collective action not only in terms of diversity of identities, but also the empowerment it gives to resist:

¹⁴ Four of the following interviews were made by one of us in Gezi Park during the occupation. The total number of respondents was 61; 50 of whom were recorded textually, while 11 recorded with an audio recorder. The real names of the interviewees are confidential.

“Before I never felt that I am a part of something or of a political group or of an opinion. But what happens in this park is more than to be just a member of a political group. It is amazing. All political groups and people with different opinions are in this park. I feel like I have to be here. I am not able to fight on the barricades but I want to be here and try to stay here. I feel hope in the air. People surround me have hopes. I think people are here because they think that change is possible.” (Nur, age 29)

The enunciations from one of the student insurgents, despite her self-identification as “being not political”, are significant to understand the both moral and physical aspect of participating in construction of collective identity:

“I am on the street, because it is important to gather, because we are talking about human rights, freedom, expression, ideas, future, being together. [...] I think what is going on here is the act of systematizing violence and overawing people...physically and emotionally. [...] But I feel so good in the park. We were all participating of a minor revolution here. Everyone is together...very good mood...very hopeful...happy [...] It was so beautiful in the air. Freedom, smiling with everybody, helping each other...taking and giving all the time...” (Özge, age 26)

As Hunt and Benford (2004:439) states that “the physical body is the vehicle for experiencing reality, it is an essential component of personal and social identities”, she similarly continues:

“It is also physical. You feel inside your body. [...] It feels so good, but difficult to explain. There is no fear to speak, no fear to act, no fear to be here...being yourself with other people in full of respect.” (Özge, age 26)

In addition to the foregoing interviews testifying the motivation and solidarity, people who similarly expressed their feelings in different media should be taken into account, too. For instance, Birgül as one of the protesters from feminist groups puts her experience into the words by explaining that:

“We, as feminists, pitched our tents in the Gezi Park. [...] During this process, women in the Park whom we regard as ‘apolitical’ expressed their critiques about restrictive discourses of the left to feminists. We would have called those women as ‘disorganized’, but they had a completely different way of organizing that we were not able to conceive. As feminists, we questioned ourselves, and then, personally I clearly understood that it is not possible anymore to move forward by using the outdated ways” (Kızıldağ and Sevik, 2013: 24).

This statement above depicts a crucial shift for the women's movement in Turkey. Even the collision between separatist feminists and radical feminists that includes or excludes LGBT groups was taken into account and re-evaluated for the future politics of women. Throughout the Gezi revolts, the boundaries between politics of space and gender movements vanished.

Similar change that LGBT people availed of is equally crucial to pay attention for the history of the movement in Turkey, especially in terms of their visibility and acknowledgment in the greater scale. One of the protestors states this paradigm shift thus:

"We reclaimed this space together, and moreover, the solidarity has overcome the prejudices. When we first arrived at Taksim Square, we were around 60-70 people with our LGBT flag. There have been around 100.000 people giving applauses to us and singing the slogan "there is no salvation alone: either all or none of us." (Kızıldağ and Sebik, 2013: 23)

Furthermore, the period of non-hierarchical but structure-based organization is described from the perspective of the LGBT activists within their groups:

"During the Gezi Park resistance, the resistance and solidarity table that was built by mobilized and immobilized LGBT individuals –called as LGBT block – was formed with its own dynamic. LGBT people, who have not had any interactions or any social, class or cultural common ground before, gathered under the same roof of resistance." (Deniz, Özlem, and Yalçın, 2013: 31)

Another testimony lays stress on not only the solidarity among LGBT groups, but also how importance it was to gather in the space of appearance in order to be empowered and create a new kind of "life", identity and stance against the power:

"LGBT was another group that never left the ranks since the beginning of the resistance by taking place in the barricades, in İstiklal Street and against the water cannons. Only some days after we had been announced as 'sick' by the national assembly, we were on the streets with an accumulated exasperation of being ignored and stigmatized. Since the day we retrieved the Park from the police and started building a new life, we got to know each other; and we enjoyed acting together and feeling free. The more free we felt, the more we proliferated and took strength from each other. Gezi happened to be a nonesuch space of encounter for us." (Deniz, Özlem, and Yalçın, 2013: 29)

All the first-hand and common accounts above accentuated by protestors demonstrate not only the unifying and strengthening spirit of Gezi Park resistance, but also their consciousness of the change both in their political

bodies and their relation to others. Furthermore, it is significant to stress the collective actions, implacable resistance and new creative strategies; especially among women, LGBT people and young generations who finally acquired this long awaited stimulation and transformed it into political act. Bayram Mısır beatifically heralds this new form of ‘beyond-identities’ mobilization as ‘beyond-age’ possibility by reminding also the empowering atmosphere of the protests and the creative solidarity:

“Not only the multitudes that are already parts of certain fan groups, but also the generation of 15-25-year-old who participated to such action for the first time embellished this ‘carnival’ with their characteristics so much that their creativity and saying “intelligence versus tear gas” became the motto of June.” (Bayram Mısır, 2013: 19)

Reflections: envisioning the future

The aforementioned extreme violence and attacks from the police during Gezi Revolts once more substantiated that the state, as an outright manifestation of men’s interest (Mackinnon, 1982), cannot cope with freedom, therefore it always creates control mechanisms over the bodies, especially bodies that do not represent the male-identity and dominative power (Gambetti, 2013). In Gezi Park protests this control has gone beyond insomuch as that the state attacked the bodies by using all possible apparatus; thus what was left was only body politics. To recall Butler once again:

“[...] to attack the body is to attack the rights itself, since the right is precisely what is exercised by the body on the street.” (Butler, 2011: 4)

Gezi Park, notwithstanding, was one of the unique examples in this instance because women and LGBT people were on the street at fronts, acting with their own agency and without leaving their space for men-defenders. Hereby, they exercised exactly what Butler propounded for politics: they gathered, stayed together without knowing each other, created a gap in balance with interaction, actualized their appearance and engendered their space of politics and politics of space where popular sovereignty took over state sovereignty (Butler, 2013).

Apart from the activity of gathering in the public space *per se*, what protestors experienced justified the invalidity of ostensible ‘democratic participation’ and ‘representative democracy’ which only exist in the ballot boxes according to Erdoğan. Women and LGBT groups, who have been the subjects of this claim for so long, proved and corroborated in Gezi Revolts that direct political participation is possible, because they witnessed the immediate reactions and reflections to their claims in that very time and space. Moreover, as also stated in their testimonies, their power and action expanded and spread itself to other bodies which paved the way for “collective identity” via “emotional investment”

which enabled them to “recognize themselves” (Melucci, 1988: 343) together. Thousands of bodies gathered on the streets instead of staying in private realms despite the extreme violence and the various suppressive forces while political gesture was surging (Lambert, 2013); therefore, we believe that it is a great fountain head of upcoming strategies for gender groups in their politics.

Without being besotted with the euphoric optimism of this solidarity, gender groups now should bear what happened in mind, reflect upon and develop new strategies for future politics whilst remembering ongoing state oppression. They should ponder over the question of how new knowledge of being a big collective organism can enable gender groups to create new realms outside the institutional politics. As Polletta and Jasper stress that “collective identity can move us beyond some theoretical impasses,” (2001: 298) this hope of reaching beyond the theory and impasse of existing politics is also expressed in the interviewees’ answers to the question of “what will happen next?” accompanied by their beliefs on the solidarity:

“People will remain brave. The government is making decisions, but these are not the decisions of the people in the Park. The situation at the moment is much better than expectations about how it would end.” (Hatice, age 35)

Another interviewee goes further to suggest new models of mobilization that could be visible and legitimate by confronting state politics:

“Maybe we need representatives in the parliament. We need a new kind of association...a new kind of organization.” (Nur, age 29)

Whether developing this recent gender solidarity into an institutional politics or not, it is vital to sustain this collective consideration and to use it in organizational level for reclaiming the restrained rights and for supporting ‘sister’ activist groups despite their different micro-ideologies. Therefore, we behold that this new way of collective politicization would take gender and sexuality politics in Turkey to a step further which is more inclusive, immune to various forms of state intimidation and straightforward. It has potential not only to continue threading new solidarities amongst different women’s and LGBT groups as new encounters for conservative state, but also to expand the territories of body politics to miscellaneous realms of struggle such as ethnicity, class and religion as the other subjects for ‘space of appearance’.

Although we are wary of the necessity of fair amount of optimism, we would like to go further and claim that such practices of mobilization, empowerment and moments of solidarity can cross the borders and be envisioned in other countries that have recently experienced/are yet to experience similar uprisings. Through exchanging knowledge via available media, the Gezi revolts can be conveyed to and become inspiration for other women and LGBT people under

other oppressive regimes and neoliberal sexual politics - from Middle East to Latin America and to Europe. With an everlasting hope that people in collectivity and solidarity with belief could overcome the political and social barriers together, experience and knowledge which are greater than borders can be transformed into greater long-term strategies that can bring about new gender and sexual activism we imagine.

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Beyond nonhuman animal rights: a grassroots movement in Istanbul and its alignment with other causes¹

Silvia Ilonka Wolf

Abstract

This paper aims to shed light on the way the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul aligns itself with other progressive leftist causes. This alignment manifests itself on different levels; other struggles are incorporated both intellectually and practically. Intellectually the relation between speciesism and other forms of discrimination is emphasized through the use of philosophies that theorize this relation. These philosophies are often further developed and debated. The practical dimension involves networking with other movements, campaigning for other causes and joining other movements' protests. But discrimination against disadvantaged groups also causes disputes within the nonhuman animal rights movement itself. What do these debates reveal about inconsistencies within the movement? And to what extent is the nonhuman animal rights cause acknowledged in other movements? I seek to find answers to these questions through ethnographic research. The grassroots character of the movement appears to be a major influence with regard to its radical, progressive, ethical vegan advocacy and its stimulation for further knowledge and self-improvement.

Keywords: social movements, nonhuman animal rights, Turkey, grassroots activism, alignment, Istanbul, veganarchism, abolitionist approach

Introduction

In June 2013 the Gezi Park protests mobilized thousands of citizens to the streets of Istanbul and other Turkish cities. Although the protests started as an environmental, rights-to-the-city movement, it soon represented a myriad of individuals, groups, and social movements. Part of this heterogeneous mass was a movement that had appeared relatively recently on the Istanbul activist scene: the nonhuman animal rights movement. For these (mostly) ethical vegans the

¹I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the editorial board of *Interface*. This paper could not have been written without their useful comments and feedback. I would also like to thank my thesis supervisor Ayşe Öncü, for her suggestions have greatly contributed to this paper. Thanks also to Banu Karaca who motivated me to start writing about this topic. Finally, a special thanks to the activists and other vegans who have participated on this research and who are, by virtue of their participation, co-creators of this paper.

Gezi incident appeared as a political opportunity to protest against one of the most pervasive systems of discrimination in society: speciesism, i.e. discrimination based on species membership. Some of these activists, under the name of Diren Vegan (Vegan Resist), had started a vegan food booth in Gezi Park. They organized a range of vegan forums to debate nonhuman animal rights philosophies, protested against other Gezi protest participants that were selling meatballs and milk, and tried to convince people not to consume those products.

The Gezi incident has been identified by Turkish nonhuman animal rights activists as a major turning point through which the movement gained momentum. Gülce Özen Gürkan and Berk Efe Altınal, the founders of Diren Vegan², observe that other liberation movements' previous perception of vegan activists as 'elitist' and 'middle class bourgeois' largely fell to pieces after the Gezi protests (Altınal and Gürkan 2013). It can also be said that, because so many different rights-based movements joined the Gezi protests, they were a unique opportunity for the ethical vegans to align themselves with other movements.

This paper looks at the way in which the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul aligned itself with and incorporated other struggles against discrimination. I attempt to show how the grassroots nature of the movement facilitates this alignment. Alignment with other progressive leftist movements manifests itself on different levels; other struggles are incorporated both intellectually and practically. Intellectually the relation between speciesism and other forms of discrimination is emphasized through the use of philosophies that theorize this relation. These philosophies are often further developed and debated. The practical dimension involves networking with other movements, campaigning for other causes and joining other movements' protests. Activists who have membership in multiple movements play a particularly significant role in the process of networking. They bring in their unique perspectives to each movement that they are a part of. They are also likely to contribute to the (future) legitimacy of the nonhuman animal rights cause. This leads us to the following question: to what extent are speciesism and the urge to counter it acknowledged, or in the process of being acknowledged, in the larger Istanbul activist scene? And how are other causes debated within the nonhuman animal rights movement itself? Internal debates and disputes allow us to see where there is still room for improvement when it comes to an inclusive approach.

²Diren Vegan is currently known as Abolisyonist Vegan Hareket (Abolitionist Vegan Movement).

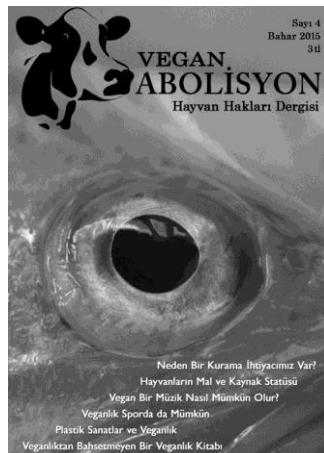


Figure 1: the magazine of Abolitionist Vegan Hareket (Abolitionist Vegan Movement, AVH). This magazine is published four times a year. Source: the website <http://abolitionistveganhareket.org/>

I am trying to answer these questions through extensive fieldwork. In October 2014 I immersed myself in the nonhuman animal rights activist scene in Istanbul. I attended events, protests, formal and informal meetings, and other activities. I also carried out ethnographic interviews with fourteen activists and one vegan restaurant owner.³ Some of the interviewees chose to stay anonymous; when I quote them I use pseudonyms. Others preferred to be quoted by their real names. The research is further supported by a textual analysis of the groups' official approaches found on their websites, manifestos, Facebook pages, and other written and visual works.

Background and conceptualization of the nonhuman animal rights movement

In this study I use the term 'nonhuman animal rights movement' to denote the groups and individuals that organize themselves to combat speciesism and that regard a vegan lifestyle as an ethical necessity. While the term 'animal rights' is more common in mainstream discourse and even in much of the academic work dealing with this topic, it can be problematic in that it denies the fact that humans are also an animal species. To avoid a speciesist terminology and to acknowledge that the boundary between humans and other animals is a social construct, I therefore use the term 'nonhuman animals' and 'nonhuman animal rights', even though this is not a popular practice among activists in Turkey or elsewhere.

³ Some of these interviews were done in Turkish and some in English. Prior to the fieldwork, in May 2014, I had gathered activists' personal positions through e-mail and Facebook correspondence. In this paper I use citations from only seven of the interviews.

Another terminological controversy is whether to use the term 'nonhuman animal rights' or 'nonhuman animal liberation'. While many of the groups and activists that are the subjects of this research use 'animal liberation'⁴, this is a contested term. The controversy has to do with the history of the modern nonhuman animal movement in the geographical areas where it originated, i.e. the Anglophone countries, as well as with the history of this movement in Turkey itself. When I asked GülceÖzenGürkan⁵ which term would describe the nonhuman animal movement in Turkey more accurately she explained:

For a very long time, the term 'animal rights' was only used for the rights of cats and dogs. When it started to be realised that there are lots of animals suffering because of humans, the term 'animal rights' was rejected and animal people started to use the term 'animal liberation', which was taken from Peter Singer.⁶ The thing is, Peter Singer is not a vegan and he promotes 'happy' exploitation. And now vegans are getting the term 'animal rights' back from the narrow area it pointed to for a long time, and expand it to all animals. That's why it's better to use the term 'animal rights' for the movement in Turkey, because many of the animal people are vegan, as it is required to be (Correspondence on Facebook with Gülce Özen Gürkan on 13 March 2015).⁷

The tension between the terms 'animal rights' and 'animal liberation' that Gülce identifies is related to the most fundamental split within the nonhuman animal movement: the welfare approach versus the rights-based approach. While welfarist organizations aim at modification of nonhuman animal use, rights-based organizations aim at abolition of nonhuman animal slavery altogether. The welfare approach holds that it is justified to use nonhuman animals as a means for human ends as long as the nonhuman animals are treated 'humanely'⁸ (Shostak 2012). This approach was the dominant approach when the nonhuman animal protection movement emerged in 19th century England. Until now this approach continues to have a strong influence within the movement, even on those organizations that claim to have abolition of nonhuman animal use as their ultimate goal. These moderate organizations

⁴ In Turkish 'hayvanözgürülük'.

⁵ Gülce Özen Gürkan is one of the founders and active members of Abolisyonist Vegan Hareket. She is also one of the interviewees for this ethnographic research. The explanation provided above was given through e-mail correspondence on 13th March 2015.

⁶ Peter Singer's book *Animal Liberation* was published in 1975. Singer uses a utilitarian approach towards animal rights, as opposed to the rights-based approach that was advocated by Tom Regan (1983) and later by Gary L. Francione (1995). For more information about the differences between these approaches, see Roger Yates: <http://roger.rbgi.net/singer%2oregan%2ofrancione.html>.

⁷ While many of the groups and activists generally refer to their cause as 'animal liberation' I choose to define the movement, as a collectivity, by the term of 'nonhuman animal rights'.

⁸ This is what Gülce referred to as 'happy exploitation'.

tend to opt for reform strategies. For instance, they pressure governments to alter the laws that regulate the use of nonhuman animals in the livestock industry. Or they give out awards to corporations that have switched to 'more humane' farming, e.g. farms that captivate nonhuman animals in bigger cages. Such organizations are defined as 'new welfarist' by activists who argue that this kind of compromise is in fact harmful to nonhuman animal rights instead of being more effective.

Gülce's reference to the international context of the terminology reveals that we cannot comprehend this movement in Turkey without recognizing how it is part of a larger, transnational movement. Social movement scholars have observed that the rise of new media and communication technologies has impacted cross-border networking profoundly (Maiba 2005, Della Porta and Tarrow 2005). More widespread access to the internet has stimulated the diffusion of movement ideas, practices, and frames from one country to another (della Porta and Tarrow 2005). The nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul is exemplary of this. Ideologies, frames and tactics that originate from abroad have been adopted by the movement. Many of the local debates also take place in other countries, particularly in the Anglophone countries where the modern nonhuman animal rights movement first arose. As we will see, it is predominantly the more progressive, radical⁹ ideologies and tactics that resonate with the activists in Istanbul.¹⁰ I argue that there are two main reasons for this: (1) the period in which these groups emerged, and (2) the grassroots character of the groups, as opposed to professional organizations.

Professionalization versus grassroots activism

The activists with an explicitly radical, anti-speciesist and ethical vegan outlook started to organize themselves relatively recently in Istanbul¹¹, between 2010 and 2013. They are small-scale, grassroots, non-hierarchical groups. This character of the movement as a bottom-up, on the ground, movement is in stark contrast to the mainstream institutionalized professional nonhuman animal rights organizations that we see in the United States, Australia and much of Western Europe. While grassroots movements also exist there, they are relatively marginalized and often portrayed as 'extreme'.

The trend towards professionalization of nonhuman animal rights organizations in these countries has not gone unnoticed by scholars studying the movement (Munro 2005, Wrenn 2013). It has also been pointed out that this trend has proved detrimental for the movement's authenticity, efficacy, and for its aim to

⁹ With 'radical' I mean a style of approach that seeks out the root of a problem instead of making concessions (see Brian A. Dominick's definition, 1997). Brian A. Dominick notes that radicalism is often incorrectly seen as synonymous with extremism.

¹⁰ These ideologies are by no means homogenous, however.

¹¹ And in some other Turkish cities, but I have limited the scope of my research to Istanbul.

bring about cultural change. Professionalized movement organizations tend to prioritize resource mobilization over tactical efficacy (Torres 2007, cited in Wrenn 2013). Their focus on financial donations and media representation has led to moderation, compromise, and a 'self-imposed inflexibility' (Wrenn 2013). It is thus not surprising to see that many mainstream organizations have adopted 'new welfarist' frames and that they are reluctant in promoting veganism. Moreover, they disparage uncompromising activists for being too radical and unrealistic.



Figure 2: A group of activists painting 'vegan ol' (go vegan) on a wall. Source: the Facebook page of one of the activists.

Radical factions within the movement therefore face hegemonic exclusion by these mainstream organizations. Activists can overcome this marginalization to some extent by the use of affordable, free-access media resources such as self-printed literature and the internet (Wrenn 2012). The internet and new social media then play a significant role in the spread of counter-hegemonic factions. Wrenn notes that the abolitionist movement, initiated by Gary Francione in 1995, only started to have a sizeable audience from the moment that Francione entered the internet. In 2012 she writes that 'the Abolitionist movement, comprised of grassroots and often localized individuals and small groups self-identifying according to Francione's theory, is less than a decade old' (Wrenn 2012, 438). Wrenn suggests that 'the relative newness of the abolitionist

movement and strong countering from the mainstream nonhuman animal welfare movement has prevented abolitionism from obtaining a large presence within the nonhuman animal rights movement' (Wrenn 2012, 439).

Radical nonhuman animal rights activists in Istanbul, however, seem to be largely exempt from this hegemonic exclusion. Professionalized nonhuman animal rights organizations are not very established in Turkey. The exception is the nation-wide federation Haytap¹², but this organization seems to appeal more to 'animal lovers'¹³ rather than to people in the activist scene. Haytap was only established in 2008, thus not much earlier than the grassroots groups. Furthermore, there seems to be little interaction between Haytap and the groups that I have studied.¹⁴ Hence, the Turkish groups with a rights-based, ethical vegan character do not experience the same degree of opposition as their counterparts in many 'Western' countries. Furthermore, because they have emerged relatively late they are not bound by 'path dependencies whereby movements become locked into procedures and repertoires initiated many years prior' (Wrenn 2012, 33). On the contrary, the movement is currently experiencing a process in which ideologies, frames and tactics are being not only adopted, but also further developed, questioned and internally debated. The nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul has emerged at a time in which internet, and thus information, is highly accessible. As Wrenn has pointed out, the role of the internet is significant in the spread of radical, progressive ideologies. Therefore is not surprising to see that it is exactly these ideologies that are adopted by the newly emerged movement in Istanbul.

Grassroots activism is also distinctive from professionalized organizations with regard to mobilization and organization. The nonhuman animal rights groups in Istanbul have no formal leaders. Besides, the movement consists of a considerable number of 'independent' activists.¹⁵ Paolo Gerbaudo notes a similar tendency in the resistance movements that emerged in Egypt, Spain and the US in recent years. He finds that 'stable membership in an organization is substituted for a continuous communicative engagement with the 'movement' at

¹² Hayvan Hakları Federasyonu, Animal Rights Federation.

¹³ 'Animal lovers', or 'hayvan sever' in Turkish is a term that many people in Turkey, including the media, use when they refer to nonhuman animal rights activists. According to most of the activists this term degrades the movement because it makes it seem as if it is about 'loving' rather than about rights. A similar discussion has also occurred in the 'West'. However, many of the volunteers that support Haytap would call themselves 'animal lovers'. They are usually concerned with the wellbeing of companion species such as cats and dogs, but they often do not criticize the use of other species for food.

¹⁴ However, some of them may meet during demonstrations around the well-being of stray dogs and cats or other joint campaigns.

¹⁵ There is also a group by the name of 'Independent Animal Liberation Activists' (Bağımsız Hayvan Özgürlik Aktivistleri, BHÖA) and another group by the name of 'Independent Nature-Animal Activists' (Bağımsız Doğa-Hayvan Aktivistleri, BADOHA). By 'independent activists' I do not mean people belonging to these groups; I mean activists that do not affiliate themselves with any group in particular.

large' (Gerbaudo 2013, 136). He calls this 'disintermediation', a situation in which 'individual activists rather than groups are seen as the basic units of the movement' (*ibid*). In Istanbul many nonhuman animal rights activists do not associate themselves with any group in particular; they attend different events regardless of which group organizes it. It is for this reason that a certain group may only have about twenty or thirty core members but is able to mobilize more than eighty activists for a protest. Individual activists are thus vital for the movement. Besides, protests and events are often a joint alliance of different groups. These factors suggest that the fluid nature of the movement leads to a high degree of interaction between the groups, and, as we will see later, with other movements. Various connections also exist between activists in Istanbul and their vegan counterparts in other big Turkish cities, such as Ankara and Izmir.

Philosophical alignment

Many of the groups in Istanbul are based on the philosophies of grassroots nonhuman animal rights factions that originated in the US in the 1990s. These progressive factions have a more explicitly vegan outlook than most institutionalized nonhuman animal rights organizations. Professional nonhuman animal rights organizations heavily rely on financial donations and on media campaigns that are directed at a mainstream audience. The way they frame their cause is often adapted to match society's dominant cultural frameworks. This leads to policies of moderation and compromise. Grassroots groups however generally lack the mainstream media infrastructure and their survival is not dependent on financial donations. Suchgroups are therefore more likely to be radical and straight to the point. This explains why professionalized nonhuman animal rights organizations are often focused on modification of nonhuman animal use and a decrease in meat consumption, whereas grassroots groups have fewer barriers in directly pursuing a vegan advocacy.

Francione's abolitionist approach is one of the factions that have recently gained ground in Istanbul. Another ideological faction that enjoys considerable support in Istanbul is the anarchist-based philosophy of veganarchism. Many Turkish veganarchist groups and individual activists have also joined the transnational Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) network. DxE organizes protests at locations that engage in nonhuman animal exploitation such as restaurants, fast food companies, and supermarkets.

Video link: Direct Action Everywhere (DxE) on 6 December 2014 in Istanbul. Protest at Burger King, Kentucky Fried Chicken and MacDonalds: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iddbeEkuqvk>

Radical factions such as the abolitionist approach and veganarchism make great efforts to undo the nonhuman animal rights movement's marginalization by the left. They generally do this by pointing out that injustices or discriminations against nonhuman animals and other injustices or discriminations are equally important and interconnected. This is also reflected in many of the articles and posts on their websites and Facebook pages, which often address injustices against a variety of human groups.

However, they are neither the first nor the only activists to emphasize the relation between speciesism and other forms of discrimination.¹⁶ A similar connection was made by their precedents in the 1970s. It was then that the term speciesism was introduced by Richard Ryder. He defined it as 'the prejudice against nonhuman animals that arbitrarily assigns varying values and levels of moral worth' (cited in Wrenn 2012, 440). In 1975 Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* was published, in which the author compared speciesism with racism and sexism. At the time, Singer's utilitarian position, which Yates calls a 'radical version of welfarism' and which Francione calls 'new welfarism' became a popular philosophical resource for second wave nonhuman animal advocacy. The mainstream nonhuman animal rights movement still largely follows Singer's approach; an approach that is focused on reform policies with the intention of eventually reaching abolition of nonhuman animal use. The nonhuman animal rights movement has however largely failed to pursue an activist agenda that is effective in aligning itself with other progressive leftist struggles. Neither has it succeeded at influencing public opinion with regard to nonhuman animal rights principles (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2013).¹⁷ What follows now is a brief overview of how the newer, progressive approaches adopted by the Turkish nonhuman animal rights groups relate to injustices against humans.

The Abolitionist Approach

The Abolitionist Vegan Movement (Abolisyonist Vegan Hareket, AVH) was established during the Gezi Park Protests under the former name Vegan Resist (Diren Vegan). As of October 2014 AVH had twelve active members. In line with Francione's approach, the organization holds the principle that 'humans or nonhumans, have one right: the basic right not to be treated as the property of others'.¹⁸

¹⁶Many of their theories are also based on nonhuman animal rights defenders from outside Turkey.

¹⁷This is not to say that they have not made the public aware about nonhuman animal welfare, but welfare and rights are clearly not the same thing.

¹⁸ <http://www.abolitionistapproach.com/>



Figure 3: This is the vegan information stand by Abolisyonist Vegan Hareket (at the time still known as Diren Vegan). They do these type of actions regularly (every week or once a two weeks). Source: the website <http://abolisyonistveganhareket.org/>

Principle number 5¹⁹ of Francione's abolitionist approach emphasizes speciesism's relationship to other discriminations: 'Just as we reject racism, sexism, ageism, and heterosexism, we reject speciesism. The species of a sentient being is no more reason to deny the protection of this basic right than race, sex, age, or sexual orientation is a reason to deny membership in the human moral community to other humans'²⁰In the article 'A Movements's Means to Create its Ends' co-written by Francione and Tom Regan²¹ they assert that 'the philosophy of animal rights necessarily calls for human, not only animal, liberation.

(...) The Philosophy of animal rights is an inclusive philosophy. Rights for nonhumans only make sense if we accept the total inclusion of our human sisters and brothers as full and equal members of the extended human family, without regard to race, sex, economic status, religious persuasion, disability, or sexual preference. Thus the philosophy of animal rights entails far reaching social change. Animal liberation is human liberation' (Francione and Regan 1991, 43).

The Abolitionist Vegan Movement devotes a great deal of effort to make nonhuman animal rights activists aware of forms of discrimination other than speciesism. Besides organizing seminars to discuss these issues, they also publish articles about it on their website and in their magazine. Berk Efe emphasizes the importance of an awareness of all forms of discrimination:

We really need a strong human rights perspective in the animal movement. We really need to educate animal advocates on discrimination, sexism, heterosexism, racism, colonialism etc. All the discriminations are related to each other and we need a strong perspective on this issue. Speciesism is one of the discriminations and we cannot use racism, sexism or heterosexism to prevent speciesism(Correspondence on Facebook with Berk Efe Altinal, 21 May 2014).

Adherents of the abolitionist approach argue that many traditional tactics and campaigns perpetuate discrimination against disadvantaged groups. We will return to this in the section on internal debates.

¹⁹ The Abolitionist Approach consists of six principles.

²⁰ <http://www.abolitionistapproach.com/about/the-six-principles-of-the-abolitionist-approach-to-animal-rights/#.VRv3iOGzmZM>, 1 April 2015

²¹ Tom Regan is a nonhuman animal rights philosopher and the author of 'The Case for Animal Rights', which was published in 1983.

Veganarchism

Another popular approach within the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul is the anarchist philosophy veganarchism, or vegan anarchism. Many ethical vegan activists define themselves as anarchists and some of the groups have a strong anarchist outlook. The group that provided the most extensive materials for this research is the anarchist YeryüzüneÖzgürLükDerneği (Freedom to Earth, YÖD). At the time of inquiry (December 2014) YÖD had thirty official members, their regular meetings are followed by ten to twenty activists, and their street actions generally comprise of ten to seventy people.



Figure 4: the logo of YeryüzüneÖzgürLükDerneği (Freedom to Earth Association, YÖD). Source: the website <https://yeryuzuneozgurluk.wordpress.com/2014/11/25/vegan-beslenme-tablosu/>

YÖD's motto is 'Liberation to Humans, Animals, and the Earth' (İnsana, Hayvana, GezegeneÖzgürLük). MetinKeser, one of YÖD's activists, clarifies:

Freedom to Earth, as the name says, covers broader topics than animal rights. It is an organization that envisions a total liberation of all living beings and earth against civilization and capitalism. Our activism might focus more on animals because it is usually ignored by leftists etc. all around the world, but our discourse and manifestations does not deem any living being more important than another (E-mail correspondence with MetinKeser (not his real name), 26 May 2014).

Defining YÖD simply as a nonhuman animal rights group may fail to capture the totality of the group's outlook, as its scope is explicitly broader than nonhuman animal rights. On YÖD's website the organization's aim is defined as

'exposing all violations of rights without discriminating such as against species, race, and gender, and to carry out all kinds of campaigns in order to prevent those violations, and to have solidarity with those who are the victims of governmental, capitalist or societal dominance' (<http://veryuzuneozgurluk.org/>, 1 April 2015).

The veganarchist approach was introduced by Brian A. Dominick in *Animal Liberation and Social Revolution*, first published in 1995. Like the abolitionist approach, veganarchism connects nonhuman animal liberation to human liberation. It regards nonhuman animal liberation and social revolution as inevitably related with each other. Veganarchists argue that speciesism is but one part of the larger oppression that permeates contemporary society. For supporters of the veganarchist movement, speciesism is one of the oppressions that results from anthropocentrism (Dominick 1997). YÖD's manifesto explains that speciesism and the domination of nature by the human species goes way back in history. Since the industrial revolution, however, which led to an 'overall transformation in society to create an industrial mass-consumer society', this domination has acquired extreme forms (YÖD manifesto). Particularly after WWII, when intensive livestock farming was on the rise, has industrialization caused immense detriment to the life quality of nonhuman animals raised for food. YÖD points to the fact that late capitalism has not only led to a mass exploitation of nonhuman animals, but also of nature and humans alike. Deforestation, pollution, malnutrition, global warming, and big conglomerates taking over the smaller companies are among the examples (YÖD manifesto). Thus, a critique of capitalism is central in the veganarchist perspective.

Veganarchists also discuss the problematic use of oppressive terminology and dichotomies of 'self' and 'other'. Dominick states that 'oppressive dynamics are always based on an us-them dichotomy, with the oppressors seen in clear distinction from the oppressed' (Dominick 1997, 14). Examples of dichotomies given in YÖD's manifesto are: 'man-nature, human-animal, man-woman, white-black, adult-minor, heterosexual-homosexual, civilized-primitive, modern-traditional, beautiful-ugly, educated-ignorant, sane-insane, normal-abnormal' (YÖD manifesto). These patterns of thinking have served to justify the domination of the 'civilized' white man over the 'other'.

A YÖD speaker gives presentations at universities about speciesism. He reminds his audience that a few centuries ago, people that did not belong to the category 'rich white men' were not considered human. The term 'human' has historically been used to draw a line between 'us' and 'them'. In contemporary society this term serves to distinguish humans from nonhuman animals. The YÖD activist asserts that this makes it an arbitrary term because it denies the fact that 'we are also animals'.

Discursive deconstruction of boundaries

As we have seen in the above examples nonhuman animal rights activists are aware that the categorization of ‘humans’ vs. ‘animals’ is a social construct that is supported by oppressive language practices. Therefore they attempt to remove the symbolic boundary between humans and other species. This boundary work, which is very important in supporting the argument that injustices against humans and nonhumans require equal attention, is reflected in movementgroups’ discourses. Examples are slogans such as ‘freedom to living creatures’²², ‘we are all animals’²³ and ‘long live the brotherhood and sisterhood of the species’.²⁴ As Elizabeth Cherry points out, the dismantling of the human-animal boundary is ‘simultaneously a goal and a strategy’ (Cherry 2010, 455).

Video link: protest in Istanbul against the massacre of stray dogs in Azerbaijan, March 2015:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X6FyOzbTqOo>

A quintessential example of this strategy is the use of nonhuman animal species names in the football club Vegan Spor (Vegan Sport) which belongs to an activist, anti-industrial football league. Each player has chosen a species. The name of the species is written on the back of their shirts and on their promotion video. Ayça, a member of Vegan Spor, explains why they do this:

We try to change peoples’ minds by using animal names, because people use those words derogatively. Like ‘donkey’ or ‘cow’. We all have an animal name. I am an ox. (...) And I was playing one time and they say: “I don’t want to say ox”. But it is not an insult. We say “it’s not an insult”. It’s something nice for us. So we try to work on this. They think that we might misunderstand if they say ‘donkey’ (Interview with Ayça (not her real name) on 13 December 2014).

This example shows that nonhuman animal rights activists’ attempts to bring about the cultural change that they seek is very challenging in a world in which speciesism is still the norm, even outside of mainstream society.

Video link: Introduction to Vegan Spor:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ingAT7iV13c>

²² ‘Canlılara Özgürlük’, a slogan by Vegan Özgürlük Hareketi (Vegan Liberation Movement).

²³ *Hepimiz Hayvanız*, a slogan used by Turkish nonhuman animal rights activists during their protest against the massacres of stray dogs in Azerbaijan in the spring of 2015.

²⁴ *Yaşasın Türlerin Kardeşliği*, a slogan by Bağımsız Hayvan Özgürlüğü Aktivistleri (Independent Animal Liberation Activists).

Knowledge development

Although the ideologies of the nonhuman animal rights groups in Turkey are largely based on earlier works and on well-known nonhuman animal rights philosophers from abroad (such as Brian A. Dominick, Steve Best, Gary L Francione, Gary Youofsky, Carol Adams) the adoption and use of these ideologies is not seen as something static and given. Rather, they are negotiated and further developed. The first line in YÖD's manifesto is quintessential of this encouragement of knowledge production:

This manifesto, which is not and will never be completed and which is open to be developed not only by us but for everyone willing, is our call for all that would want to be together in the struggle (YÖD manifesto).

Debates regularly take place within the Turkish nonhuman animal rights community regarding various topics. This often leads to splits within a group or between groups, but also to the continuous development of new visions. One of my interviewees for example gathered with several other independent activists in November 2013 in Izmir at the workshop 'Where is animal liberation within veganism?' to create a self-critical manifesto. As is stated in this 'Restless Vegans Manifesto', which they published online, 'the goal here is self-questioning of people who are close to animal liberation discourse and veganism, a change of direction in a personal and political sense' (Restless Vegans Manifesto).

Practical alignment

We have seen how nonhuman animal rights activists in Istanbul align themselves philosophically with other progressive leftist causes, like their counterparts elsewhere that adhere to the same factions. But an intellectual framework that includes other causes is not sufficient to allow for an effective integration in the larger activist scene. It requires a practical component as well. Therefore I will now have a look at how the groups' perspectives are reflected in their activities.

Face to face interactions

It is very common for Turkish nonhuman animal rights activists and groups to join other movements' protests and events. This considerably increases ethical vegans' visibility within the larger activist scene. Snow et al. highlight the importance of direct personal contacts 'because they allow organizers and potential participants to "align" their "frames", to achieve a common definition of a social problem and a common prescription for solving it' (Snow et al. 1986, cited in Jasper and Poulsen 1995, 495). Metin also emphasizes that personal, face-to-face contact and actively supporting the struggles of other movements is crucial, even though the news items and campaigns on the group's website

already do a good job in attracting people from outside. He tells how personal contact stimulates mutual support:

Although we are really small but in Istanbul political struggles somehow go together. We are not isolated. I think this is caused by efforts from both sides because we are befriended, in our personal life we know each other. When there's an action for transsexual people we also announce it and if we have the opportunity we go there and then we tell like "hey you know, next week we're doing an action against leather and fur". Even if they're not vegan or vegetarian they think like "ok, these guys are fighting for transsexual people. Animals are somehow exploited and discriminated on a kind of similar level, maybe I might go there and check". So if you sincerely go there and support their cause.

Sincerely, not with the intention that "I'm going to convert those guys and go away", then they really come (Interview with Metin Keser (not his real name) on 4 October 2014).

These interactions are likely to evoke some degree of awareness regarding speciesism within the movements that the ethical vegans are interacting with. Another platform where they may be influential is the weekly event *Bombaları Karşı Sofralar İstanbul* (Food not Bombs Istanbul). Food not Bombs is an international anarchistic network which promotes 'freeganism'²⁵ by collecting free (vegan) leftovers from supermarkets and then cooking and eating these together. In Istanbul it is a joint event organized by different anarchist groups. YÖD is one of the groups that are externally connected to Bombaları Karşı Sofralar. The free dinners are often accompanied by seminars that cover a variety of topics, such as militarism, capitalism, ecology and nonhuman animal rights.

Interactive platforms

Activists who are involved in both the nonhuman animal rights movement and one or more other movements are important actors with regard to networking. Carroll and Ratner call these kinds of multimovement actors 'cosmopolitan activists', as opposed to 'locals', who are active in only one movement. Although quantitative data is lacking, it seems that there is a considerable amount of cosmopolitan activist within the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul. This includes not only 'activists', i.e. people that engage in organized political actions, but also others involved with veganism and promoting veganism. The feminist movement, the LGBT²⁶ movement, and the antimilitarist movement seem to be particularly significant in this regard. Some

²⁵'Freegans' as defined by the website Freegan.info are 'people who employ alternative strategies for living based on limited participation in the conventional economy and minimal consumption of resources'.

²⁶ LGBT stands for Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual. Sometimes a Q for Queer is added.

of the cosmopolitan activists have organized themselves in Facebook groups, such as the ‘vegan feminists’ group and ‘vegan LGBT’ group on Facebook. The ‘abolitionist vegan women’ have also organized themselves.

These other movements, such as the feminist movement and the LGBT movement, provide potential or actual platforms where nonhuman animal rights can be discussed. Gizem, for example, is a feminist and a nonhuman animal rights activist. She is an abolitionist vegan and active for the women’s rights organization MorÇatı (Purple Roof). She tells that her co-feminists at MorÇatı are very interested in her being vegan. When she brought vegan food to the organization it was received with enthusiasm. There are a few feminists in MorÇatı that are vegetarian, but not vegan. Therefore, Gizem sees it as her responsibility to inform them about it extensively and comprehensively. Her presentation about ethical veganism has already been put on the agenda of the organization’s monthly workshop.

Süheyla is also a feminist, as well as an LGBT-activist and an independent nonhuman animal rights activist. She attends protest events that deal with a wide range of topics: “I go to every women’s right event, every LGBT rights event, climate change, etc. I go to everything that has a connection to rights because I care about rights.” Süheyla’s experience is that it is easier to discuss nonhuman animal rights with people from the LGBT community than it usually is in the wider society. When she attended an LGBT meeting she noticed that a lot of people there were vegan or vegetarian or considering to become one. She narrates:

After the talk everybody was like: “are you vegan? I’m vegan too. Are you vegetarian? Yes I am thinking about it.” Because when a group is kind of oppressed like LGBT people they can feel more about other oppressed groups. Like women or animals. So I think LGBT people are more prone to it. More open minded about it. They can understand it. You can just say: “I’m vegan” and they say: “okay I’m going to be vegan too”. Generally people wouldn’t say that (Interview with Süheyla on 1 November 2014).

Süheyla’s experience with regard to how the topic of nonhuman animal rights is received in the LGBT community is promising. But the relationship between the nonhuman animal rights movement and other progressive leftist social movements is a dynamic one. The mutual incorporation of these different struggles, especially the incorporation of ethical veganism by the feminist or LGBT movement (or other movements that deal with discrimination) does not happen overnight. However, the topics of veganism and nonhuman animal rights activism have been increasingly covered in recent years by leftist news websites, such as *Bianet*, *YeşilGazete* (Green Newspaper) and the anarchist *SosyalSavaş* (Social War). Besides, a large amount of references to nonhuman animal rights activism is found on the website of the LGBT organization Kaos GL. This Ankara-based organization shows perhaps the most visible cooperation

with the nonhuman animal rights movement. On their website there are numerous articles about protests against nonhuman animal abuse. Among the topics included are veganism and vegetarianism, circuses, leather and fur, and nonhuman animal experiments. Several nonhuman animal rights groups' protests and events are covered in the articles. One of these protests for nonhuman animal rights was organized by LGBT organization ZeugMadi LGBT, which is based in the city Gaziantep.

On the 1st of November World Vegan Day 2014 KAOS GL took it a step further; it was announced on their website that from that day onwards, 'KAOS GL does not eat meat anymore' (<http://www.kaosgl.com/sayfa.php?id=17840>, 1 April 2015). In other words, nonhuman animal flesh will no longer be served at their meetings. This step suggest that Kaos GL as an organization that struggles against heteronormativity could be in the process of aligning itself with nonhuman animal rights. In terms of actual joint events there has been at least one organized with YÖD and EkolojiKolektifiDerneği (Ecology Collective Association). During this event, which was about the connection between speciesism and sexism, a speaker from YÖD gave a presentation about the relationship between meat consumption and male heteronormative dominance.

The last example that I will use here to explore the connection between nonhuman animal rights activism and other movements is KarşıLig (Against League). Karşı League was established as an alternative football league that defines itself as 'against industrial football, racism, nationalism, sexism, and all kinds of hate speech and discrimination'. Every Saturday matches are played, without referees and in mixed gender teams. It is clear that Karşı League is about more than just sports. The gatherings look like a hotbed of activism. Each week different political issues that concern rights violations are addressed with banners on the field. About sixteen teams are part of KarşıLig, each representing their own social movement. A group of nonhuman animal rights activists have organized themselves under the name of Vegan Spor, mentioned earlier in this paper.



Figure 5: This photo was taken at anti-industrial football league KarşıLig (Against League). Vegan Spor (Vegan Sport) is one of the football clubs that participate in this league. Every week there are protests against all kinds of injustices. This time they protested against the rape of a dog, which became a court case in Istanbul. Source: the facebook page of Vegan Spor.

Zeynep and Ayça²⁷, both members of Vegan Spor, remark that it took a while before the team and its cause was accepted by the other teams. Zeynep recalls: ‘They used to discriminate against us: “you don’t eat meat so you can’t play well”. For them animals always come second. But after a while we succeeded in getting accepted.’ Ayça adds:

There was no ‘antispeciesism’ word in KarşıLig but after Vegan Spor got established it was added. And now, since about a year ago, when KarşıLig organizes something that involves food, it is usually vegan. They pay attention to

²⁷ These are not their real names.

that now. Otherwise we don't join (Interview with Ayça(not her real name) on 13 December 2014).

As these members of Vegan Spor point out, the vegan lifestyle receives visibility during the KarşıLig parties. But even during the matches lifestyle choices do not go unnoticed. This is due to the fact that normally footballs are made out of leather. In the beginning when the vegan activists joined KarşıLig it was only during matches played by Vegan Spor that a non-leather, vegan ball was used. However, by the end of the 2013/2014 season KarşıLig announced a formal decision to replace every ball with artificial-leather balls starting from the new season onwards (Murat Utku in Al Jazeera Turkey, 26 April 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/karsi-ligden-muhalif-goller>, 1 April 2015).

Thus it seems that the nonhuman animal rights cause is gaining some degree of legitimacy among other movements step by step. Even though many activists of other movements may not be convinced about ethical veganism on a personal level, a space has been opened for the discussion of nonhuman animal rights. Cosmopolitan activists, as well as other ethical vegans that involve themselves with other causes, are important actors in this process because they are the glue that binds different movements together; they help create the platform where different movements intersect. Their multiple missions can be regarded as an asset for any movement they take part in because of their broader perspective. But while this stimulates critical thinking, it sometimes causes and reinforces disputes. In the next section I will give examples of how discriminatory elements that are to some degree present in the nonhuman animal rights movement are being challenged. Critical approaches are often held by, but by no means limited to, cosmopolitan activists.

Internal debates regarding other causes

During my research it appeared that the topics of discrimination against disadvantaged groups cause contestations within the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul. Sexism and misanthropy in particular have been identified by some activists as a major problem within the movement. This seems at odds with the philosophies and activism of the groups. But we should not forget that the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul is part of a larger, more heterogeneous, transnational nonhuman animal rights movement. The debates that have arisen are inseparable from the nonhuman animal rights movement in the Anglophone countries and Western Europe. Therefore it is useful to have a look at the criticisms regarding sexism and other discriminations that have been directed at the professionalized mainstream organizations in those countries.

Gender discrimination

Historically, since its emergence in 19th century England, the nonhuman animal movement had considerably more female adherents than male. Nonhuman animal rights activists came to be depicted as ‘irrational’, ‘feminine’ and ‘overly emotional’; all values that were seen as negative in the patriarchal, masculine society in which the movement arose. Rachel L. Einwohner observes that nonhuman animal rights organizations in the US tried to increase the visibility of male activists in order not to be accused of being ‘a bunch of emotional women shaking their fists’ (Einwohner 2002, 259). Grove, too, found that men are seen as a source of status and a resource for legitimizing emotions such as anger and compassion, traits which are associated with women in a stigmatizing way (cited in Munro, 2005, 109). It is also in this context that male leadership has been celebrated by movement organizations (Einwohner 2002, Munro 2005, Wrenn 2013).

Another problem relative to gender discrimination is the objectification of women’s bodies in movement organizations’ campaigning. Female vulnerability is exploited in order to garner attention from men and from the mass media (Wrenn 2013). Scholarly analysis of sexist advertisements have focused mainly on those of the world’s largest nonhuman animal rights organization PETA, but Wrenn argues that sexist representations as a resource and tactic have in fact become movement normative. She writes: ‘female objectification is a pervasive gender issue in Nonhuman Animal rights simply due to the power of larger groups and the exposure they are able to generate. These large organizations are the face of the movement: they define a movement’s agenda and help shape public perceptions’ (Wrenn 2013, 6).

Earlier in the paper I have discussed the difference between professionalized organizations and grassroots activism with regard to resource mobilization and framing. As we have seen, the Turkish groups do not rely heavily on mainstream media; neither do they focus on fundraising. It is then to be expected that sexist stereotypes are not used as much since they do not need these to survive. However, influences on Turkish ethical vegan activists are not entirely limited to radical, progressive factions. Considering Wrenn’s argument that female objectification has become movement-normative, discriminatory discourses can easily penetrate the Turkish nonhuman animal rights scene in the form of images and statements circling on the internet. Besides, some of the organizations and nonhuman animal rights advocates from abroad that have gained support in Turkey are accused of using sexist discourses. Berk Efe identifies sexism as a major problem within the nonhuman animal rights movement:

The animal rights movement is a disaster when it comes to animal rights. The largest organizations (such as. PETA²⁸, 269Life²⁹) are clearly sexist. I am sick of

²⁸ PETA is the largest nonhuman animal rights organization worldwide.

seeing PETA's sexist ad campaigns. And there is also Gary Yourofsky, who is a popular figure among animal right advocates, and he thinks that women who wear fur should get raped! (Correspondence on Facebook with BerkEfeAltinal on 21 May 2014).³⁰

The organization 269Life has a branch in Turkey and Gary Yourofsky's speeches are a popular resource among Turkish ethical vegans. However, the appearance of discriminative elements is strongly countered by several movement actors. On 1 November World Vegan Day 2014 AVH organized a range of presentations in which discriminative discourses were identified and problematized. The topics of these presentations were: nationalism and racism, sexism, and heterosexism within the nonhuman animal rights movement.

Gizem presented her research on sexism and heterosexism at this public event together with two co-activists, to an audience of AVH members, sympathizers and other interested people. She became interested in exploring this topic after she saw demonstrations by the American nonhuman animal rights organization PETA and the British cosmetics company Lush. She points out that certain popular advertisements and campaigns by the nonhuman animal rights movement are characterized by a high degree of sexism and heteronormativity. Lush, a British company that sells handmade cosmetics that are not tested on nonhuman animals, had organized a demonstration with an act in which a woman was 'tortured' by a man for ten hours. PETA, as is very well known, has produced many advertisements in which women's bodies are objectified.

Examples of heteronormativity that Gizem pointed to are the book 'A Man's Guide to Vegetarianism - Eat Veggies like a Man'³¹, the ad 'Real Men eat tofu' and the ad 'Hunters have no balls – real men don't kill'. In the latter advertisement a hunter is depicted. His pants are half down; it is visible that he does not have balls, nor does he have a penis. Gizem explains how these kinds of ads are gender-biased, discriminative and targeted at the identity of transsexual people: "penis doesn't define our gender or who we are. What about transmen/women? The Vegan community doesn't get rid of the gender roles unfortunately. It is discriminatory and not sustainable" (Interview with Gizem on 9 November 2014).

²⁹ 269Life is an Israeli nonhuman animal rights organization, named after a calf that was born on an Israeli dairy farm.

³⁰ The American Gary Yourofsky is considerably popular and influential among nonhuman animal rights activists in Turkey. In an interview in 2006 he had said: "Every woman ensconced in fur should endure a rape so vicious that it scars them forever. While every man entrenched in fur should suffer an anal raping so horrific that they become disembowelled" (Haaretz.com, published on 6 September 2012).

The examples all relate to advertisements and nonhuman animal rights organizations from outside Turkey. However, some activists within the ethical vegan community in Turkey posted these ads on their Facebook accounts. The fact that these images from abroad have been circulating in the Turkish nonhuman animal rights movement makes Gizem's critiques also a critique towards the movement at home. She is not very optimistic about gender equality within the nonhuman animal rights movement, whether in general or in Turkey. According to her the ethical vegan movement is male-dominated and has a sexist perspective:

They equate veganism with manhood. Nonvegan people on the other hand associate meat with manhood. It is vice versa. PETA investigated that women comprise a great part of veganism. So they decided to get men's attention and say that 'veganism develops your manhood. You can be a real man'. The Vegan Feminist Network³² criticizes this (Interview with Gizem on 9 November 2014).

The Abolitionist vegan activists are not the only ones who problematize the discriminative elements that certain images evoke. Critical voices within the movement are on the rise. An independent activist calling himself Earthlings Dünyalı³³ wrote an article on his weblog in which he criticizes some nonhuman animal rights groups for posting sexist images on Facebook. The images in question are supposed to bring about empathy for nonhuman animals that are exploited. However, as Earthlings Dünyalı argues, they objectify women's bodies and legitimize male-dominance. One of the images depicts a naked woman tied up on a grill above a fire. The other one, which was copied from a Spanish Facebook page, is a comic in which a cow milks a woman's breasts. Earthlings Dünyalı points out that images that are permeated with sexism are counterproductive. Since sexism and speciesism, like racism, are all about the alleged superiority of one group over another there is an inherent contradiction within these images. Moreover, they are not actually going to convince people about ethical veganism. 'The world is filled with millions of human rights defenders that are still using animals', he writes. Thus he poses a crucial rhetorical question: 'what kind of influence do these images have on the relationship between the animal movement and groups that deal with other struggles ("alliance politics")?' He concludes that 'in order to establish alliances

³²The Vegan Feminist Network was formed by abolitionist vegan women. The website veganfeministnetwork.com aims to give voice to those that are oppressed or marginalized within the nonhuman animal rights community.

³³Earthlings Dünyalı is his Facebook name. 'Earthlings' (dünyalı is the Turkish word for this) refers to the documentary film with the same name in which the suffering of nonhumans in industries was revealed through footages.

and to get united with groups that work on liberation struggles a total liberation (liberation of humans, animals, and the earth) is unavoidable’³⁴.

Video link: vegan advocacy video in Turkish and English created by independent activist ‘Earthlings Dünyah’: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o7K1POA09kc>

Single-issue campaigns and discrimination

In order to avoid discriminations of any kind, Abolitionist vegans are opposed to single-issue campaigning. Gizem states that ‘single-issue demonstrations are always open to discrimination. Most of the time against women’. She mentions protests against fur and against cosmetics that are tested on nonhuman animals as examples of protests that are mainly directed at women.

Discrimination against disadvantaged groups, of which female objectification is but one example, is not uncommon in single-issue campaigns. In recent years the American nonhuman animal rights movement has been criticized by some progressive nonhuman animal rights activists for lacking an intersectional perspective. Doris Lin argues that because of this ‘we sometimes see racism and sexism in our movement’ (Lin, 2014). Opting for intersectionality in the movement, she concludes: ‘intersectionality in the animal rights movement is about including historically marginalized groups of people, recognizing how our own biases manifest in our movement’s campaigns, networking with diverse social justice groups, and working toward a more just world for humans and animals’ (Lin 2014).

Garrett M. Broad comes to a similar conclusion in his analysis of the controversial Michael Vick dogfighting case. Vick, an African American basketball player who was jailed for engaging in dogfighting and later released, was vilified by mainstream nonhuman animal rights organizations. The media, too, depicted him as cruel and unfit for society. Vick’s socially disadvantaged context was not taken into account. Moreover, it made the practice of dogfighting seem worse than other cases of nonhuman animal use. Francione calls this ‘moral schizophrenia’ around nonhuman animal issues in American society. He poses the question: “How removed from the screaming crowd around the dog pit is the laughing group around the summer steak barbecue?” (cited in Broad 2013, 790).

³⁴ <http://earthlingsdunyali.blogspot.nl/2015/02/hayvan-hareketinde-neden-cinsiyetcilige.html>, 1 April 2015.



Figure 6: This event took place on 4 October 2014 in Istanbul. It was a protest against the sacrifice of nonhuman animals for the Islamic sacrifice feast. It was organized by different nonhuman animal rights groups and individual activists. The Abolitionist vegans are against these types of single-issue campaigns because they are open to discrimination (in this case discrimination of Muslims). Source: the facebook page of one of the activists. He gave me permission to use this photo.

Several scholars within critical animal studies have problematized the ‘cruelty framework’ in nonhuman animal advocacy, while not all of them explicitly blame it on single-issue campaigns. Maneesha Dekha explains how the cruelty framework is related to the perception that using nonhuman animals for human ends is acceptable: ‘The broader public endorses the principle that humans do have the right to harm and kill animals for our benefit so long as we avoid ‘cruel’ and ‘unnecessary’ harm. It is this principle that opens the door to bias, since perceptions of what is cruel or unnecessary are culturally variable’ (Dekha, cited in Donaldson and Kymlicka 2013, 7). As Donaldson and Kymlicka assert, ‘customary practices are the default from which cruelty is measured’ (*ibid*, 14). A consequence is that one practice of nonhuman animal use is deemed worse than

another and can thus easily lead to discrimination, for example against women, immigrants, or other disadvantaged groups. According to Abolitionist vegans, focusing on the promotion of veganism as an ethical necessity avoids these kinds of pitfalls. While the other nonhuman animal rights groups in Istanbul share an explicitly vegan outlook, they generally do not see single-issue campaigns as problematic.

Video link: song 'Vegan Ol' (Go Vegan) by *Gülce Özen Gürkan* (with English subtitling option):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQyAXSUyh1U>

Misanthropy

The expression of misanthropic sentiments is another controversial issue in the nonhuman animal rights movement. Misanthropy seems clearly at odds with the ideologies and outlook of the groups in this study, and also with veganism as an ethical principle. The 'Restless Vegans Manifesto' says about hatred against the human species, 'since human is an animal, misanthropy for a vegan individual is cognitive dissonance. Instead of hating people, we should clarify that we are against authorities and discriminations' (Restless Vegans Manifesto, 7). Nonetheless, it has been identified as a problem by several movement actors. Berk Efe argues:

The biggest problem I see in animal groups in Turkey is misanthropy. Like a few days ago there was a question on a vegan page asking 'what do you think is the most useful way to stop animal use' and there were lots of answers saying 'we should kill all meat eaters' or 'the human species must be destroyed'. (...) a few months ago I wrote something about the military coup and death penalties in Egypt as you know there are really terrible human rights issues there and some vegans came and commented on my page and they were arguing that vegans should not promote human rights for those who are consuming animal products and in the Middle East they consume so much animals and so on. I was really shocked to see that someone is really saying that (Correspondence on Facebook with Berk Efe Altinal on 21 May 2014).

Gizem has also observed aggressive attitudes among nonhuman animal rights activists towards nonvegans. She believes that these people harm the movement and widen the gap between the movement and the rest of society, giving the movement a bad name. The scope of this paper is too limited to find out on what scale these type of attitudes exist. Moreover, it is not clear if the people who made such comments are actively involved in a particular nonhuman animal rights group or whether they are individual activists. It is to be expected that the more an individual interacts with an organization that explicitly opposes itself to all forms of discrimination, the more aware that person becomes about his or

her own discriminative attitudes. The ‘Restless Vegans’ also note that some vegan individuals might have fascist beliefs but that this may change as the individual learns more about nonhuman animal rights philosophies: ‘Some animal liberation activists who simultaneously hold some fascist opinions might gradually become anti-fascist through discovering the parallelism between speciesism and other types of discriminations’ (Restless Vegans Manifesto, 8).

Quantitative sociological research could tell us more about the extent to which hatred against the human species or discrimination against human groups exists within the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul or elsewhere. That these exist does not mean that the nonhuman animal rights groups fail to address this issue. Social movements are not homogenous entities; there is always a lesser or higher degree of diversity. This is also the case with the nonhuman animal rights movement.

Conclusion

We have seen how nonhuman animal rights groups and activists in Istanbul explicitly align themselves with other progressive movements that struggle against injustices. Besides fighting speciesism, they argue against forms of discrimination such as those based on gender, age, race, class, and nation. There are various relations between the nonhuman animal rights movement and other movements in Istanbul. Cross-movement networking, which provide platforms for the discussion of nonhuman animal rights as well as other issues, is common and is facilitated by cosmopolitan activists and ethical vegans that have these broader perspectives. Alliances take the form of joint events and joining each other’s protests. Sometimes it leads to an increased awareness about a speciesist lifestyle, as was the case when Kaos GL decided to ‘stop eating meat’.

It is also clear that the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul is not disconnected from the larger, transnational nonhuman animal rights movement. Many of the debates, disputes, terminology issues and controversies that occur in the US, Australia and much of Western Europe also take place in the Turkish context. What seems to be a major difference though with the Turkish case is the absence of a considerable number of strong mainstream professional nonhuman animal rights organizations. The short history of the movement in Turkey appears to be an advantage when it comes to the prominence of radical nonhuman animal rights advocacy. This not only makes the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul slightly more homogeneous than those in ‘the West’, it also prevents the marginalization of and countering against the progressive grassroots activists. It provides space for an effective vegan outreach and for an explicit alignment with other progressive leftist causes. Grassroots groups, as opposed to professional organizations, are less likely to adapt their frames to the dominant culture. Furthermore, they are generally more flexible and open to change. The way many of the nonhuman animal rights groups in Istanbul define their views and the fact that they stimulate debates and further knowledge production illustrates this well.

Gülce describes the importance of critical thinking metaphorically: ‘if you are vegan you have the mistaken impression that you know all about animal rights, but of course you don’t. It’s like you’ve applied for some education. Veganism is the application. You become a vegan activist after all the education’ (Interview with Gülce Özen Gürkan on 7 October 2014).

Each social movement has its own challenges when it comes to education of its members and developing a critical perspective that does not exclude any group. The nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul is not an exception to this. Nevertheless, with a myriad of critical activists at its disposal and a thriving grassroots infrastructure, Turkish nonhuman animal rights activists are significant potential actors of cultural change. The future of the nonhuman animal rights movement in Istanbul, and in Turkey at large as it is already expanding to other major cities, seems promising.

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Sealfies, seals and celebs: expressions of Inuit resilience in the Twitter era

Kathleen Rodgers and Willow Scobie

Abstract

On March 2, 2014 the host of the Oscars, Ellen DeGeneres, established a new record on Twitter when the “selfie” that she posted, featuring a group of ‘A-list’ celebrities, re-circulated approximately three million times. The events also produced the “#sealfie” campaign, an unprecedented outpouring of contemporary Inuit political expression. Sealfies, pictures that began to appear on Twitter on March 26th, 2014 of people – Inuit and otherwise – wearing sealskin clothing, eating seal meat or standing beside freshly killed seals, emerged in response to DeGeneres’ support for the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and their anti-sealing stance. But what began as a whimsical rejoinder to the sensationalized tactics of animal rights activists became a serious campaign to “counter the impact of colonialism and... explicitly protect and preserve identity and culture” of the Inuit. Drawing on the social movement literature on social media and activism as well as the postcolonial literature on “resilience” we situate the #sealfie campaign in the broader historic struggle between anti-sealing activists and their opponents.

On March 2, 2014 the host of the Oscars, Ellen DeGeneres, established a new record on Twitter when the “selfie” that she posted, featuring a group of ‘A-list’ celebrities, re-circulated approximately three million times. As part of a pre-negotiated deal with the smartphone company Samsung, DeGeneres was awarded \$3 million¹ to distribute evenly to her charities of choice, namely St Jude’s and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)², in exchange for promoting their product on the show. DeGeneres’ selfie not only raised millions of dollars for charity, it also inspired the “#sealfie” campaign, an unprecedented outpouring of contemporary Inuit political expression. Sealfies, pictures that began to appear on Twitter on March 26th, 2014 of people – Inuit and otherwise – wearing sealskin clothing, eating seal meat or standing beside freshly killed seals, emerged in response to DeGeneres’ support for the HSUS and their anti-sealing stance.

Both the timing of DeGeneres’ highly publicized donation, which coincided with the Humane Society of the United States’ launch of their annual anti-sealing campaigns, and DeGeneres’ own explicit statements describing the Canadian seal hunt as “one of the most atrocious and inhumane acts against animals

¹ Samsung pledged to donate a dollar to charity for every time the photo was retweeted. The photo thus raised \$3 million.

² Fortune.com accessed Aug 14, 2014.

allowed by any government”³ meant that at least some of her followers drew a link between the \$1.5 million donation and specific efforts to end the seal hunt. In response, a young female fan from Nunavut, Inuk teen Killaq Enuaraq-Strauss, attempted to engage in a dialogue via social media. Imagining DeGeneres as her audience, Enuaraq-Strauss uploaded “Dear Ellen” to YouTube on March 23, 2014. At the time of writing, it had garnered more than 58,000 views and almost 780 comments.

Some scholars argue that social media’s contribution to activism is mainly as a means to circulate information. Building on this argument, we find that for indigenous peoples this enables communities to control the content of information that is about them (Niezen 2009), that social media may further provide an opportunity for groups to assert their own identity (Iseke-Barnes 2002), and that it widens and deepens engagement in their activist projects (Iseke-Barnes and Danard 2007). In this paper, we examine a case study in which Inuit in Canada’s Arctic asserted that the seal hunt has contemporary cultural, economic, and social relevance via social media sites. Using the platforms of YouTube and Twitter to bring together images, texts, as well as facilitate dialogue across Northern communities and beyond their borders, Inuit were able to engage with and dispel myths, outdated claims, and point to the ongoing relevance of seal hunting. Taking inspiration from Prins’ (2002) use of the concept of ‘primitivism’, by which we mean the tactical use of stereotypes about indigenous peoples by indigenous peoples to advance their own political objectives, we argue that Inuit have deployed ‘sealfies’ on YouTube and on Twitter in order to counter the narrative about seal hunting. Against a multi-decade, multi-million dollar set of campaigns designed to pressure governments to ban most aspects of the commercial seal hunt, the #sealfies tweets, for example, counteract the aesthetic impact of morally shocking images such as bludgeoned seals (Mika 2006) used by anti-sealing activists with images that depict the cultural and practical necessity of seal hunting for the Inuit. Facilitated by these platforms and the media interest they generated, Inuit activists confronted anti-sealing activists by pointing out the role of the Inuit in the commercial seal hunt, the subsistence wages provided at one point by Inuit participation in the hunt, and subsequent poverty as a result of government bans and the dramatically reduced dollar value of seal meat and pelts.

In the following sections we use the events surrounding the Oscar-night ‘selfie’ and the subsequent ‘sealfies’ to briefly retrace the history of anti-seal hunt activism and to explore the ways in which social media are increasing the capacity of Inuit to have a voice in the forces that impact upon their lives.⁴ We

³<http://www.ellentv.com/2011/04/06/stop-seal-hunting-in-canada-now/> Last accessed, April 24, 2014.

⁴Our analysis is based on the results of searches conducted on the Twitter site for tweets between March 2, 2014 and April 17, 2014, a close examination of Killaq Enuaraq-Strauss’ YouTube video and the comments directly linked to that video, as well as the online comments of the coverage of the #sealfie phenomenon by the Huffington Post, CBC, Business Insider, Al Jazeera, Global News, and the Vancouver Observer. Consistent with Edwards et al.’s (2013: 9) statement that “[a] field-building approach must be implemented if we are to understand the

engage with the literature on social media and activism but we also draw on the concept of resilience as it is used by Tousignant and Sioui (2009) and Kirmayer et al (2007) in reference to the facing of adversity, to the emergence of moral strength and optimism, and to the (strategic) use of a rhetoric of hope to describe initiatives in First Nations and Inuit communities that counter the impact of colonialism and that explicitly protect and preserve identity and culture. The self-authorship afforded by social media facilitates an expression of resilience in a public forum to be shared in a space that can be described as, “a new geography of identity formation” (Niezen 2009:45). Of particular interest for this paper is the way in which the #sealfie campaign served as an activist project with the dual purpose of countering a colonial narrative entrenched within anti-sealing campaigns as well as signalling to a global audience that the Inuit are resilient and persist in living off the land. Of particular importance in the contribution of the Inuit perspective on seal hunting – a perspective that includes the commercial seal hunt – is to highlight the contemporary role of seal hunting in Inuit identity, as evidenced in the material circulated on social media.

Anti-seal hunt activists have maintained pressure on governments, publics, and hunters themselves for over forty years. They have kept the seal hunt controversy in the public imagination and on government agendas largely as a result of their media campaigns, by attracting attention with celebrity photo-ops (see image 2), and at the inter-governmental level of economic trade talks between Canada and the EU. During this period, efforts to justify ongoing support for a commercial seal hunt have avoided engaging in the moral and emotional methods occupied by the anti-sealing activists, but have instead used scientific data and government-issued assurances that the seal hunt is carried out humanely. Inuit hunters who have relied on seal hunting for both personal sustenance and commercial gain have been sufficiently included at the intergovernmental level to be given exemptions to bans on bringing seal products to market, but, as we will demonstrate below, they have still been subjected to the wide-sweeping political, economic, and emotional effects of anti-sealing campaigns. The #sealfie response, which quickly emerged as a far-reaching campaign on its own terms, is a novel move to engage in methods that invoke and inspire emotional and moral reactions, as well as defend the right to practice traditions. In this recent campaign, they demonstrated the salience, continuity, and importance of seal hunting in their communities. In so doing they also highlight this as a cautionary tale for animal rights activists whose campaigns may pit the rights of animals against the rights of indigenous peoples, an insurmountable binary for animal rights groups.

mechanics of this new phenomenon beyond the specifics of individual cases,” this paper focuses on text, images, and the prominence of particular individuals in the creation of an Inuit-produced counter-narrative about the seal hunt over social media.

History of the seal hunt controversy in Canada's North

Though opposition to the seal hunt stretches back to concerns raised by a Canadian branch of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in the 1950s, the 1970s and '80s represent the peak of anti-seal hunt activism (Wenzel, 1987; Jasper and Nelkin, 1992; Barry, 2005). The explosion of opposition to the seal hunt in the 1980s coincided with the expansion of both the environmental movement and the North American animal rights movement (ARM). The organizational capacity and activist networks of the ARM combined with the powerful, emotive images of (white-coat) seal pups produced a highly successful, though controversial, global animal rights campaign (Zelko, 2013). In Canada, a somewhat stunned backlash against the campaign eventually arose, led in large part by the fur industry and the Federal Fisheries Ministry (Barry 2005). Effective lobbying by the Inuit Tapirisat (now, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami or ITK) became important in ensuring that the eventual European bans of seal products in 1983 and 2009 excluded the pelts harvested by indigenous hunters. In spite of this sanctioned recognition, however, throughout the counter-resistance to anti-sealing activists, this distinctive Inuit voice was muted by the strident voices and strategic political ploys of both the animal rights activists and Canadian politicians.

Two organizations, Greenpeace and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), were at the forefront of the late 20th century campaign to end the seal hunt. IFAW, which began as a single campaign in the 1960s known as "Save the Seals" and later developed into the International Fund for Animal Welfare, became the most vocal and enduring opponent of the seal hunt. Combined with Greenpeace's well-honed media savvy, the organizations attracted international media attention. The images of teary-eyed and bludgeoned seal pups, the vilification of the sealers, and the parade of celebrities, including Brigitte Bardot, Paul McCartney and Pamela Anderson, launched the campaign into the international spotlight (Harter, 2004; Marland, 2014). The anti-sealing movement, while initially Canada-based and supported, rapidly drew strength from environmentally concerned individuals and organizations in the United States and Western Europe. As George Wenzel (1987: 200) argues, the anti-sealing organizations became emboldened by their own success and what began as an argument about conservation was transformed into "a de facto animal rights position, condemnatory of any human exploitation of any seal species."

The ensuing battle between environmentalists and animal rights activists on the one side and proponents of the seal hunt on the other was geographically focused on activities in Newfoundland and Labrador. In the context of a depressed east coast fisheries and the perception of environmentalism as an elitist preoccupation, these tensions were often framed as the result of a battle between environmentalists and working-class men (Zelko, 2013; Marland, 2014). Between the imagery skilfully deployed by both activists and a counter-discourse that used a nationalist sentiment to support an industry relevant to the east coast economy from politicians, the story of the Inuit's financial dependence on the seal hunt was almost completely absent. The animal rights

organizations so convincingly framed the issue as an act of unnecessary cruelty and ruthlessness that public pressure eventually led to the 1972 US ban on seal products and the 1983 European Economic Community ban on seal pup skins and products. Both of these moves effectively closed the market for all sealskins. In Newfoundland and Labrador, where the seal hunt has been a marginally important economic booster to communities ravaged by the decline in the cod fishery, Alex Marland (2014: 75) argues that “opposing activists has become an invented tradition...that symbolizes a social cohesion among sealers, non-sealing Newfoundlanders, and Canadian politicians.”

The political implications of the controversy, therefore, have stretched far beyond the sensationalism of the media images, playing an enduring role in policies within Canada and trade relationships between Canada and the EU. The controversy inspired the 1984 Royal Commission on Seals and the Sealing Industry, from which a 1986 report formed the basis for Canadian legislation that banned the hunt for seal pups and installed measures to ensure that the adult hunt followed humane methods. These measures were sufficient to appease the World Wildlife Federation (WWF), the Audubon Society, and the Ontario Humane society, convincing them that the hunt could be sustainable and humane and that the government would enforce these measures. While IFAW (and additionally now People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, or PETA) remained committed to their campaigns, many of the organizations that originally opposed the hunt no longer maintained an anti-sealing platform. The Report also noted that while the Canadian public had concerns about the perceived cruelty of the hunt, there was support for the *indigenous* seal hunt, concluding that:

Seals are a vital resource for the Inuit for economic, social and cultural reasons. Sealing is the most economical means of maintaining adequate nutritional levels in most northern communities. Increased use of imported foods will result in substantially poorer health and extra costs which the Inuit can ill afford.⁵

Because the original EU ban in 1983 applied only to white-coat and black-hooded seal products, in 2009 the European Parliament took aim squarely at the remaining Canadian industry, voting to expand the ban to the sale of all commercial seal products.⁶ When the Canadian government turned to the World Trade Organization to overturn the ban, the WTO upheld it, arguing that the embargo “fulfills the objective of addressing EU public moral concerns on

⁵ P 45 of summary of report

⁶ See “Council Directive 83/129/EEC of 28 March 1983 concerning the importation into Member States of skins of certain seal pups and products” <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31983L0129> and the 2009 statement of the European Commission on the Seal Hunt http://ec.europa.eu/environment/biodiversity/animal_welfare/seals/seal_hunting.htm See also <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8033498.stm>

seal welfare.”⁷ Furthermore, it was not just the WTO that rejected the proposal; in 2011, more than 100 members of the 753-member European Parliament signed an open letter vowing to oppose a new economic trade agreement between Canada and the EU unless Canada abandoned its appeal to the WTO.

Both the 1983 and 2009 EU bans held an exemption for Inuit produced pelts and other products, but as Harter (2004: 100) explains: “in terms of media relations, the sealers had been outdone.” The NGO sector had “enjoyed an almost complete victory in its campaign to ban the hunt” and as a result, the original ban led to an overall decline in the value of seal pelts. This was not surprising; activists had picked the seal hunt in part because of its media potential. As Frank Zelko (2013: 247-8) argues in reference to Greenpeace, “from the beginning, the campaign was based on an uneasy blend of ecology and moral outrage...when combined with the possibility of direct confrontation between swilers⁸ and protesters on the stark ice floes, it proved to be an irresistible opportunity for grabbing media attention.” And despite the Inuit exemptions, Wenzel argues that “lost within the strident tones of southern protest and counter-protest was the impact a highly emotional and politicized anti-sealing campaign would have on aboriginal, especially Inuit, access and use of ringed seals.”

As the Inuit sealing industry collapsed with the entire industry, it took with it the revenues that supported isolated Inuit communities with few additional opportunities for economic development. As Collings and Condon (1996: 255-256) demonstrated in their study of the Arctic community of Holman (Ulukhaktok), prior to the seal product ban:

[M]ost Inuit families...were able to make a comfortable living from a combination of seal hunting, fox trapping, and skin crafts manufacture...The collapse of the sealskin market at the end of the decade brought tremendous changes to Holman and other Inuit communities across the Arctic....Hunters once able to support themselves completely by hunting and trapping were suddenly unable to do so.

Household, family, and community economies not only suffered from the collapse of the sealing industry, but in their eyes responsibility for these economic consequences fell squarely on the activists. This resulted in long-term animosity toward and distrust of animal rights and environmental organizations. In this regard, Collings and Condon (1996: 255) quote one individual (James):

⁷ <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/canada-wins-partial-victory-in-challenge-of-eu-ban-on-imported-seal-products/article15583922/>

⁸ A ‘swiler’ is a term for a Newfoundland and Labrador seal hunter.

Greenpeace really ruined our native way of life, man. They really ruined our traditional way, the way we used to be. It's our way of life and how we used to be. OK, I'm out of the talk now, I'll be quiet. I don't hunt. I don't do anything.

This animosity endures to the present. During the most recent 2014 sealing confrontations, Terry Audla, National Inuit Leader and President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), drew attention to this frustration, writing that:

Inuit rely on the Canadian East Coast seal hunt for its shared market dynamics and the opportunity to sell seal pelts at fair market value. Activists have known (but never acknowledged because it's bad for business) that their campaigns to make sealing evil and seal products untouchable have negatively impacted us along with other remote, coastal communities who have few other economic opportunities.... All we want is a means for survival and an economic generator that incorporates our deep respect for the land and sea and the wildlife with which we share it.⁹

In part due to these dynamics, the predictions of the 1984 Royal Commission on the relationship between anti-sealing and the health and welfare of Inuit communities appears to have been fulfilled; in 2012 the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food declared that 70 percent of Nunavut households with Inuit preschool children are food insecure and even more recently, the Council of Canadian Academies has shown that hunger in the North is a result in part from the fact that the cost of hunting is now out of reach for most families. As a columnist for the *True North Times* recently wrote to reflect this frustration in Northern communities, “Seals are cute but starvation is ugly.”¹⁰

As such, there is a great deal of hostility that has quietly burned under the surface toward the anti-sealing activists where impoverishment, suicide, hunger and substance abuse are regularly perceived as related to the decline of the industry.¹¹ Today, organizations that took part in the charge against sealing in the seventies and eighties have become more self-reflexive. Greenpeace, for instance, now remains silent on sealing, having stated that there are more pressing environmental issues.¹² Breaking from its American counterpart, the Canadian Humane Society issued this recent statement in response to the #sealfie campaign, reasserting support for the Inuit seal hunt:

⁹ http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/terry-audla/sealing_b_5214956.html?utm_hp_ref=tw

¹⁰ Luckhardt, Natasha, “Seals are cute but starvation is ugly” *True North Times*, March 29, 2014

¹¹ Collings and Condon 1996; Wenzel, 1991; Borre, 1986

¹² “More urgent things to do: Greenpeace abandons seal hunt protest” *Canada Free Press*. April 26, 2004. <http://www.canadafreepress.com/2004/tgro42604.htm>

We have never opposed the Inuit subsistence seal hunt that occurs in Canada's North. Animal protection groups oppose the commercial seal slaughter, which occurs in Atlantic Canada and is almost entirely conducted by non-aboriginal people.¹³

When the #sealfies began to surface in March 2014 they were not, therefore, simply an expression of the right to hunt. They expressed feelings of anger against what Taiaiake Alfred (2013) sees as central to processes of neocolonialism in the indigenous communities that strip away traditional culture, livelihood and connection to the land. In this case, the instrument of animal rights protest is perceived as all the more frustrating because it is seen as taking place so effortlessly from the comfort of Hollywood and the urban centres of North America. Having expressed the frustration that animal rights activists have at least passively pitted the rights of seals against the rights and cultures of indigenous peoples and their inability to counter this, Audla further states:

This may seem like a cynical opinion of people proposing to give a voice to the voiceless, but they have proven to be the greatest of tricksters -- exploiting a cause for money while silencing and starving an already marginalized population. Living off the land and sea, as Inuit need to do, gives us a distinct connection and perspective to our world unlike any other population. We know exactly where our food comes from -- mostly free-roaming, nutrient-dense animals. The land quite literally keeps us alive because it feeds and clothes us and often also pays our (rising) bills.

Restrictions on the seal hunt that came into effect at the end of the 1980s created economic hardships on the Inuit, as Audla points out, as well as the east coast hunters (Dauvergne and Neville, 2011:201). The Government of Nunavut estimates that the EU seal ban cut worldwide sealskin prices in half, from about \$60 a pelt to \$30¹⁴ and, despite subsidies, real income in Inuit households has fallen significantly. As Nuttall (1990) argues,

Animal rights groups have frequently depended on public opinion for the success of their sealing campaigns, but little sympathy has been shown for the people for whom such opposition has precipitated cultural disintegration (240).

¹³ Goodyear, S. "Humane Society respond to sealfies, says it supports Inuit hunt" Canoe.ca April 9, 2014. <http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/Canada/2014/04/08/21590731.html>

¹⁴"As local fur demand rises, mysterious drop in Nunavut seal harvest: Number of sealskins harvested has fallen by more than half since EU sealskin ban in 2009" CBC News December 18, 2013. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/as-local-fur-demand-rises-mysterious-drop-in-nunavut-seal-harvest-1.2468737>

As the statement from the Canadian Humane Society demonstrates, support for Inuit seal hunting delineates subsistence from commercial activities. When Inuit defend their right to access markets for the products of their hunt, animal-rights groups have in turn questioned the necessity of seal hunting for subsistence purposes and have argued that the “Inuit are no longer regarded as caring about the animals they hunt” (Nuttall, 199): 241). In an article published by Finn Lynge, former member of the European Parliament for Greenland and former Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference Environmental Commission, he writes about the effect of the EU ban on seal products on the Greenlandic Inuit: “They undermine our culture, because if we cannot market our products then we have no economy, and if we have no economy, people cannot go on living as trappers and hunters” (1995: 490). Speaking specifically to the notion that Inuit can now rely on food imported from the South he says,

In the Arctic, you cannot subsist on what you import from the south.. the economy does not work that way” (1995: 491). Speaking broadly to the EU ban on commercial seal products, he said: “... of course the French people should be aware that these attitudes threaten entire cultures in foreign lands (1995: 492).¹⁵

Social media and indigenous identity

Unlike earlier decades where Inuit resistance to the discourses of anti-sealing has been subordinated to the nationalist discourses and trade negotiations of the Canadian Federal Government, the capacity of Inuit to counter animal rights activism has recently been enhanced by their use of social media. Recent real-world events and scholarly research emphasize the near-revolutionary impact of new media technologies in all realms of life, particularly the political, leading Manuel Castells (2012) to dub the era the “Internet Age.” Beginning in large part with the Zapatistas’ use of the Internet to garner global support for their uprising in 1994, the last two decades have also shown that web-based networks include indigenous populations who are eager to use digital technology in powerful ways (Niezen, 2009). From the Blogs of the Igorots to *Virtual Powwows* to the role of internet networks in the mobilization of *Idle No More*, we see the increasing complexity of indigenous expressions of identity, culture, politics, and resilience online. This reflects one of the ways in which the “articulation of collective being...has been brought back from an imposed condition of oblivion and forgetting” (Niezen 2009: xvi). Our case study here contributes to this growing body of literature on indigenous engagement with digital media, emphasizing how the classic barriers of geographic, political and economic marginalization can be displaced by digital technologies. We also demonstrate how these digital voices have the capacity to honour and rejuvenate cultural practices and identities and thus show their resilience.

¹⁵ Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna and Greenlandic Premier Aleqa Hammond met on June 30, 2014 and “pledged to fight the European Union seal product ban” (<http://www.cbc.ca/m/news/#!/content/1.2699100>).

With the explosion of online activity, scholars continue to debate the measurable impacts of cyberactivism. On the one hand, despite the exponential expansion of the political applications of digital media, observers often accuse users of “slacktivism,” suggesting that individual actions such as signing an online petition, joining a Facebook group, “liking” a political post or changing one’s profile photo to publicize a cause lacks any significant consequences. Malcolm Gladwell (2010: 45) in particular argues that the commitment and risk apparent in social movements like the civil rights movement simply isn’t present in internet mediated actions: “The kind of activism associated with social media isn’t like this at all. The platforms of social media are built around weak ties.” Moreover, authors such as Morozov (2011) have argued that in as much as activists are able to mobilize resistance online, authoritarian governments are equally able to use technology to stifle dissent and monitor civil society groups. Clay Shirky (2011: 7-8) argues, however, that the detractors may be correct but “the fact that barely committed actors cannot click their way to a better world does not mean that committed actors cannot use social media effectively.” Many, he suggests, “have used social media not as a replacement for real-world action but as a way to coordinate it.”

Building on Shirky’s assertion that communication networks and social media in particular play a role in activism, we also look to scholarship that takes this notion further. We do not presume that activism must inevitably ‘take to the streets’, but rather contribute to an investigation of the extent to which a transformative effect occurs as a result of the circulation of content on digital media due to its complex network architecture. In this literature, digital media are seen as offering *affordances*, or ways in which they enable or support actions that have “democratic uses and outcomes” (Dahlberg 2011: 857). Specifically, these *affordances* include the reduced costs for “creating, organizing and participating in protest” and the fact that participants are not required “to be co-present in time and space” (Earl and Kimport 2011: 10). Much of the promise of digital media is, therefore, that they are as well-suited to economically disadvantaged and/or geographically disparate populations as they are to any other population. As such, scholars such as Edwards et al (2013) at the *Digital Activism Research Project* have worked to substantiate anecdotal evidence for the impact of digital media through a systematic and comparative investigation of social media outcomes. They make a credible, albeit cautious, claim that digital activism has very real potential to produce tangible political outcomes when effectively used by activists in a favourable context.

The study of activist models that diverge from classic examples of meetings, marches, rallies, and protests highlight the role of digital media in the creation of communities, identity, as well as personal and collective empowerment. These approaches are particularly important to our understanding of the use of digital media by indigenous peoples. In this sense, the questions that guide our project are not simply about whether or not social media can increase political participation or produce concrete political outcomes, but also about what occurs along the way, how such processes can result in the creation of “virtual communities” (Rheingold, 2000), “informational utopias” (Juris, 2008) or how,

as Ronald Niezen (2009:45) writes, “the internet is mapping a new geography of identity formation.” These online communities may eventually contribute to political outcomes, but are also destinations, notable for the global solidarities and identities they create and/or reinforce. Manuel Castells explains the way in which such many-to-many dynamics of social media may be simultaneously personal and political:

[The] condition for individual experiences to link up and form a movement is the existence of a communication process that propagates the events and the emotions attached to it. [...] In our time, multimodal digital networks of horizontal communication are the fastest and most autonomous, interactive, reprogrammable and self-expanding means of communication in history. [...] the networked social movements of the digital age represent a new species of social movement. (2012, 15)

These multi-modal networks thus provide a platform for forms of authorship that bring expressions of indigenous identity to a wide audience (Landezulis, 2006; Niezen, 2005, 2009; Petray, 2011). Many of the scholars studying in this area (Landzelius 2006a; Niezen 2009, 2005; Prins 2002) argue that access to the Internet is allowing indigenous populations to counter the colonial discourses that have shaped their lives. As Prins (2002: 70) writes, the Internet “enables tribal communities and individuals to represent themselves and to do so largely on their own terms and according to their own aesthetic preferences.” Additionally, the Internet holds the capacity for “new expressions of indigeneity” (Niezen 2009: 45) that may enhance political power. On this latter point, Niezen adds:

The internet’s displays of collective being can be seen as free-flowing manifestations of a new stratagem of release from political domination, one that emphasizes the virtues of repressed heritage and public expression of strivings towards renewal, self-expression and self-determination. (*ibid.*)

It thus facilitates self-authorship, but it also provides a platform for networked communication. With specific reference to Inuit populations, Tomiak and Patrick (2010) examined the effect of Inuit migration to urban areas on their own sense of ‘Inuitness’ - their personal and collective Inuit identity given that they reside “outside of traditional homelands” (128). Focused on the City of Ottawa because of its large Inuit population, they make the point that “the telephone and the internet, including email, webcam, and instant messaging have become part of maintaining their ‘rootedness’ by communicating with friends and relatives in the Arctic” (129-30). The focus on the connections facilitated by communication technology between Inuit in disparate locales is important, Donna Patrick (2008: 101) argues, because of their significance in redefining, expanding, and enriching notions of Inuitness.

Social media sites thus link Inuit to each other across great distances and, when their content is broadcast outside of personal relationship circuits, Inuit also draw a public eye to salient political issues within their communities. The far-reaching potential of sites such as Twitter, Blogs, Facebook, Instagram, and others that foster user-produced content make possible tactical moves that foreground material and discursive evidence of political projects, including images, texts, and hyperlinks that convey an anti-colonialist stance. In response to Iseke-Barnes and Danard's (2007) concern that internet content may give the illusion of value neutrality, indigenous peoples and Inuit in particular may use the capacity of social media to lay claim to their own stories and put out their own messages. Adopting Jackson's (2006) assertion that we come into being by telling our own stories, social media sites may be viewed as platforms that foster a "sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances" (Jackson 2006: 15). The entries - text, photos, videos - constitute living archives, sometimes in the style of journalists and sometimes as witness testimonials, that altogether render the voices of the Inuit louder by virtue of transforming "private" viewpoints into "public" accounts.

In order to understand the role of social media in these methods of activism, the Web is understood to have the capacity to facilitate communication, to overcome the need for co-presence and to assemble multiple perspectives and voices. The action potential of social media thus includes the dissemination of news and testimonials to a wide audience. The technology also fosters a continuous circulation of updates and new links within the network, as social media may meet a need for time-sensitive, multi-nodal, and multi-media communication.

Furthermore, the dissemination of information as a form of resistance for the Inuit collapses the effect of geographical and political marginalization. Without social media, the range of options available to small, geographically isolated communities in the North is limited to media that circulate locally (radio, newspapers, magazines, and television) or for Southern news sources to take an interest and circulate news more broadly (Roth 2005). As Lim (2003) points out, when individuals and grassroots organizations disrupt the efforts of a small, powerful group to restrict the flow of knowledge and information they engage in a process of democratization. In the case study examples below, we explore the possibility of advancing this process via social media.

Tweeting the counterpublic: voicing opposition and expressions of resilience

The contrast of the images and messages originating from the anti-sealing activists and the Inuit "#sealfies" reveal several interesting things about the narrative that each group seeks to tell. As this case study reveals, social media postings can be densely packed to stir cognitive and emotional reactions. The anti-sealing campaigns' repeated use of images depicting the Newfoundland and Labrador hunt in progress, for example, show recently killed seals in pools of

blood and of skinless cadavers on the ice. Their goal is to offend the audience and “raise such a sense of outrage that individuals are inclined to react politically in response to them” (Mika 2006: 919). Messages on social media, such as the one included below from the Sea Shepherd Twitter feed, use a ‘moral shock tactic’ to stir strong reactions and recruit viewers to their cause. The platform is intimate – we hold social media in our hands and it is where individuals follow news feeds, friend activities, and try online dating (van Dijck, 2013; Jones and Ortlieb 2008). In this particular tweet, the text and photo work together to highlight a tragic death and assign political responsibility (to Member of Parliament Gail Shea, then Minister of Fisheries and Oceans). Designed so that anyone using the search term #SealHunt will encounter this tweet, we can easily access pictures of dead and dying seals on our smartphones, on our home computers, and in our classrooms; in turn, they can easily reach us (Morozov 2011).



As Jasper and Poulson (1995) argue, the circulation of images such as this one operate on both emotional and cognitive levels in order to build political consciousness. They work as “condensing symbols” (497) – functioning quickly due to the power and efficiency of the images that revolt and sadden us. For anyone removed from the process of animal harvesting, the graphic depiction of the half-closed eyes, blood, and lifeless bodies disrupt complacency (Mika, 2006). These images are effective if they illicit a sense of outrage on the part of the viewer so that they become involved in some sort of political action (Jasper and Poulson, 1995), or if the viewer develops some level of emotional investment in the life cycle of seals.

The goal of triggering strong emotional resonances has a long history in the anti-sealing movement. In previous decades, before the ban on hunting white-coats, very young seal pups featured prominently in campaign media materials. Anti-sealers mobilized emotional reactions, for example, by explicitly “turning seals into cuddly babies” (Dauvergne and Neville, 2011: 192):



In the early years of circulating images at rallies, on billboards, and other platforms that required drawing supporters in to hear about their campaign, organizations exploited the image of the infant seal and its large, dark tearing eyes, its clean white fur, and fat, vulnerable body. The success of these campaigns was measurable: “Prices for sealskins tumbled from 1965 to 1968, with media portrayals of an inhumane hunt contributing to market turmoil” (Dauvergne and Neville, 2011:197). With the launch of the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) in 1969 in order to specifically end the seal hunt, “Soon, cuddly whitecoats were everywhere: on posters, in pamphlets, as stuffed animals” Dauvergne and Neville, 2011: 197). The powerful appeal of the cherubic white-coat thus became a rallying point. In 1977, Greenpeace and IFAW “pulled off a publicity coup by flying in French actress Brigitte Bardot – a photo of her cuddling a whitecoat was splashed on the cover of Paris Match” (Dauvergne and Neville, 2011: 198; Emberley, 1997).¹⁶ These images were “juxtaposed with other images of baby seals bludgeoned to death and scattered over the ice floes off the coast of Labrador in Canada” (Emberley, 1997: 1-2). Therefore, the early campaigns made intimate connections with potential supporters by likening seals to human infants. The physical appeal of very young seal pups was effective in capturing the attention of North Americans and Western Europeans.

¹⁶ Photo Source: Dancing Star Foundation. <http://www.dancingstaranimalrights.org/brigitte-bardot-foundation/> Last accessed August 30, 2014.

The efforts of Greenpeace and IFAW successfully instilled potent master frames in a broad-based public reaction to hunting for seals (Dauvergne and Neville, 2011). In the early 1980s, while Greenpeace sprayed green dye on the fur of the white-coats, IFAW took out ads in European newspapers “asking readers to write to European Parliament members and call for a ban on the import of whitecoats and ‘bluebacks’ (nursing hood seals)” (Dauvergne and Neville, 2011: 200). The physical appeal of the young seal pups had a lasting effect: the success of this campaign meant that the European Parliament was flooded by somewhere between three and five million postcards (Dauvergne and Neville, 2011). On the heels of this achievement, IFAW increased pressure by lobbying consumers and supermarkets to boycott Canadian fish products. The cumulative effect of these victories resulted in the ban on hunting whitecoats and bluebacks, as well as hunting any seals from large offshore vessels (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the powerful effect of pairing Brigitte Bardot with a seal pup began a trend that continues to this day, where trusted celebrities volunteer and/or are recruited to lend their credibility to the cause. For example, Martin Sheen, the actor who played the U.S. president on the television show “The West Wing”, provides a voice-over on the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society website calling for an end to the “annual ritual of blood and slaughter of the innocents” (Dauvergne and Neville, 2011: 202).

Most recently, in 2011, American celebrity Ellen DeGeneres made her stance on the seal hunt clear with this posting on the website for her show, www.ellentv.com. The links embedded in the posting take the viewer to PETA’s fundraising page in specific support of ending the seal hunt.

Stop Seal Hunting in Canada Now

04.06.11 :: Filed Under: [Ellen's Picks](#)

[!\[\]\(69a2577904b0671618b44148b09addd8_img.jpg\) Share on Facebook](#) [!\[\]\(5d98f191ee003b213cbc5ebcc846c3c4_img.jpg\) Twitter](#)

It's time to end the seal slaughter!



Seal hunting is one of the most atrocious and inhumane acts against animals allowed by any government. Canada is allowing the slaughter of a record number of seals in their 2011 hunting season, which is going on right now. The seals are often younger than 3 months old.

This has to stop. To my friends and fans in Canada: please help put a stop to this. Follow the link below to [make a donation and send the message that killing innocent animals is wrong](#).

Thank you for your support.

[Click here!](#)

Other celebrities, such as Kaley Cuoco-Sweeting¹⁷, took advantage of the attention garnered from the Oscar night tweet and subsequent interest in the

¹⁷ Cuoco is best-known for her role in the “The Big Bang Theory” television series.

Humane Society of the United States. In the immediate aftermath of this awareness, they highlighted their own endorsement of the Humane Society's efforts to raise funds to pressure the Canadian Government to end the seal hunt. Cuoco-Sweeting posted this tweet on April 15, 2014:

 **Kaley Cuoco Sweeting** @KaleyCuoco · 4 months · 511 retweets
"@FriendsForSeals: <http://t.co/CmkJUJYXOa> <http://t.co/CDDogaCIGu> #sealhunt video" this is SO disgusting and needs to stop NOW please!



She then posted the following video on the website of the Humane Society of the United States to assist with fundraising, pleading: "We can end this brutal slaughter, but we need your help."

Kaley Cuoco-Sweeting's Protect Seals Fundraiser



SHARE THIS PROJECT



In contrast, reaction to Ellen DeGeneres' explicit support for the Humane Society of the United States and their anti-sealing work mobilized Inuk teen

Killaq Enuaraq-Strauss to take to social media site YouTube. As mentioned above, Enuaraq-Strauss' video drew attention to her own message and also inspired others to voice their views on social media. In her homemade video which runs for 6:57 minutes, Killaq Enuaraq-Strauss introduces herself as an Inuk and says that she wants to educate Ellen about the seal hunt. "We hunt to survive. Yes, we make clothing out of the seal fur, but that's because it's warm and it's not three million dollars." Two minutes into the video she says, "Even now that we have been assimilated into a Western society, traditional food is still a thing that is sustaining families who cannot afford to go to the grocery store. Because food security is a big issue in the North... approximately 70% of people living in Nunavut reported food insecurity in 2010." She goes on,

So, when you said, 'Seal hunting is one of the most atrocious and inhumane acts allowed by any government' personally, I was hurt!.. Suddenly, a huge part of your fan base is targeting us, as a people, for practicing our own rights and traditions as an indigenous group...I want to speak up for indigenous people worldwide who have been oppressed, because to take away such a vital part of who we are, it's detrimental to our culture. It's oppressive... To raise money to fight against us? I'm a little bit insulted. And hurt.... Like I said, I understand. But now I want to help you understand. If Canada were to ban the seal hunt, so many families would suffer. Would face harsher conditions and wouldn't be able to afford the proper clothing for the Arctic environment we live in. And even more so, another part of our culture would have been killed... I hope that I have helped you understand my way of life.

Inspired by Enuaraq-Strauss' video, Laakkuluk Bathory initiated the Twitter feed "#sealfies" in order to reinforce this perspective. Her first tweet went out on March 26, 2014:

 Laakkuluk W. Bathory @Laakkuluk · Mar 26
Make a #sealfie to stick it to animal rights activists who don't know the consequences of their words. @TheEllenShow



Bathory's tweet was 'favourited' 30 times and re-tweeted 29 times. Although these are not extraordinary numbers by Twitter's standards, the impact of this tweet reached beyond the circulation of this particular posting, evident in the movement that it generated. Individuals and groups began creating their own #sealfie tweets. Between March 26th and April 17th, tweets containing "#sealfie" appeared 2148 times. The popularity of "#sealfie" tweets from both Inuit and their allies in support of the seal hunt and from mainstream news sources reporting on the significance of the content and the forum (Twitter) demonstrates the role that social media can play in Inuit-led activist projects. The circulation of images and text over Twitter, on YouTube, and subsequently on the 'Comment' sections of news websites fostered opportunities for a collective expression of opposition to the discourses of anti-sealing activists as well as a celebration of Inuit culture and resilience on social media.

Thus inspired by Bathory's original tweet, #sealfies tweets were created by individuals and groups across the North, such as this one posted by staff at the Inuit organization Nunavut Tunngavik:

 **Nunavut_Tunngavik** @NTunngavik · Apr 11
#sealfie #TheEllenShow #ntunngavik #ShowSomeSkin
#EatSealWearSeal #foodsecurity #inuit #nunavut #wto #ᓇᓱᐊᓘ
#ΔᓘΔᓘ



As #sealfies circulated within and outside of Inuit online networks, mainstream newsmedia also picked up the story:



Laakkuluk W. Bathory

@Laakkuluk



Following

Tune in to Al Jazeera's coverage of the #sealfie at 3:30pm #Iqaluit time. Many of us contributed! #ajstream stream.aljazeera.com/story/20140408...

Reply Retweet Favorite More



The Stream

On the hunt for survival

A Canadian Inuit campaign defending seal hunting reveals a community in crisis.

[View on web](#)



News outlets, such as The Huffington Post, CBC, Business Insider, Al Jazeera, Global News, and the Vancouver Observer covered the #sealfies movement. As all of the online versions of the story include a section for comments, an analysis of the comments revealed several interesting trends. By looking at both the news comment sections and the comment section on Killaq Enuaraq-Strauss' YouTube video, we found that the issue drew the attention of an international audience and commentors indicated that they were from Europe and the US (including Hawaii), in addition to being from Canada. Members of other indigenous communities expressed a sense of solidarity and support for the Inuit in defence of the sealhunt for both personal and commercial uses. Inuit from across Canada as well as from Greenland strongly endorsed the #sealfie campaign. Seal hunters from Newfoundland and Labrador similarly expressed support for the Inuit in their efforts to raise awareness about the sustainability of the seal hunt.

Based on a thematic examination of the content of these comments, several patterns clearly emerge. Respondents argued that there was a clear distinction for them between maintaining culture and tradition, as well as engaging in activities that are about subsistence rather than commercial interests. Those experienced with seal hunting argued that seals are killed humanely. Many commented that it was hypocritical to be against the seal hunt, but to generally support an omnivorous diet. This image, for example, was circulated:



Finally, commenters brought up the relevance of voice and locatedness, posing the rhetorical question: what does someone who lives in California know about the lives of Inuit communities in Northern Canada? The most common expression of support for the Inuit delineated traditional practices for subsistence purposes from an engagement in a commercial hunt.

The emergence of leadership

One of the key features of internet organizing is that its network structure means that movements can emerge almost instantaneously yet be highly decentralized. Unlike off-line movements, loosely connected activist networks wage effective campaigns without a headquarters or formal leadership; it is the networks that become activated through communication technologies that enable political organization and do not necessarily require the charismatic leadership so characteristic of off-line activism. At the same time, activists who served as important nodes in the social-movement network frequently found themselves with new leadership roles, becoming a kind of “digerati” among

activists (Brockman, 1996). Just as in other online campaigns, a small number of Inuit activists became prominent in the creation and circulation of the #sealfies, within the news stories, and were engaged in the comment sections of the news stories. Women mentioned previously, such as Killaq Enuaraq-Strauss and Laakkuluk Bathory, stood out within the movement, as did Inuit filmmaker Alethea Arnaquq-Baril (who posted this on April 8, 2014):

Alethea ArnaquqBaril
@Alethea_Aggiuq

Hungry Inuit children be damned, the animal rights industry will get their donations. [#sealfie](#) [@wto](#) [@TheEllenShow](#)

Celebrating 60 Years
THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

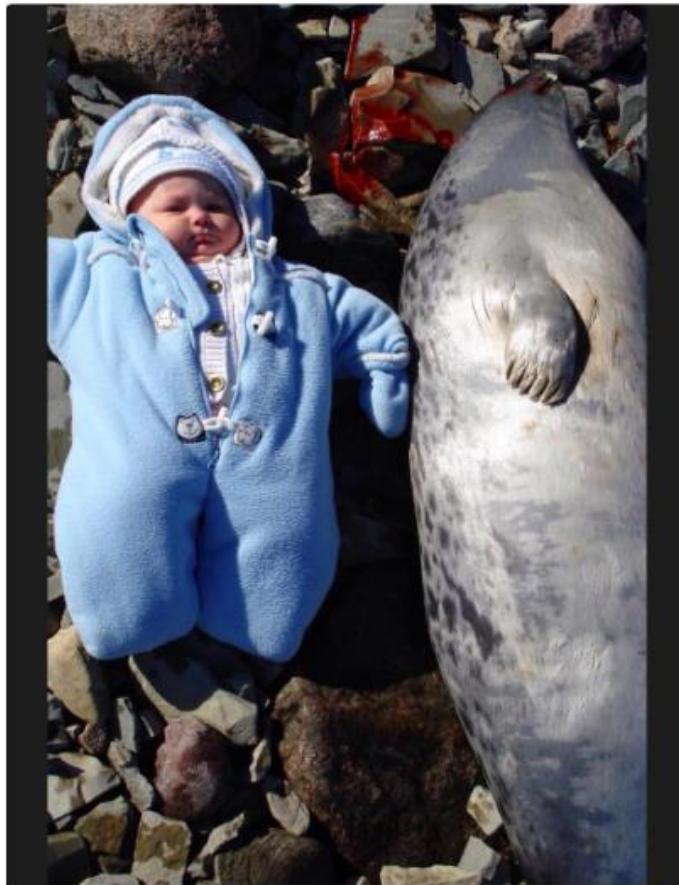
DONATE MONTHLY OR Donate one time

Seals

RETWEETS 16 FAVORITES 14

5:58 PM - 8 Apr 2014 Flag media

Consequently, however, many of the individuals who were most prominent in posting and commenting on #sealfies were on the receiving end of a negative backlash. None quite to the degree as musician Tanya Tagaq. Tagaq's difficulties began when she posted this photo of her daughter and a dead seal:



 tanya tagaq
@tagaq

 Follow

#sealfie
10:42 AM - 28 Mar 2014 · Division No. 7, Manitoba, Canada

47 RETWEETS 72 FAVORITES



Though the offending posts were removed following cyberbullying charges, Tagaq experienced an almost daily barrage of tweets and messages that were abusive. The most extreme of these had photoshopped the image Tagaq had posted of her infant daughter near a dead seal and depicted her baby being skinned.¹⁸ Another individual tweeted: “Pretty SICK 2 take a pic of a baby laying next 2 a bludgeoned baby seal then actually POST it 4 all 2 see.” Others posted death threats and suggested an online petition demanding her child be removed from her care. Tagaq didn’t back down from the backlash and worked with a Canadian police force to ensure charges were brought against one poster. The

¹⁸ “Tanya Tagaq Shuts Down ‘Sealfie’ Cyberbully With Police Help” *Huffington Post*. June 12, 2014. http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/06/12/tanya-tagaq-sealfie-cyberbully_n_5488324.html; “UNCHARTED: Inuk throat singer Tanya Tagaq talks Animism, Pixies and #Sealfies” <http://www.chartattack.com/features/uncharted/2014/05/29/uncharted-tanya-tagaq/>

media attention Tagaq received from the events reinforced her commitment to her activism, effectively appointing her as a key spokesperson for the movement. In a recent interview she used the occasion to draw the link between the #sealfies and broader issues related to the seal hunt:

We don't get a tonne of money from the natural resources that are being extracted from Nunavut, but we do have one resource and that's seals. We eat them and we always have and there are plenty of them, but for some reason there's a level of discrimination happening that one of the smallest minorities on the planet isn't allowed to reap the benefits from their own resources. It just seems like there's a lot of oppression happening from too many sides.¹⁹

Discussion and conclusion

The appearance of Inuit, young and old, wearing sealskin clothing in traditional and contemporary designs in photos on Twitter operate on a number of levels, including what Prins (2002) describes as invoking a tactical 'primitivist' approach. Consistent, for example, with the position adopted by the anti-sealer activists to support Inuit subsistence seal hunting, but not commercial hunting, the appearance of sealskin clothing, meat, and cadavers that comprised the #sealfies campaign simultaneously comforts and disrupts. Presented in forms in which non-Inuit viewers expect to see the Inuit, the presence of fur, meat, and freshly harvested seals are both consistent with the 'primitivisation' of the Inuit and interrupt historical attempts to marginalize their participation in the debate. For those creating and circulating #sealfie tweets, the Inuit and their allies, "primitivism" becomes a paradox (Prins 2002) such that the "exotic imagery" (*ibid.*) is deployed in service of the expectations of colonialism and simultaneously engages in a subterfuge of resistance. The #sealfies tweets turn clothes into political symbols (Dauvergne and Neville, 2011; DeLuca, 1999) to represent cultural resistance to colonialism and continuities of culture and identity in the face of pressure to change. At the same time, they conform to racist assumptions about people who maintain 'pre-modern', subsistence lifestyles. The Inuit "use the construct of primitivism in their political efforts" (Prins, 2002: 60) through the use of photographs and text via social media in order to advance awareness of their resilience in maintaining their identity and practices. By showing people outside of their community the ongoing significance of seal hunting, they demonstrate their autonomy, self-determination, and advocate on their own behalf. These images directly appeal "to the romanticism of primitivist imagination" and enables them to "represent themselves on their own terms" (*ibid.*: 70).

¹⁹ "UNCHARTED: Inuk throat singer Tanya Tagaq talks Animism, Pixies and #Sealfies"
<http://www.chartattack.com/features/uncharted/2014/05/29/uncharted-tanya-tagaq/>

By demonstrating the practical and symbolic value of sealskin clothing via photos of themselves wearing sealskins and by engaging in debates on social media, Inuit are able to show and defend their culture. In an interview with Cousineau (1998), Zacharias Kunuk said of his own work: "... how could we... sew clothing... if our culture had died out?" (cited in Wachowich 2006: 134). In that interview he asked rhetorically how he and his colleagues could accomplish what they have accomplished "if we were all dropouts and drunks?" (ibid. 135). Their desire to demonstrate this resilience in various ways, including in filmmaking, Kunuk says, shows their culture "from an Inuit point of view, not as victims but with the skills and strength to survive 4000 years with our identity intact. Inuit culture is alive" (ibid. 135).

Inspired by Wexler's (2009) discussion of 'cultural identification' amongst indigenous youth (269), we extend her concept to include cultural *resilience*. We therefore build upon the notion of 'recognition' of one's cultural attributes, including "beliefs, values, practices, norms, traditions and heritage" (269) and highlight the continuity of these attributes within Inuit communities. The #sealfies tweets demonstrate the semiotic power of the sealskin as a way to show the everyday, ongoing relevance of the seal hunt. Their symbolic power as evidence of a living culture has been incorporated into a social movement in order to "demonstrate ethnic unity, to dramatize injustice, [and] to animate [their] grievances" (Nagel, 1994: 167) in the form of wide, sweeping discriminatory policies supported and endorsed by far-removed Hollywood celebrities.

In the introduction to this article we argued that the anger evoked by the anti-sealing campaigners within indigenous communities serves as an important cautionary tale for activists. And indeed, our ongoing research consistently encounters the damage done by this campaign in the North; Greenpeace, and environmental NGOs in general, remain unwelcome participants in the civil society of the North.²⁰ In some communities the name Greenpeace was even used as a slur against anyone who showed seemingly excessive compassion for animals. As principal interlocutors on environmental issues, this is unfortunate. At the same time, many animal rights activists have become acutely conscious of this critique and are forging a pathway to recognize the overlap of indigenous and animal rights agendas. The delineation of subsistence and commercial seal hunting as practiced by the Inuit into 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' categories on the part of these NGOs has been at the very least racist and patronizing, and at the most politically and economically devastating. As Inuit assert their own voices in conversations about resource development, land and marine animal preservation, food security, and political autonomy, they may benefit from the contributions of civil society groups with technical expertise in these areas. Historical distrust must be addressed, however, before southern NGOs will be accepted at the table.

²⁰ For discussion of this please see Scobie and Rodgers 2013.

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Rapid mobilisation of demonstrators in March Australia

Stewart Jackson and Peter John Chen

Introduction

This movement event analysis reports on field interviews collected at the end of August 2014 at the Sydney “March in August” (MiA) March Australia protest. March Australia represents one of a new generation of social movement organisations: wholly based on social media, without a formal, legal constitution, yet able to display considerable effectiveness in mobilisation. In the last few years, a number of significant protest events (various Occupy collectives, the “Convoy of No Confidence”) have been organised largely via new media channels and without the support of pre-existing parties, groups or organisations. This may reflect the tendency of new media to facilitate “swarming” or social flocking behaviour (Moe and Schweidel, 2014). This event analysis provides an overview of the demographic, and political behaviour of MiA participants, before examining the role of new media and specific policy issues in mobilisation.

Context

The election in September 2013 saw a change in national government from the Australian Labor Party (ALP) (2007-2013) to the Liberal-National Coalition. Led by Prime Minister Tony Abbott, the new government had successfully campaigned on the perceived weaknesses of the previous administration to retain internal party unity and deliver coherent policy. Abbott’s success was predicated on a largely populist campaign focusing on expanding border security (“stop the boats”), abolition of carbon pricing (“scrap the carbon tax”), and balancing the national budget (“end the waste”) (T. Abbott, ABC Broadcast, 2nd September, 2013). In addition, the incoming government renounced a series of unpopular, neoliberal policies, particularly, industrial relations reforms, reductions in government support to healthcare and education, and decreases in welfare entitlements.

In government the new administration initiated a far more austere tone, foreshadowing significant reductions in entitlements, the marketisation of health and education provision, and public sector downsizing. The popular media has largely characterised these as deliberate “lies” made to win office, attaching blame specifically to the figure of the Prime Minister. The national budget, released in May 2014, realised a range of policy reversals, benefit reductions, and significant program cuts (Whiteford, 2014). Combined with the inability of the government to progress its policies through the Australian upper house, the budget consolidated a slump in the government’s popularity generally, and Mr Abbott’s in particular (see: Browne, 2014).

March Australia: observations and questions

March Australia (“March”) is a nationally-disaggregated and grass-roots organisation (Price, 2014) that has effectively mobilised large numbers of Australians in protest against the Liberal-National Coalition government and its policies throughout 2014. Its core organisational tool has been social media, particularly Facebook. At the time of writing, March has held three national events (“March in March”, “March in May”, and “March in August”), and spawned comparable events (“March Against the Budget”, June 2014) organised by the Australian Union movement and capitalising on public sentiment regarding the first Coalition budget (ABC News, 2014). The future of March is uncertain, while producing strong participation in March and August 2014 (with participation estimates of 80,000 to 120,000 participants in each month), participation in MiA march fell considerably (at most, half previous events).

March is an interesting case for three reasons.

The first reason is the rapidity with which the organisation formed and mobilised (Lillebuen, 2014). In the context of Australia, the scale of these initial protests is remarkable given the newness of the Government; governments are traditionally graced with an extended “honeymoon” period of restrained criticism following elections (Singleton, et al., 2013). In comparison, the first high-profile protests against the previous Labor administration, the “Convoy of No Confidence” took place four years after their election.¹ It is possible, therefore, to hypothesize this rapidity as the result of the remobilisation of a social movement in “abeyance” - demobilisation without disbandment (Taylor, 1989) – of anti-conservative protestors active under the previous period of Coalition government (1996-2007).

Second, is the use of new media as the primary mobilising tool. Without a pre-existing organisation, “brand”, or endorsement from established political or protest organisations, March was able to mobilise large numbers onto the streets. This was achieved almost wholly through the use of social networking (though some street posters were also produced in an ad hoc manner). What is also remarkable is that the organisation was able to undertake this prior to the authoritative release of government policies that generate specific grievances (the pre-Budget march in March), and sustain participation in the face of dismissive initial reporting by commercial and mass media organisations which tended to paint the first protest as rootless and unfocussed.²

¹ While comparisons could be drawn with the Convoy, due to organization online (Glazov, 2011), its industry sponsorship and comparatively small numbers of participants (Wear, 2014) make it a less useful comparator.

² There is an established tendency for corporate media to regard political protests as illegitimate and highlight their unruly elements. This was highly evident in the case of the Occupy movement in 2011, and initial reporting of the large March in March events was limited. Following online criticisms about the limited reporting, some news organisations publicly admitted to underestimating the significance of the event. See, for example, Maley (2014). This follows a number of recent examples of perception gaps between media and the public.

Third, March consisted of a very small number of organisers (March Australia, 2014). This follows the tendency for internet-based campaigning organisations to be comprised of comparatively small numbers of staff (a good example would be the highly successful online campaigning organisation in Australia, GetUp!; Vromen, 2014). In line with early thinking about social movements as mobilising individual “rational actors” through alterations to the costs and benefits of participation (Klandermans, 1984), this reflects the view that new media has a role in: reducing barriers to participation through lowering information costs and enabling new forms of protest co-ordination (such as swarming), substituting new attachments for traditional forms of organisational alignment such as party membership and action (Klandermans, 1997), and permitting increased reach and impact of movement media.

Method

To examine participation in March, the Sydney City MiA rally and march was selected for field interviews. The interviews were conducted on 31 August 2014, in Sydney’s central business district. Sydney is the largest city in Australia (population 4.76m). The protest event took place over a five-hour period, but the data collection was restricted to a 2.5-hour period when the march was assembling. The interviews were conducted by the authors and a team of four student researchers from the University of Sydney’s Department of Government and International Relations. The research was approved by the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee as project 2014/676.

The interviews themselves consisted of a series of open and closed questions, with the questions being modelled on two previous instruments, used to collect data from the 2011 Sydney Occupy rally (Jackson and Chen, 2012) and an online survey of March supporters undertaken by researchers at the University of Canberra. The field interview method was selected to be able to focus on actual attendees, however this choice sacrifices the breadth of locations available to online research.

The instrument questions collected data on demographics, political activity, democratic saliency, issues, and rally connections. Interviews were conducted only with people unknown to the interviewer, and with participants under the age of 18 excluded.³ The total number of interviews conducted was 132, which represented approximately ten per cent of attendees (attendance was estimated by the researchers as 1,500).⁴ Where relevant, comparative data from the 2011 Occupy study (Jackson and Chen, 2012) has been included.

³ The researchers estimate that youth participation was minimal.

⁴ A media estimate was 3,000 (Farrell, 2014).

Results

Demographics of participants

The average age of participants was 41. This challenges common assumptions that political participation associated with new media would skew towards younger citizens. Younger participation in the Occupy movement in Australia (average 39 years, Table 1) indicates that topic, rather than channel, is significant. The average and distribution of participants' age sees MiA participants as younger than those who participate in formal political parties in Australia⁵.

Table 1: Age of participants (range: 18-79) (Occupy n = 180)

Age range	MiA%	n	Occupy %
18-30	32%	42	41%
31-45	30%	39	27%
46-60	23%	31	17%
61+	15%	20	15%
	100%	132	100%

A similar observation can be made of the gender distribution (Table 2), with there being slightly more women participating in MiA than men. Significant political organisations in Australia tend to be older and more male in composition - women represent only one-third of Australia's parliamentarians (McCann and Wilson, 2014) and they are under-represented in major political party membership rolls (Sawer, 1994: 82).⁶ Thus, the marchers represent a different group than might normally involve themselves in formal political institutions such as parties, parliament, or unions.

Table 2: Gender of participants, self-identified

Gender	%	n
Male	45%	59
Female	52%	68
Other/none	3%	4
<i>Total</i>	100%	131

⁵ On political party membership see for instance, Jepsen (2014), Jackson (2012), Cavalier (2010). Australian parties routinely withhold information regarding their memberships, but commentary on aging memberships is a common theme for established parties in other Anglophone countries such as the UK.

⁶ The Liberal Party, for instance, has an average age of 58 and is 58% male (Jepsen, 2014).

The majority of participants were employed in some capacity (76%), with only 26% not working. Interestingly of the 28% of the rally whom were students, 69% were also employed in some capacity (of which 62% were in full-time work), with only 31% of student participants unemployed.

Table 3: Participants' employment status by age brackets

Age by brackets	F/T	P/T	Casual	Unemployed	Retired	Total
18-31	21.1%	31.6%	61.1%	50.0%	0.0%	30.9%
31-45	36.8%	26.3%	27.8%	27.8%	0.0%	29.3%
46-60	33.3%	21.1%	11.1%	22.2%	9.1%	24.4%
61+	8.8%	21.1%	0.0%	0.0%	90.9%	15.4%
n	57	19	18	18	11	123
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

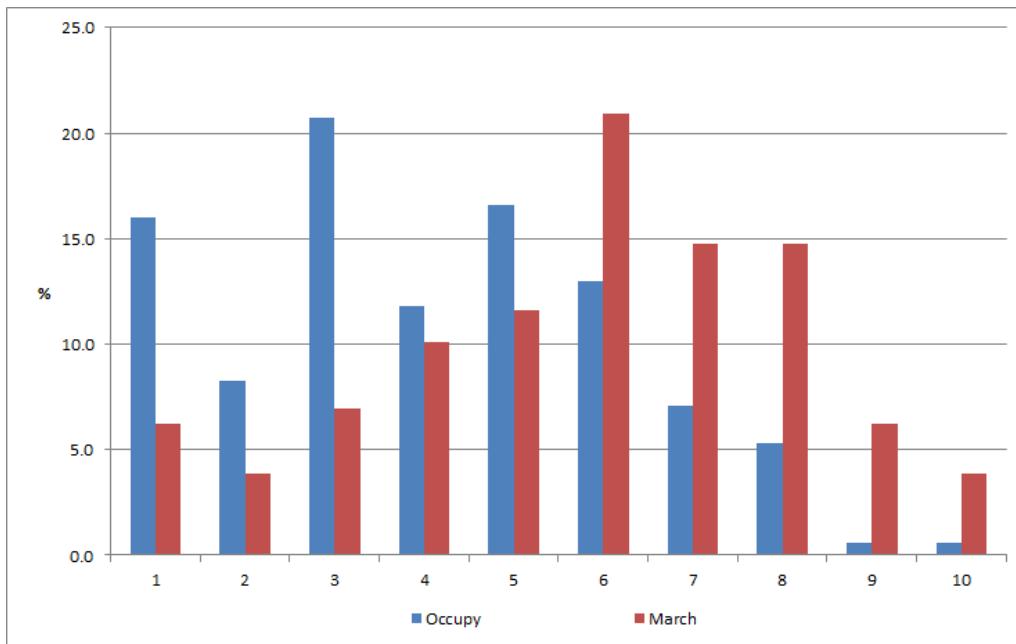
In respect of full-time vs part-time or casual employment this distribution is close to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures for the Australian population of 30% for part-time/casual employment, but higher than the overall participation rate, 76% vs 65% (ABS, 2013). This would appear to argue against the usual epithets cast at rally participants as unemployed students or professional agitators (Crawford, 2006).

Attitudes of participants

Unlike the anti-system attitudes exhibited in the Occupy study, most MiA participants appear to be anti-government in their orientation to the Australian political environment. This can be demonstrated by comparing responses to a question about Australian democracy overall, and specific views about political actors in institutions.

With regards to democracy, the group presents a moderately positive view of the quality of Australian democracy (mean 6.93, compared with 4.07 for Occupy). Still a sizable proportion did not rate Australian democracy highly, as is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Rating Australian democracy (0 is very poorly and 10 is very well; MiA n=132, Occupy n=180)



However, when considering specific actors and institutions, MiA participants exhibit similar levels of cynicism to political actors and institutions as the Occupy participants from 2011. As shown in Table 4, while MiA and Occupy participants share the population's view of politicians' capacity to understand popular opinion (low), they are far more likely to attribute unfavourable governmental actions to the deliberate behaviour of elites. This questions construct comparability in the instruments. Given that the three point difference between Occupy and MiA participants' democratic satisfaction is not reflected in the component breakdown of Table 4, further investigation into what "democracy" means and its relationship with government administration needs elaboration. It is likely that, while the Occupy movement was largely focused on an anti-system critique and the MiA is oppositional in nature, systematic concerns are more likely to be demonstrated in the 2011 dataset, while the 2014 data may be more situational in nature and therefore more volatile.

Table 4: Views of government (n=132)

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Government can be expected to do right thing	MiA 2014	2%	13%	14%	35%	36%
	Australia 2013 [†]	-	-	-	-	-
	Occupy 2011	2%	9%	12%	33%	44%
	Australia 2010*	4%	39%	-	48%	9%
Politicians know what ordinary people think	MiA 2014	1%	8%	19%	36%	36%
	Australia 2013	4%	18%	36%	25%	17%
	Occupy 2011	1%	14%	16%	37%	32%
	Australia 2010	3%	12%	19%	37%	29%
People in government most likely to look after themselves	MiA 2014	41%	41%	11%	7%	0%
	Australia 2013*	38%	28%	-	24%	12%
	Occupy 2011	39%	48%	7%	5%	1%
	Australia 2010*	36%	25%	-	30%	9%
Government mostly run for big interests	MiA 2014	52%	38%	9%	1%	0%
	Australia 2013	10%	35%	38%	16%	1%
	Occupy 2011	57%	35%	5%	3%	0%
	Australia 2010	9%	33%	44%	13%	1%

Source: Australia data drawn from the *Australian Electoral Study 2010 & 2013*.

[†] Question not asked in 2013

* Question asked on a four point scale

Examining participants' perceived personal efficacy, respondents were asked if they believe that March would create "real change". Somewhat dispelling the common conception of "the optimism of youth", it is those aged between 30-65 that are the most hopeful, with younger attendees less convinced their actions will create real change.

While the majority see the protests as having a positive impact, Table 5 also reflects a degree of ambivalence considerably higher than that reported by Occupy participants in 2011. The variation may reflect fatigue and the comparatively small attendance at the sampled event over previous marches. However, this does tend to demonstrate the inverse of swarming behaviour: social flocking can lead to rapid demobilisation and/or attention shifting in loosely coupled movements where participants do not maintain formal memberships in established organisations where political behaviour is surveilled (e.g. countering defection).

Table 5: Political efficacy in MiA (n=132) and Occupy Sydney (n=180)

Participation will "create real change"	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
MiA	10%	42%	37%	9%	2%
Occupy	15%	52%	22%	8%	3%

While only 11% of attendees do not think that March Australia will create any change, only 10% are strongly convinced change will occur, while 37% are less convinced (are neutral). This is fairly evenly spread across all the party identifiers with those with no party identity being more convinced of the efficacy of this form of action than others. This can be compared to the reactions

of Occupy Sydney marchers (November 2011), who were generally more hopeful (67% v 52% agreeing that change will be generated), although a similar number remained unconvinced (11% disagreeing). If we can consider that the two rallies do have similarities and linkages, it would then appear as if a certain amount of ambivalence towards change can be generated by public protest. This may also be as a result of this rally being the third in 2014, with any impacts on government being uncertain early in the electoral cycle.

Table 6: Political efficacy, MiA by party affiliation

Participation will “create real change”	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	n
ALP	8%	48%	32%	12%	0%	25
Greens	9%	40%	35%	13%	3%	69
No party	19%	33%	48%	0%	0%	27
Socialist Alt/All	0%	66%	34%	0%	0%	4
Others	0%	40%	60%	0%	0%	5

Political behaviours of participants

A significant number of participants who were prepared to identify as voters for a political party (79%), with all the parties identified coming from what would otherwise be considered centre-left (ALP) or left-wing. Given the prevalence of high-profile protest actions from members of socialist organisations (for example a live-to-air televised protest on the national broadcasters flagship current affairs program; 4 May 2014), a surprisingly low 4% identified with the two major Australian socialist parties.⁷ The most sizable identifiers were the Australian Greens (52%) a small, but established progressive party that attracts around 10 per cent of the primary vote at national elections.

Table 7: Party identification of participants⁸

Party Affiliation	%	n	Occupy%
Greens	52%	69	37%
None	21%	27	35%
ALP	19%	25	9%
Socialist Alliance/Alternative	4%	6	17%
Other	4%	5	2%
Total	100%	132	100%

⁷ Anecdotally, March organisers were actively resistant to entryist strategies by socialist parties (explaining the lower representation of socialists than in the Occupy sample).

⁸ In examining the question of party identification we need to consider that this question does not focus on whether the person is a member or close supporter, but worded as “Which political party would you most strongly identify with”, so does not test whether they have actually voted for the party or whether they would see themselves allied to that party ideologically or programmatically. Further iterations of the instrument need development to address this limitation.

That over half the participants identified with the Greens fits with the age and gender distribution skewing away from what otherwise might be associated with the established political organisations. This becomes clear when examining the gender distribution by political identification – the “no affiliation” group was predominantly (68%) women, while ALP (44%) and other (22%) identifiers were significantly male. This may be a reaction to the recent masculinisation of federal politics under Tony Abbott (the depictions of Abbott as an athlete, the lack of female representation in federal cabinet, and the deposing of Julia Gillard as Prime Minister being examples).

Table 8: Party identification by gender

	Party Identification - collapsed				Total
	ALP	Soc./Other	Greens	None	
Male	56%	70%	42%	31%	45%
Female	44%	20%	55%	65%	52%
Other/none	0%	10%	3%	4%	3%
n	25	10	69	26	130
total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

In respect of other political activities, such as signing a petition or boy-/buy-cutting products, participants were unsurprisingly very active, although not always in the most recent past. Comparisons with the data from Occupy show a difference in the willingness of participants to engage in relatively conventional political behaviours⁹: this again marks out the difference between MiA as anti-government, and Occupy as anti-system in orientation. Occupy participants were significantly more likely to have or be willing to undertake this more direct action, such as industrial action, with higher levels of personal risk and cost.

⁹ In the Australian context petitions, product boycotts, and letters to MPs are some of the most ubiquitous, conventional political behaviours, whereas taking industrial action and contacting the media are seen as somewhat more ‘activist’, i.e., unconventional behaviours (McAllister and Cameron, 2014).

Table 9: Participants' political behaviours

Political Behaviour	Done in past year		Done in the more distant past		No, but might do this in the future		No, never would do this	
	March	Occupy	March	Occupy	March	Occupy	March	Occupy
Signed petition	98%	85%	1%	8%	1%	6%	0%	1%
Boycott	70%	69%	8%	7%	20%	18%	2%	6%
Contact politician	64%	51%	8%	13%	21%	22%	7%	14%
Contact media	24%	38%	14%	16%	41%	30%	21%	16%
Industrial action	16%	30%	23%	19%	52%	42%	9%	7%

The March movement started with the “March in March”, held a further march in May, and continues with the third march, now in August. As can be seen from Table 10, the decision for many attendees’ was to be at this march, potentially following previous marches, or at least in response to knowing about the movement in general. That half made the decision to be involved “months ago” suggests a committed core of participants over time, as does those starting weeks ago (20%). This would itself suggest that – given the previously discussed tendency towards fatigue –the attendees at this march are close to the core of people likely to be on-going attendees at further events, especially when the rally/march is to continue agitating against the current government and/or current policies.

Table 10: When decision made to attend (n=131)

	Today	Days ago	Weeks ago	Months ago	Forget/unsure
Decision to attend	12%	17%	20%	50%	1%

Drawing on Noelle-Neumann’s (1984) research on civic political discourse, the willingness of participants to engage in social conversations on questions of politics was explored using a “stranger on a train” scenario where they are asked if they would discuss their political views with a political opponent for an extended period of time. This type of question is useful to determine the extent to which participants as (a) likely to proselytise and (b) levels of political tolerance in a society (Noelle-Neumann’s original interest). MiA participants were far less likely to engage with a person holding an opposing political opinion than that found in the Occupy participants in 2011 (Table 11).

Table 11: Willingness to engage with a person with a different view about politics (n=131)

	MiA	Occupy
Talk to person	62%	84%
Don't bother	37%	16%

This lower likelihood of willingness to engage with people with different views can also be tested against participants' political affiliation. Here it is interesting to note that it is those that affiliate with the Greens that are the most open to talking to the person with a different viewpoint, descending through those with no affiliation, the ALP and finally to those with another (minor) party affiliation (including both Socialist parties). This may be explained in that Australian Green's, while a minority party, tend to exhibit higher levels of education than the average (McCann, 2012).

Table 12: MiA participants, willingness to engage, by party identification

	Greens	None	ALP	Soc./Other
Talk to person	71.0%	61.5%	48.0%	40.0%
Don't bother	29.0%	38.5%	52.0%	60.0%
N	69	26	25	10

Participants' issue identification

MiA participants were also asked in a free-form question what the key reasons/concerns were that prompted them to attend the march. The responses were then coded for the key issues mentioned, noting that participants could mention as many concerns as they wished.

What was clearly apparent was that issues connected to the May National Budget were most prevalent, in particular the proposed cuts and changes in education funding (both those under the "Gonski" school funding reforms as well as the higher education changes). Almost a third (31%) of participant nominated education as one of their key concerns. In respect of budget measures, changes to the public funding of health services and marketisation of health provision were cited by 17% of participants. The National Budget in general terms was mentioned by 12% of participants. The second most important reason, and one linking with border protection/migration and general security concerns was the plight of refugees – this was mentioned by 26% of participants. The third most prevalent issue area mentioned was that of the environment, mentioned in a general sense by 17% of participants, with climate change mentioned specifically by 11%, and renewable energy by 5%.

Table 13: Issue of concern / motivations for participation

Issue of concern	Mentioned
Education	31%
Refugees/Asylum Seekers	26%
Health – Public Health Service/Co-payment	17%
Environment - General	17%
Government Performance	14%
Welfare	13%
Health - General	12%
Budget	12%
Economic Justice/Employment/Workers	11%
Environment - Climate Change	11%
Indigenous Issues	6%
Big Business/Corporations	6%
Accountability	6%
Environment - Renewables	5%
Gay Marriage/Rights	5%
Class War/Elites	5%
Democracy	3%
War/Iraq/Military	3%
Palestine/Muslims	2%
Racism	2%
Women/Feminism	2%
Foreign Aid	1%
Public Broadcasting	1%
National Broadband Network	1%
Promote Action	14%
Change / Solidarity	11%
Activity / Meeting Friends / Support Friends	11%

If we consider the key areas of education, refugees, health, welfare, the budget and indigenous affairs, we find some interesting shifts in issue identification. We can see that identification of the budget, as a general concern over specific policy issues within it, is stronger amongst party members (particularly the ALP). Similarly, refugees and asylum seekers are a key issue for some 30% of Green participants, but this halves for ALP supporters. Perhaps most striking is the very strong support for education issues amongst Greens and non-identifiers when compared to ALP identifiers.

Table 14: MiA most commonly cited of concern, comparison of ALP-Green-None affiliation

	ALP	Greens	None	% of Total
General Education	12%	35%	44%	31%
Refugees	16%	30%	22%	26%
General Health	4%	15%	19%	12%
Budget	20%	13%	4%	12%
Climate issues	0%	10%	15%	11%
Indigenous	0%	7%	7%	5%
Total	52%	110%	111%	97%

Note: because participants could nominate more than one policy area motivating attendance, party column totals can add to more than 100%.

Table 13 also demonstrates that participation or solidarity benefits were also significant responses from participants. This took the form of promoting activity (14%) or change (11%), as well as personal, social benefits (protests as a recreational or social activity, 11%). In an era where there are manifold means for political expression online, protests still clearly provide a way for the politically-engaged to enjoy and/or generate social capital.

Role of new media in mobilisation

Given the hypothesis that new media drove participation in the March Australia events, Table 15 demonstrates social media, particularly Facebook, was significant in informing participants about the event. The second most commonly cited source of event information was friends or family and then organisations. The comparatively small level of attention given to these events by mainstream media is reflected in the extremely small number of participants nominating print, radio, or television as significant sources of information about the event.

Table 15: Source of information promoting March, by party affiliation (n=131)

	ALP	Soc./Other	Greens	None	Total
Facebook	56.00%	80.00%	76.80%	63.00%	70.20%
Friend / family	48.00%	20.00%	36.20%	40.70%	38.20%
Organisation	12.00%	30.00%	14.50%	22.20%	16.80%
Email	8.00%	10.00%	8.70%	11.10%	9.20%
Twitter	16.00%	0%	5.80%	0%	6.10%
Print media	4.00%	0%	0%	7.40%	2.30%
Other social media	8.00%	0%	0%	0%	1.50%
Radio	0%	0.00%	1.40%	0.00%	0.80%
Television	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table 15 is interesting in that it does not support Klandermans' et al. (2014) hypothesis that unaffiliated protestors would be more likely to be mobilised through open communications channels. The comparatively high level of organisational nomination by unaffiliated participants talks to the role, not of parties or union in MiA's mobilisation, but online campaigning organisations like GetUp! This appears to confirm the role of these organisations in mobilising monitorial citizens (Schudson, 1999).

Wider observations on the event

In addition to the specific findings detailed above, a number of general observations can be made.

The first observation relates to this question of event frame. Framing provides shared cognitive models that create collective meaning and direction for social movements (Ryan and Gamson, 2014). In addition, it is also seen as important in explaining the longevity of movements. This process appears less significant in the MiA data.

Given the comparatively open nature of the rally as a general forum for dissent, it is clear that different participants participated for different reasons. Without a central narrative, participants' motivations are more diverse, but party affiliation appears important in shaping interpretation of the event. This reflects the value of ambiguity in building larger coalitions, but makes participants capacity to gauge movement success more difficult. This appears evident in the comparatively low levels of efficacy demonstrated by participants. Largely, however, participants can be categorised as anti-government protestors, rather than the anti-system orientation of those interviewed at the Occupy event in 2011.

Second, the use of unstructured responses for issue identification present interesting observations about the relationship between policy issues and party affiliation.

The strong focus of ALP identifiers on "the budget" as a general grievance, and comparative unwillingness of ALP-identifiers to engage in political dialogue with opponents talks to the increasingly competitive and zero-sum nature of major party politics in Australia. The policy orientation of ALP identifiers is unclear given the party's strong history of social democratic policy innovation. Participants who were non-ALP identifiers were *more* likely to nominate the defence of "signature" Labor polities (particularly in the public provision of health and education services) as motivators for attendance. This may demonstrate a weakness of Labor's previous administration being able to communicate the ownership of key reforms like the Gonski funding model for schools (Keane, 2012), but also the party's low profile in opposition regardless of attempts to campaign around the defence of its decades old public health reforms.

The research also demonstrates the changing nature of Green party identifiers: Greens are no longer purely environmentally focussed. Their supporters' interests reflect the broader array of policy interests the party has developed following its transition from a single-interest to mass party (Rhiannon, 2012). Interestingly, in the breakdown of motivating issues, Greens-affiliated participants were *less* likely to nominate environmental issues than non-greens (with the exception of ALP identifiers). This is significant as a number of significant environmental issues (particularly related to climate change and the Australian carbon economy) have been subject to considerable debate during the preceding year. The move to a mass party clearly alters the significance of "traditional" green issues, but this may also reflect an impact of the previous event frames (focusing on the budget and particularly social policy issues) in driving participation.¹⁰

The final observation is that March conforms to our description as a largely online organisation that relied on social media for the promotion of its events and co-ordination of participation nationally.

While considerable attention in the popular press has been focused on the use of Twitter for political purposes, largely due to its popularity with journalists and political elites (Chen, 2013: 177–8), Facebook remains the most common tool for event-related political communication among participants. Social networks, online or face-to-face, dominate mobilisation decisions by participants, with endorsement by organisations still relevant for a subset of participants.

The implications of this can be summarised as:

1. Social media has become an important tool for political organising, both in established political institutions like political parties, but also in social movement organisations and unstructured movements like Occupy and March Australia;
2. The unique nature of the event as unframed and open to multiple grievance expression may have reduced the number of organisational referrals, and therefore be specific to this type of mobilising group;
3. This form of organisation can mobilise large numbers of participants at short notice, reducing the capacity of governments to control dissent through "swarming";
4. Online organisations are not immune from problems of collective action. This appears particularly significant in the ambiguous nature of participant's motivations, and the lack of other social structures to build and reinforce issue/group commitment/cohesion. Activists and organisations interested in employing these methods need to pay considerable attention to framing and narrative;

¹⁰ This finding needs further investigation, given a succession of large, climate-focused rallies held across Australia in late 2014. Social movement theorists have discussed the way that social movement organisations increasingly engage in niching strategies to, deliberately or Darwinianly, effectively compete for resources (Stern, 1999). Selectivity in participation at the individual level is less clearly addressed in this literature, but seems highly likely in the rational allocation of time and effort.

5. Protests organised online can also demobilise rapidly due to “flocking” behaviours. Consideration is needed for organisers about sustaining unity and commitment in the absence of membership structures (Tilly, 2005), and;
6. The effectiveness of these types of event appears to be associated with both entrepreneurialism and political opportunities. This is demonstrated in this case through the combination of the work of the March Australia collective and the unexpected scale of the austerity budget of the new Abbott administration.

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Examining mainstream media discourses on the squatters' movements in Barcelona and London

ETC Dee and G. Debelle dos Santos

Abstract

This article brings together separate research on mainstream media discourses concerning the squatters' movements in Barcelona and England and Wales. The previous findings are introduced and then compared. Using the technique of Critical Discourse Analysis, we assess the presentations in the mainstream media of the squatters' movements and analyse how they individually contest these portrayals. Mainstream media discourses often present a negative stereotype of squatters which in both cases facilitated repression. These dominant narratives both shape and are shaped by public opinion, as indicated by specific examples. The findings for London and Barcelona are compared and three specific concerns are addressed, namely how squatters are presented as a deviant other, ways in which squatters formulated new meanings of squatting through linguistic methods and how mainstream media discourses can be contested.

Keywords: squatting, critical discourse analysis, CDA, social centre, criminalisation, squatters' movement, okupa, Barcelona, London.

Introduction

The work of scholars such as Norman Fairclough (Fairclough, 1989; Fairclough, Cortese & Ardizzone, 2007; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013) and Teun van Dijk (1988) in Critical Discourse Analysis demonstrates that in every area of public debate, there are many different narratives but that there is often one hegemonic discourse which both informs and is shaped by public opinion and other factors. Such a discourse can be termed a dominant ideological discursive formation (IDF). It is our contention that such a formation, which framed squatters as a dangerous other, which was a crucial factor in the repression of squatters in two European cities, namely Barcelona and London.

We would argue that discourse analysis can be useful for social movement theorists and participants alike, since events and groups are often affected by the stance of the mainstream media. To give one striking example, in his comprehensively documented book about the 1984-1985 miners' strike in the UK, Seamus Milne (2014) examines the subsequent persecution of trade union leaders. Arthur Scargill and others were accused of corruption and fraud, but all the allegations were eventually proven to be false, whilst their accusers themselves were in turn revealed to be deeply corrupt. The important point for our purposes here is that Milne emphatically states that the trial by media of the democratically elected union leaders was organised and controlled by the

Conservative government of the time, in collusion with other aligned interests. He writes that "the media onslaught unleashed by Maxwell's Mirror and Central Television on the miners' leaders was in reality a classic smear campaign. Indeed the treatment of the whole farrago of allegations and legal cases was a particularly revealing example of how the British media - and particularly the press - routinely operates against designated enemies" (Milne, 2014, p.362). Social movements of all strands can be affected by the discourses created about them, and as we shall see, negative discourses about the squatters' movements indeed facilitated the criminalisation of squatting in various forms.

This article brings together separate research on mainstream media discourses concerning the squatters' movements in Barcelona and England and Wales (Dadusc & Dee, 2015; Debelle, 2010; Dee, 2012; Dee, 2013a). Building on previous work, we first outline our findings and then compare them. Using the technique of Critical Discourse Analysis, we examine the respective political squatters' movements' presentations in the mainstream media and how the squatters contest these portrayals. The previous research approached the same question in different ways, namely how mainstream media discourses presented a negative stereotype of squatters which facilitated repression. As the epigraph (a quotation from Steve Platt) suggests, the mainstream media tends to select easy stereotypes, in this context the 'good' and the 'bad' squatters is a framing which often occurs. We then compare our findings and address three specific concerns, namely how squatters are presented as a deviant other, ways in which squatters formulated new meanings of squatting through linguistic methods and how mainstream media discourses can be contested

Our previous research has taken different tacks but we have both employed Critical Discourse Analysis and our approaches can be productively compared. Most obviously, there is a difference between research based on one Catalonian city (Barcelona) as opposed to two countries (England and Wales), although to reduce that difference, examples here have mainly been taken from the case of London, so this work is able to compare situations in London and Barcelona. Another difference is the existence of a strong political squatters' movement in Barcelona, whereas in England and Wales squatting is more precarious and whilst a political movement did coalesce to some degree in opposition to criminalisation, the squatters' movement is generally more diffuse and disorganised.

However, thematic similarities can easily be observed and one specific example is that both analyses engaged with the notion that there are media narratives concerning 'good' squatters and 'bad' squatters. As Dee writes "there is a certain shorthand at work which enables 'good' squatters who are protesters, occupiers or an art group to be distinguished from 'bad' squatters who are aggressive, lifestylists, serial, unlawful and unwanted" (Dee, 2013a, p. 257). We will examine these moral categories and critique them. Further, we will observe that for squatters attempting to conform to the description of the 'good' squatter, there are dangers. The distinction is of course imposed and arbitrary: some squatters do not intend to fit into the 'good' stereotype and nevertheless end up

categorised as such, or perhaps use it as a tactical part of their identity in a situation such as a court case. The internal debates of the movement show that these categories affect not only the perception that unpoliticized citizens have of squatting, but ineed can be reproduced inside the movement, although under different terms. Our comparative work hopes to shed some light on this matter.

For London, E.T.C. Dee evaluates research which focused more generally upon England and Wales, since he was working on media discourses around the issue of the criminalisation of squatting, which in the end occurred on September 1 2012. He analysed 235 stories about squatting in eight daily newspapers (seven national and one London-specific) over the time period from January 1 2009 to December 31 2011. However, the majority of stories focused on London, home in turn to the majority of squatters. We examine this research first.

For Barcelona, Debelle (2010) examined stories from four newspapers concerning two cases where squatting received considerable media coverage, namely *El Forat de la Vergonya* and *La Makabra*. The news articles were analysed in order to assess the quality of the journalists' coverage in terms of accuracy and reproduction of stereotypes regarding squatters. In addition, an analysis was made of editorials mentioning squatters in these two cases, and also when the housing issue was addressed. We examine this research second, after providing a brief theoretical presentation of the squatters' movement in Barcelona.

Following the presentation of the two case studies we then turn to a consideration of the similarities and differences in discourse between the two contexts.

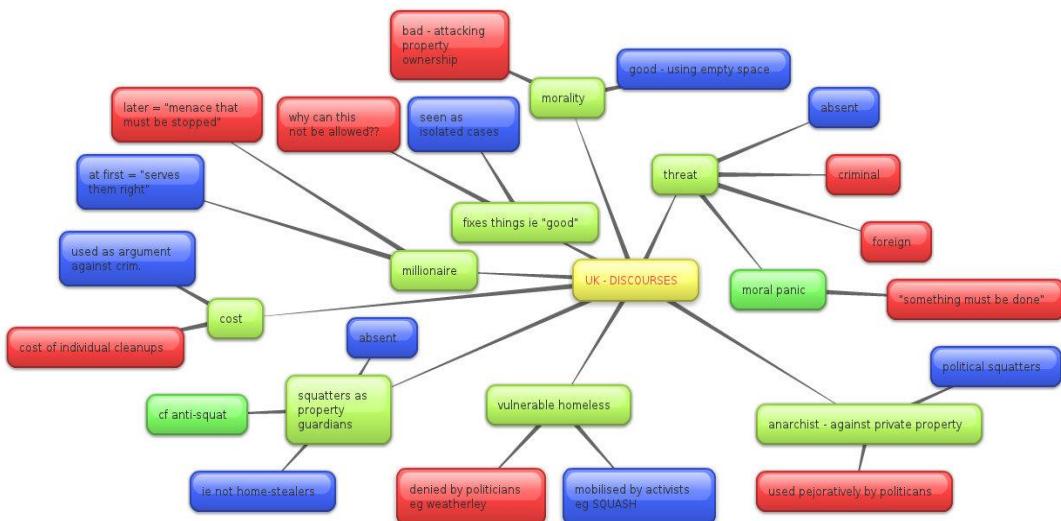
London

In the work of E.T.C. Dee (Dadusc & Dee, 2015; Dee, 2012; Dee, 2013a) on discourses surrounding the criminalisation of squatting in England and Wales, the technique of Critical Discourse Analysis is employed. This was developed by Norman Fairclough and includes the concept of the 'ideological discursive formation' (IDF), a collection of beliefs about an issue which both shapes and is in turn shaped by media discourses. Fairclough argues that one formation often becomes hegemonic and thus the views it contains then are taken as natural and self-evident. Dee asserts that the dominant IDF regarding squatting in England is that squatters are dangerous, criminal, marginal characters, whilst at the same time there also exist other discourses more favourable to squatters (Dee, 2012, p.251).

In order to test this claim about the dominant IDF, Dee (2012) collected 235 individual news stories about squatting which appeared from January 1 2009 until December 31 2011, using UK Newsstand. The newspapers analysed were the Daily Mail (tabloid), the Daily Mirror (tabloid), the Daily Telegraph (broadsheet), the Guardian (broadsheet), the Independent (broadsheet), the Sun (tabloid), the Times (broadsheet) and the Evening Standard (tabloid). All except the latter are daily national papers, the Standard is London-based daily

(and since October 2009 is distributed for free). The newspapers cover a range of political colours and seven out of the top ten selling national newspapers are included (National Readership Survey).

Of the 235 stories, Dee (2012) found 32% to be presenting a negative discourse about squatting, 15% to be presenting a positive discourse and 53% to be neutral. Dee took this to indicate that whilst the dominant IDF is set against squatters, other discourses also proliferate. Whilst the majority of stories were neutral in tone, this was often because squatting was itself not the main focus of the article and it is significant that there were more than double the number of negative stories as opposed to positive. Dee (2013) drew up a list of discourses around squatting and criminalisation, shown below in figure 1. We can see that there at least eight, some of which can themselves be framed either negatively or positively. As an example, there is the moral discourse, which either frames squatting as an attack on private property (bad for the wealthy) or as a useful way of housing people (good for those not rich enough to afford a house).



Further, what Dee discovered was that negative stories tended to cluster around specific events to form part of a larger narrative whereas individual positive stories occurred every so often but remained isolated. The larger narrative correlated with a stereotype of squatters as a threatening other (possessing such supposedly deviant values as being foreign, young, criminal, anti-capitalist, drug-using and so on) and thus easily fed into a moral panic about squatters which arose when the debate about criminalisation heated up. This then served to create the impression that something needed to be done to eliminate the threat posed by squatting, despite this threat being itself generated by hysterical media stories about a few specific cases. Two examples are discussed below, after a brief discussion regarding the creation of the stereotypes of the 'good' and 'bad' squatter.

In analysing media discourses, one quickly discerns the inclination of the mainstream media to break up squatters into the 'good' and the 'bad.' The 'good' squatter occupies an empty house and repairs it, getting along with her neighbours, in contrast to the bad squatter who is a terrifying beast from foreign lands. In their most extreme form these categories are clearly evinced simply by reading the title of the story, to give two examples from the case of England and Wales: 'Squatters refurbish £3 million mansion' in the Sun (Syson, 2009); 'Rave hordes in 18 hour spree of destruction at former Royal Mail depot in central London' in the Daily Mail (Cohen, 2010). Yet the fact that both these stories come from right-wing tabloids demonstrates that different discourses are in circulation.

Moving forwards, we will now look at some specific examples. Firstly, in early 2011, a man of Latvian descent named Jason Ruddick became the subject of no less than seventeen substantial mainstream media stories. The first cluster of articles, appeared in five newspapers on January 7, 2011. The title for the Daily Mail article was 'Come over and join me in soft-touch Britain, says Latvian in a £6m squat' (Bentley, 2011) and it recounted how Ruddick and a "gang of immigrants" were squatting in a ten bed Highgate mansion. Other titles were 'Latvian travels 1,500 miles to milk Britain's 'soft' laws against squatters' (Wardrop, 2011), 'SQUAT A CHEEK: 1,500 mile trip to scrounge in "easy touch" UK' (Fricker, 2011), 'The £10million home "not good enough" for squatter gang' (Moore-Bridger, 2011) and 'I came from Latvia to squat in Pounds 10m home in easy-touch Britain: PENNILESS SCROUNGER BOASTS' (Flynn, 2011).

Ruddick and by extension squatters generally are characterised as possessing deviant values which place them in opposition to decent, law-abiding citizens. There is certainly a racist element to this, since Ruddick's status as a foreigner is another element being utilised in the othering process. As a result of stories such as this and others which played upon fears of home-owners that they could go out for five minutes and have their homes squatted by the time they came back (Dee, 2012), a moral panic thus arose which was centred on the enemy (the squatter), the victim (the home owner, who is by extension any well-behaved British person) and the required consensus, which is that 'something must be done' about the supposed menace of squatting (this analysis follows Stanley Cohen's seminal 1972 formulation of the constituent requirements for a moral panic in *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*).

Another cluster of similar stories appeared in March/April 2011 (in the *Independent on Sunday*, *Sun* and *Evening Standard*), when Ruddick was now squatting in the former home of the Congolese ambassador. Notoriously, he was reported to have said: "This place isn't nice enough for me. I want somewhere posher, with a swimming pool if possible. I want a shower and hot water. But I want to stay in Hampstead. It's a very nice area" (Dominiczak, 2011). This quotation was then repeated verbatim by Mike Weatherley MP in the House of Commons debate on the criminalisation of squatting on March 30, 2011 (Hansard).

As a second example, another cluster of stories happened one year later, in

January 2012, when Janice Mason's house was squatted. Articles were entitled 'My childhood home has been invaded by Moldovan squatters' (Levy, 2012), 'Why can squatters take over our house?: Homeowner begs ministers to speed up change in law' (Parsons, 2012), 'Stop this squat hell' (Anonymous, 2012) and 'Moldovan squatters and a week that showed how good citizens suffer while parasites flourish' (Hastings, 2012).

We should note here that all of this is in fact nothing new or particularly surprising. Steve Platt, writing on squatting in the UK in the 1970s (when criminalisation was also proposed but not implemented), states that the mainstream media "could at times be almost unrelievedly hostile" (Platt, 1999, p.107). He observes the media drawing an arbitrary distinction between "respectable", self-evidently 'deserving' cases of homeless families occupying empty council properties" and cases where the squatters "were perceived to be less respectable and deserving - single people, 'outsiders', 'hippies', 'dossers' or drug-takers". Further, he gives the example of the now defunct London Evening News commenting on "foreign scroungers here for the social security and free accommodation" (*ibid*).

In contrast, positive stories tended to be isolated events not linked into any larger narrative of squatters being a useful part of society. Such random stories would include 'The squatter locals want in their village', and also the 'Squatters refurbish £3 million mansion' article mentioned above (Anon, 2011). This story indicates rather well the discourse of the 'good' squatter, since a local person offers the opinion that "Squatting may be illegal but it's criminal to let a dwelling like that go to ruin, especially with the need for housing there is". In contrast the owner states "I find it horrible that someone can just break into a property and live in it. How would people feel if it was their property?". The squatter is of course caught in the middle and quoted as saying "I don't want to cause trouble. I just wanted a roof over my head. If the judge asks me to leave I'll have to comply - I don't want to be arrested" (*ibid*). He appears to be using a moral argument regarding the 'crime' of emptiness to support his enterprise in housing himself and conserving the building (unfortunately what eventually happened in this case is unknown). The 'good' squatter discourse represents an occasional disruption to the dominant IDF concerning squatters. Further, whilst some sympathy for the squatter may be expressed, the law of private property still over-rules any other arguments in almost all cases.

Another article concerned the London-based Oubliette, an arts collective which squatted properties such as an old language school in Waterloo, a Mayfair mansion left empty for twelve years and two former embassies near Green Park (Pidd, 2009). Their spokesperson, Dan Simon states that in each place the group has attempted to make contact with the owner, proposing that they run the arts project until whatever time the owner requires the use of the building again and offering to maintain the building, with the twin benefits being that neighbourhood property values do not fall as a result of dereliction and the need for paid private security is removed (*ibid*).

This story fits into another narrative, that of the art squatter, and further, both

examples I have supplied fall under the meta-narrative of the good squatter who occupies something derelict and puts it to good use. However, this narrative, if tolerated, tends almost always to be trumped by the eventual right of the owner to do what he or she wants with the property in question. As mentioned above, it is rare for the absolute right of private property, so central to the operations of capitalism, to be challenged, but one rare occasion when this occurred was the occupation of Saif Gaddafi's London mansion in March 2011 during the Libyan revolution which was almost universally condoned (Addley, 2011). An amendment was even tabled to the parliamentary Early Day Motion proposing to criminalise squatting which would have exempted this particular instance from prosecution and only the local Conservative Member of Parliament dissented (Dee, 2013, p.255).

As a last point, it is also important to note that discourses are not fixed, but rather they shift and change over time. Thus, whilst it was difficult to document, we would claim that as the moral panic swelled, certain discourses became more negative. For example we can turn to the discourse of 'millionaire squatters' (and indeed the art squatters, all these discourses are intertwined), which concerned the occupation of London mansions left empty by the super-rich, including celebrities such as Nigella Lawson. As Dee comments, "until quite recently, when other factors appear to disrupt the tone, there tends to be some sympathy for the squatters which could be explained by the framing of the squatters as slightly mythologised 'Robin Hood' figures, taking back for the people what has been stolen from them by the ultrarich" (Dee, 2012, p.253). This sympathy was then drowned out by stories discussing the same sort of occupations but using them now as justification to clamour for a change in the law regarding squatting. Thus a Daily Telegraph article about the occupation of Guy Ritchie's Fitzrovia mansion, which a year earlier might have expressed some concern that Ritchie was leaving property empty, was instead entitled 'The middle class serial squatters exploiting the law' and claimed that "a ragtag bunch of up to 40 activists and undergraduates exploited legal loopholes to live for free in a string of historic buildings in London" (Jamieson & Leach, 2011). This story was flanked by three other Telegraph articles in the same month which discussed how the law would be changed to criminalise squatters (Dee, 2013, p.260).

Barcelona

Now we turn to Debelle's work on Barcelona (Debelle, 2010). Following E.T.C. Dee's (2013) approach, the media portrayal of the two specific cases can easily be broken down under the stereotype of the 'good' and the 'bad' squatter. The case of El Forat consists of the analysis of news articles where squatters are accused of being troublemakers who caused riots after a protest. These are the 'bad squatters': uncivil, violent, unpoliticised, and dangerous. The case of La Makabra allows for the study of 'good squatters', since this arts collective made a peaceful squatting action to claim a cultural space. Finally, we study in the newspaper editorials three themes which received the most media attention.

Dee's approach permitted a broad vision of the discourses on squatting, in a country where the political squatting movement is much smaller than Barcelona. As our hypothesis is that discourses circulated by politicians and the mainstream media facilitated the criminalisation of squatting, it is therefore logical that a moral panic was harder to create around politicised squatting, since Barcelona has a large and visible squatting movement which undertakes significant actions. News articles about squatting for economic reasons (homeless, poor individuals or families etc.) also exist in the Catalan press and were not studied. Thus, Dee's quantitative study concerns mostly unpoliticized squatting, while Debelle's qualitative approach sheds some light on how politicised squatting is depicted.

The evolution of squatting in Barcelona

In Barcelona, squatting has existed as a social movement only since 1996. This is a restrictive interpretation, as politically minded squatting projects which had a public presence can be traced back to the beginning of the 1980s (Martínez, 2007, p. 226). Occasional public squatting projects occurred up until the Criminal Code changed in 1996 to include draft evasion and squatting of private property (Asens, 2004, p.329). As a response, squats organised as a movement and a strong identity around political squatting emerged. Over the following years, squatting received considerable attention from both the media and politicians. Although repression grew, the number of politically active squats augmented in absolute terms during the following years (Martínez, 2007, pp.229-231).

From 2000 onwards, the global anti-capitalist movement emerged. This movement aggregates struggles such as ecologism, cooperativism, anti-racism, feminism, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, and Transgender), anti-militarism, squatting and other social movements. Squats participated in the global movement organising counter-summits and then Social Forums, but lost their hegemonic status as other social movements became more active (Barranco & González, 2007, pp.268-274). These social movements started themselves to use squatting as a tactic around 2000 and transform the 'okupa' identity. 'Okupa' stands for squatter and is derived from the word 'ocupa,' which in turn can be translated as 'occupy'. In Spanish, 'okupa' designates both the squat and the squatters. The squatters' movement at a certain point began to refer to their squats as 'okupas' using a 'k', a letter that also frequently substituted the letter "q" and silent letters after it. Thus, squatters were making a deliberate misspelling and emphasised their difference from normal codes of behaviour and existence.

The okupa identity becomes more diffuse over time as several squatting projects started to define themselves on other aspects of social change and other social movements start creating social centers too. The okupa identity is the product of the interaction between the discourse of squatters and the one of the institutions (city hall, police, media etc.). It does not strictly exist and yet it is

used politically by most actors, who try to shape its meaning in their own interests.

Although the squatting movement ceased to be strongly united around a single identity around 2000, it is in 2006 that most news stories were made about squatters in Catalonia (Debelle, 2010, p.149). Although late 2006 is the period when more news on squatters was produced, it is important to note that the criminalisation process started in early 2006. One important story which contributed to the stigmatisation of squatting (and which we will only mention in passing here) is the 4F case. On February 4 2006, a police officer went into a coma after being hit by an object which fell from a squatted house where a large party was happening. Innocent people arrested on the street were blamed and police officers forged evidence. One of the people arrested that night, Patricia Heras, committed suicide in 2011, after spending several years in jail. Most spent severals years in jail. The arresting officers have been involved in other cases of corruption and torture and following the release of a film about the case in 2014, the convictions are now being questioned. The investigation shown in Ciutat Morta is both a inspiring example of independent journalism and a factual proof of the interests of the ruling elite to criminalize squatting.

That same year, the pro-housing movement became more politically relevant than the okupa movement in 2006 and several significant peaceful protests were held. Two years later, the mass anti-eviction movement "PAH" ('Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca' or - this could be translated as 'Movement of Mortgage Victims') was created.

Sample

Debelle (2010) chose four newspapers which cover the ideological diversity of the Catalan press. *El Periódico* is the traditional left-wing newspaper. *Avui* is a centre-right newspaper with a Catalan nationalist agenda. *La Vanguardia* is the traditional right-wing newspaper with a Catalan nationalist agenda. Finally, *El Punt* is an independentist left-wing newspaper with a regional basis. By then, this journal had a strong local implementation, with several regional editions. These were the four most read newspapers in Catalonia by then (Huertas Bailén, 2009; MME, 2009). Debelle selected the period of late 2006, due to the massive volume of news on squatting that was then being produced. All texts were taken from found between October and December 2006, except one editorial on housing from *La Vanguardia*, which was datedfound in January 2007. Two samples were made, one of editorials and the other one of news articles. Articles from each case and journal were selected, most of them synchronically (Debelle, 2010, p.47). The sample of news articles consists of the analysis of two cases with relevant media coverage: *El Forat de la Vergonya* and *La Makabra*. A total of 16 editorials and 24 articles were analysed.

The first case provides evidence regarding the coverage of 'bad squatters'. *El Forat* is a public square in the centre of Barcelona that had been self-managed by the neighbours since 2000. In late 2006, the City Hall evicted the square,

destroyed parts of it, and secured the perimeter with a police guard. A protest was called and a confrontation occurred in front of the MACBA (Barcelona's Contemporary Art Museum), a symbol of the undemocratic urban transformation of the city. If we are to speak of violence in the context of this article, one should bear in mind the institutional violence that surrounds the move by City Hall to evict the square. It was there that several innocent people had been sent to jail without any kind of evidence, some because of their foreign birth, others based on how they looked (ie, if they were punks, had dreadlocks and so on, thus conforming to the 'bad squatter' stereotype). It was also where the neighbours self-organized their communal space throughout 6 long years of struggle. Finally, the squatters were blamed by the authorities for the disturbances which happened after the protest and the media followed the story instead of giving contextual. Thus, the story is that "bad squatters" ruin the protest of the neighbours. A total of 34 articles were found in the newspapers, of which 14 were analysed.

In contrast, the case of La Makabra permits a study of the representation of 'good squatters' in the press. La Makabra was a huge squatted warehouse in which one could find a circus workshop and the facilities needed for artists of all kinds to practice. When the eviction occurred, the collective decided to squat Can Ricart. This building had been claimed by the neighbours for decades, and several associations joined the squatting action. The squatters attempted to legitimate themselves and in response the police besieged the building to prevent food and beverages from being brought in; the Red Cross and a secretary from the UN intervened. The squatters stayed 10 days in total, receiving much media attention. As a result, the total sample for La Makabra's case is much bigger than the one of the Forat. These events account for 84 news articles in total, of which 10 were analysed. Only the day of the eviction and the day of the squatting of Can Ricart were selected. Although it would have been interesting to consider if journalists changed their views on squatting over these two weeks' of coverage, we decided to focus on studying the 'good squatter' stereotype. To do so, we only analysed the articles which were written before the journalists had the chance to actually meet the squatters.

Previous academic research on squatters in the press identifies the main themes of squatting in the Spanish media: violence, evictions, and housing (Alcalde, 2004; Rodríguez, 1999). These three themes account for more than half of the news produced on squatting. Editorials on violence were selected in the case of El Forat, those on evictions were found in the case of La Makabra, and those on housing were selected whenever the journals decided to write on that subject. The sixteen editorials we found were analysed. All were selected in the period between the Forat's protest in October and late December, except for one which was taken from La Vanguardia on late January, during the political debate around housing. In this period, squatters received the largest share of mainstream media attention, since an intense debate about 'violent squatters' and 'peaceful squatters' monopolised the public sphere. The fact that the regional elections were to occur in early 2007 explains the public debate on squatting in Catalonia during 2006, since the politicians were being pressured

by considerable social discontent.

Drawing upon the Critical Discourse Analysis of van Dijk (1987) on squatters, we analysed news articles in order to assess the quality of the journalists' coverage, in terms of both accuracy and reproduction of stereotypes regarding squatters. We combined his methodological approach with that of Giró (1990), who offers a technique for studying editorials.

Results of analysis of news articles

The criminalisation of 'bad squatters' happens in various ways and we will give a detailed example here. On October 7, 2006, both La Vanguardia and Avui quoted Martí [the Mayor of Barcelona] saying that organised groups of violent protesters were somehow related to the squatting movement, but they were not the same thing. Nonetheless, the headline's subtitle in La Vanguardia is 'City hall blames organized groups and the neighbours of Santa Caterina repudiate *okupas*', thus implying that *okupas* are to blame (Peiron & Castells, 2006). Also like Avui, La Vanguardia says the protest was convoked by *okupas*, instead of neighbors (*ibid*). El Periódico is more cautious than La Vanguardia and Avui on the 6th, and only says that some violent protesters had "okupa aesthetics" (Fernández & Subirana, 2006). In contrast, on the next day, El Periódico exaggerated the claim of the City Hall by publishing an article with the following headline: 'City Hall attributes disturbances at the Forat to radical *okupas*' (Ollès & Subirana, 2006). El Periódico is the only journal which did not reproduce the full statement of Martí (Ollès & Subirana, 2006). Thus, the threat by association proposed by a politician was magnified and distorted by journalists (except by those of El Punt, where squatters were not mentioned at all).

The day following the eviction of La Makabra, media articles stated that the social centre was an important circus space for Barcelona. Only El Punt acknowledges this in any detail, while Avui, La Vanguardia and El Periódico limit themselves to quoting the art professionals who were there on the day of the eviction and informed journalists about the importance of that squat for the local art scene. Then, when La Makabra squatted Can Ricart, the squatters were presented as unpoliticised in the next day's articles. This is exemplified by the way that journalists designated the spokesperson of La Makabra's assembly, Gadis Romero: La Vanguardia correctly identifies her as a "spokesperson", but considers that she is speaking on behalf of the "squatting movement" (Peirón, 2006); Avui also quotes Romero as the "spokesperson", this time of the "artists", or of the "evicted artists" (Rourera, 2006); El Periódico quotes on several occasions "representatives" or "coordinators" of the "squatter movement" (Placer, 2006; Placer & Pereda, 2006). The squatters' movement organises in assemblies and rejects representation and hierarchy, so both of these categorisations are incorrect. Barcelona's Squatters Assembly sometimes designates spokespersons, but this assembly does not pretend to represent all squats. Only El Punt reveals a correct understanding of how the movement organises, thus referring to Romero as the "spokesperson of Makabra's

assembly" (Barrera, 2006). This small yet significant point indicates how a dominant ideological discursive formation presents the squatters movement in a certain way according to its norms, rather than the way the movement itself actually organises.

Positive representations of squatters seldom exist regarding news on squats and evictions. Thus, we considered the first day of coverage of La Makabra at Can Ricart as being the most relevant, as far as the 'good squatter' stereotype is concerned. We were able to conclude that the stereotype of the 'good squatter' is largely unpoliticised, although further research might show that journalists changed their stance as days went by.

Editorial stance of newspapers

The analysis of the editorial stance of the newspapers shows that each has a coherent vision of what 'okupas' are and also that each response is individualised. Studying the editorials allowed us to give more strength to the conclusions we reached while analysing the news articles.

All the editorials opine that squatting is a criminal practice, which sometimes degenerates into violence. None of the newspapers questioned the juridical system, although only La Vanguardia pushed for stricter laws towards squatting. All newspapers, except El Punt, defended the actions of the police. All of them argued against 'violent protesters'. El Periódico characterises these protesters as "minority groups of radical squatters", mostly foreigners "who claim to be libertarians", and distinguishes them from the squatting movement (which it claims is 95% pacifist) (El Periódico, 2006a).

La Vanguardia, El Punt and Avui all criticize the postponement of an international meeting on the housing issue which was to be held in Barcelona, although in different ways: La Vanguardia argues that "violent groups, okupas and anti-system collectives" are "groups of delinquents" ready to create disturbances during the summit; El Punt complains about the fact that "200 troublemakers that are already identified by the police" were a valid reason to cancel it (El Punt, 2006a; La Vanguardia, 2006a); Avui published an editorial on October 15, 10 days after the Forat protest, accusing the "very active minorities" within "the far left, anarchists, okupas, independentists, etc." of making people feel insecure, while criticising the decision to postpone the summit with nationalistic arguments against Madrid (Avui, 2006b). Thus, a moral panic was created against the political ideologies and marginalised groups which allegedly were responsible for violence and were endangering the population of the city. The summit at which the issue of violence was to be discussed was itself cancelled, thus turning a brief disturbance into a major issue.

Turning back to the case of La Makabra, El Punt was the only newspaper which acknowledged that the squatters' movement had the potential to generate alternative popular culture. Thus, this newspaper argues that cultural spaces should be offered to squatters, whilst at the same time criticising the authorities for knowing that La Makabra would squat Can Ricart and doing nothing to

prevent it (El Punt, 2006b). Avui briefly questions the squatters' good intentions on October 4 and then publishes an analytical editorial on October 6 which argues throughout against squatters (Avui, 2006c; 2006d). Avui and El Punt do not exclude the possibility of negotiation, whereas La Vanguardia considers the squatting movement to have a clear tendency towards vandalism. In La Makabra's case, where the squatters were clearly peaceful and politically active artists, La Vanguardia limited itself to criticising the deviant and bohemian lifestyle of the squatters (La Vanguardia, 2006b). El Periódico seems to be superficially aware that the squatting movement is a social movement, but then argues that private property should be protected (El Periódico, 2006b). It is implied that squatters can sometimes claim their constitutional right to housing, but cannot do so when they are claiming "non-basic needs" (El Periódico, 2006c). This argument would seem to be replicating the dualistic thinking which Platt (1999) notes concerning deserving and undeserving squatters. Thus, we can see that stereotyping is employed by the four Barcelona-based newspapers in much the same way as the English language media. Table 1 below sets these findings out for comparison:

Table 1: Results

		EL PERIÓDICO	LA VANGUARDIA	AVUI	EL PUNT
Forat de la Vergonya	Violent squatters	95% of squatters are pacifists, only 5% are violent	Organised and dangerous okupa groups	Okupa groups caused trouble	200 trouble-makers already identified by the police
	Morality of squatting	Laws are correct	Law should be made tougher	Laws are correct	The City Hall is doing a bad job, laws should be flexible
La Makabra at Can Ricart	Pacifist squatters	No negotiation with La Makabra	No negotiation with any squatters	Negotiation can be justified	The City Hall must negotiate
	Negotiation with squatters	Squatters who claim their constitutional right are legitimate, those who claim « non-basic » needs are not	Bohemians and ravers abused an abandoned factory	The patience and trust of Catalans is being abused by squatters	La Makabra should be granted a space, their labour is valuable for society.

Comparing the two case studies

Having drawn out several points from the case studies above, we now move to

making thematic comparisons. These are (in order of appearance) the process in which squatters were represented as a threatening other possessing deviant values, ways in which squatters contested the meaning of squatting through linguistic variation and a final evaluation of how the mainstream media easily resorts to stereotyping squatters. Before comparing the results we obtained, we include a brief comparison of each movement. This description of the movements will be treated in more detail in section 4.2 and 4.3. Firstly we provide a general picture of each movement in order to discuss the othering process in section 4.1.

The squatting movements in England and Wales and Catalonia are quite different. Squats in Barcelona last much longer than in London, something that has allowed for the creation of a strong political squatters' movement. Also, very few negotiations have happened in Barcelona between squats and local administration (Mir *et al.*, 2013, pp.55-56). Although the norms of the movement are not that strict with regards to communicating with the mainstream media, squatters have shown a reduced interest in establishing a dialogue with journalists. Of course, the squatters' movement is very heterogeneous and several concrete squatting projects have decided to nominate spokespersons, such as La Makabra. The fact that these squatters had a lot of artistic resources might have also contributed to the more positive accounts of the event, but again, this cannot be interpreted as an attempt to obtain favours from the City Hall, as in the case of artistic squats in Paris (see Using Space, 2013). That being said, La Makabra did sit down with City hall's negotiators when these came to Can Ricard.

In contrast, the squatters' movement in England and Wales is diffuse and fairly disorganised, with the average lifespan for a squat being three months and a culture in which squatters are uninterested to communicate with mainstream media since (as we have seen) the coverage tends towards the negative in most cases (Dee, 2015). It is worth noting that no-one has an accurate assessment of the number of people squatting, with the oft-quoted figure of 20,000 not supported by any evidence. The threat of criminalisation did provoke some (but not all) politically minded squatters to organise into various groups such as the Squatters Network of Brighton, Birmingham Tenants & Homeless Action Group, Manchester Housing Action and Squatters Action for Secure Housing (SQUASH - which also fought criminalisation in the 1990s and was reformed recently). These groups attempted to create positive discourses reflecting the squatters movement as one which provided housing for the vulnerable as well as allowing people to explore cultural and artistic projects, but it was an uphill struggle to counter the dominant narratives.

Othering

Although the socio-political context is very different indeed, there are some common aspects shared by the different repressive processes. In both cases, squatters are depicted as deviant subjects. One could argue that this is in some

ways positive, as deviance is a precondition for the existence of social movements, which must always exist in opposition to some hegemonic norms or values (Colorado, 2010, p.1). Nevertheless, in the mainstream media stories which we analysed, the squatter's deviance is characterised as criminality, dirt, youth, etc. Squatters are depicted as selfish parasites.

Dee's study shows how the general tone of the news on squatting in London was negative and how the tendency to produce negative stereotypes amplified as the criminalisation process advanced. On the other hand, Debelle's study shows that in Barcelona particular sources of information are systematically privileged over others, receiving more attention and most importantly being reproduced without critique. These sources would include the security forces; the City Hall; the judicial system; politicians; (only sometimes) neighbourhood associations (Debelle, 2010, p.118). Critical Discourse Analysis demonstrates that powerful actors have more weight given to their pronouncements (Barriga, 2011; Fairclough & Fairclough, 2013). Thus, institutions can be said to have contributed directly to stigmatisation by representing a certain view of squatters, both by generating a criminalisation process and by being the main actors in this process.

Further, in both case studies, squatters are depicted as a threat to the moral order of society. Heidi Rimke argues that "the resurgent intensification of state repression against activism and 'anarchism' since the end of the twentieth century is legitimised by a society that has now been almost completely colonised by the discourse of security" (Rimke, 2011, pp.209-210). In the case of the Forat protest, the 'bad' squatter stereotype allowed the city mayor and journalists to explain why violence had occurred without referring at all to the actual structural violence which caused it. In England, the criminalisation of squatting was legitimised by a narrative concerning the vulnerability of private property (whilst the counter narrative emphasised the vulnerability of people squatting). It could be argued that the strength of the movement in Catalonia brought about a stronger reaction, but the underlying mechanism that legitimised repression is in both cases the same: squatters are a moral threat that justify this juridical control.

In the English context it is interesting to note that the Land Registration Act of 2002 made it harder for squatters to gain ownership of buildings or land through adverse possession, by notifying the owner of a claim and thus giving them the chance to begin eviction proceedings. As Cobb & Fox (2007) discuss, this adjusted approach takes a moral stance which sees property owners as blameless.

In both cases, the mainstream media amplified a moral panic by ignoring fundamental contextual elements which would allow a better understanding of the conflict. The Barcelona study shows that despite their demands often being aligned with the local community, squatters' actions are rarely portrayed as related (Debelle, 2010, p.110). As A.K. Thompson writes with regard to activism in North America (and the point applies equally well here) "representing activists as criminals and security threats (a category that takes on its full

significance under the society of control) allowed state actors to initiate legal courses of action designed to more effectively regulate dissent" (Thompson, 2010, p.32). Likewise the othering process not only characterised squatters as deviant but also represented them as a serious challenge to domestic security which needed to be dealt with.

As part of the moral panic which facilitated criminalisation in England and Wales, squatters were stereotyped as deviant characters, possessing such qualities as youth, aggression, foreign birth and uncleanliness. This process of othering makes a distinction between the typical decent citizen and the squatter, and fitted well to a hegemonic ideological discursive formation which already framed squatters as a threat (Dee, 2013). As we have seen, hysterical media stories amplified this threat and thus a moral panic ensued, with the need for 'something to be done' resulting in criminalisation. In Spain, the discourses about the right for housing and for protest clashed with the discourses about the duty to be respectful, civic minded, citizens while doing so (with squatters being those who claim housing and protest in a wrong and unacceptable way). The law was not changed in Catalonia after the criminalisation of squatting in late 2006, but criminalisation allowed for politicians to avoid talking about the demands of the already existing pro-housing movement, that has since turned into a mass movement at a national level.

In general, we could then say that the mass media the dominant representation of the squatter is of a young, abnormal person, frequently designated as 'radical', 'anti-system', 'alternative' and usually framed as being part of an urban tribe (Feixa, 2004, p.161). Framing squatters in this manner allows the media to avoid a serious discussion of the legitimacy of using private propriety for social purposes (VVA, 2003, p.86). Also, the media often sees the *okupa* movement as a homogeneous group with shared goals, a vision which fails to admit the importance of the political subject that each social centre becomes (Rodríguez, 1999; VVA, 2003).

It has been shown that the media tends to favour aspects of the events portrayed according to their news value instead of their explanatory potential (Vidal Castell, 2004, p.49). For instance, the media focuses on marginal violent episodes in demonstrations while giving little attention to the aims of the march itself (van Dijk 1988, p.261). On the contrary, news stories concerning social centres' regular activities are minimal (Alcalde, 2004; Feixa, 2004; Pretel, 1999; VVA, 2003). In general, the media tends to marginalize groups categorized as radicals for their beliefs and strategies (Fairclough, 2009; McLeod & Detenber, 1999). As political squatting is not often mentioned in the media, squatters are incorrectly framed in terms of this recurring stereotype (Alcalde 2004, pp.234-236). More concretely, terminologies referring to the politicized nature of the movement are almost never used (González 2008, pp.52-54). Representing squatting in this fashion frames the act as a problem and therefore suggest the need to find a solution to it.

To sum up, othering from the media facilitates criminalisation and repression of social protest, something that we have found in both case studies. This section

has shown some aspects that are shared by both othering processes.

Sidestepping the discourse

It is interesting to note that squatters in London were keen to sidestep the negative stereotypes conferred by the word 'squatting' (Dee, 2013, p.263). Instead of respelling the word as the Barcelona squatters did, they chose to create new signifiers such as 'caretakers' or 'property maintainers,' but the essential motivation is the same, in that they attempted to reformulate the meaning of the word, to give it more positive associations. For example, in a Guardian article mentioned earlier, which is actually entitled "We're not squatters," says art group occupying Mayfair mansion,' squatter Dan Simon claims that they are not squatting the building in question, but rather temporarily using it as an 'artshouse' promoting cultural activities without recourse to funding and at the same time, maintaining the building (Pidd, 2009).

Pidd (2009) sees this as the squatters making an "attempt to turn squatting into a legitimate way of showcasing the arts without the taxpayer's help, while disassociating themselves from wilder, less well organised squatters in other London mansions" (and thus this also provides an example of a journalist jumping to use the 'good'/'bad' squatter distinction). In a related fashion, Mark Guard, part of a group which squatted a string of mansions in Belgravia, claimed in an Evening Standard interview that they were "good squatters" as opposed to "bad anti-capitalist squatters" (Curtis, 2009). And to give two more examples of squatters contesting their negative portrayal, one article from the Daily Telegraph entitled 'Squatters occupy £3 million house on "millionaire's row"' quotes one of the squatters as saying "I don't mind being called a squatter, but I am a good one. We are normal people, we go to work" (Gammell *et al.*, 2009); in another an un-named Lithuanian states "We are good squatters. We treat the places we live in with respect. We keep the place clean and tidy – we ask visitors to take their shoes off when they enter – so we feel we should be treated with respect" (Leach, 2011).

This then brings us back to the danger of distinguishing between the good and the bad squatter, since the squatters who (not without effort) conform to certain standards might occasionally be tolerated longer in their squats whereas others who refuse imposed normativities would be evicted. However, since the average lifespan of English squats is just three months this does not often become a matter of concern, whereas it does in places like Paris, where artistic squatters are tolerated and anarchist squatters often quickly evicted (Using Space). Or to give another French example, in her article 'What is a "Good" Squatter? Categorization processes of squats by government officials in France' Florence Bouillon (2013, p.239) describes how in a hypothetical court case regarding the eviction of a squat, the lawyer will be at pains to point out that the squatters "are not 'drug addicts', they 'don't steal' and their marginalisation does not necessarily coincide with delinquency. He affirms the occupants' insertion in

their neighbourhood and if possible, presents letters and petitions of support signed by neighbours.” However, the Guardian article states that Oubliette arts group have occupied five places in one year, so it does not seem that their caretaking proposition is meeting with success (even if Simon also does say he has “successfully negotiated consent to squat in eight properties in London in the past seven years”) (Pidd, 2009).

Instead of trying to produce a positive image, another tactic for squatters would be refusal to engage with the media (see Dee, 2013, p.253), although this then can result in the journalist simply making up the story and misrepresenting the squatters. This has repeatedly happened in Barcelona, where squatters have not traditionally engaged with the authorities or the media. As we have seen earlier, squatters in Barcelona defined their spaces as 'okupas'. In this way, otherness is (re)claimed as a positive value. That being said, the media has been able to interpret the meaning of the 'k' spelling without much contestation, thus associating it with the negative connotations that we have mentioned.

Regarding La Makabra, we have seen that the spokesperson designated by La Makabra never tried to avoid being labelled as an 'okupa'.

In 2006 a squat started a public discussion with the authorities to legalise squatting (Mir *et al.*, 2013, pp.55–56). Since then, several attempts at negotiation have been made, but none under the identity of the 'okupa'. As we argued above, only Miles de Viviendas used the 'okupa with a K' spelling as an 'advertisement' for their intent to legalise squatting and to make it accessible to everybody. In other words, some of Barcelona's squatters tried to sidestep stigmatisation by arguing that everyone has the right to be a squatter. Although this campaign could have been done without identifying as 'okupas with a k', evictions through foreclosures provided a genuine need for the general populace to benefit from the techniques which squatters offered. The squatter movement has in fact been an integral part of the housing rights struggle. In 2006 politicians stigmatised squatters in order to avoid a serious debate on housing.

To sum up, this comparison shows that the strategy of social movements differs from the strategy of institutions. Also, although both London's and Barcelona's squatters have taken initiatives to sidestep criminalisation, specific contexts condition the ways in which each political actor positions itself regarding what is seen as 'good' and 'bad' squatting. The power balance between institutions and popular movements is crucial. Dee's study shows that London squatters had to gather in groups to find a voice and sidestep dominant discourse. Bouillon's study shows that French squatters have drawn from the legitimacy of popular organizations to deflect moral concern in court. Debelle's study shows that the only positive descriptions of La Makabra, right after the eviction and the squat of Can Ricart, were a result of association with the art world. Indeed in both cases, squatters tried to influence the mainstream media as well as producing their own media. Still, as we will discuss below, although it might become *necessary* for squatters to engage with the media, it is certainly not a *sufficient* condition for success.

Creating different discourses

As we have observed, despite being in a weak position to counter the discourses of powerful institutions such as the police, Government officials and the mainstream media, squatters do still remain actors with agency and can indeed turn the very process of othering to their advantage, embracing symbols of difference and declaring that they are on the one hand situated in opposition to some hegemonic values (such as property rights), whilst emphasising their normality on the other, since at a fundamental level they, like most people, are also searching for housing security. As Michel Foucault emphasises, the crucial task is to assume one's own subjectivity and at the same time to refuse and sidestep subjectivities imposed from above. This is a task he sees as "the political, ethical, social philosophical problem of our days" (Foucault in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p.216). We have been concerned here with how discourses present in the mainstream media can support dominant ideological-discursive formations which actively attack the creation of new subjectivities and instead impose different meanings upon squatters. We have shown how this negative stereotyping aided the criminalisation and repression of squatters in two contexts, but there is a broader lesson here for all antagonistic social movements, since if discourses are created and perpetuated by the media, this creates a crucial point of contestation and stereotypes can shift (and be shifted) over time in ways which are positive as well as negative for the movement in question.

Of course, one answer is also to refuse to play the game, yet this is not always possible when the stakes are high enough. To return to the example of the UK miners' strike mentioned in the introduction, which Milne describes as "without doubt a watershed in the country's postwar history", an unholy combination of Conservative politicians, right-wing media moguls, anti-Communist Russian mining officials and shadowy intelligence operatives somehow joined together to attack the strike leaders and to crush the strike itself (Milne, 2014, p.ix). The negative media coverage of the strike and also the subsequent hounding of certain officials was a key factor in affecting public opinion. Milne asserts that MI5 (the British domestic secret intelligence services) actively manipulated press reports of the miners' strike and its bloody aftermath, with "three quarters of national labour and industrial correspondents [recruited] as informants of one kind or another" (Milne, 2014, p.368). In a situation like this the miners' unions could not ignore such allegations but were forced to contest them (and were eventually successful although the process took years).

An important point made by Dadusc & Dee (2015) in discussing how squatters fought criminalisation in England and the Netherlands is that whilst possessing their own channels of communication (such as banners, flyers, independent media and so on) in order to communicate with the authorities, squatters were forced to engage with the mainstream media or else they were not heard. Also, a general tactic appeared to be to ignore racist discourses so as not to give them any weight, but as an unintended consequence "neither mentioning nor contesting these specific discourses has perpetuated and enabled the process of

othering, a technique which had a strong role in raising the moral panic and legitimising criminalisation" (Dadusc & Dee, 2015, p.128).

In London, isolated sympathetic portrayals of squatters who fix up houses and get on with their neighbours were drowned out by rather hysterical stories of Latvian or Moldovan squatters who were depicted as folk devils needing juridical control (a discourse which of course ties in with a broader media-created narrative concerning East Europeans invading the UK, living off the benefit system and stealing English people's jobs). Steve Platt's work mentioned earlier shows that in the English context such lazy categorisations were already occurring in the 1970s. The dominant ideological discursive formation has long regarded squatters as parasites and as Kesia Reeve observes, "this popular characterisation of squatters, and associated disregard to empirical evidence, has a long history. The media headlines in 2011 (including a campaign by the Daily Telegraph lobbying for a change in the law) were virtually indistinguishable from those 40 years earlier" (Reeve, 2015, p.139). We would suggest that this stereotyping often happens in the portrayal of social movements more generally.

Still, the struggle against being stereotyped by the media is not self-evident. In the cases of both Paris and Barcelona, attempts by some squatters to avoid stigmatisation have unintentionally reinforced existing stereotypes and have created conflicts between squats. In Barcelona, pushing for legalisation created intense internal debates and a general rejection by the squatters movement of two squats (Miles de Viviendas and CSO Magdalenes), which tried to legalise. Unproductive tensions around the 'okupa' identity undermined the goal of Miles de Viviendas, which was to enable people generally to access squatting. It could be said that the strategy adopted by these squats was mistaken, as it clashed with the identity and the goals claimed by other sectors of the squatting movement. Thus, tensions around the 'okupa identity' were not only created by politicians and the media. There was also an intense debate (even conflict), which provided new anti-austerity social movements with an extensive repertoire for action.

We note in passing that another Spanish episode of negotiation which created conflict is the case of Patio Maravillas in Madrid, when a chicken filled with firecrackers was left to explode in front of the squat. Patio Maravillas was attempting to legalise and was also one of the few squats cooking meat. This extreme case of an attack on a squat by other squatters sheds some light on the importance which the movement attaches to its refusal of relationships with the authorities. What motivates some conflicts is the attempt of collectives to negotiate with authorities, more than the usage of a certain spelling or identity. Thus, our comments only begin touch on several important issues.

Moving towards the conclusion, brief reference must be made to Can Vies, since it suggests a means to oppose the discourses imposed by the mainstream media. Dee & Debelle (2014a; 2014b) have described in several articles the riots caused by the eviction of the social centre, as well as the popular revolt that followed. The former were broadly discussed in the media, while the latter was almost

completely ignored. Yet the revolt was interpreted by Can Vies' spokesperson as the legitimisation of their disobedience. In a press conference which gathered more than 20 television channels and mainstream newspapers, the discourses about violence were directly addressed, the spokesperson arguing that the violence emanated from the authorities, not the protesters. The success of this strategy rests on the popular support which Can Vies received (from the local community, in social networks, through economic solidarity with around €90,000 raised through crowdfunding etc.). The press conference thus became a very effective tool to sidestep discourse. This confrontational tactic was only made possible by 17 years of work. Can Vies holds an important position in the Sants neighbourhood's recent popular history.

Conclusions

In this article we have seen how in two different contexts, namely Barcelona and London, the political squatters' movements are presented in various ways in the mainstream media, with more negative discourses given more weight. In both cases, the dominant ideological discursive formation (IDF) represents the squatter as a deviant other in need of repression.

We have seen evidence in both cases of a tendency for media portrayals to lapse into dualistic stereotypes such as the 'good' and the 'bad' squatters, or alternatively the deserving versus undeserving squatters, or violent versus peaceful. Debelle's two studies show how squatters were pigeon-holed as violent in the case of El Forat or represented unfavourably in the case of Makabra despite appearing to be peaceful, civic-minded squatters. Dee's analysis of 235 media stories indicates that despite the prevalence of a multitude of discourses, when squatting was under threat of criminalisation, the coverage in the mainstream media increased, clearly stoking a moral panic, which ultimately resulted in the criminalisation of squatting in residential buildings in 2012.

It is unsurprising that squatters are othered in such a way, since they present a challenge to the logic of capitalism by undermining the absolute right of the owner to enjoy his/her private property whether she/he actually puts it to use or not. Through repurposing derelict or disused buildings for use as housing, social centre projects, arts spaces, advice centres, infoshops and a thousand other uses, squatters take direct action to present a vision of a different society, in which access to land is determined by need, not wealth or privilege.

As Steve Platt (1999, p.107) remarks, such "nuance and complexity" is easily lost in the stories published by mainstream media. Yet the process of othering can be contested and in the comparison section we have discussed how squatters have employed different tactics such as the refusal to talk to mainstream media, subverting stereotypes, creating new identities and of course continuing to occupy empty space. The success of these tactics depend on popular support, but also on collective unity in between activists. There is a clear tendency to form groups and unite against criminalisation, but the two different cases we have studied show that it would be hard to elaborate strategies that do not

generate internal conflicts.

It is clear that the mainstream media affects the different discourses surrounding popular issues. But of course, another key factor is public opinion, which again both shapes, and is shaped by, the discourses in circulation. The recent example of the attempted eviction of the Can Vies social centre points to an inspiring example of people power overcoming powerful interests, since the official narrative which declared the centre had to be demolished was itself demolished by a week of unrest (Dee & Debelle, 2014a; 2014b). The Can Vies collective, supported by many local groups and individuals, is now rebuilding the centre brick by brick.

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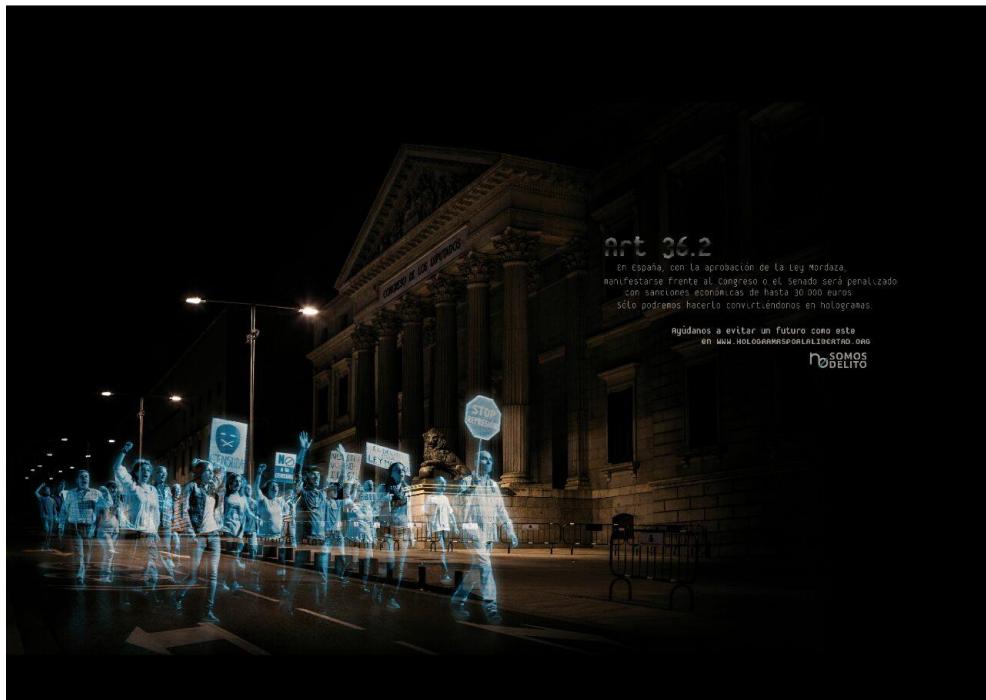
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World's first hologram protest in Spain

Lesley Wood speaks with No Somos Delito spokesperson Cristina Flesher Fominaya about the protest against Spain's gag laws.



LW: Could you describe the gag law that was recently passed in Spain?

CFF: The law of citizen security is part of a major package of legal reforms that represent the greatest restriction of democratic rights in Spain since the dictatorship. The law is also known as the Gag Law because it is clearly designed to target, repress and silence social movements, particularly the 15-M related protests that started four years ago on the 15th of May 2011. This law not only introduces 46 new sanctions but 15 of them violate basic constitutional rights such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of assembly, the right to freedom of information, and the right to protest.

To give you some examples of the fines and their relation to 15-M type activities:

Up to €600 fine for holding an assembly in the open air,

Up to €30,000 for protesting in front of parliament, or stopping an eviction, for unauthorized use of photographs or videos of police, or for passive resistance to authority, such as a sit in or a bank occupation.

And up to €600,000 for protesting within or in the immediate area surrounding any infrastructure that provides basic services, in such a way as to create a risk to life or people, but there is no legal specification of "risk" or "the surrounding

area” in the law, so it is open to interpretation. This clause is known as the Greenpeace clause, since they often protest at energy facilities, but it also targets telecommunication infrastructures, because we still have critical journalists willing to speak out, and they would like to silence these voices as well.

The law is designed to close down the space available for not only protest, but assemblies or other activities in which citizens can communicate with each other about politics and society. The law does not just target protesters though, it also makes returning migrants at the border legal, which violates their right to seek asylum, and it also includes a number of measures that penalize poverty. For example, anything that “degrades public spaces” can be fined 600 Euros, so a homeless person sleeping on a mattress on a public street could be fined 600 Euros!

Although No Somos Delito (NSD) as a platform has raised awareness about all these aspects of the law, with the hologram protest we have focused specifically on the threat to our right to protest. Because if we lose that right, we will not be able to campaign around other issues, such as the environment, migrant rights, and social injustice.

It also introduces a two tiered justice system because before you would have had the right to go in front of a judge now you are fined through an administrative process. If you want your day in court you would need to pay for that.

The irony of this law is that it is justified by alleging that citizens are demanding “greater security”, but in reality it increases insecurity by making the exercise of basic democratic rights subject to criminalization. “Security” ranks around 12th in public concerns, possible because Spain is the third *least* violent country in the entire European Union. The 15-M movement has been explicitly committed to non-violence from the very beginning, less than 1% of protests in Spain have any sort of incident-99% are peaceful. And the state already has at its disposal a set of laws to handle any major disturbances.

Movements in Spain have been responsible for exposing a lot of the political corruption scandals that have really damaged the Popular Party’s legitimacy, as well as stopping the privatization of public services, which the Popular Party has been aggressively pursuing, so these laws are clearly a response to that and clearly social movements are the real targets here, not any increase in security.

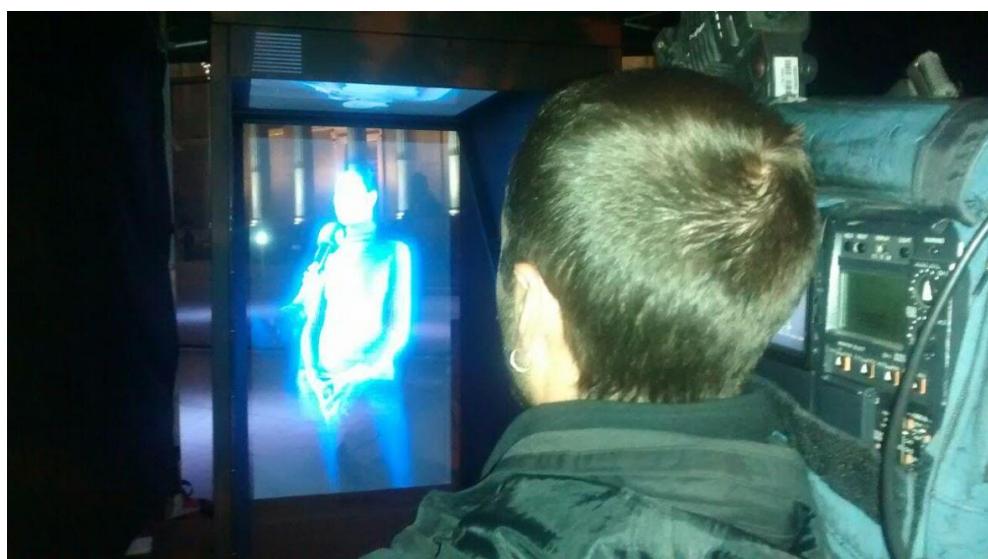
LW: What did the campaign look like?

CFF: There are two aspects of the campaign, one was the webpage <http://www.hologramasporlalibertad.org/#home> where people from anywhere in the world can go online and leave their hologram, a written message, or a shout out. The day before the hologram protest, over 50,000 people from over eighty countries had visited the site and almost 18,000 had participated by leaving a hologram, message or shout. The idea was to integrate this participation into the filming of the protest itself.

The second part was the actual hologram protest itself, which was filmed in a location outside Madrid, and about 50 people from No Somos Delito took part in that, preparing the signs, and being filmed as holograms.

The actual protest took place in front of parliament and involved a screening of the previously filmed holographic protest, which integrated some of the messages left on the webpage in protest signs, and some of the shouts into the audio track. The film was then projected in a loop, which kept the protesters moving across the street. The scrim size and position was very carefully designed to match the exact angles of the filming so that the holograms were moving across the street. It was very eerie and beautiful.

Spokespeople from No Somos Delito and the media were there, but no one else, it was a virtual protest. It was really important that people *not* show up for it, because the symbolic impact was for there to be only holograms protesting, so the location was kept under wraps until the last moment. There was a black hologram booth set up so that journalists and spokespeople from No Somos Delito could do the media interviews as holograms too. Really the creative geniuses behind the design thought of everything. We do have fantastic media professionals in Spain! Fortunately, some of them are also committed to critical politics and are willing to put all that talent at the service of the movements.



LW: Who was involved?

CFF: The idea for this came from media professionals who were really concerned about what is happening in Spain. In Spain, morning coffee with your colleagues is a sacred tradition, and on one of these mornings one of the people said to the other “The way things are going soon the only way we will be able to protest is if we turn ourselves into holograms”. So the idea was born. It took them about four months to develop it, and they brought it to No Somos Delito

completely for free, because the platform had been working on this for well over a year and had built up a lot of legitimacy, since over 100 associations are affiliated with it. No Somos Delito got involved about one month before the actual protest. The whole thing probably would have cost about 300,000 Euros, but all the equipment, labour and technical support was completely pro-bono, so it cost nothing in Euros, for us at least. This is not the first time we have had this kind of support. The production company Insolentes Bastardos (Insolent Bastards) has also filmed really high quality videos for Greenpeace in collaboration with No Somos Delito to raise awareness about the Gag Laws and the importance of the right to protest in democracy.

Internally, the campaign worked like all of the campaigns NSD do, with face-to-face assemblies, and Titan Pads to develop the different aspects of the campaign internally, plus constant Telegram communication throughout. Email and social media to communicate with other people outside the platform.

LW: What response did you get from the government?

CFF: Total silence as far as I know.



LW: What response did you get from the public?

CFF: Well, no one knew what was happening, since we staged it as a film shoot in order to get the permit!

LW: How did social media affect the campaign?

CFF: It was crucial in getting people to the webpage, in circulating the promo videos. NSD, like most active groups in Spain, have a very well organized communication infrastructure that connects between many different actors in the network.

LW: What did the campaign achieve?

CFF: The media response has been fantastic, major newspapers and magazines have carried stories on the protest, which has increased international awareness of the threat to democracy In Spain, and there have been numerous denunciations. Human Rights experts from the United Nations have determined that this law violates Spanish citizens human rights and "unnecessarily and disproportionately restricts basic freedoms such as the collective exercise of the right to freedom of opinion", and the Commissioner of Human Rights of the Council of Europe has also expressed concern and opposition, as has Amnesty International and other groups. They made this clear before the protest, but the protest really increased the visibility of the issue.

LW: What should other folks organizing against repressive laws learn from this?

CFF: Well, I would distinguish between what they could learn from the hologram protest and what they could learn from No Somos Delito. The fact that the protest managed to be pulled off is due to the generosity and creativity of the people who designed the campaign and executed it, but they also would not have been able to give it expression without the NSD network, our activists, our spokespeople, and our extensive contacts within the movement network in Madrid and in Spain. So NSD has been really successful in building up that popular support and legitimacy, by working hard, reaching out to anyone who is also working on similar issues.

The strength of the networks in Spain really comes from a willingness of everyone to put themselves at the service of the movements, without worrying about who gets credit, etc. No Somos Delito is supported by so many organizations, from more formally organized ones like Greenpeace to 15-M assemblies like LegalSol, who offer legal analysis and support, and so many more. But it is important not to get the idea that Greenpeace and Legal Sol are outsiders offering support, they too form part of the assembly itself, they too form part of No Somos Delito, as do many other associations and collectives. This collaborative process is not without tensions, but on the whole it is pretty remarkable how well it works.

NSD had one simple objective from the start: to stop these laws. Now that the laws have been passed, we continue to work with many other people to have them revoked, by seeking commitments from political parties likely to form part of the next government to overturn them in the first six months of government, by supporting legal recourses to have them declared unconstitutional, and through many other means. Keeping the objective clear and simple, working openly with other groups and associations, experimenting with different forms of action, and maintaining a resolutely nonpartisan stance while at the same time reaching out to political parties to raise awareness about the law, I think this is what has made NSD a point of reference for mobilizing against repression in Spain.

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Recordar el 15M para reimaginar el presente. Los movimientos sociales en España más allá del ciclo electoral de 2015

Alberto Arribas Lozano

En una entrevista publicada a finales de 2014, la cineasta chilena Cecilia Barriga conversaba sobre su película “Tres instantes, un grito”, realizada a partir de las movilizaciones vividas en 2011 en Madrid, Nueva York y Santiago de Chile¹. Al reflexionar sobre lo sucedido en los últimos meses en el contexto del estado español, donde el eje se ha desplazado claramente desde las políticas de movimiento hacia el campo electoral e institucional, afirmaba con cierta ironía que “el 15M no va a convenir recordarlo, porque es el momento en que decimos que no nos creemos el poder”. En ningún caso restaba importancia a fenómenos como ‘Podemos’, o a las distintas iniciativas de reinención del municipalismo que han surgido en la geografía peninsular, pero subrayaba el papel de su documental como *dispositivo de memoria activa*, e insistía en que “recordar el 15M no es nada nostálgico, sino algo muy práctico”.

Esa es la idea sobre la que se asienta este texto, un aporte para la discusión en un año marcado por las diferentes contiendas electorales a nivel municipal, autonómico y estatal. Mi objetivo es reflexionar sobre el papel de los movimientos sociales en este contexto a partir del recuerdo de las manifestaciones celebradas el 15 de mayo de 2011, y de lo sucedido durante las semanas posteriores –lo que denomino como el acontecimiento/movimiento 15M; no se trata, sin embargo, de evaluar el 15M a posteriori, sino del intento de sumergirnos de nuevo en aquellos meses singulares para repensar desde ahí las posibilidades del presente.

Pero para llevar a cabo esta tarea es fundamental, primero, traer a la memoria la situación en la que estábamos antes de esa fecha, la sensación de parálisis –el impasse– que poco a poco fue imponiéndose con el despliegue de la crisis económica, política e institucional a partir del 2008. Durante los años siguientes, el impasse afectó intensamente a las prácticas de los movimientos sociales, bloqueando las opciones de construir respuestas colectivas ‘desde abajo’ que estuvieran a la altura de la situación, que fueran capaces de enfrentar y revertir los sucesivos recortes de welfare y derechos. La sensación generalizada era de dispersión y estancamiento, un bucle de inquietud y malestar en el que la pregunta ‘¿cómo es posible que con todo lo que está pasando, no pase nada?’, circulaba entre el asombro y la impotencia, entre la perplejidad y la rabia. Era un tiempo trabado, marcado por la aparente imposibilidad de abrir escenarios de acción colectiva; ni los conceptos ni las herramientas disponibles parecían funcionar más, y crecía la urgencia por

¹ Ver la entrevista completa en: http://www.eldiario.es/interferencias/cine-politica-15M-Cecilia_Barriga_6_336726339.html [consultado en abril de 2015].

reinventar otra política que permitiera combatir la creciente precarización de nuestras vidas.

En esa temporalidad *en suspenso*, en ese contexto del impasse, las movilizaciones de la primavera de 2011 aparecieron como una discontinuidad inesperada y sorprendente, una interrupción radical de la normalidad que abría nuevas posibilidades para el pensamiento y la acción.



Imagen 1. Fotografía tomada en Acampada Sol, Madrid, en junio de 2011. Fuente: propia.

1. Nociones para (re)pensar el 15M

“Que lo irrepresentable exista y forme comunidad sin presupuestos ni condiciones de pertenencia, tal es precisamente la amenaza con la que el Estado no está dispuesto a transigir”.

Medios sin fin. Notas sobre la política - Giorgio Agamben

La secuencia de la gestación del 15M es bien conocida. A principios de 2011, personas de muy diversas procedencias, actuando a título individual o como integrantes de diferentes colectivos, comenzaron a intercambiar en las redes sociales inquietudes y propuestas en relación con la crisis política y económica. Desde estos foros se constituyó en febrero del mismo año la “Plataforma de coordinación de grupos pro-movilización ciudadana”, que daría paso a la

elaboración de un manifiesto de reivindicaciones básicas² y a la creación de Democracia Real Ya!, dispositivo desde el que se lanzaría la convocatoria para celebrar una manifestación descentralizada a nivel de todo el país el día 15 de mayo, una semana antes de las elecciones municipales.

En esos meses iniciales el papel de las redes sociales resultó central, es ahí donde la iniciativa fue tomando forma. El domingo 15 de mayo de 2011 la propuesta ponía en conexión el espacio virtual con la presencia física en el espacio público, se hacía cuerpo, y tomaba las calles de más de cincuenta ciudades y pueblos. Recuerdo aquella tarde con nitidez; no había participado en la organización, era un mero asistente a la manifestación, y tampoco tenía mucha confianza en lo que pudiera suceder. Y sin embargo, la sensación al caminar hacia el punto de inicio del recorrido era la de que aquello *no era lo de siempre*, estaba pasando algo diferente, la calle tenía una vibración particular³. Más adelante retomaré esta idea, pero ahora quiero avanzar en el relato recordando lo que pasó en la manifestación de Madrid. Allí, y tras algunas cargas policiales al final del recorrido, un grupo de gente (sin ni tan siquiera conocerse todos y todas entre sí) decidieron de manera improvisada quedarse a dormir –montar un campamento- en pleno centro de la ciudad, en la Puerta del Sol, y ese gesto fue el detonador de todo lo que vendría después. La noticia empezó a circular por las redes sociales y el boca a boca, y a lo largo del día siguiente se fueron sumando más y más personas a la plaza; de nuevo la potencia de la interacción entre las herramientas tecno-políticas y los cuerpos, el círculo virtuoso de la red a la calle y de la calle a la red. La madrugada del lunes 16 al martes 17 la policía desalojó Sol violentamente, y como respuesta inmediata y espontánea ese mismo martes las acampadas comenzarían a multiplicarse en las plazas de decenas de ciudades y pueblos.

De manera tan sorprendente como impredecible el impasse quedaba desbordado por ese gesto, se había cruzado un umbral indeterminado que nos situaba en un escenario totalmente diferente. ‘El futuro ya no es lo que era’, decían los carteles en las plazas. La imposición paralizante del ‘esto es lo que hay’ se desestabilizaba, se le rompían las costuras, y entre la incredulidad y el entusiasmo habitábamos de repente un espacio y una temporalidad distintas. El filósofo francés Alain Badiou hablaba en ese mismo mes de mayo de una *intensificación subjetiva general*, una “radicalización de los enunciados, de las tomas de partido y de las formas de acción” que iba ligada “al sentimiento de que ha habido una modificación brutal de la relación entre lo posible y lo imposible” (Badiou 2011). Se pusieron en el centro de las plazas y las conversaciones preguntas que no estaban dadas de antemano; el grito colectivo era simultáneamente destituyente y constituyente: un grito de hartazgo y rabia, y a la vez, del anhelo de una vida –propia y común- que *es otra cosa*: “si el

² Ver: <http://www.democraciarealya.es/documento-transversal/> [consultado en abril de 2015].

³ Asistí a la manifestación en Granada, donde vivía. En 2011 y 2012 viajé repetidamente entre Madrid, Zaragoza, Sevilla, Iruña, Barcelona, Terrassa y Málaga para desarrollar el trabajo de campo de una investigación que estaba realizando en ese momento. Las reflexiones que componen este texto nacen a partir de las conversaciones con activistas de dichas ciudades.

mando dice: «esto es lo que hay», hay un nosotros que responde: «la vida no puede ser sólo eso»” (Garcés 2006, 1). Y sin embargo, es importante enfatizar que todo lo sucedido podría no haber tenido lugar. Un acontecimiento no puede provocarse, su acontecer es inexplicable; en esos días del 15 al 17 de mayo se disparó algo que ni se podía prever ni se puede replicar, la secuencia de los hechos podría haber sido la misma y que no hubiera pasado nada, o pasar de modo diferente, producirse sin llegar a tomar la consistencia necesaria. Cuando Maurizio Lazzarato empleaba los sucesos de Seattle –las protestas que supondrían la irrupción a gran escala del movimiento global en 1999- como punto de partida para reflexionar sobre el carácter del acontecimiento, señalaba algunas ideas que nos pueden ayudar a orientarnos en relación al 15M. Planteaba, en primer lugar, que un acontecimiento crea *un nuevo campo de lo posible* que no existía antes, que llega con él, que emerge al interior de esa discontinuidad y hace aparecer *nuevas posibilidades de vida* que no están dadas sino que deben ser producidas: “ha surgido la posibilidad de otro mundo, pero permanece como tarea a cumplir” (Lazzarato 2006, 35). Y esa *tarea a cumplir* exige la *invención* de dispositivos concretos, prácticas y espacios de colaboración entre múltiples actores, dimensiones y escalas, que puedan dar forma y contenido a esas nuevas posibilidades de vida. Cada afirmación que sostiene un acontecimiento –como serían en el caso del 15M los lemas ‘democracia real ya’ o ‘no nos representan’- es en realidad una pregunta abierta, que solo puede responderse al interior de ese *nuevo campo de lo posible* que el propio acontecimiento inaugura.

2. Una fecha, cuatro imágenes

Los carteles que convocaban a la manifestación del 15M eran bastante sencillos. En una de sus versiones más conocidas aparecía tan solo la fecha de la movilización [15.05.11] junto a los lemas: ‘democracia real ya’, ‘no somos mercancías en manos de políticos y banqueros’, y ‘toma la calle’. Tres ideas fuerza que remitían a dos planos de acción diferenciados: las dos primeras expresaban un conflicto ‘entre los de arriba y los de abajo’, se movían en un plano destituyente, y reflejaban el rechazo a las múltiples limitaciones de una democracia de baja intensidad, y a los impactos de la economía neoliberal y las políticas de austeridad; mientras que la tercera era, fundamentalmente, una invitación al encuentro que operaba en clave constituyente, y que proponía redefinir colectivamente las maneras de vivir en común.

Así, ‘democracia real ya’, al igual que ‘no nos representan’ o ‘lo llaman democracia y no lo es’, hacían referencia al hartazgo ante el modelo de democracia de perfil bajo nacido de la arquitectura institucional de la transición, en la que el campo político quedaba prácticamente monopolizado por los partidos y sindicatos mayoritarios, unas élites cerradas, opacas, escasamente permeables a las demandas de la ciudadanía y preocupadas en primera instancia por asegurar su propia reproducción, y que por consiguiente limitaban el desarrollo de otros canales, actores y formas de expresión y participación política sustantiva. El complejo juego de equilibrios de la

transición había convertido en hegemónica una narrativa que expropiaba a la gente su derecho y su capacidad para definir cuáles eran las preguntas y los problemas relevantes, y discutir sus soluciones; el campo de *lo posible* aparecía claramente restringido, los consensos alcanzados entre las élites políticas, económicas y mediáticas delimitaban tanto aquello de lo que se podía discutir como los términos de la discusión. Así, la frase ‘democracia real ya’ devenía “un grito de asco contra este mundo, y a la vez, un grito lleno de vida que tapa la boca a todos los políticos, que interrumpe su monólogo, que les hunde como farsantes” (López Petit 2011).

Por otro lado, ‘no somos mercancías en manos de políticos y banqueros’ tomaba sentido en un contexto en el que iban a ser los mismos actores que tomaron las decisiones que llevaron a la explosión de la crisis, quienes implementaran ahora las medidas para salir de la misma; una salida marcadamente neoliberal que se va a hacer a costa del aumento de las desigualdades, la pérdida de derechos sociales, y la re-mercantilización de pilares básicos del estado de bienestar (educación, sanidad, pensiones). Esta idea remitía por lo tanto a la experiencia concreta y cotidiana, a la vivencia individual y colectiva de un proceso continuado de extensión y profundización de la precariedad. Así, frente al discurso oficial, según el cual la crisis era el resultado directo de haber vivido ‘por encima de nuestras posibilidades’, un relato que buscaba activar los mecanismos de la culpa y la deuda, nacían los gritos ‘no es una crisis, es una estafa’, ‘no somos mercancías en manos de políticos y banqueros’, o ‘no hay pan para tanto chorizo’, que expresaban con afilada ironía las vínculos –los intereses compartidos- entre las élites políticas y económicas.

Un acierto fundamental de la convocatoria del 15M fue conectar estas dos dimensiones, la crítica a la democracia de baja intensidad y la crítica a las lógicas de precarización de la vida, y cruzarlas con la invitación al encuentro, a reapropiarnos de nuestras capacidades y a hacernos la pregunta ‘¿cómo queremos vivir juntos?’. Tanto el lema ‘toma la calle’ como la manifestación del 15M fueron una primera tentativa en ese sentido, pero donde este plano se desplegó en toda su riqueza fue en la fase inicial de las acampadas, en un proceso que fue tomando forma en la intersección de cuatro imágenes: el encuentro entre los cuerpos, la palabra compartida, las pasiones alegres y la cooperación entre singularidades.

A) *El encuentro entre los cuerpos*. Esta imagen es la más obvia de las cuatro; las fotografías de las plazas llenas de gente expresan esta idea con mayor claridad y contundencia que cualquier explicación que pueda ofrecer aquí. Desbordando un contexto marcado por la fragmentación, el individualismo y la dispersión, en las plazas se inauguraba la posibilidad de (re)crear el vínculo social. Sin esperar a ser convocados, quebrando el impasse, los cuerpos finalmente se buscaban, el clinamen se había activado, queríamos encontrarnos, conocernos y reconocernos, reapropiarnos del espacio público, habitar y construir juntos y juntas una ciudad que siendo la misma ya era radicalmente diferente a la del 14 de mayo.



Imágenes 2 y 3. Fotografías tomadas en Acampada Granada, en mayo de 2011.
Fuente: propia.

B) La palabra compartida. La primavera de 2011 vino acompañada de un enorme estallido de palabras. Las calles y plazas se convirtieron en una gran conversación; las asambleas, los encuentros informales, los mil y un carteles diferentes que poblaban cada manifestación, la multiplicación de los relatos, las preguntas y propuestas que circulaban en todas las direcciones. Era un intercambio continuo, un laboratorio deliberativo, una escuela de democracia.

Por oposición al impasse, en el 15M las palabras brotaban con toda su fuerza desde la materialidad de la experiencia compartida. El criterio que sostenía la circulación de las mismas –sobre todo en los primeros días- no era la eficacia;

en las asambleas multitudinarias la conversación se movía durante horas entre múltiples registros: de la anécdota a la poesía, de la denuncia de un problema más o menos concreto al recuerdo emocionado, del agradecimiento por lo logrado a la propuesta de un nuevo grupo de trabajo. El deseo de hablarse y escucharse parecía no tener fin, y rompía de mil maneras diferentes el código de *lo que puede decirse*, reinventando colectivamente prácticas que “nos permitan quitarnos las sujeciones de palabra vacía que nos aplastan” (Guattari 1996, 119).

C) *Las pasiones alegres.* La euforia se situó en el centro del proceso, desencadenando la sensación compartida de que ‘juntos y juntas lo podemos todo’. El desplazamiento desde las pasiones tristes del impasse, hacia las pasiones alegres del acontecimiento fue una de las claves de aquellos días; recuerdo escribir a un gran amigo: *muchas gente fuimos a la manifestación del 15M con un cuerpo (el de siempre) y volvimos con otro diferente.*

Durante semanas se transformó nuestra cotidianidad, cambió el tono del aire, el 15M *lo llenaba todo*, las plazas se convirtieron en un espacio de colaboración y amistad entre muchísimas personas que no se conocían hasta ese momento, que tenían edades, saberes, lenguajes, trayectorias y situaciones vitales diferentes, pero que compartían lo que Lazzarato denominaba “un sentir conjunto, un «afectarse» conjunto” (2006, 127). El entusiasmo era contagioso, la apertura colectiva a la potencia del acontecimiento era fascinante: *ponerse en movimiento* a una escala desconocida para la mayoría de nosotros y nosotras. No se trataba ya de tener más o menos esperanza en la posibilidad de un futuro mejor, sino de habitar la certeza de estar construyendo en común un presente diferente.

D) *La inteligencia colectiva, la cooperación entre singularidades.* Frente al ‘sálvese quien pueda’ neoliberal, el 15M llenó las plazas y las calles de prácticas autoorganizadas de colaboración. La heterogeneidad hacía que los saberes se multiplicaran, construyendo ciudades dentro de cada ciudad. Al tercer día, en la acampada de Granada ya había biblioteca, punto de información, comisiones de trabajo, asambleas de cientos de personas con traducción simultánea a lengua de signos, guardería, sillas para quienes no podían aguantar mucho rato sentadas en el suelo, grupos de estudio, docenas de ordenadores conectados con las otras plazas, talleres de mil cosas, gente que hacía un periódico o un vídeo o pintaba carteles o limpiaba lo que se había ensuciado durante el día, otros grupos que preparaban la comida que la gente llevaba a la plaza... Cada cual aportando lo que sabía desde la generosidad y el placer de construir juntos y juntas. Las plazas se convirtieron en un laboratorio, un espacio de aprendizaje colectivo: escuchar, compartir, ceder, confiar, cooperar. El debate era constante; habrá quien diga que además era desordenado, incluso delirante a veces, y tendría razón, pero no puede haber una situación de desborde que no sea caótica. Las plazas no eran de nadie porque eran de todos y de todas.

3. Un espacio de cualquiera

En el cruce de las imágenes que acabo de detallar se construía un territorio singular, en el que veíamos emerger nuevas prácticas de acción colectiva, formas novedosas de pensar, construir y habitar lo político, nuevas figuras del común apenas reconocibles como movimientos sociales en el sentido clásico, difusas, pero que en el caso del 15M iban a expresarse a una escala multitudinaria.

La movilización del 15 de mayo remitía con fuerza, desde el inicio, a un imaginario y un lenguaje muy inclusivos⁴. Los lemas que circulaban eran transversales, no repetían *lo de siempre*, e interpelaban así a una comunidad abierta. Había múltiples puntos de enganche que podían activarse para gente con trayectorias y situaciones muy diferentes, porque los problemas eran compartidos (aunque eso no implica que nos afecten de la misma manera). Potencialmente *cualquiera* podía sentirse convocado por una protesta contra el bajo perfil de la democracia española, y *cualquiera* podía sentir que había que dar alguna respuesta a la creciente precarización de nuestras vidas. La movilización nacía así a partir de la politización de los malestares: la experiencia cotidiana y en primera persona (del singular y del plural) era la que alimentaba la protesta, y no los planteamientos ideológicos ni las identidades tradicionales de la acción colectiva. Y parece claro que ese carácter inclusivo funcionó, y las movilizaciones traspasaron totalmente el límite de los circuitos activistas; el 15M sucedió *por afuera* de los movimientos sociales organizados, pasó *por otro(s) lado(s)*. Esto no quiere decir que no hubiera militantes de largo recorrido implicados e implicadas en el proceso, tanto en la preparación de la manifestación como más tarde en las acampadas, pero –tomado en su conjunto– las redes y organizaciones de los movimientos sociales no jugaron un papel central en lo ocurrido. Especialmente durante los primeros días no fueron los y las activistas con mayor trayectoria quienes tenían el protagonismo sino –en su mayoría– gente sin experiencia política previa, mientras que muchos y muchas militantes caminaban por los márgenes de cada plaza mirando y escuchando, sorprendidos y sorprendidas ante lo que estaba pasando. El acontecimiento/movimiento 15M era otra cosa, y en mi opinión fue posible justo porque era otra cosa: un espacio abierto de encuentro, movilización y politicización, lo social en movimiento más que un movimiento social al uso.

Como ya he mencionado, el 15M modificó el imaginario colectivo sobre *lo que es posible*, la gente se atrevía a más, y vimos socializarse discursos y generalizarse prácticas de desobediencia civil que hasta ese momento eran propias del activismo. Y sin embargo, y esto es lo que me parece fundamental recordar, directa o indirectamente el 15M señaló también con fuerza la crisis de las formas de hacer política de los movimientos sociales que habían venido actuando en los últimos años. No planteaba tan solo un cuestionamiento radical de la ‘vieja política’, sino también, y con la misma intensidad, una crítica profunda de los circuitos y las dinámicas auto-referenciales, las formas

⁴ Ver en: <http://www.democraciarealya.es/manifiesto-comun/> [consultado en abril de 2015]

organizativas, los discursos y las identidades propias de los movimientos sociales tradicionales. El 15M abría procesos colectivos de búsqueda y ensayo de *otra política*, y priorizaba para ello la mezcla y el encuentro, la escucha y la colaboración entre diferentes, las comunidades abiertas, amplias y heterogéneas que den fuerza a los proyectos de transformación. Y desde ahí obligaba –como un espejo en el que mirarse- a reconocer los límites de las prácticas y los discursos más habituales (las inercias) en los circuitos activistas, que “convocan y acogen sobre todo a otros activistas” y que por lo tanto tienden a poner en marcha una dinámica que “vacía los espacios comunes” (Fernández-Savater 2012¹). El 15M desbordó –también- a los movimientos sociales, señaló su incapacidad para leer/escuchar lo que estaba sucediendo desde y contra el impasse, y produjo en cierto modo una crisis de sentido: ‘lo que queríamos que pasara ha pasado sin nosotros, entonces ¿qué estábamos haciendo?’ Y ésta es la pregunta que creo que los movimientos sociales deberían tener presente en este momento como punto de apoyo desde el que repensar sus prácticas⁵.

En cualquier caso, el proceso abierto en la primavera de 2011 marcó un antes y un después, multiplicando exponencialmente las movilizaciones y dando lugar a nuevos proyectos o vivificando otros que ya venían funcionando. La autoorganización devino sentido común, y vimos desplegarse y fortalecerse una multiplicidad de saberes y prácticas colectivas: las mareas ciudadanas en defensa de la educación y la sanidad públicas; las redes vinculadas a la economía social, cooperativas integrales, banca ética, trueque, monedas alternativas; los colectivos y redes contra los desahucios, destacando el papel de la Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca (PAH); las experiencias de ecología social, huertos urbanos, grupos de consumo autogestionados; los espacios de autoformación, librerías asociativas, editoriales alternativas; etc. De este modo, las iniciativas ‘desde abajo’ tomaban un protagonismo fundamental, marcando la agenda política en los meses posteriores al acontecimiento/movimiento 15M.

⁵ Obviamente no todos los movimientos sociales operaban en el mismo registro. Mi tesis doctoral fue una investigación sobre las lógicas y prácticas emergentes de acción colectiva en el periodo 2008-2012, trabajando con redes de movimientos que desplegaban prácticas más abiertas y experimentales. Esas lógicas, que antes eran minoritarias, en el 15M se convirtieron en el sentido común de la protesta. La tesis puede verse en: <http://hdl.handle.net/10481/34050>



Imagen 4. Fotografías tomadas en Barcelona, en junio de 2011. Fuente: propia.

4. No podemos

Sin embargo, tras estos primeros meses vertiginosos, el paso del tiempo fue demostrando que a pesar de estar sumido en una crisis de legitimidad sin precedentes en el periodo democrático, el sistema político mantenía la solidez necesaria para contener el desafío y el empuje de las iniciativas asociadas al 15M.

A finales de 2013, la sensación de impasse había returned con fuerza. La situación no era idéntica a los meses previos al acontecimiento/movimiento 15M, esa vivencia y ese aprendizaje dejaron una huella profunda a nivel individual y colectivo; pero la percepción compartida era que había un cierre, un bloqueo del campo de posibilidades que se había abierto desde aquellas semanas singulares. El ruido mediático se imponía de nuevo a las conversaciones desde abajo, ni las pasiones alegres ni la inteligencia colectiva mostraban la misma intensidad, las preguntas ya no eran tan nuestras, y los cuerpos y las palabras circulaban de otra manera. Era como si la ley de la gravedad hubiera vuelto a imponer su orden; y en ese marco se reactivaba la tentación de repetir lo conocido: discursos, categorías y herramientas –formas de hacer- que generan cierto espejismo de seguridad. Insisto en que el escenario no era igual al que vivíamos antes del 15M; algunas experiencias, en especial la PAH, habían alcanzado un nivel muy notable de inteligencia, impacto, audacia y visibilidad, y en nuestras ciudades se continuaban impulsando nuevas experimentaciones. No paraban de crearse y ensayarse una multitud de ideas, proyectos y dispositivos, pero la sensación era que habían vuelto a situarse, en

su mayoría, al interior de las redes y circuitos activistas, desplazándose de nuevo a esos márgenes de los que habían conseguido salir. Y ahí reaparecía la lógica problemática de lo minoritario, la dispersión, los tics militantes, la tensión entre la apertura y el cierre, entre el adentro y el afuera de los movimientos sociales; una situación que –como sabemos bien– dificulta la capacidad de producir vínculo y comunidad política, y de imaginar y articular transformaciones reales.

Y al interior de este bloqueo, en el reflujo de un intenso ciclo de protestas que no habían logrado modificar los equilibrios de poder ni detener la gestión neoliberal y post-democrática de la crisis, es donde vimos emerger el fenómeno ‘Podemos’, aprovechando la ventana de oportunidad que ofrecían las elecciones europeas celebradas en mayo de 2014. No pretendo analizar aquí la irrupción ni las particularidades de este partido, esa tarea excede completamente el objetivo de mi reflexión; tan solo quiero subrayar algunas ideas que me parecen relevantes para pensar el papel de los movimientos sociales en la coyuntura actual, marcada por el desplazamiento del eje político hacia el campo electoral e institucional frente a las lógicas ‘desde abajo’ desplegadas tras el 15M.

En primer lugar, en una paradoja difícil de gestionar, el éxito de Podemos está directamente ligado al bloqueo de la potencia en las opciones de movimiento. Hay que situar la fuerza del fenómeno Podemos, por lo tanto, en un contexto atravesado por la constatación –la vivencia nítida– de haber llegado a una situación en la que los movimientos *no podemos*: no ha habido la capacidad para transformar la energía y el carácter innovador y multitudinario de las movilizaciones en cambios reales y concretos que modifiquen la situación abierta por la crisis.

En segundo lugar, es indiscutible –y hay que alegrarse por ello, y desechar que siga siendo así– que Podemos ha sido capaz de alterar sensiblemente el escenario político, generando una gran ilusión de cambio entre sectores muy amplios de la población⁶, y logrando imponer en la esfera pública debates y narrativas que formaban parte destacada del acontecimiento/movimiento 15M. Los puntos de conexión en el plano discursivo son tantos que podríamos entender que se trata, en cierto modo, de *la continuación del 15M por otros medios*; pero el tránsito desde el ‘No nos representan’ que llenó las plazas en 2011, al ‘Sí se puede’ que busca llenar las urnas en 2014 y 2015 es un camino mucho más irregular –menos directo y menos obvio– de como se nos presenta a menudo. La lógica política de esos dos momentos es profundamente diferente; en el nuevo escenario no estamos hablando ya de los cambios *de abajo a arriba* que conforman el imaginario de los movimientos sociales, sino de un horizonte de conquista electoral del poder institucional –ganar las elecciones– para provocar cambios *de arriba a abajo*. En ese marco, es posible que Podemos tenga la habilidad política necesaria para capitalizar electoralmente tanto el

⁶ Esta producción de ilusión ha cambiado de escala con el resultado de las elecciones griegas, donde la victoria de Syriza hace posible imaginar una alianza entre este partido y Podemos, abriendo un escenario de potenciales transformaciones en el tablero político europeo.

desencanto generalizado como el horizonte de cambio abierto por el 15M, pero no es –no puede ser– la continuación del 15M (algo así como la representación de lo irrepresentable). Es *necesariamente* otra cosa.

En cualquier caso, no pretendo discutir aquí las bondades o los límites de su estrategia, o su ajuste o desajuste en relación al ‘sentido común’ del 15M. Lo que quiero enfatizar es que la fuerza con la que Podemos ha irrumpido en la escena política sitúa a los movimientos sociales en una posición de gran complejidad. Por un lado, porque hay una asimetría clara entre los actores; hoy el foco está completamente orientado hacia la opción electoral, y el resto de experiencias y procesos ocupan un lugar periférico, muy secundario, casi subordinado⁷, y el marcado descenso en el número e intensidad de las movilizaciones podría leerse como un síntoma de esta realidad. Y por otro lado, porque al interior de esa asimetría, Podemos considera que no necesita a los movimientos sociales (y no es atrevido decir que ni siquiera cree que sean un actor especialmente importante⁸) para el desarrollo de su estrategia de construcción de hegemonía y toma del poder. Aunque ha sido definido como “un nuevo tipo de partido, un partido-movimiento, o mejor, un movimiento-partido” (Santos 2014), lo cierto es que en su intento de articular una mayoría social que le permita gobernar, Podemos ha rebajado su discurso en relación a preocupaciones que son centrales para muchos movimientos sociales, como es el caso del decrecimiento, los feminismos o los derechos de los y las migrantes. Además, impulsado por el *tiempo de la urgencia* que impone el calendario electoral –y según palabras del propio Iñigo Errejón⁹– ha acabado situando el *qué* (los fines) por delante del *cómo* (los medios), una operación que casa mal con las exigencias de radicalización democrática planteadas en las plazas. Así, aunque la situación permanece abierta, mi hipótesis es que en el medio plazo vamos a asistir a una fricción creciente entre Podemos y las iniciativas de movimiento, y ya vemos aparecer algunas voces que expresan su preocupación en este sentido:

Frente a la reducción al cálculo cuantitativo que los procesos electorales imponen,

⁷ En esta línea, puede leerse el artículo publicado en septiembre de 2014 por Débora Ávila y Marta Malo ‘De los caminos para gobernar(se)’ en: <https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/la-plaza/23877-caminos-para-gobernarse.html> Por otro lado, hay que destacar las experiencias de profundización democrática municipalista en Barcelona, Madrid, Zaragoza, Málaga o A Coruña, entre otras ciudades, donde confluyen gran parte de los movimientos más activos en el ciclo abierto tras el 15M. Sus lógicas políticas difieren de las de Podemos, pero en la mayoría de los casos, incluso en las ciudades donde la experiencia es más consistente, es probable que el desarrollo final de estas iniciativas venga marcado por su asimetría de visibilidad y alcance fuera de los circuitos activistas con respecto al proyecto de Podemos.

⁸ Las declaraciones de Iñigo Errejón en este sentido al periódico Diagonal son significativas, sobre todo si pensamos que son realizadas en un medio de comunicación que nace desde los movimientos sociales y que es parte de los mismos:

<https://www.diagonalperiodico.net/panorama/24573-estamos-orgullosos-la-oligarquia-espanola-tenga-miedo.html#comments> [consultado en abril de 2015].

⁹ Entrevista disponible en: <http://ctxt.es/es/20150115/politica/92/La-campaña-de-infamias-y-acoso-va-a-ir-a-más-España-Rebelión-en-la-periferia-sur.htm> [consultado en abril de 2015].

todo cambio social radicalmente democrático resulta siempre cualitativo e incontable. No deberíamos permitir que la cualidad de lo que venimos construyendo desde hace años en nuestros barrios o de lo que hemos vivido en las plazas de nuestras ciudades en los últimos tiempos se vacíe hasta diluirse en lo electoral. Si algo hemos terminado de confirmar en los últimos años es que la sociedad civil no necesita hacerse partido para devenir política. Pese a lo que algunos apuntan, la política no puede ser únicamente ganar y poder. Los medios deben ser en todo momento los que justifiquen los fines. Si la política no es ante todo una ética, nos habremos extraviado antes incluso de comenzar a caminar. (Murgui, Rivero y Lara 2014)

5. La memoria cargada de futuro

Ante ese escenario, ¿qué opciones de actuación tienen los movimientos sociales? Ni la subordinación ni el enfrentamiento con Podemos parecen posibilidades útiles ni con mucho recorrido; mejor poner el deseo, la inteligencia y las energías *en otro sitio*. De la misma manera, tampoco sería deseable un repliegue hacia las lógicas minoritarias, auto-referenciales e inofensivas previas a la primavera de 2011; no sirve de nada repetir los discursos y propuestas de siempre, no servía antes y no serviría ahora. ¿Qué hacer entonces para que la fragilidad no se convierta en desánimo, provocando un retorno hacia lo ya conocido?

En el intento de responder a esta pregunta es donde me parece fundamental convocar y sostener la memoria del 15M como propuesta eminentemente práctica. Como vengo señalando, este acontecimiento/movimiento marcó un antes y un después en el campo de la acción colectiva en nuestro país. Expresó un rechazo a la vieja política de los actores tradicionales (partidos, sindicatos, etc.), pero a la vez cuestionó muchos de los gestos presentes en las prácticas de los propios movimientos sociales, las formas y lógicas de funcionamiento de los circuitos activistas, y demandó un impulso colectivo por construir un estilo de trabajo diferente –*otra política*– que implicaba, necesariamente, salir de los entornos más militantes y tejer dinámicas de encuentro con otros sujetos. Así, podría afirmarse que el 15M empujó a los movimientos sociales más allá de sus propios límites, y que al hacerlo, paradójicamente, *volvió a poner a los movimientos en movimiento*.

La reflexión que se puede extraer de este proceso es la importancia central que tiene la experimentación continua en torno a los lenguajes, prácticas y modelos organizativos. No se trata de caer en el fetichismo de ‘lo nuevo’, sino de subrayar que hacer política desde abajo, desde los movimientos sociales, es (hoy y siempre) el arte –la artesanía, la inteligencia colectiva– de construir dispositivos que se adapten a la realidad. La capacidad de escucha es fundamental tanto para imaginar y producir herramientas capaces de provocar cambios, como para percibir el momento en el que dejan de servir y hay que repensarlas o inventar otras nuevas que funcionen mejor. Recordar hoy el 15M no es un ejercicio de nostalgia, sino una invitación a profundizar y expandir un estilo de trabajo abierto y experimental:

- que no pasa por identidades colectivas fuertes ni por posicionamientos ideológicos muy marcados, sino por aprender a cooperar entre diferentes sin negar las diferencias; producir ideas y vínculo social, trabajar en conexión con otros y otras sin que para ello haya que pensar igual, trenzar comunidades abiertas –más allá de los entornos y circuitos militantes- tomando la heterogeneidad no como un problema sino como punto de partida, horizonte y desafío;
- que no es un programa cerrado sino un estilo en construcción permanente, una política *sin manual*, de la vida cotidiana, desde y hacia la autoorganización, que *camina preguntando* para ampliar lo posible y lo pensable; “movimientos sociales que no son movimientos sociales” (Fernández-Savater 2012₂, 669), que se descentran como sujeto de enunciación, que más que decir *lo que hay que hacer* están atentos a lo que sucede en cada territorio, a los procesos vivos y encarnados en la gente, y desde ahí –en situación- se van reinventando a sí mismos;
- donde los vínculos que sostienen la acción se tejen, se producen y reproducen, en la materialidad de las prácticas y luchas concretas, cuando la gente se encuentra y se reconoce en torno a problemas y malestares compartidos. Es ahí donde se pueden producir conexiones, procesos de politización, nociones comunes y prototipos organizativos que permitan crear ‘comunidades de lucha’ más fuertes, ecologías de prácticas y saberes, dispositivos capaces de abrir y sostener proyectos colectivos, conquistar derechos y generar respuestas contra la precarización de la vida.

Más allá del escenario electoral de los próximos meses, el futuro se juega –como siempre- en la capacidad colectiva de construir, desde abajo y entre muchos y muchas, otros mundos más vivibles. Esta lógica de experimentación en torno a las formas de imaginar y hacer política, este estilo abierto, no auto-referencial, centrado en la autoorganización y la colaboración entre diferentes, es la memoria activa del 15M que podría servir a los nuevos protagonismos sociales en los tiempos que vienen. No se trata de intentar replicar lo vivido en aquella primavera, ese ejercicio no tendría sentido (el acontecimiento es, por definición, irrepetible). La tarea es apoyarse en las pistas que tenemos para responder de manera creativa al desafío –la crítica profunda- que el 15M planteó a los movimientos sociales: las cosas no se pueden seguir haciendo como antes, no hay (no debería haber) vuelta atrás en este cambio en las formas de hacer política. Y aquí la memoria no es nostalgia, sino la herramienta en la que sostener nuestros intentos de pensar, vivir y convivir de otras maneras.

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Mass action speed dating: an experiment in making mass actions empowering and effective at Reclaim the Power 2013 and 2014

Claire de la Lune

Mass actions can be moments of great inspiration and power, where huge numbers of people come together to get in the way of the machine, corporation, industry, government department, global summit that they oppose. They can be opportunities for new people to take their first steps into the world of direct action. They can also be frustrating, futile and disempowering. In organising the 2013 and 2014 days of action for Reclaim the Power¹, organisers sought to learn lessons from the Climate Camps² and to try out a new way of making a mass action effective and empowering.

An *effective* day of action requires planning and co-ordination. An *empowering* one requires autonomy and a chance to use your creativity. The Climate Camps largely tried to achieve both of these aims of empowerment and effectiveness by involving people in the planning through an open organising process. However, this gives the forces of darkness all the information they need to stop effective action in its tracks. An alternative approach could be to allow small trusted groups (affinity groups in movement jargon) to take on specific secret roles on an action and for everyone else to join in as a mass with little or no information about what they are doing or how they can helpfully input into making the action more successful. This can be disempowering for those new people looking for their first taste of direct action and fails to involve people who want to put energy and thought into what is going on.

For the mass action at Reclaim the Power 2013 at Balcombe we tried out a new method. People wanting to take part in the day of action were sorted into affinity groups with other people with who wanted to take action in a similar way through a 'speed dating' process. Each group formed was then given a mission by the organising group outlining their role in the day of action. The

¹ Reclaim the Power is a mass action camp that took place in 2013 and 14 organised by No Dash for Gas, following their successful occupation of West Burton gas fired power station – the first of 40 new gas fired power stations planned in the UK. The camps have largely targeted the fracking industry – a new form of drilling for gas. www.nodashforgas.org.uk

² The best round up of the Climate Camps online is unfortunately Wikipedia.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_for_Climate_Action

idea being that everybody would have a small piece of the jigsaw that revealed the full picture of what would happen on the day of action. Only the coordinating group of people would get the whole picture, but all of the fine detail would be decided by the affinity groups. Each group would be able to put their creative energy and input into making their mission happen and feel part of the success of the whole thing. The process was used first at Balcombe in 2013 and revised with more time for groups to plan their missions at the camp in Blackpool in 2014.

The process (in theory)

1. A secret group of people is formed in advance of the camp to plan the day of action, recce targets, gather supplies and information, write the missions, brief facilitators of the plenaries at the camp relating to the action
2. People state their preferences for the day of action - In the main meeting people who wanted to take part in the day of action but were not in a pre-formed affinity group were invited to fill out a form stating their levels of experience, the type of action they would be up for, arrestability etc.
3. The forms are sorted by the secret group into affinity groups. The pre-existing and newly formed affinity groups fill in another form to communicate their joint preferences and needs with the secret group (e.g. would they be happy to travel to take action, do they have/want medics, legal observers, photographers, media, drivers etc.?)
4. The secret group provides each affinity group with a mission sheet including all the information they have available and can securely give out to help the group complete their mission.
5. The above stages are repeated as more people arrive and want to get involved.

...and in practice

In 2013 the process was initially devised for organising an action focused on a single target – West Burton gas fired power station. The missions allowed the timing and strategy of the shut down of the power station to be communicated to a few people but for everyone to have a clear idea of what their role was on the day – from blockading roads, to creating diversions to getting in food and

toilets. Three weeks before the camp the situation changed drastically and the decision was made to move the entire camp to Balcombe to put our organising muscle behind the fight against fracking. In doing so all the work that had been done on the missions needed to be started from scratch, while security was ramped up massively at the drilling site with multiple layers of fencing, leading the group to decide that a more decentralised mass action hitting targets further afield than the fracking site would be necessary. At the camp the decisions on what the missions would be were still being made and as a result little time was given to groups to plan their missions. However, the tactic was successful with a blockade of the fracking site supported by many affinity groups complete with diversions, an occupation of Cuadrilla the fracking company's head office, a superglue blockade of the entrance to Cuadrilla's PR company, an action targetting the local MP and Tory minister Francis Maude with a wind turbine blade dumped on the roof of his constituency office.³

In 2014 organisers faced a similar situation in terms of last minute planning. With the situation changing month by month in terms of which fracking sites were active, the decision to go to Blackpool was made only a month before the camp. A week later Cuadrilla announced that they were extending their public consultation, making it clear that there would be no live fracking site in the area at the time that the camp would descend. This necessitated another decentralised day of action with a number of targets planned at the last minute and with a group exceedingly lacking in capacity. Much of the final planning and all of the missions writing happened on the camp at the same time as the 'speed dating' process was underway which was far from ideal and the amount of time groups had to plan their action was again cut short.

However, a very successful day of action was again pulled off with actions against thirteen different companies, government departments and frackademics who stand to profit from the extreme energy industry. Two actions were planned independently by affinity groups.

3 A round up of actions at Reclaim the Power 2013:
<http://www.nodashforgas.org.uk/uncategorized/cuadrilla-hit-with-protests-across-the-uk-campaigners-condemn-aggressive-policing/>

Rundown of actions at RtP 2014, with links⁴:

1. Occupation at DEFRA: DEFRA (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) was targeted to draw attention to the report published the previous week on the potential impacts of shale gas exploration on rural communities, which contained 63 redactions. Black tape was worn across the mouths of some of the activists to highlight the hidden information.

2. Blockade at IGas HQ, London: There was a complete blockade of the headquarters of IGas Energy – one of the major fossil fuel exploration and production companies involved in fracking in the UK.

3. Lock-on at Crawberry Hill, live fracking site: At Crawberry Hill, East Yorkshire, campaigners occupied and shut down a new drilling site operated by Rathlin Energy.

4. Blockade of construction site for new fracking research institute at Swansea University: Swansea University's new Energy Safety Research Institute is being built on land gifted to the university by BP. Research will be focused on long-term 'strengths' in petroleum and chemical processing – particularly fracking, with BP as the primary collaborator.

5. Occupation of Cuadrilla's northern headquarters: A group of activists occupied the foyer of the office while outside a demonstration occurred with local community activists including the Nanas from Nanagate supporting the occupation, alongside a giant "Cuadzilla" puppet. There was also a fake visit from Cuadrilla's "Communications Manager" which managed to convince some of the local media.

6. Radioactive Response: A number of families and their children placed 88 'atoms' of radium around Lytham as a temporary art installation to highlight concerns about negative impacts of fracking on public health and the environment from radioactive discharge.

7 + 8. Banner hanging in Salford and Blackpool College: Anti-fracking campaigners from Salford hung a banner from a bridge at Salford Media City. The banner stated that 884,000 gallons of radioactive fracking water has been dumped into the Manchester Ship Canal. A banner was also hung at Blackpool College who have accepted donations from Cuadrilla.

9. Visits to local councillors: Campaigners visited the homes of local councillors with vested interests in supporting fracking in Lancashire.

4 A round up of actions at Reclaim the Power 2014:
<http://www.nodashforgas.org.uk/news/monday-18th-august-2014/>

10. Fraxtons: Activists posed as a spoof fracking insurance company – ‘the only company promising to offer insurance to homes in a fracking area.’

11. Superglue action at Total Environmental Technology: A haulage company used by Cuadrilla and the fracking industry, Total Environmental Technology lorries are currently being used to remove waste and used fracking chemicals – “frack fluids” – from live sites. Approximately 2-300 lorry-loads of waste are created per frack from each well. The activists, including Yorkshire locals, glued the doors closed in order to shut down the site.

12. HSBC die-in: At 14:30, thirteen activists staged a “die-in” at the Birley Street branch of HSBC in Blackpool, where they raised banners displaying the phrases “Fracker’s Bank” and “Toxic Investors”. Demonstrators played drilling sounds to represent the hydraulic fracturing process of fracking, and spoke to both customers and passers-by about the dangers of extreme energy extraction. Their t-shirts were emblazoned with their very own “HSBC” slogan: “Helping Shaft Blackpool’s Community”. Public response to the action was overwhelmingly positive, with many people expressing agreement about the need to stop fracking.

13. Blockade at PPS, Cuadrilla’s PR company: PPS have been accused of bugging private council meetings, forging letters from residents in support of developments and using “trickery, deceit and manipulation” to secure planning permissions. PPS was awarded the PR Week award for Issues and Crisis management for supporting Cuadrilla following the earthquakes caused by their exploratory shale gas drilling in the Blackpool area in 2011.

Reflections on the process

In working on this article I sought thoughts from participants. These responses are all from people I know personally, which may skew them in some way. However I felt that these reflections were useful and worth including here in full as personal stories are always more interesting than dry analysis. This is certainly not evidence-based empirical research. As far as I am aware there wasn't a formal evaluation of the process at the camps.

D____:

My main feeling about the speed-dating was that it was significantly more empowering than certain Climate Camps, where people with confidence/experience/connections could easily form affinity groups to go off and do cool stuff, while newbies had to join the morass of the mass organising meetings and either choose to join a fluffy march or run across a field at lines of

riot police. I've had only positive feedback from first-timers at Reclaim the Power about the speed-dating model - yes, it relies on some centralised organising but that's kind of inevitable when we need to combine secrecy with a bit of necessary advance research. The important thing is that groups are given enough autonomy in how they carry out their "missions", including the freedom to change them significantly if they decide that would be more effective.

Which is not to say that the speed-dating doesn't have problems of its own and reinforce invisible hierarchies of experience etc. but it has definite advantages over the "open mass meeting" model, where those same hierarchies still inevitably emerge anyway.

K____:

It worked ok for me in terms of being with people on a similar level, and it was pure chance that i knew many of the people in my group previously. but there was a major failing in us not knowing what our 'mission' was until the saturday night. this shortage of time meant that we all felt really rushed and majorly compromised the effectiveness of the action as

1. we had to plan everything in 1 night and a morning, as our group was then going to London.
2. This meant that all the shops were closed. had we had another day, we would have bought charity shop suits/ smart clothes and banner material and actually had decent signage as well as a chance of getting inside the building instead of being spotted a mile off.
3. Due to all night planning session and long bus journey, all group members were extremely tired which led to tempers fraying and people not being as alert or having their usual capacity to withstand stressful circumstances.

Although in the end it went ok, it felt very much like we were being pushed into something that none of us were really ready for. the lack of preparation time led to us appearing amateur, disorganised, scruffy- in short, it was not the action that any of us really wanted to carry out. The action was effective as part of the wider image event, but not as a stand-alone event.

Given even 2 more days planning this could have been something pretty awesome, instead it was shoddy and only partially effective. I have never organised like that before, and did so partly out of lack of self-organisation, and partially out of curiosity. I won't ever do it again though.

There was also a bit too much of a feeling of "Yay! It's so fun to do an action and maybe get arrested!" and not as much consideration for the fact that many of the

things that make it easy to participate in stuff like this are class and money privilege. Stuff like - having to repeatedly ask about funding for transport back from london, and nobody really knowing the answer, instead of it being explicitly mentioned on the mission card so people don't feel like they're the ones with the problem.

R____:

Basically I LOVED LOVED LOVED LOVED the speed dating. my history with actions at big camps was Drax - being asked to be an arrest bunny. Heathrow - being asked by someone else to go on an action. both times i got to do an action not on the mass action day, and then feel like it was okay just to stay on camp on the mass action day and do some support role. Kingsnorth i think i just didn't do any action. Balcombe, it began to dawn on me i just had a bit of a mental block about mass action days cos i'm not sure where to put myself or feel useful. And at Balcombe lots of my buddies had gone off site for an action or had kids or whatever. And so it [the process] was brilliant for finding a team and do a role i was comfortable with. really, really brilliant. And I LOVED that there weren't a million meetings where the people who had the vision had to put it to the masses to be picked apart and tweaked in frustrating ways. Lots of time was saved. I never went to those meetings at climate camps, but I remember lots of ppl walking round being annoyed about them going round in circles. And it was brilliant how this restricted the info available to everyone.

I remember our group (bicycles) getting changing/conflicting information as time progressed, and our plans had to change as more info got through to us about what was needed and timings, but I don't remember anyone getting that upset about it. Maybe they did a bit. Not sure.

But we totally did a grand job and I felt loads of affinity with everyone. Not sure anyone really knew each other before, but it worked really well. And it meant that later on the action after official bit was done, whenever the cops were about to move in and we spied them, we could call on each other and work together and get ready and get other people ready, and not be that mass of people not-being-on-the-case. in the way affinity groups are meant to work because people listen to each other and have each other's backs.

Really, I hadn't done an action like that for years, and I'm getting excited again remembering how I loved it.

What was also clever was how if I'm feeling cynical/more comfortable with an outsider role, and I was in a massive meeting about a mass action, it was always too easy for me to leave. But while I would have felt comfortable leaving if I genuinely didn't want in, having the initial conversation at the speed dating, kind

of committed me in a way that was really good for me.

After the action I basically wanted to find everyone involved in the organising and have that enthusiastic rant in their face.

H_____:

It was slightly over-complicated and not quite organised enough, [because of the issue of] people not wanting to look like organisers.

Getting everyone together to fill in another form - the group one [after people had already filled out the individual form], seemed a bit like a waste of the energy getting everyone together just to fill in info that was pretty much already known.

I think it's a really nice way for people who are up for doing something but haven't done the research/don't know where to start looking for targets, but leaves some people wanting to know more info than they have available.

It's a good way to get a LOT of actions planned in a short time, and to try and keep a common media message throughout.

My reflections on the process

Secret groups and hierarchy

Having a process organised by a select, secret group of people clearly has issues in terms of creating a hierarchy that is inaccessible to people and which has a LOT of power in terms of deciding on the targets and strategy for the action. This is especially important in this case where the group is essentially telling people what to do, based on only a small amount of information on what those people want. A lot of people are putting a lot of trust in a small group of people and they don't even know who they are. This is problematic and principles of non-hierarchy are being traded off against the need for security around targets, strategy and tactics.

An idealised, non-hierarchical model would have established affinity groups discuss their collective aims. Representatives from each affinity group would then come together to decide an overarching plan and roles for each group within that, and the groups would then work autonomously on the fine details. In an open public action with a high risk of infiltration and most people coming along having done little self preparation, this is not really a workable model.

The existence of a secret organising group is at least explicit whereas in other

mass action situations it is often not explicit. And this model does at least attempt to give as much autonomy to the affinity groups as possible.

There is no getting around this major flaw in the process but there are ways that the impacts of this flaw can be minimised, eg:

- The secret group should be given a clear mandate by the wider group outlining as far as possible the political and strategic aims of the action, messaging, guidelines as to tactics etc. This should help to minimise the amount of control an unaccountable group has over the way the wider world sees the action.
- The secret group should incorporate new people to ensure that skills are being passed on and try to reflect the diversity of the wider group as much as possible.
- It should be clear that groups are welcome to reject/change/improve their mission, or to develop their own action autonomously in advance.

How does the secret group get appointed?

Should an openly organised group in future decide to organise a mass action using this process, how would they appoint the secret group? Any infiltrator in the group is sure to be trying to get onto the secret group. Not protecting the identities of the secret group opens those people up to surveillance and potential conspiracy charges and makes their job more complicated in terms of trying to organise securely.

Security

While the process seeks to minimise the amount of strategic information that is available to the police, there is clearly a risk of the secret group including a trusted person who is, in fact, an infiltrator. Both Mark Kennedy and Lynn Watson, the undercover cops that were known to have infiltrated the Climate Camp, were party to this type of information and part of secret groups.

One way in which the process tries to increase security is to keep the identity of the groups most likely to be doing more arrestable roles in the action secret. One way of forming groups might be to ask everyone to stand in a line according to how up for arrest they are but that would clearly give away to any infiltrators information about the groups and people to watch. The use of forms meant that this information about people's preferences was entirely anonymised (people were invited to give fake names on their forms), however it did create other

issues (see below).

Security can be increased by:

- Having an explicit process by which the secret group co-opts people, e.g. asking if you know people who have been to their place of work, met their family etc. A lot of people are putting their trust in this group and it's important to do your homework and make sure you minimise the risk of infiltration.
- Ensuring that, whatever process is used for 'speed-dating' people into affinity groups, as little information as possible is given away about who is potentially up for arrestable roles.

Efficiency

While the process limited whole group meetings and devolved decision making to small groups, it would have been more effective and empowering if the affinity groups had more time to plan their missions.

The process of using forms added a lot of complication and bureaucracy. The aim of the forms was to totally anonymise the information people were giving about their preferences. However, in 2014, it meant that people attended a meeting to fill in a form, were sorted into groups overnight and had the groups announced at the morning meeting which many people who filled in the forms inevitably failed to attend – leading to a lot of confusion amongst groups and individuals especially as people used fake names. The groups were then asked to fill out another form and had to wait until a later meeting to be given their mission.

If the group forming was done by people talking to each other, then a group could be formed by the end of the meeting and discuss their aims and feed that information to the secret group who could give them their missions at the next meeting. This would however mean that people would have to reveal information about their arrestability to other people they speak to in the speed dating process – though ideally not in a way that is visible to the whole group. A process for this would need working on.

One idea for a process that doesn't use forms uses the model of conventional speed dating. People either individually or with a 'buddy' (someone they want to work with on the day of action) form two circles, one inside the other, facing each other. The person/pair on the inside chats to the person/pair next to them on the outside and if they have a similar idea of what they want to do on the action they join up. One circle then moves on a place and gradually groups of

people with similar aims will form. Once a group has reached an optimum size they then separate off and discuss their joint aims and preferences and fill out a form to pass to the secret group who then assigns them a mission. Another advantage of this is that it is more real – getting people to talk to each other is always more fun than filling in forms! Early brainstorms on this process also had groups communicating with the secret group through a confessional booth. This has not been tried.

One target/many targets

The process was initially designed for a mass action targetting a single target but ended up being used in a hybrid process where most groups were involved in an action at a single target (Balcombe drilling site in 2013 and Cuadrillas Northern HQ in 2014) but many of the missions, especially in 2014, hit other targets and were able to do so in a way that has a coherent narrative. The process should be flexible enough to deliver an mass action at either one or many targets, and also adds the dimension that the police don't know if all the groups will be hitting one place, or if they are all going to different places, or a hybrid of the two.

Other concerns

One of the commentators raises a lot of useful concerns about the way the process was run in 2014. With more time, careful planning and capacity it should be possible to deal with these concerns. For example:

- Ask on the forms how far people would be willing to travel for an action and agree in advance a budget for travel and make it explicit if that is available.
- Have a stock of resources – e.g. banner materials, clothes for office occupations, lock on materials etc. – available at the camp.
- Do more to encourage the formation of affinity groups and self organisation in advance of the speed dating process.

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Fundraising for direct action and legal defense: a case study of the 2000 RNC protests

Kris Hermes and Ezra Berkley Nepon

The year 2000 saw the precipitous rise of the Global Justice movement. Following the November 30th, 1999 protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle, mass demonstrations erupted in resistance to the International Monetary Fund/World Bank in Washington, DC (April 2000) and Prague, Czech Republic (September 2000). The December 2000 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Bush v. Gore* marked the beginning of eight long years of President George W. Bush. Less known, however, are the groundbreaking and foreshadowing events that unfolded in Philadelphia during the July/August 2000 protests against the Republican National Convention (RNC).

That summer, under the authority of then-Philadelphia Police Commissioner John Timoney, local, state, and federal governments colluded to violate laws protecting free expression. Timoney used Philadelphia as a laboratory to develop our contemporary form of political policing, later coined the "Miami Model" for the brutal reaction to the 2003 Free Trade Area of the Americas protests carried out by then-Miami Police Chief Timoney. The RNC protests in Philadelphia offered an early showcase and trial run of a repressive strategy that has since been used widely, with police violating protesters' human-rights through beatings, pre-emptive and mass arrests of more than 400 people, and levying serious felony charges against non-violent demonstrators.

At the same time, activists from several social change movements came together in creative and determined ways to resist this repression. Once arrested, RNC protesters defiantly refused to give their names, jamming up the booking and charging process in a moving and resolute example of jail solidarity. Activists maintained their collective resistance despite further violence perpetrated against them by jail authorities. And after they were released, hundreds of activists took their resistance and solidarity into the courtroom.

But none of that would have been possible without the underlying legal support effort and a fundraising apparatus that achieved unexpected results. R2K Legal, an activist and defendant-led collective, organized hundreds of people to engage in court solidarity to politicize trials, build support, and fight the charges. In a very short period of time, before the advent of social networks and online "crowdfunding" tools, activists managed to raise \$200,000 for bail and legal defense costs. How did a scrappy radical protest group raise so much money in so little time? What follows is a case study of the RNC 2000 protests and a look back on that period, nearly fifteen years later, to better understand what happened. What worked and what didn't? How can we use these lessons in our fundraising work today?

Funding direct action organizing

The August 1st Day of Direct Action against the RNC was designed to include a major march with floats and giant puppets, while a series of smaller “affinity groups” attempted to block major intersections in the city to tie up traffic and put a stop to “business as usual.” The protests were organized to resist a number of foreign and domestic policies, with a special focus on the expanding prison system in the U.S. Fundraising for the costs of these protests began in May 2000, with a draft budget of \$30,000, including a range of expenses covering the multi-day protest convergence and the plan for direct action:

- **outreach and education:** printed materials, postage, phones, informational event costs
- **communications:** cell phones, website, press release, flyer distribution
- **logistics:** food, water, convergence space, welcome packets, loaner bicycles
- **medical support:** first aid supplies and other protective gear
- **legal support:** office space, phones and other office equipment
- **travel scholarships**
- **fundraising costs**

There were no plans for a bail fund, because Philadelphia police did not have a track record of requiring bail for arrests at demonstrations.

The Philadelphia Direct Action Group (PDAG), which was largely responsible for organizing the August 1st Day of Direct Action, spread word around the country encouraging people to organize benefits, house parties, group endorsements and other methods of grassroots fundraising in order to raise enough money to cover the projected budget. Local and regional activists got creative, too, putting on fundraising events that drew attention and much-needed money to the mobilization in the final month before the protests.

Besides events, most of the money raised by PDAG came from individual donations by people sending in checks, which were solicited by letters, flyers, in-person conversations, and through email lists. PDAG also applied for and received several small grants.

In order to build the fundraising capacity and keep things moving, PDAG delegated complete fiscal authority to a fundraising committee. While this structure enabled us to get the job done, the relaxed level of oversight made the fundraising committee vulnerable. Hindsight taught us that if any members of the committee had been dishonest or ill-intentioned, it could have been disastrous.

Fiscal sponsorship

In order to receive tax-deductible donations, PDAG needed a nonprofit organization to act as a fiscal sponsor. Fiscal sponsorship is a common legal

means in the U.S. by which smaller organizations without nonprofit status can receive money, including grants and large gifts, while donors receive the benefits of tax credit for their donations. In the final weeks before the protests, we changed fiscal sponsors three times in search of a stable fundraising “home.” These quick transitions came in response to complex logistical demands: PDAG’s fundraising team needed a high level of autonomy and access to funds on short notice in order to serve the fast-paced organizing.

All hands on deck! Raising funds in a time of crisis

On August 1st, the big day of direct action protests, Philadelphia was in a state of pandemonium. With the help of undercover infiltrators, police raided a West Philadelphia warehouse, arresting more than 70 people inside and seizing puppets, signs, banners and other protest materials even before they hit the streets to make their voices heard. Meanwhile, protesters blockaded several of the city’s major intersections for hours, interfering with the transportation of delegates to the convention site, while numerous marches and rallies filled the streets. Frustrated that plans for an unfettered political convention had been foiled, the police acted out by assaulting scores of people and arresting hundreds of protesters.

August 1st was also a time of crisis for PDAG whose bank account was in the red. Despite strong fundraising efforts, the group had failed to reach its goal of \$30,000. As the protests began, we did not have the money to reimburse expenses that people had put on their personal credit cards. With downtown Philadelphia under police siege, more than 400 people in jail being held on bails ranging from \$3,000 to \$1 million, and no money in the bank, this was an “all hands on deck!” moment. It was also crucial that the group’s only designated check-signer stay out of jail.

On August 5th, the newly formed R2K Legal Collective sent out its first email fundraising appeal, which read in part:

Activists who came out to the Philly streets to make their voices heard, to demand a response to the issues of police brutality, the criminal injustice system, and the brutal effects of corporate globalization are being met with inhumane and torturous conditions in Philly jails and prisons. Our first priority is to get people out of these conditions -- and that means an urgent push to raise bail funds and legal fees. We are asking people to make donations, to organize benefits, to ask everyone you know to give to this fund. This is a way you can contribute whether or not you live in Philly: by helping us get people out of jail.

Emergency calls for funds were sent out over email, posted to various websites, and spread through countless letters and phone calls. People were encouraged to send checks, donate online, and wire funds. Some people earmarked their contribution for a particular arrestee, often those with serious felony charges. In

a very short period of time, we received hundreds of donations. Ironically, after the scramble to find a fiscal sponsor, most of the donations were used for legal fees which are generally not tax-deductible.

We experienced incredible generosity and solidarity, from all angles. For instance, one \$8,000 contribution was handed-off to a fundraising team member at a concert in New York, another supporter mailed in a two dollar money order from a small town in the Midwest, and a political prisoner sent a letter of support along with a modest donation. It was a powerful example of everybody giving what they could.

Quickly following the mass arrests of August 1st, several foundations gave sizable grants, including Bread and Roses Community Fund, the Tides Foundation, Funding Exchange, and the Peace Development Fund. We also received a number of emergency loans to support the bail fund - \$30,000 in total - all of which was paid back within a year. Complementing these grants and loans, we received a staggering array of in-kind donations, including phones, fax machines, printers and other office supplies, as well as basic necessities like food, water and toiletries.

Distributing bail funds

In order to pay bail in Philadelphia and many other U.S. jurisdictions, you need sizeable assets. Without a house or other valuables to use as collateral for bail, protesters could still be released with ten percent of the bail amount *in cash* and a “surety,” someone local who would be responsible for ensuring that the defendant showed up in court. As a result, the fundraising committee had to collect and manage huge amounts of cash, presenting a considerable challenge in an era before widespread use of online banking and other electronic financial services.

It was difficult to find people who were available and willing to transport large amounts of cash (up to \$10,000) to pay bail. With numerous key organizers swept up in the mass arrests and a frenetic, understaffed environment in the legal office, the process of bailing out protesters broke down. R2K Legal often sent whoever happened to be around to pay bail, including one person who had recently - and randomly - shown up, and was previously unknown to organizers. There were a couple of people making gut decisions about how trustworthy people were and although all of the funds earmarked for bail made it to their destination, a few of the “surety” signers disappeared and, as a result, some bail payments were never returned after the trials concluded.

Transition from PDAG to R2K Legal

Within a few weeks after the mass arrests, organizers recognized that the legal defense process would require a multi-year strategy and a structure to coordinate support. Many of the PDAG organizers and participants were now also co-defendants, and the PDAG structure was not designed to outlast the

demonstrations. To move forward, R2K Legal created a new fundraising committee, which quickly drafted a budget and began to develop ways to solicit funds for the more serious criminal cases and to pay back people who had loaned money for bail. The budget was an ambitious \$200,000 and included costs for office space, utilities and equipment, phone and internet service, investigation fees for the more serious cases, evidence maintenance and research, attorney fees, an elaborate outreach effort, and media work. While most legal workers and lawyers volunteered their time and skills, nominal stipends were briefly provided to a handful of people. Over time, line items on the budget changed considerably as the legal needs became clearer, but the overall amount of \$200,000 remained relatively unchanged.

In order to sustain contributions to the legal support effort after the crisis of freeing jailed protesters was over, activists held countless fundraisers across the country, and even as far away as Berlin, Germany. From mud-wrestling parties and poetry readings to puppet shows and concerts, including hip-hop, punk and folk performances, thousands of dollars were raised in the months after the protests. The Boston Philly Defense Group (reformed as the Boston Activist Defense Association, or BADAss) organized a few events, including a concert and a house party for wealthy donors, which netted more than \$4,000. There were also several educational fundraisers in smaller cities from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to Fort Bragg, California, which in addition to raising hundreds of dollars would also garner media attention in local papers.

Locally, Philly activists and supporters of the legal defense effort organized an amazing array of fundraising events. These events served multiple purposes: raising funds, building a culture of solidarity, and morale boosting.

A few examples:

- The Philadelphia chapter of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG) and the radical bookstore Wooden Shoe Books organized a fundraiser featuring a talk by civil liberties watchdog and author Chip Berlet, speaking on “Dissent and Surveillance: Protecting Civil Rights and Civil Liberties.”
- Several screenings of the award-winning, one-hour documentary *Unconventional Coverage* were held as fundraising events across the city. The film, which was produced by *BiG TeA PaRtY* and subpoenaed as evidence by the Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office, featured Elizabeth Fiend, the host of Philly’s only anarchist cable TV show.
- In January 2001, The Virgin Bride Cabaret included poetry, puppetry, dancing, live music, and an “eye-popping” fashion show featured a dozen naked male RNC arrestees (and friends) who were all modeling floral and fruit-decorated mirkins (pubic wigs).
- A couple of weeks later, in the middle of a snow storm, supporters hosted “Pancake Palooza.” Inspired by a similar event in San Francisco, which raised \$2,200 for R2K Legal, the Philly Pancake Palooza brought together an array of artists who shared politics with the protesters. For five hours and a suggested donation of \$10-\$100, the Palooza offered an all-you-can-eat

pancake extravaganza. “Save Democracy, Eat Pancakes!,” read the invitational flyer. The event included spoken word, puppetry and dance, with as many as 20 performers. You could also get your picture taken with a felony defendant.

Some money also came in from unexpected sources, like record labels. RNC arrestee and musician Christopher Perri devoted part of his CD proceeds to R2K Legal, and Sub City Records agreed to donate five percent of the retail price of every record sold by Adam and His Package for more than a year, directing hundreds of dollars to the legal support effort.

Nurturing the donor base

In the first 6 months after the protests, R2K Legal raised about \$130,000. Most of that money came from individuals, many with attached notes offering solidarity, love, and support. This inspired us to put thought and care into sending “thank you” letters to all of our supporters. We made a card with two woodcut images, each designed by an activist involved in the RNC protests¹. One image displayed the words, “your heart is a muscle the size of your fist, keep loving keep fighting,” and the other featured a flying monkey wrench emblazoned with the word, “liberation.” A quote by Audre Lorde accompanied the images: “When I dare to be powerful -- to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

Gradually, as interest in the RNC protest fallout began to wane, the fundraising working-group shifted focus from fundraising events to targeted direct mail campaigns. Although it was somewhat unusual to send follow-up “asks” to donors of an emergency solicitation, we believed that our donors also cared about the long-term legal battles and the social justice movements at the core of our work. R2K Legal sent a mailing with return envelopes enclosed to hundreds of donors, giving them a legal update and an explanation of why funds were still needed. Hundreds of additional dollars were mailed in.

As we approached the one-year anniversary of the mass arrests, we were close to meeting our goal of \$200,000. One of the last formal fundraisers was held July 18th: “Freedom Breakfast,” a \$100-per-plate fundraiser. There was a lot to celebrate at that point, given the overwhelming criminal court victories, but R2K Legal needed money to launch our civil suit effort against the City of Philadelphia. The Freedom Breakfast invitation encouraged prospective donors to hold the city accountable for its “overreaction and malicious conduct resulting in major civil rights violations and the suppression of dissent.” Former defendants spoke, as did an R2K Legal attorney and the National Organization for Women’s Pennsylvania chapter president. Organizers distributed packets for the donors that included the R2K Legal timeline of events, coined “A Civil Rights Catastrophe,” a newsletter, and a collection of media clippings on the legal victories over that past year.

¹ The artists are Dalia Shevin and Morgan Andrews.

Fiscal closure

In the end, more than \$200,000 was spent on criminal defense, civil litigation, legal fees, and general expenses such as phone bills and office space. R2K Legal even paid the travel for defendants and their witnesses, though many young activists also received travel grants from the Rosenberg Fund for Children. Long after the criminal cases and civil lawsuits were resolved, R2K Legal still had about \$15,000. Some of the remaining money was used to print thousands of “Know Your Rights” brochures, and some of it funded a website for the nascent Philly legal collective, Up Against the Law. A portion of the money also went to support another one of the mass mobilizations happening at the time. By 2008, the account had been whittled down to \$5,000, at which point the current R2K Legal treasurer carried out the will of the collective, giving the remaining funds to the lawyers who did the bulk of the R2K Legal pro-bono (volunteer) criminal defense work.

The legacy of fundraising for the RNC 2000 protests

The legal fallout from the RNC 2000 protests lasted for almost ten years. In a stunning show of court solidarity, hundreds of activists fought their excessive charges and were vindicated in the courtroom, in the mainstream media, and among the general public. By the time the last trial occurred, more than 90 percent of the cases had been dismissed, acquitted or otherwise thrown out. More than 40 activists had been charged with serious felonies, but in the end not a single person was convicted of a felony at trial. This powerful legal success story was accomplished by the hard work of the defendants and their supporters, and it was enabled by a concerted fundraising effort by a small group of committed activists, much of which went on in the background and behind the scenes.

While the political and fundraising landscapes have changed in the fifteen years since the RNC protests in Philadelphia, many of the lessons remain relevant and important to our social change efforts. With the increased demand on activists to raise bail for comrades who are locked up as a result of increased arrests, effective fundraising is more crucial than ever. We hope this case study will shed light on some important themes in how to pull off a successful fundraising campaign for direct action and resulting legal defense. Here are a few key points we especially want to pull out. We know these will not all be possible in each situation - your mileage may vary - but we hope this list will be helpful:

- Plan ahead for your fundraising and cash needs. This means getting structures like bank accounts in place before you need them. Running funds through a personal bank account or paypal account will likely need to be reported as income on personal taxes, so organizational accounts are more ideal, but you also need an account you can access quickly and easily 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Plan for fundraising expenses. This may include banking fees and deductions that come off the top of a crowdfunding campaign (up to 10%), help with phone bill costs for people coordinating fundraising efforts, the percentage of bail fees that don't come back after a trial is complete, postage and printing supplies for thank you notes...
- Assign trusted people (primary and back up people) to handle the finances, sign the checks, and hold the debit/credit cards. These people are signing up to explicitly avoid arrest. Depending on planned activities, people who handle the finances may need or want to be off-site during a direct action event. Know that this role may last well beyond the event of a specific action. Use a buddy system when transporting cash.
- Prepare tracking documents so you can sign cash in and out of the coordinating space, and track all income and expenses. In the chaos of activity before, during, and after an action, it's easy for funds to slip through the cracks. [For example, we found a bunch of checks between two folders, months after we had received them.]
- Take the time to acknowledge and thank your donors (including in-kind donations). The movement is a long haul, and donors who know that their support matters are more likely to stay connected.
- Remember that you are not alone, and let others know what you need. For us, in 2000, over 400 people were arrested. Even without the social networks we have now, that meant that 400+ people's friends, families, and communities went into action to spread the word about how to show support. The wide reach of social justice movements are a powerful resource for mobilizing support and solidarity.

The fundraising experience during and after the RNC 2000 protests was trial by fire. Once the crisis of mass arrests hit the national media, our capacity to fundraise was enormous. With money coming in from all over and so quickly, it was more successful than any other fundraising effort we had been a part of, and all involved were swept into a steep learning curve. We tried our hardest under tremendous pressure, and looking back we recognize that we desperately needed more structured accountability and more guidance. And still, the results were extraordinary: we got all of our people out of jail, and kept them out. We share this story with hopes for the same results for all who organize for direct action and legal defense!

About the authors

Kris Hermes is a Bay Area-based activist who has worked for nearly 30 years on social justice issues. In the lead-up to the 2000 Republican National Convention, Hermes was organizing with ACT UP Philadelphia, which spurred his interest in legal support work and led to his years-long involvement with R2K Legal. Since 2000, Hermes has been an active, award-winning legal worker-member of the National Lawyers Guild and has been a part of numerous law collectives and legal support efforts over the years. In July, PM Press will publish Hermes' *Crashing the Party: Legacies and Lessons from the RNC 2000*, which centers around the development of repressive policing policies and how activists worked collectively to overcome that repression.

Ezra Berkley Nepon is a Philly-based writer, grassroots fundraiser, and activist who coordinated much of the fundraising and finances for the Philadelphia Direct Action Group and R2K Legal Defense. Nepon is the author of *Justice, Justice Shall You Pursue: A History of New Jewish Agenda*, and is a recipient of the Leeway Foundation 2014 Transformation Award.

From marching for change to producing the change: reconstructions of the Italian anti-mafia movement

Christina Jerne

Abstract

The article discusses the shifts in Italian anti-mafia activism from its origins in the nineteenth century to today. The claims, the modes of action and the actors involved have in fact varied concurrently with the metamorphosis of the mafia, the Italian state and society. Previous waves of anti-mafia protest were prevalently class-based and often followed the massacre of heroes who stood up to corruption. On the other hand today's panorama is characterised by a growing number of civil society organisations that are producing commercial products which contrast the mafia economy through the creation of an alternative market. The analyses draw on existing literature and on my own qualitative data collected from May-September 2014. The concluding remarks reflect on the shape that anti-mafia activism takes within the capitalist market economy.

Keywords: Anti-mafia, social movement, social entrepreneurship, mafia, social cooperatives, voluntarism, protest economy, branding, activism, performative citizenship.

Introduction

Since their first manifestations in the mid-nineteenth century, anti-mafia sentiments and collective action have undergone a series of deep transformations. The claims, the modes of action and the actors involved have shifted concurrently with the metamorphosis of the mafia, the Italian state and society. Differently from previous waves of anti-mafia protest, which were prevalently class-based and often followed the massacre of heroes who stood up to corruption (Santino, 2009), today's panorama is characterised by a growing number of civil society organisations that are producing commercial products which contrast the mafia economy through to creation of an alternative market.

The mafia itself has undergone a series of transformations since the nineties. Mass killings and internal gang wars have been replaced by tacit financial rivalries, which are progressively globalising as the different criminal organisations are able to communicate and collaborate through extensive trading practices. This is facilitated by the growing opacity of financial transactions, which makes distinguishing between licit and illicit capital flows problematic (Santino, 2011b:14). The mafias have been accumulating so much capital in the past twenty years, that it is hard for them to reinvest it. Therefore money laundering through licit businesses in Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom has become a common

strategy (Transcrime, 2014). Collaboration with non-European criminal organisations is also increasing, as Russian, Chinese, Columbian and Nigerian groups infiltrate the market in a period in which social and economic disparity is more obvious and illegal capital is one of the most convenient strategies to circumvent the problem.

Accordingly the anti-mafia struggle in Italy has taken an economic turn too, as it is now blatant that criminalising and incarcerating bosses is no longer sufficient. Yet the existing body of literature on the anti-mafia struggle has for a long time concentrated its attentions on institutional efforts to deal with the problem, and research on grass-root, bottom-up activism is still relatively meagre (Mattoni 2013). The past decades have represented a florid moment for experimenting new ways of educating, spreading value and fighting corruption in Italy. As is true for many social movements, online spaces have allowed for an increased level of visibility, the immediacy of emotional expression, and rich exchanges of information and resources which, in this scenario, have contributed to the creation of a protest economy.

This article highlights the transformations at play within the movement by beginning with a historical overview. This summary is necessary as the existing literature is primarily in Italian (limiting therefore the possibility for researchers and activists to learn from these experiences), and because it is a precondition to understand the current transformations of anti-mafia activism, which I investigate in the second part of the text. The analysis draws from existing literature as well as observations made on online platforms used by activists and from my own ethnographic fieldwork carried out throughout 2014. The fieldwork took place between May and September, when I interviewed and corresponded with 19 key informants (2 AddioPizzo activists, 8 Libera activists, 2 employees of Libera shops in Pisa and Palermo, 3 relatives of mafia victims, 1 magistrate and 3 mafia scholars). The main part of my work on the field however took place in July, when I used participant observation methods (Spradley, 1980) in 3 volunteer camps, where I worked in contact with 5 different social cooperatives¹ which operate on assets confiscated from the mafia. This methodology allowed me to be in close contact with 17 people who directly administer and work on confiscated land, as well as about 40 volunteers

¹ In Sicily I worked with Placido Rizzotto, Pio la Torre, LiberEessenze and Valorizziamoci. Apart from volunteering with physical work, I collaborated with Libera Palermo in holding 2 workshops and translating 4 for the German participants, which gave me an insight on what the organisation felt was important to communicate to the volunteers. In Apulia I worked on the lands administered by Terra Aut and Pietra di Scarto cooperatives. The choice of going to Sicily was dictated by a historical factor, namely that it is the region where the movement started and is therefore more established. Apulia was chosen because of the different nature of the mafia which is being challenged: the cooperatives in that region are in fact working with international mafias and human trafficking as a focus, and are relatively new initiatives. Both experiences allowed me to snowball-sample and open the field up further. This way, I got in contact with other organisations with which I had numerous interactions that have helped me get a more overarching overview of the field (Santa Chiara Association, Ubuntu, Impresa Etica, Nelson Mandela Ghetto Aut Association, Avvocati di Strada, Emergency, CGIL, Coop Estense, Casa Sankara, Banca di Credito Cooperativo, ARCI, SPI).

from Italy and Germany that decided to spend their summer experiencing and contributing to the anti-mafia movement. The analyses of the concrete practices, placed in a historical context, allow me to conclude with some reflections on the transformations of activist practices within the capitalist market.

Tracing the origins

In order to speak of an anti-mafia movement it is first necessary to briefly reflect upon the mafia itself. Today the common use of the term mafia is extremely broad; it can be used to describe street-attitudes and well as institutional corruption, it can point towards the Eastern Yakuza as well as the Western “Outfit”. Within this context I narrow the geographic focus to the Italian scene, which other than being the birthplace of the term mafia, is also the most developed in terms of institutional, political and cultural anti-mafia efforts. With regards to the more descriptive delimitation of what the term mafia comprehends, the choice is more difficult. This is due to the fact that the mafia is an extremely complex social phenomenon, marked by a remarkable flexibility to work *across* social classes (from street criminals to high-end bureaucrats) and *between* legal and illegal spheres of influence (from the ghettos to the state) (Lupo, 2007). The mafia has across time proven to be polymorphic and entrepreneurial and has sewn itself into and out of different political parties, social classes and economic sectors.

As a result of this epochal issue, the Italian legislation has made a clear distinction between criminal associations and mafia associations. Mafia associations, according to the law², have a particular use of intimidation, where subjection is achieved through the use *omertá*, a supposed code of honour which implies virility and self-justice: a passive attitude of acceptance, an active choice of not collaborating with institutions and not interfering in the activities (legal or illegal) of others. This “code of silence”, which has been well represented and further mystified by the film industry, has been aptly appropriated and manipulated by the mafia itself, to increase social control (Lupo, 2004).

The analyses that follow look at grass-root initiatives that have made it their prerogative to oppose these types of attitudes- used to increase economic and territorial power- in one way or another. To facilitate the reading of this longitudinal reconstruction, I find it useful to bring forward Santino’s (2011a:59) periodization of the mafia, which although simplistic in this form, can help understand the development of the Italian economy overall:

1. *Italian Unification- 1950s: The Agrarian Mafia.* The economy of southern Italy is agricultural, and thus the mafia develops primarily as the entrepreneurial force which administers the land of the aristocracy,

² Article 416 bis of the Penal Code, introduced in 1982, also known as the Rognoni/La Torre law.

controlling the farming class. The mafia also mediates the relationships between the centre and periphery of the national administrative organs.

- 2. 1960s: The Urban-Entrepreneurial Mafia.** As the tertiary sector grows, the mafia begins to have a prominent role in accessing and gaining control to public funds, especially in the construction industry. The mafia develops particularly in relation to, as well as inside, the state bourgeoisie (the middle-upper class which had close contact to, or was directly involved in, administering institutional power).
- 3. 1970s-onwards: The Financial Mafia.** This period is marked by an increased internationalization, particularly with the growth of wealth linked to the drug industry. The massive amounts of capital lead to, in the eighties, a competition over the control of resources which cause violent clashes between clans that have spill-overs outside the organisations. These prompt the end of the golden age for the Sicilian mafia (*Cosa Nostra*) and the growingly transversal, invisible and globalised character of organised crime.

Accordingly, the actors involved in the anti-mafia movement appear to be diverse in these phases and use different tools and platforms to express their claims.

Workers' movements and collective rentals

The first grass-root struggles against the mafia occur more or less at the time of the birth of the mafia itself. Prominent mafia historian Salvatore Lupo notes that to label connections between socio-political powers and criminality as being *mafiosi* in character, it is a prerequisite that these operate within modern state institutions. In contexts of *ancien régime* it was both praxis and law that established personal ties, unequal rights and particular privileges regarding the use of force, and therefore these same relationships were seen as “physiological rather than pathological and [were not] so scandalous as to require a specific word to define their illicit character” (2004:51)³. In other words, before modern state institutions were established in Sicily, before the official abolition of the feudal system in 1812 and the process of “democratization of violence” (*ibidem*), which saw the progressive legal transfer of the right of use of force from aristocracy to the state, one cannot talk of illegality as mafia.

It is therefore in a post-unitary scene, which crowned a longer process of administrative reforms that had started during the Bourbonic rule⁴, that the first forms of resistance against the mafia have been identified.

This first wave of protest saw the Sicilian Workers's Leagues (*Fasci Siciliani*) as protagonists (Santino, 2009). These leagues emerged as a response to an international period of economic recession which lasted from 1888 to 1894 and

³ Author's own free translation. This applies to all references in Italian.

⁴ Sicily was under Bourbonic rule from 1734 to 1860 (Li Vigni, 1992).

hit the Sicilian working class particularly harshly (Luzzato, 1955) due to the inadequacy of its socio-political structures to the economic transformations which took place. Although the economy of the region had since 1860 showed progressive growth both in terms of quantity of mined sulphur and in the scale of agricultural trade markets, the working class suffered from the use of backward technologies, the exploitation of its minors and of an increase in taxation which was disproportionately distributed in the midst of a period marked by protectionism⁵. The workers' leagues therefore emerged as a response to a system of social injustice, in a time of sensitisation to social claims, which were institutionalised in both catholic and secular realms with the issuing of the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical (1891) first, and the birth of the Italian Socialist Party (1892) then (Santino, 2009).

It is on this terrain that one of the first concrete cases of socialist action in Italy took place, counting an estimate of 350,000 members circa including farmers, constructors, sulphur miners and artisans (Renda, 1977). Although the leagues were heterogeneous in social composition and political aims⁶, their general objectives were analogous: a larger share in outputs, a fixed minimum wage, 14 years as the worker's age limit and a reduction in work hours. The question here is; why are these workers' movements also considered part of the anti-mafia movement?

Although these claims are not explicitly (or at least solely)⁷ against the mafia, they questioned the labour relationships and power structures of the time which saw the wealthy agrarian class using the *gabellotti* or private tenants as their executive force. The *gabellotti* were in fact rural entrepreneurs who either took payment for the use of the lands, or sub-let the land to *sotto-gabellotti* and they would often hire guards (*campieri*) to manage their assets.

These actors effectively dominated 19th century Sicily and were certainly not willing to let their status quo be questioned easily. The Crispi government supported this vision by officially banning the leagues and arresting and prosecuting the leaders of the *Fasci*. It is estimated that 108 civilians were killed by Crispi's soldiers and the mafia guards (*campieri*) from 1891-1894 (Santino, 2009). This is a fundamental factor for the definition of the movement; not only

⁵ In 1887 the Historical left extended the protective tariffs from the textile and steel industries to the agricultural sector in order to compete with the lower priced wheat exported by the US. This process was seen as a strategy of the "Agrarian-industrial block" by Gramsci (1966), who saw this as a coalition between the northern industrial class and to the southern agrarian class to dominate the subordinate masses.

⁶ Some exponents of the movement were even destined to become mafia bosses, and there were cases in which the leagues incorporated mafia elements in their regulations (such as killing dissidents who refused to strike, or drawing out the names of members who should carry out thefts of wheat and blood-sealing the promise of denying in the case in which they were caught) (Ganci, 1977:341).

⁷Some of the leagues (Santo Stefano Quisquina, Santa Caterina Vilarmosa and Paternó) explicitly addressed the mafia in their statutes by banning them from the joining the *Fasci* (Renda, 1977:143).

was the agrarian mafia and the power structures which it embodied contested, but it also directly responded and stood its ground by repressing the movement.

“The antimafia allows for us to see the mafia” (Lupo, 2007:8) and thereby understand the context which is under contestation. Until the about the end of the Second World War, the mafia was tightly connected to the agrarian class and the respective political representatives. Although these forces continued to dominate socio-economic relationships, thus acting as push-factors in the first wave of Sicilian emigration (Renda, 1987), their legitimacy was nonetheless contested in various other occasions.

One important event was the protests which followed the assassination of the Mayor of Palermo, Emanuele Notarbartolo, in 1893. Notarbartolo had tried to fight financial speculations and corruption, and was therefore an “uncomfortable” political figure. In 1899 the people of Palermo organised the first demonstration against the mafia, which gathered thousands of citizens who wanted justice and truth about the murder (Santino, 2009:117).

Even more pertinent to this context, are the entrepreneurial practices of the peasant movement at the dawn of the 20th century.

Amongst the forms of organisation practiced by the Sicilian peasant movement, the first and possibly the most singular of all was the so-called collective rental⁸, which was a special form of agrarian cooperative of production and labour, having the aim of eliminating the intermediation of the tenants⁹, and the direct management of the land (Sturzo, 1974:68).

These proto-cooperatives were initiated by both catholic and socialist figures and tried to tend to two different needs, one political and one economic, respectively; the will to put an end to the mafia’s intermediation, and the craving for land (Santino, 2009:127).

Collective rentals emerged in four different regions of Italy: Sicily, Emilia, Piedmont and Lombardy. The appearance of these cooperatives was clearly linked to different contexts and needs, and nowhere but in Sicily was the organisation linked to the issue of the large land estates and the mafia. Yet Sicily had the largest number of rentals: 53 in 1906, counting 15.900 partners and covering 39.800 hectares of land (Renda, 1972: 145). Although these collective rentals substituted the *gabellotti* and were therefore at risk of becoming new subjects through which old and new client relationships could be channelled (Lupo, 1987), the fact that they emerged in such numbers is incoherent with the idea that Sicily lacks in cooperative tradition and horizontal solidarity¹⁰

⁸ *affittanza collettiva*

⁹ *gabellotti*

¹⁰ For a detailed and brilliant analysis of Putnam’s dichotomous division between a civic and an uncivic Italy in *Making Democracy Work* see Lupo, 1993.

(Gunnarson, 2014; Putnam, 1993). The words of Sydney Sonnino, Tuscan politician who was sent to Sicily in 1876 with Leopoldo Franchetti to write a report about the conditions of the farmers for the Parliament, support this view:

The spirit of association is very strong amongst Sicilian farmers; they however lack instruction and moral education to extrapolate all the fruits that the association is capable of bearing (Sonnino, 1975:247).

Other forms of solidaristic social entrepreneurship were the catholic rural credit unions. These micro-credit agencies aimed at helping the poorer members of society who were forced to resort of usurers and were forced into debt and bankruptcy. These institutions were born in Veneto in 1896 but soon reached Sicily, which in just a decade proved to have the highest number of rural credit unions per municipality¹¹.

These forms of direct resistance to the mafia continued throughout the beginning of the 20th century and were accompanied by workers' strikes which obtained some outcomes in terms of work conditions for the farmers but also resulted in the assassination of prominent activists such as Bernardino Verro¹² in 1915.

The First World War increased unrest amongst the farmers who were not only promised land and rights which they were not accordingly given, but were also called to the front to fight a war which tore them away from their property. These conditions led to the rise of bandit groups which refused military conscription and more generally antagonised the established social order by surviving as fugitives by robbing and sacking. Although these groups were the expression of a social discontent, they were soon used politically by the mafia and the state to repress the increasingly unpopular agrarian union (*ibidem*).

1947 was an important year with regards to this; as the threat of Fascism faded, the antifascist unity was dismantled and the Christian Democratic Party (DC) gradually drifted away from the Left and started shifting its alliances towards the conservative classes and the mafia. Yet the first regional elections showed a strong victory of the Left and of the agrarian movement. This result was certainly not to the taste of the agrarian class, the mafia or their institutional counterpart which swiftly showed a firm fist. On a symbolic date, annual Worker's Day celebration in Portella della Ginestra, the Giuliano Bandits¹³ shot

¹¹ The province of Girgenti (Sicily) reached a “cooperative density” (number of unions/number of municipalities) of 1,78 in 1911, followed by: Bologna (1,40), Palermo (1,03) and Verona (0,84) (La Loggia, 1953).

¹² Verro was the socialist mayor of Corleone and had been condemned for political crimes connected to his involvement in the *fasci*. After having received amnesty he was re-elected and murdered in broad daylight by 13 mafiosi (Santino, 2009:140).

¹³ The Giuliano Bandits were one of the most prominent bandit groups in Sicily. Numerous sources testify their interaction with formal institutions (Casarubbea, 1997, 1998; La Bella & Mecarolo 2003; Lupo 2004).

onto the crowd and killed 12 civilians and injured 30 (Santino, 2009:203). Although the official declarations denied any political content in the massacre, the message was clear: a new political liaison had been formed and the Left were not welcome.

Solitary heroism

The workers' movements also lost much terrain in their more direct forms of dissent. In fact, although the amount of cooperatives and collective rentals which were administered was high, and the cooperatives (both leftist and Christian Democrat) held a one-week-event dedicated to the movement, there were stronger forces which aimed at supplanting these efforts¹⁴. Furthermore the 1950 regional agrarian reform did not even mention them as subjects (further weakening the farming class which continued to migrate in search of greener pastures), and the list of trade-unionists which were murdered grew longer (*ibidem*).

This period indeed marked one of the final crises of the large estate agricultural economy, and thus the mafia began selling their property and finding new channels in which to invest. As the economy began progressively industrialising throughout the fifties and the sixties, the entrepreneurial mafia skilfully followed this trend and began shifting its interests towards more urban areas, home of the tertiary sector and official political institutions.

Perhaps mirroring this shift in interests, the anti-mafia movement began using more formal institutional channels, losing therefore its mass features. However, it was largely due to the fact that the cooperatives and the labour unions were notably weakened that it was the Italian Communist Party (PCI) which took on the fight of the farmers against the mafia and the Christian Democrats with whom they devised (Mattoni, 2013). These institutional efforts, which took place in Palermo and the newly established Anti-Mafia Commission¹⁵, did however not succeed in stopping the mafia from investing heavily in the construction industry, building up entire sections of Palermo in collaboration with large construction companies and municipal administrators who managed the contracts.

Although this period of transformation lost its mass feature compared to the past, this did not mean that neither the mafia nor the anti-mafia had perished. Indeed, there were some singular cases of charismatic grass-root activists who

¹⁴ Internal forces also hit the cooperatives harshly: the president of the USCA (socialist association of cooperatives) robbed the entire treasury and disappeared in 1948 (Santino, 2009:210).

¹⁵ The Anti-mafia Commission was established in the parliament in 1963 as a reaction to a period of intense internal mafia wars (1961-63). The creation of the Commission had been proposed since 1948, and only produced a report in 1976 without reaching legislative or political outcomes before 1982 (Santino, 2009:263).

stood up to the mafia in creative ways as the more formal paths led to cul-de-sacs.

Danilo Dolci, who was a philanthropic pacifist, writer, pedagogue and activist from the Trieste region, moved to Sicily in 1952 to explore the poorest area of what he saw as the edge of Europe. In Sicily he had a personal mission of educating and empowering the poor using Socratic maeutics. Through these methods, he organised a “reverse-strike” based on the idea that if you wanted to achieve something as a worker, you should refuse to work, but if you wanted to achieve something while unemployed you should work. Dolci gathered a hundred unemployed Sicilians in Partinico who symbolically started fixing an abandoned public road, but he was soon arrested for obstruction. Once he was released, he had gained so much public attention that he was barely obstacled in his project to construct the Jato dam in 1967. Although his initial aims were not directly mafia related, his attention to the poor and the marginalised soon led him to fight the oppressors. The construction of the Jato dam was in fact aimed at breaking the mafia’s monopoly over hydric resources in the area, which suffered from a lack of irrigation that caused poor agricultural yields and contributed to the emigration process. Apart from mobilising weaker parts of society and leading various hunger strikes, Dolci did an impressive amount of research and collected important declarations on prominent politicians and was therefore arrested for false claims (Santino, 2009; Grasso, 1956).

Another striking figure is Giuseppe Impastato, who was born into a mafia family and began showing opposition to his own father in his adolescence and was therefore thrown out of his home. He began being engaged politically in 1965 when he joined the far-left section of the socialist party (PSIUP) and started a political magazine, *L’idea Socialista*, where he published an article entitled “Mafia: a Mountain of Shit” which caused threats to all the editors and deeper ruptures with his family. Nonetheless Impastato continued his activity through student demonstrations and marches. One of his fundamental actions was the organisation of protests amongst small estate owners who were in the process of being expropriated due to the construction of a new runway at the Airport of Palermo. Despite his young age Impastato was extremely perceptive and was more than aware of the economic transformations of the mafia at the time, which were investing more of their capital in drugs and had progressively been expanding their Atlantic trade routes since the 1950s. The airport would in fact become a cardinal node of the heroin market between the United States and Europe- trade route which would later be called the “Pizza connection” by the FBI¹⁶. Impastato also started a satirical political radio channel “Radio Aut” where he discussed the relationship between politics, mafia, drugs and the

¹⁶ In the period that went from the seventies to the eighties, the Sicilian mafia produced, refined and shipped most of the heroin consumed in the United States and Europe (Falcone and Padovani: 1991). In 1979 the FBI began a massive investigation of the phenomenon. The name of the complex operation derives from the fact that Pizza parlours were used as fronts for this market. The Pizza Connection trial was longest criminal jury trial in the history of United States’ federal courts (Blumenthal, 1988).

Badalamenti clan. His voice however became too loud, and on the 9th of May 1978 he was kidnapped, tied to the rail-tracks and exploded with TNT (Casa Memoria, 2014).

In this case, the fight between the mafia and the anti-mafia took place within a family and after Giuseppe's death the Impastato family reacted combatively:

My mother was revolutionary because after the death of my brother she did not seek vengeance, but opened her door to everyone. She was revolutionary because, in her days, widows closed their doors (Impastato, Giovanni¹⁷ 2014, personal interview 28th May).

Excellent cadavers and mass protests

Although Impastato's death had spurred a national demonstration which counted up to 2000 participants, it is only in the eighties that the fight against the mafia truly takes wide-spread national characteristics (Mattoni, 2013:339; Santino, 2009). The eighties were some of the bloodiest years in the history of Palermo¹⁸. The cause of this increase of violence has been linked to the increase of the mafia's capital at the time. The two main groups which administered Palermo's drug traffic (*inter alia*), the Corleone families (allied with some historical Palermo families such as the Greco) and the Palermo families began fighting for hegemony, particularly because of Riina's¹⁹ will to impose himself as an "absolute monarch" (Santino, 2009:313). The murders also spilled-over into the outside world, and for the first time²⁰ since 1893 was the violence of the clans aimed at institutional figures, intimidating the political system as a whole (Lupo, 2004:291). Amongst the more prominent victims are the President of the Region, the leader of the main opposition party Pio la Torre, General-Prefect Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa, other political figures, key law enforcers and magistrates.

Although many have interpreted these acts as an attack to the state, it is important to remember that the victims of these murders were individuals who were particularly and passionately involved in the fight against not only the mafia but also the flaws of the state, and were therefore considered threats at a *personal* level rather than at institutional level (Santino, 2009: 314; Lupo, 2004: 293).

¹⁷ Giovanni is Giuseppe's only brother. He lives in Cinisi and is active in telling his family's story in *Casa Memoria*, the house in which Giuseppe lived and is now open to the public.

¹⁸ Between 1978 and 1984, 332 mafia related homicides, of which 203 were internal to the groups, and circa 1000 victims in total (including cases of *white lupara*-or bodies which were never found) have been documented (Chinnici and Santino, 1989).

¹⁹ Salvatore Riina, currently under arrest, was the head of the Corleone faction.

²⁰ With the exception of the 1971 assassination of Attorney General Pietro Scaglione (*ibidem*).

However the reactions to these massacres were certainly perceived as an attack to the state, to democracy, to justice, to the health of Italian institutions and not solely as attacks to individuals who were devoted to a cause. These were excellent cadavers, which represented a greater stake. The reaction of civil society was therefore also national. The headings of the main national newspapers after the assassination of Carlo Alberto Dalla Chiesa in 1982 both read: “A National Issue” (Santino, 2009:319). Other than the mass scale participation to his and Pio La Torre’s funerals in Palermo, other areas of Italy began mobilising too.

In 1985, young students in Campania started marching against the Camorra which was gaining strength and new anti-mafia associations begin emerging in Northern Italy²¹ as well. In 1984 the establishment of the National Anti-mafia Coordination is the first attempt to unite anti-mafia associations, and although this organ was short-lived because of the many different ideological backgrounds of the 38 adherent associations, it led to the formation of a new National Coordination in 1986 to which individuals could participate rather than associations (Mattoni, 2013: 340).

Yet associations have throughout the years become the prevalent oppositional form of the anti-mafia. The movement has in fact moved away from being channelled through labour unions and parties (although some contact remains), and the forms of collective action are initiated directly by citizens (Dalla Chiesa, 1983). Furthermore, the role of institutions is growingly transformed from being an object of contestation to a potential ally. This does of course not entail that the movement has stopped contesting the state, but that it is in a peculiar dual position to the state: it is both pro and anti-state, as it is trying to reform the system using principles that belong to the system itself. It is pro-system because it does not aim at radically changing the terms of the social contract, but rather aims at guaranteeing their upholding. It is anti-system because it questions the quality of the social order by wanting to cleanse the state from criminal power (Dalla Chiesa, 1983:58).

Along with the actors, the forms of protest have also transformed, especially after the death of the two judges Falcone and Borsellino in 1992. The two judges had carried out important investigations which led to the Maxi trial- a one and a half year trial which charged 475 criminals for mafia related crimes. Their murders incited a series of emotional manifestations of dissent and solidarity. One woman hung a sheet from her balcony that read: “Palermo asks for justice” and was soon imitated by so many in her action that a “sheet committee” was formed where the participants all shared their personalised slogans in a common form (Mattoni, 2013). In June citizens formed a human chain from the Justice Palace to the magnolia tree in front of Falcone’s home, which has become a symbolic place for the resistance to the mafia, and is covered in flowers, banners and slogans. Another group of women organised a one month

²¹ “Circolo Società Civile” was founded in Milan in 1985 to spread critical knowledge about the mafias (Mattoni, 2013:340).

hunger strike to plea for the removal from office of various law enforcers considered responsible for Falcone's safety. In response and in support of this action, eight deputy prosecutors resigned to "denounce the impossibility of performing their functions against the mafia" (Santino, 2009:374). In July 17 year old Rita Atria, daughter of a mafioso from Partanna, committed suicide in desperation: she had collaborated with Borsellino and was under protection in Rome. Her funeral in is an important emotional moment where women from Palermo carry her tomb on their shoulders (*ivi*).

Another important theme that began taking foot within the movement is extortion. Extortion is one of the practices employed by the mafia to gain territorial control which has the longest tradition. Throughout the eighties and the nineties a growing number of businessmen began reporting threats and racket-related violence, receiving an escalating amount of media coverage and support from trade associations. In January 1991 Libero Grassi, owner of a clothing industry, decided to denounce his extorters and announced that he was not willing to pay the requested sum. Although he received some sympathetic declarations of solidarity, Grassi was murdered 7 months later and portrayed as a "hero" who was killed by the indifference of the state, of trade associations, of fellow businessmen and the mafia. It was clear that Palermo was not yet ready to oppose this form of economic dictatorship. However, only about 150 kilometres away, the first anti-racket association emerged in Capo D'Orlando in 1990. Differently to Palermo, the extorters which pressured the businesses in Capo D'Orlando did not have a strong and historical presence on the territory, but came from the adjacent town of Tortorici which was poor and where crime was a key to economic and social advancement. Capo D'Orlando had been experiencing an economic boom tied to tourism and commerce and was therefore very enticing. After a series of violent acts the newly born association successfully charged the extorters and won the case in 1991. This association would soon be an example for others which slowly emerged nationally (Santino, 2009).

Probably one of the most fundamental moments in bringing the anti-mafia to a national level was the foundation of *Libera Association* in 1995, which was born out of the necessity to coordinate all the anti-mafia efforts which were blossoming nationwide. Although its intent was initially to act as a support group for the less prominent or indirect victims of the mafia²², Libera soon became the umbrella organisation which today unites more than 1600 associations. Just one year after its establishment, Libera initiated a petition and collected one million signatures to push for law 109/96, which allows for the social use of mafia confiscated assets. This law basically permits citizens to use goods which have been confiscated, to actualise social projects. The need to requalify these assets comes from the fact that the goods which are confiscated are often thriving businesses; therefore freezing them is not a total victory from the part of the state because in fact, many jobs and capitals are frozen. By

²² Marcone, Daniela, daughter of a mafia victim and Libera Activist, Personal Interview, 25th July 2014.

allowing for these goods to be used socially, this law aims at circumventing this problem.

Recent developments

The fact that Libera emerged in the mid-nineties is coherent with the quantitative growth in grass-root anti-mafia associations in the same period (Ramella and Trigilia, 1997). The past two decades are in fact characterised by an increase in individuals, groups and associations which are acting towards a common cause through education, commemorations, and the administration of confiscated assets.

The preponderance of these types of subjects within the grass-root anti-mafia scene today is strictly connected to the nature of the mafia's relationship to public institutions, and the role of these institutions within the public sphere. The nineties were emblematic with regards to these interactions: in 1992, a turgid corruption scandal, *Tangentopoli* (Bribesville), hit most political parties and led to the incarceration of many public figures. The strong belief that state presence within the economy was what favoured corruption began to take foot, and resulted in a de-regulation policy which aimed at minimising state involvement through liberalisation and privatisation measures (Tridico, 2013). These were however carried out inefficiently, and resulted in the creation of private monopolies, which were not followed by private investments (CNEL, 2007). This period is colloquially referred to as the Second Republic²³, as the historical national parties (both the Christian Democrats and the Italian Socialist Party) almost vanished from the political scene, inaugurating the Berlusconian era, which certainly did not break the line of corruption but further mediatized it.

In this scenario, where there is a growing amount of public awareness around national scandals and judicial hearings, and with the advancement of the idea of the mafia as a truly national problem, civil society is increasingly organising itself outside evasive political parties and weakened labour unions. The activities of the movement are gradually distancing themselves from being immediate reactions to violent events (Renda, 1993; Mattoni, 2013) and are instead becoming daily performances of a worldview which contrasts that of the mafia. Significantly, this occurs in a time where the mafia is more latent and has moved away from the manifesting itself through acts of physical violence to acts of structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 1990).

The recent forms of anti-mafia activism can thus be seen as expressions of what Martin Albrow calls *performative citizenship*. In *The Global Age* (1997) he argues that citizens and movements are increasingly independent from nation-

²³ Although this term is technically incorrect, as it only denotes a political shift rather than an actual constitutional reform, it is widely used to describe the massive change in the Italian political scene.

states, which are losing authority, and have developed new forms of action which use co-ordinated “open networking”.

In an important sense they are actually *performing the state*, creating it through practices which they have learned as the colonized and skilful citizens of the nation-state. This is where the penetration of the modern state into everyday life has prepared its citizens for a new and proactive role (*ibidem*: 177).

These “embedded” civic capacities also emerge *because* of a lack of state, a problem which has been described by many of my informants and confirmed by Gunnarson’s study on Addiopizzo (2014)²⁴, which shows a particularly low trust towards the political system compared to other institutions and organisations amongst adherents. I find this quote from an activist involved in Libera quite explanatory:

I sometimes find that the state expects us to do their job, and this is because we are so visible and acknowledged, so they trust us to have the “know-how”. For instance, we are the ones who point out to the prefects which need more reallocated confiscated land: we know where the mafia is most active and they lean on us (Personal interview, 5th July 2014).

The following paragraphs take a closer look at concrete practices that have shaped them movement in the past two decades.

Education, information, sensitisation

Ramella and Trigilia (1997) describe the anti-mafia mobilisation in the nineties as rotating around three main practices:

1. Prevention through social work in the areas with the highest level of mafia infiltration.
2. Awareness raising, particularly through scholastic institutions.
3. The organisation of celebrations and demonstrations.

These tactics are the cardinal nodes of what can be defined as the cultural anti-mafia, which focuses on transforming society from below, mainly through educational practices aimed at fostering a civic culture on which the mafia should be hindered in taking root. Many of the organisations’ activities are in fact aimed at schools and universities, where seminars are held and courses are financed in order to increase knowledge on the topic, foster research and spur debates. The diffusion of digital devices has brought this activity online, where numerous webpages are dedicated to collecting and diffusing textual and audio

²⁴ AddioPizzo is an organization which opposes extortion. See page 15.

information. Some examples of this are the *Radio Kreattiva*, a web-radio financed by Bari municipality since 2005 and run by the city's students, or *Stampo Antimafioso* which emerged in 2011 with the aim of documenting and cataloguing news and research related to the mafia in Northern Italy (Mattoni, 2013:346). Some of the more established mafia research centres such as the *Centro Siciliano di Documentazione Giuseppe Impastato* have also created websites that share information and articles, and *Transcrime*, a research centre which focuses on international crime, is especially active in publishing reports, statistics and papers on their website as well as on social media platforms. Apart from academic content, other activists and associations such as *Sottoterra Movimento Antimafie*, *(R)esistenza Anticamorra*, *VALORIzziamoci*, *Casa Memoria Felicia e Peppino Impastato* (just to mention a handful) post events, thoughts, experiences and news which is collected daily and shared by other members. This, according to many of my informants, is key to recruitment:

I think that if I didn't have the possibility to show what I do with the volunteers through Facebook and Instagram, I wouldn't be able to encourage others to join us. It is much easier to involve people if you show them the cool things which you create! I have to adapt: times are changing, and for once they are helping me in my activity (Merra, Vito 2014, personal interview, 22nd July).

Additionally these central actors collect individual online emotional expressions from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram which occur during protests, demonstrations or daily activities of the organisations. By re-tweeting and sharing, the immediacy of the impressions and ideas is kept alive, and the single activists are brought into the front-line in voicing a particular mood, expressing an idea or informing the public of an event, thereby creating an open online network of information and capital. This is of course not a specificity of the anti-mafia movement but a wide-spread characteristic of online knowledge production in the information age.

A protest economy

Although these informative and educational practises are still very central today, the turn of the century has added some new elements to anti-mafia-activism which have led to the creation of a protest economy.

When I go to the Zen²⁵ and talk to kids about the Mafia as something horrible, and I tell them the story of the heroes who have stood up to it and been murdered, they look at me and think: "Great. My father is in jail and my mother is a whore. What do they care about Falcone? That's why we have to show them

²⁵ Zen is a particularly difficult neighbourhood in the North of Palermo. The area has experienced high crime rates and mafia infiltrations.

that the anti-mafia is a concrete alternative, that it works, that it employs people (Libera Activist 2014, personal interview, 10th July)".

Since the beginning of the 2000s²⁶, the movement has effectively started tackling the mafia from an economic perspective. What I am referring to is the growing network of producers and consumers of mafia-free products; a group of social enterprises which have launched a series of products, both material (i.e. tomatoes grown on mafia-confiscated land) and immaterial (i.e. touristic excursions aimed experiencing the mafia and anti-mafia). The production of these goods is one which directly involves activists through voluntarism and reflects co-creative practices in almost all phases of the process. Some of the most successful enterprises within this network are Libera Terra, which is Libera's economic arm and brand that markets the agricultural output of the adherent cooperatives administering confiscated farmlands. Another association is AddioPizzo, which emerged in Palermo in 2005 with the aims of economically and psychologically supporting entrepreneurs who refuse to pay extortion money, and of empowering consumers by giving them agency in supporting these "clean" businesses (Gunnarson, 2014; Forno and Gunnarson 2011). Both these enterprises are directed at proving that it is possible to thrive economically while respecting the law and that it is possible to create revenue that does not feed into the mafia. Both these enterprises furthermore include the category of political consumers in their actions making consumption one of the most central mobilisation strategies (Forno and Gunnarson, 2011:42).

These more "normalised" acts of protest begin to emerge in a time where the mafia is progressively globalising and connecting to other groups of organised crime. Their relations are increasingly difficult to trace as they get lost in the opacity of financial transactions which are so exponential that it can even be difficult to launder them into front businesses (Yardley, 2014), which makes distinguishing between "licit" and "illicit" capital increasingly challenging (Santino, 2011b:14). It is perhaps not a chance that it is through something as micro and tangible as political production and consumption that the movement is expressing its opposition to these invisible powers.

If we reflect retrospectively, this is not the first time that the movement has taken a stance against the mafia through a social business model. In the first phase of the movement, various farmers in fact opposed the mafia by collectively renting land so as to eliminate the intermediation of the *gabellotti*, who hoarded wealth and repressed the working class. Today's anti-mafia economy is similarly trying to replace the mafia, which is far more complex and invisible. Comparing the current productive practices to this historical precedent allows me to bring forward the novelties of contemporary practices.

²⁶ The first cooperative (NoEmarginazione) on a confiscated asset actually emerged in 1996 in Partinico (in the province of Palermo), but it is not before 2001 that this tendency begins to take foot with the first pilot experience of Libera Terra brand (Forno and Gunnarson, 2011:42).

In order to reduce complexity, I have chosen to use Libera Terra and the cooperatives which operate on confiscated assets as my comparative basis.

	Collective Rentals (XIX Century)	Social Cooperatives (Confiscated Assets)
Main Actors	Private Citizens Labour Unions Political Parties Catholic Credit Unions	Private Citizens Civil Society Organisations The State Volunteers Consumers
Referent Object	<i>Gabellotti</i> Labour Laws	Local & International Mafias Environmental Degradation The State
Platforms	Proto-cooperatives Legal Instances Micro-credit agencies	Social Cooperatives Legal Instances “Ethical” Banks The Market Voluntarism The Land (Organic Farming Practices)
Tools	Demonstrations Formal statutes/agreements/claims	Demonstrations Formal statutes/agreements/claims On and off line recruitment and promotion Brands Tourism

Main actors

Although the two experiences take place in two extremely different economic and political conditions, they both tackle a social issue taking an entrepreneurial stand point by directly substituting the actor which is under contestation. The protagonists of the action are clearly different; during the period of the collective rentals, these initiatives were taken up by groups of farmers which were politically linked to socialist or catholic labour unions. At the same time, catholic credit unions supported poor farmers in their financial fight against usury. Today's panorama is mainly made up of private citizens forming unions, organisations and cooperatives, although an important number of them are still linked to catholic voluntarism and workers' unions which makes it understandable why the leader of the organisation, Don Luigi Ciotti (a priest), is so popular. This charismatic figure has been very capable in gathering the sympathies of different groups of activists, and has become a sort of “idol”:

We are being affected by what I call *ciottism*. It seems that everything the man says is law. He attracts so much media attention though that it is natural that we follow him; whatever we do is covered so widely that we have to be careful in making mistakes. The more established you are, the more you attract vipers (Libera activist, 2014, personal interview, 24th July).

What is new is that the state is directly involved in these practices. It is through the judicial system that the assets are confiscated and it is a national administrative organ²⁷ which reallocates it to cooperatives which compete for its use. The 109/96 law is aimed at “commoning” public property; although the confiscated private goods become public in terms of property, they effectively often remain enclosed in terms of use. This is indeed what often happens to most confiscated goods today; although the number of confiscated goods was 12944 as of January 2013 (ANBSC) (11237 real estate and 1707 enterprises) and is growing thanks to effective institutional efforts, many of them remain frozen state property because it is difficult to reallocate them²⁸.

Managing a confiscated asset requires a lot of capital investment, especially when it comes to agricultural land which has been abandoned for years. A frequent problem cooperatives face is the access to credit, as these goods are only up for use and therefore banks are not willing to lend out money without a secure return for their investments. Nonetheless some forms of “ethical” banking, coupled with state and EU subsidies, are helping the cooperatives in accessing credit and in alleviating the pressure of the mortgages which weigh on the good from previous owners (Forno, 2011:106). Discussions on the possibility of selling the confiscated goods in question have been numerous, as have propositions of the state running them directly²⁹.

However Libera, who has become one of the main actors involved in promoting the reallocation of these goods, has taken a clear stand to avoiding these policies as they believe that there is a risk that these goods are acquired by corrupt privates. The use of the goods is therefore trying to remain as open as possible, even though it is clear that Libera (although an umbrella organisation) dominates the scene, making it difficult for cooperatives which are independent to compete with their expertise and voice.

Another important difference in terms of actors is the massive increase in numbers of people involved. The contemporary social cooperatives are in fact often linked to Estate Liberi, a programme aimed at opening up of confiscated lands to volunteers which contribute by farming and fixing up the often

²⁷ The National Agency for confiscated assets, established in 2010, has the duty to assign the goods to appropriate cooperatives who have social ends to their projects, but also to monitor the correct use of these goods (Forno, 2011:104).

²⁸ In worse cases, confiscated businesses have been administered directly by state representatives who mismanaged them and led them to bankruptcy as occurred to the Cavallotti family (Viviani, 2014).

²⁹ Pecoraro, Giuseppe, AddioPizzo activist, Personal Interview, 30th May 2014.

decadent structures. In the summer of 2014, 8000 people spent seven to ten days on one of the 34 lands which host volunteers (Ansa, 2014). In July I participated in Libera's first International Camp in San Giuseppe Jato, which hosted a group of German activists and further demonstrates a tendency to expand the participation across national borders. The expansion is also occurring thanks to the fact that the cooperatives produce agricultural products, which are branded. This allows for these material vectors of anti-mafia identity to be transported, shelved and picked up by consumers. The German activists had for instance first heard of the movement thanks to the commodities which they bought for the fair-trade shop they ran.

Both the consumers and the volunteers contribute to the cooperatives in an economic sense as well as in social terms. In fact, not only do the volunteers donate wealth in terms of work, but they also pay a fee³⁰ which contributes to the expenses of living there and to some extent also to the budget of the cooperative as a whole³¹.

Referent object

The object of contestation is appropriately different today than it was in the nineteenth century. The agrarian mafia of the time was simply a network of individuals (*gabellotti*) who unjustly administered land, and repressed the farming class. The proto-cooperatives attempted to circumvent the problem, but were also linked to labour unions and socialist parties as they aimed at improving their formal worker's rights. Despite the abyssal difference in terms of employment conditions today, many of the same themes are still relevant. One of the main objectives of today's cooperatives is to create (fair and legal) employment opportunities for young and disadvantaged members of society, so this form of production is also aimed at creating work opportunities which are more than scarce given the times. In this sense today's anti-mafia has expanded its referent object from a visible or concrete group of mafiosi to an entire economic regime of stagnation and corruption, whose passwords are crisis and precarity. This can be seen for instance in the emphasis placed by many of my respondents on the need to create jobs:

Q. Why don't you use machines to harvest if your workload if it is so big?

A. Machines!?! I'm here to make us all work! All you youngsters without a future...
Machines may be cheaper in the long run, but we want change. Who else will give you
jobs? The state? Your Iphone?³²

³⁰ A fee which, even if affordable, makes this type of voluntarism more common amongst members of the middle class with a generally high level of education , which corresponds to the general social extraction of today's anti-mafia movement overall (Gunnarson, 2014; Forno, 2011; Santino, 2009).

³¹ Fortunato, Emanuela, Libera Puglia, Personal Interview July 2014.

³² Farmer, Pio La Torre Cooperative, 8th July 2014.

Libera and Gruppo Abele³³ have also pronounced themselves on issues unemployment in campaigns such as Miseria Ladra (2014), focusing on the recession and the consequent impoverishment of many citizens who are prone to collaborate with the mafia. The campaign, containing a 19 point programme which addresses local and international institutions, includes points such as the active enforcement of a minimum salary, the promotion of employment policies, stopping austerity measures and rendering banking agencies more flexible towards crisis strangled debtors.

Another expansion in terms of what is being contested of geographical nature. The fact that the mafia has expanded nationally and internationally in its enterprises is apparent both in the fact that the confiscated assets, and consequently the cooperatives, are physically located from the south to the north of Italy, where the ‘Ndrangheta³⁴ is particularly strong, but also in the types of activities which the cooperatives are promoting on these assets. An example of the work is that of Pietra di Scarto and Terra AUT, two cooperatives which are not part of Libera Terra Group but which administer confiscated land. Their activities take place in Cerignola, which is in Apulia and is in one of Italy’s most productive agricultural areas. The high quantity of seasonal work linked primarily to tomatoes and olives attracts a lot of migrants and criminal groups who traffic and enslave the workers to conditions of limited freedom and miserable wages. The work of the two cooperatives is therefore focused on international human trafficking, and their opposition to the mafia is expressed in their creation of seasonal work places for migrants to demonstrate that it is possible to do things differently, and legally. The volunteers participate in the political and cultural activities which link the cooperative to other organisations which fight against migrant exploitation, but also actively produce the tomatoes and requalify the confiscated buildings.

What is also central in today’s anti-mafia economy is the issue of the environment, which is personified and protected a victim. The cooperatives in fact prioritise the use of organic farming methods, avoiding the use of industrial pesticides other than the copper and sulphur. This is in line with the shift in interest of the mafia itself, which is increasingly investing in renewable energy as well as the waste disposal sector, which is particularly evident with the environmental disaster in Campania region. The municipalities of Naples and Caserta have been in fact dramatically polluted due to the illegal disposal of house-hold, industrial and toxic operated by the Camorra which, taking advantage of the limits of the region’s incinerators and landfills, have made illegal waste disposal a lucrative business. The presence of dioxin and heavy metals in the waste has led to the contamination of entire food chains and resulted in a crisis of Bufala mozzarella producers as well as having been

³³ Gruppo Abele is a social association founded in 1965 by don Luigi Ciotti, the president of Libera.

³⁴ The ‘Ndrangheta is a mafia organisation which has origins in Calabria and is as of today probably the most powerful criminal organisation in the world, in terms of revenue (Transcrime, 2014).

correlated to a peak in cancer cases in the so called “Triangle of Death” (Senior and Mazza, 2004).

This turn also mirrors the generalised growth of attention to environmental issues within society. As opposed to other areas of food consumption in Italy which have decreased by 3,7%, the demand for organic products has grown by 8,8% in 2013 (FIRAB, 2014). Sicily and Southern Italy in general, lead in the production of these products (also due to the favourable climatic conditions which facilitate production), whilst it is the Central and Northern regions who top consumption. This is linked to the fact that consumers of organic products are usually inhabitants of urban areas and have a higher level of education and income (Forno, 2011). In fact, Southern Italian consumers have a lower level of income and have more access to products which are sold directly by small-scale producers. The majority of the confiscated land which has been successfully reallocated is accordingly in Southern Italy; so the choice of organic farming is also geographically facilitated. Yet the decision of using organic principles is not just strategic for the marketing of the produce, but also for its inherent symbolism. It further enforces the idea of a “clean” market. Firstly, because organic production requires more work-force, which is one of the movement’s goals; by ensuring the respect of workers’ rights, the labour which is produced is “clean” and contrasts systemic corruption. Secondly, there is a purely non-human element in this symbolic cleansing which is equally strong; as Francesco Galante, spokesman for Libera Terra puts it (The Salt, 2014): “To be organic is a form of respect. The idea is being kind to the soil itself: to start anew, to take symbolic poisons and real poisons from the soil itself.”

Platforms and tools

The expansion in terms of what can be considered mafia has necessarily required a broader spectrum of resources, arenas and tools by today’s anti-mafia. While the proto-cooperatives which emerged in the nineteenth century were aimed at increasing access to land and empowering the farmers, the claims of today’s cooperatives are far more multifaceted and diverse, which is most obviously mirrored in the complexity of the cooperative form; proto-cooperatives only shared the use of the lands and initial investments (Santino, 2009:125-126), whilst more than a century later, the cooperatives have fully developed into providing mutual social, economic and cultural capital. The intent of these cooperatives is to expand the benefit of these capitals to the wider public, and rather than being primarily aimed at its members, they are aimed at a broader social share, thus in Blumer’s words transforming from an expressive to an active social movement (1951).

The promotion of today’s anti-mafia culture takes on instruments of a mature capitalist society, where individuals are *always* consumers. It is therefore not a coincidence that the movement has also turned to citizens in their role of consumers, and that it is through the language of brands that the movement speaks to its consumers.

In *The Ethical Economy* Arvidsson and Peitersen trace a synoptic history of brands which I will try to render even more shortly for the purpose of this context. Originally brands were basically symbols for products, which gave them some sort of specific identity which consumers could identify with and thus purchase. Already at this initial stage, brands were a “new kind of connecting device” to others who manifested similar choices in their purchases. In the sixties, with the spread of television and more differentiated media, companies began understanding that consumers had rather fluid lifestyles rather than fixed tastes for particular things, so brands began constructing contexts within which particular tastes for things could be hybridised and matched (a good example is Marlboro’s forging of new types of masculinity). As media became further diversified throughout the eighties, the products and the consumers they appealed to became increasingly global, so the “mixes and matches” between different normative fields and objects became even more diversified, making the connection between a brand and a specific product-Marlboro and a cigarette-more difficult. The increased availability of communication technologies has additionally shifted the boundaries between production and consumption, making it easier for people to make their own music and fashion or, in this case, political product. This means that brands themselves come to rely more and more on consumers (or prosumers) to evolve their products, and that brands become less and less symbolic and more and more social. Brands (and their underlying communities) have transformed from being a mere symbolic expression of identity to the concrete entrepreneurial productive force of that same identity.

An illustration of this is AddioPizzo, whose history starts with a symbol of expression which quickly becomes an aggregative technology. The association started up in 2004 when a group of friends, upon deciding to start up a business in Palermo, realised that they had a very high chance of paying *pizzo* (protection money) and therefore considered putting it in their budget³⁵. Soon after, these friends materialised their rage and indignation into a sticker which they spread throughout the city reading: “An entire people who pays pizzo is a people without dignity”. The media coverage of this message was broad and soon everyone was talking about it, also because the last memory of anti-extortion activist in Palermo ended tragically, as described earlier with the case of Libero Grassi. The group of friends decided to act on this wave of attention, and started (wisely) acting upon consumers rather than entrepreneurs.

They literally went knocking, door to door, to collect signatures of people who were willing to buy pizzo-free products. (...) This was a hard process, and it clearly started with the closest relatives and networks (*ibidem*).

After a year of campaigning, the regional newspaper published their dedication to fighting pizzo, supported by the 3500 names of consumers who were willing

³⁵ Pecoraro, Giuseppe , AddioPizzo Activist, 30th May 2014.

to act critically (Gunnarson, 2014; Forno, 2011). What followed was the gradual inclusion of entrepreneurs which started as a list of 100 adherents in 2006, and is today a network of 916 businesses, officially supported by 11467 consumers (AddioPizzo, 2014). AddioPizzo has also recently launched an official AddioPizzo card, which the consumer can use in the network of businesses and donate a quota of each purchase to a “collective investment” - a project which aims at requalifying Palermo. AddioPizzo also organises touristic activities to promote these businesses through their AddioPizzo Travel component, and has started an actual brand in 2010 which is aimed at

Further promoting the products which are characterized by **excellent quality level** but also by the fact they are made **respecting lawfulness, principles of sustainability and respect for the environment**. The agricultural products are strictly organic, while the crafted products are aimed at recycling, reutilising and promoting small artisans or cooperatives which work with the social inclusion of subjects which are particularly at risk of being marginalised (*ivi*).

The visibility and credibility gained through these brands is powerful, making it easier to denounce violent acts and making extorters “afraid of coming into the branded shops because we are too loud now”³⁶, as one of the methods employed by the movement is to place an AddioPizzo sticker in the window of the shops which are part of the network.

The success of AddioPizzo and the cooperatives linked to Libera Terra, can in this optic be seen as being linked to their capacities to create connections between people who have similar worldviews and who develop an “affective proximity” (Arvidsson and Peitersen, 2013) with the brand and products with which they identify. The consequent community which has developed around these products is able to make connections and organise social processes in productive ways.

Consuming the change

Although the two forms of protest are distant in time and in context, I find it useful to look at them comparatively to see how much has changed in the more entrepreneurial part of anti-mafia activism. Today’s activists have in fact reframed their negative heritage into an asset which can effectively become the infrastructure of an alternative worldview, and have done so by using instruments which are the very fruit of a late capitalist market economy. Through the use of brands, they have managed to create connections between people who share an identity, and who through a common object are able to support a cause in creative ways. The resulting products blur the boundaries between economic and cultural spheres, where “material culture is taken as the

³⁶ “Facemu troppu scrusciu” AddioPizzo entrepreneur, personal interview, 30th May 2014.

transfer of things in order to produce symbolic, social and affective values” (Knudsen et al 2014:1).

The success of these products also reflects a demand from critical consumers, who have begun to see consumption as a mean to create an identity and express a particular will. Clive Hamilton describes the process of changing our unsustainable consumption patterns as a sort of death of the subject, as when we are asked to change the way we consume, we are asked to change who we are (Lewis and Potter, 2011:9). Yet it is possible to turn this around and view the consumer as an agent whose desire is transformation, and whose most accessible political medium is his wallet. Critical consumption can in this sense be considered an attempt to create a different realm of political governance.

Anti-mafia activism has in fact turned to this very sphere of action -the market- which has been fundamental for its growth, both nationally and internationally. This is important to reflect upon, particularly for activists and especially because the advanced capitalist model within which we operate today is often portrayed as a place where there is no space for political transformation, and is described as a unified, totalising and singular system (Gibson-Graham, 1993). In a historical moment in which the capitalist market is so central to many political struggles, it is important to reflect upon how it can be used beneficially to obtain one’s aims, rather than opposing it unconditionally. The transformations of the anti-mafia movement represent numerous successful ways of using and reinterpreting the market to spread immaterial and material value.

Markets *can* be a space of care as well as of consumption. As we become more attuned to how our actions as consumers affect the ability of others to survive well, the market becomes less a space of enchantment and unbridled pleasure and more a space of learning and collective responsibility (Gibson-Graham, 2013:104).

The inclusion of volunteers in the production of the goods is particularly important for the creation of this type value. Not only do the volunteers contribute to the creation of concrete goods with their work-force, but they also help fund the cooperative’s expenses and the activities with a fee, which covers cultural excursions, workshops and seminars. These take place on confiscated spaces which are bursting in symbolic content, and on which highly experiential activities take place to trigger common emotional reactions which strengthen the sense of cohesion. One volunteer from Lombardy³⁷ described his experience in Apulia as follows:

It’s so much better than watching television. I mean they keep telling you that people are poor, that crime rate is high and that there are people being trafficked

³⁷ Turconi, Gianbattista, Libera Activist, personal interview, 26th July 2014.

from all over Africa to pluck our tomatoes. But seeing it! Experiencing it! Wow! I didn't actually believe that people down here couldn't respect traffic, that people down here lived so differently. You have to experience it to actually believe it. And it's important to believe it because after all we are a country.

In this sense the volunteer can be also be considered a consumer of experiences, which according to Joseph Pine (1999) is a central feature of today's economy. Pine argues that consumers are in fact no longer satisfied with goods and services, but that they increasingly demand to purchase experiences. The growing tourist industry is a clear example of this shift in consumption, which is mirrored by the fact that the anti-mafia has also turned to tourists to enforce their movement.

It is through the creation of these micro-experiences that the cooperatives have engaged activists, volunteers and tourists; involving them, informing them, making them feel emotionally absorbed in their daily opposition to the mafia. One activist³⁸ commented on a visit we took in Casa Memoria, a memorial site where an 11 year old child was murdered by the mafia:

I have never been to this place before, but I will certainly promise myself to return again at least every month. The emotions I feel, the anger and sense of injustice makes me feel like it's worth fighting and living. It makes me feel proud of my lifestyle and work.

It is through these experiences that activists find sense and feel pleasure in a sort of “collective (auto) therapy of desire” (Berardi, 2011:131):

There is no ethics that can be effective and not repressive if not one which is founded on the correspondence between one's actions and one's pleasure. The attention of the ethical thought must thus move from the field of universal norms to the field of desire, and must be thought of as collective (auto)therapy of desire. (...) Ethics must thus be transformed to therapy, in the opening of one's perceptive channels, in the comprehension of the fact that it is only in the other's pleasure that I can find mine.

Conclusions

This paper is an effort to reconstruct the main characteristics of anti-mafia sentiments and collective action from their origins to today. Through this historical analysis it has been possible to trace the different phases which the mafia has undergone and the respective shapes which anti-mafia activism has moulded into, to oppose these forces.

³⁸ Umberto di Maggio, Libera focus group discussion, July 2014.

When the mafia was mainly present in the agrarian sector, administering the aristocracy's land and mediating the newly born relationships between the centre and the periphery of the state, the anti-mafia took on the shoes of the *Fasci*, marching for labour rights and contesting the power relationships which dominated nineteenth century Sicily. In this phase labour unions and political parties were an important channel for these claims, but these were also accompanied by the spontaneous entrepreneurial activities which have been discussed with the example of the collective rentals. The agrarian mafia and the newly unified state repressed these initiatives in various occasions, and although the workers' movement grew stronger in consensus and achieved some legislative progress, it began to lose its mass features from the 1950s onwards when its claims were taken on mainly by the Italian Communist Party (PCI), which was a minor political force compared to the Christian Democratic Party which devised more and more with the conservative classes and the mafia.

From the 1950s onwards, the mafia became a more skilful state entrepreneur, infiltrating the tertiary sector and accessing institutional power as well as expanding its cross-Atlantic alliances. Due to the weakened labour unions and institutional channels, the anti-mafia movement was in this phase primarily characterised by solitary heroes whom stood up to corruption and violence through cultural media.

The 1970s marked an economic boom for the mafia due to the growingly financial economy, the expansion of the drug market and its international partners. The explosion in financial capital resulted in a fierce war between the two main factions of the Sicilian mafia, which had gory spill-overs within civil society and resulted in the assassination of key institutional figures that had been particularly active in fighting Cosa Nostra. This resulted in an intense period of mass protests, demonstrations and emotional reactions nationally, which echoed the idea that the mafia could no longer be seen as a regional issue but that the entire social contract on which Italy was built was at stake.

The last decades have been times of latency for both the mafia and its grass-root opponents. Although we have extensive knowledge and data on the amount of capital which is accumulated the manifestations of this wealth and power is invisible, with isolated exceptions of manifest conflict. It is within this context that the movement is acting in more silent manners, creating a daily cultural opposition to the mafia through education, awareness raising and research carried out mainly by civil society organisations and private citizens. But today's referent object cannot be tackled solely through awareness raising and institutions, towards which trust is crumbling as fast as austerity measures are being imposed, to cover an inconceivably heavy debt which should be paid through an anaemic GDP. Today's referent object speaks a global language of exponential financial growth, which everyone speaks but few understand. How to oppose the criminal accumulation of value in a system which allows for speculation on any tradable good or financial instrument?

Finance is not a monetary tradition of a certain quantity of physical goods, but a linguistic effect. (...) There is no enemy, nobody to negotiate with, but mathematical implications, automatic social concatenations that you cannot take apart or avoid (Berardi, 2011:70).

The anti-mafia movement has chosen to answer through the production of an alternative market, where employment, transparency and solidarity are central. It has chosen to negotiate with products that oppose *omertá*, by branding an anti-mafia identity which gives consumers some of the agency which is so volatile in times of crisis.

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I'm a "good" activist, you're a "bad" activist, and everything I do is activism: parsing the different types of "activist" identities in LGBTQ organizing

Daniel K. Cortese

Abstract

"What is an activist? Do you consider yourself an activist?" This paper uses memoing and content analysis to analyze interviews with thirty-five movement participants from two organizations involved in LGBTQ issues. I draw upon sociological and social psychological theories of the "perfect standard" of activism, identity competition, boundary disruption, and "identity not" to explain three configurations of activist identity—Emphatics, Demarcators, and Reconcilers—as gleaned from analyses of their responses. I conclude the paper by suggesting why people involved in activism may be more likely to identify with one type of "activist" identity over another.

Keywords: Social movements, activist identity, identity boundaries, identity competition, occupational activism, identity not

Introduction

Yes [I am an activist]—Although I don't really like the connotations that go along with social activists. [*What are those?*] I think it's often very liberal sort of extremists kind of kooky people. —Justin, SAGA

I think a lot of people think that activists are people who are out there throwing Molotov cocktails at the G8 or something like that. I really think anyone who really tries to bring awareness, speak their mind not let others control the conversations so much. So, in that sense, yes [I am an activist]. —Mark, NORM

What is an activist? Do you consider yourself an activist? These simple questions yielded broad responses from thirty-five activists from two separate social movement organizations. Participants, as we see from the quotes above, described "activists" in different ways, from kooky extremists to awareness-bringers. To scholars and activists alike, it is likely to be no surprise that movement participants define "activist" in different ways, and that "activist" is a negotiated identity. Past research provides insights into how movement actors contest the definition and challenges a self-identification of "activist" (Bobel 2007; Corrigall-Brown 2012; Gamson 1995). But, how can social movement scholars and activists make sense of these discrepancies in "activist" identity?

The multiple ways movement participants construct and perceive an “activist” identity can be understood using theories of “perfect standard of activism” (Bobel 2007), identity competition (Corrigall-Brown 2012; Hardnack 2011; Naples 1998; Stryker and Burke 2000), and boundary disruption and defense (Gamson 1995).

The focus of this paper is to parse out three types of “activist” from my findings—*Emphatics*, *Reconcilers*, and *Demarcators*—in order to more clearly understand the competing cultural constructions of what an “activist” is and what they do. I argue how social location (age, career, position within organization, duration of involvement), lived experiences with activism, social psychology (e.g., meaning-making of “activist”), types of organizing (e.g., advocacy groups), and personality characteristics shape the definitions of “activist” and help social movement scholars and participants explain why some movement actors may be more likely to fall into particular categories.

Participants in social movements define “activist” differently. This became evident when I conducted thirty-five interviews¹ with people involved in organizations that are tangentially aligned with gender and gay and lesbian social issues, but are not generally considered part of the broader Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) social movements.² Like much of the research on how movement participants define and identify with an “activist” identity (Bobel 2007; Corrigall-Brown 2012; Hardnack 2011; Naples 1998), I did not intentionally look for evidence of an array of “activist” identities in the movements I studied. The findings described in this paper arose serendipitously in other research when I asked interview participants, *What is an activist? Do you consider yourself an activist?* My intent was to ensure that I did not impose my own definition of activist (or claim that identity for them) in preparation for a series of questions that followed regarding how they, as an activist, perceived the successes or failures of the movement in the future. The questions were not asked to uncover differences in “activist” identities.

¹ Each interview lasted about ninety minutes. The names of the participants are pseudonyms in accordance with the IRB stipulations. I explained to participants the general themes of the questions at the beginning of the interview, but participants did not see the questions in advance.

² The participants for SAGA were a part of a previous research project (Cortese 2006) where I analyzed organizational records and completed thirty in-depth interviews with members in five regions in the United States to uncover the ways in which activists in an LGBT organization deploy “straight” identities differently in geographic locations to achieve particular movement goals. The participants from NORM were a part of a previous research project where I sought to uncover if, and how identity deployment strategies may be used by the organization to educate parents, medical professionals, policymakers, and the public of their perceived dangers of routine circumcision of infant boys. Both organizations in this study were chosen because included two questions that I asked both groups: *What is an activist? Do you consider yourself an activist?* Given that these movements differ in purpose and goals, and yet I find that the ways in which participants struggled with defining and identifying with an “activist” identity are similar amongst each other and to what others have found in other different social movement organizations (See Bobel 2007) is further evidence that researchers are “stumbling” onto something that should be further explored more strategically.

Nonetheless, the respondents defined “activist” in three distinctive ways. Each category I describe below had both long-term and newly-joined members; like Bobel (2007), length of time in the movement is not a predictor for particular categories other than perhaps *Emphatics*, but each type had included those who were continuously involved in a movement for 3 or more years. Rather, I find it is how one *perceives* activism in relationship to their own experiences with it that most strongly differentiates each category.

Emphatics define “activist” in extraordinarily positive ways, and emphatically identify with an activist ideal-type. These movement actors often set the standard of activism in the organization, and are the leaders who have a deep dedication to the movement goals and outcomes. But not all movement participants construct an “activist” identity in the ways that *Emphatics* do. I found that some movement participants construct “activist” based upon tactics, rather than on the tasks that they (struggle to) accomplish.

Demarcators have clear definitions of a “good activist” and a “bad activist,” identifying themselves as among the good ones, and setting a clear us-versus-them border between activists. Most of *Demarcators* are current or immediate past organizational leaders, which suggests that the boundary-setting may be either a movement strategy to act as a sentinel to keep away would-be bad “radical” activists or an outcome of managing the divergent perspectives on tactics from their current pool of movement actors. *Demarcators* see activism as occurring in everyday sites of talk and interaction, deeming in-your-face activism as an inappropriate tactic. All *Demarcators* differed from *Emphatics* by using schemas to process these in-your-face forms of activism as “radical” and to use “identity not” (Freitas et al. 1997) understandings of self to explain how their lived experiences with activism differ from the cultural presentations of “activist” as radicals.

I also found that some movement actors—*Reconcilers*—construct a new “activist” definition in order to reconcile their dedication to the movement mission despite their inability to achieve a “perfect standard” of activism. *Reconcilers* set their own standards of activism that almost anything they do qualifies them as an “activist.” *Reconcilers* fall into three groups: those who are more recently involved in the movement and yet to be socialized on the expectations of activists, those who fail to see themselves as measuring up to the work level of other activists, or former leaders who recently let their activism take a back seat, opting for a less-labor intensive role in order to focus on their personal lives that compete with the time necessary to their activism. The latter category take these identity claims further, stating that their non-activist occupations that they now do instead of their previous leadership work they once did in a movement qualifies as activism (what I call “occupational activists”). This is a departure from the oft-studied activists in social movements, making a distinct contribution to the study of movement participants.

I offer this paper as a foundational piece that identifies the issues regarding the dimensionality of activist identities. It is meant to prompt new questions and

provide fertile new research paths in the exploration of identities in social movements. This paper also provides a method for further exploration of the multiple ways movement participants understand activist identities. Scholars can apply the foundational typology in this paper to assess its generalizability to other movements, or to understand if this typology is endemic to a particular movement organization type or its membership composition. Activists can use this research as a way to prompt introspection on how participants perceive their identities as "activist" in response to the pressures of activism on the sense of self. For example, as I find with *Reconcilers*, activists with high dedication may need opportunities for recovery where they reduce their output for a brief time but still wish to identify as an activist. This paper helps activists see the commonality of this experience. It can help foster a sense of understanding amongst movement participants in response to activists' concerns about movement sustainability.

Theoretical framework

Similar to previous research on activist identity (Bobel 2007; Corrigall-Brown 2012; Naples 1998), group membership in the movement organizations that I chose is homogenously gendered; mine, however, skews mostly educated middle-class men instead of women. Similar to Bobel (2007), I could not find any gender, age, or other demographic patterns to explain the findings. Looking to explain these patterns, I sought out the social movement research on activist identities (Bobel 2007; Corrigall-Brown 2012; Naples 1998) and applied social psychological concepts of boundary disruption (Gamson 1995), identity not" (Freitas et al. 1997), identity construction (Yueng and Martin 2003) and identity competition (Hardnack 2011; Stryker 2000) to explain why my findings comport in some ways to previous research, but also diverge in the significant ways.

Competing cultural perceptions: the "good activist"

Much of the social movements research—indeed, most of the media attention of movements—focuses its articles on long term or professional activists. Why wouldn't they? These participants are often the key to our understanding of movement trajectories and successes because they tell the stories that provide valuable insights into how organizational dynamics can shape movement trajectories and decision-making. Their blood, sweat, and tears demonstrate their true dedication to the movement's cause. From reading about the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee activists who risked their lives to register African Americans to vote in the South during the 1968 Freedom Summer (McAdam 1990) to the leaders in Queer communities who challenged political, medical, and pharmaceutical institutions during the height of the AIDS pandemic (Gould 2009), we understand activists to be deeply courageous, full of conviction, and having deep dedication to the cause. We see that activists risk their lives and reputations to follow their convictions with an ambition to

transform the world.

However, focusing only on this small core of dedicated individuals is similar to looking at a submerged iceberg: by seeing only the visible tip, we distort our understanding of the entire object and its potential impacts. When we focus our research primarily on the most central participants of a movement, we implicitly shift our focus away from the others in the movement who are in less-visible roles, but also key to a movement's success. In doing so, activists and scholars end up adding to a cultural construct of "activist" that uses "unrealistic, even romantic, notions of the omniscient, tireless and selfless individual" (Bobel 2007: 156).

By considering Klandermans' (2004) typology of activism levels based upon synergy of time and effort, we can understand why the extant research focuses most often on those members who invest the most time and energy to a movement: One may sign a petition (short-lived and facile), join a sit-in (short-lived and demanding), pay a membership to an organization (long-term and facile), or serve on a committee in an organization (long-term and demanding). The focus of social movement research tends to be the latter because of the strong impacts on the movement organizations and lifecycles. The assumption is that the more involved one is in a movement, the more likely one would see themselves as activists, and consider what they do as activism. When considering movement involvement over a lifetime, Klandermans' (2004) foundational assumption is that actors mature into more arduous and enduring ones. However, people join movements at different times and with different levels of motivations, and may choose to exit a movement temporarily to regroup, or have a refractory period when "life happens" and they cannot dedicate the time and efforts as they once did. Klandermans time/effort synergy categorizes the levels of activism well, but it cannot explain how activists see themselves as an activist in relationship to what tasks they do, or fail to do.

In her research on women involved in the Menstrual Activism movement, Chris Bobel (2007: 147) finds that "an activist must 'live the issue,' demonstrate relentless dedication, and contribute a sustained effort to duly merit the label" of *activist* (emphasis in original). Bobel (2007)—building upon Stryker's (1980) role-identity theory of how one organizes their identities within a salience hierarchy of desirability—finds that the identity of *activist* is highly desirable and well-positioned within a salience hierarchy due to this romanticized notion of the tireless, selfless, and humble activist who sacrifices their lives for the greater good. Bobel (2007: 153) identifies that activists construct their identities within broader value systems of humility (avoiding a "holier-than-thou" arrogance attached to the meaning of *activist*) and rigor ("unyielding sacrifice s/he brings to her[/his] social change efforts...no hardship [and] no trial is too much"). Combined, this becomes a *perfect standard* of activist rooted deeply in our value systems and reflected in our cultural and scholarly focus on one particular type of activist: the selfless leaders in the movement for the long-term.

When scholars focus their research on this romanticized type of the "perfect"

activist, we are complicit in perpetuating the “perfect standard” of activism that may lead movement participants to make new claims on what activism is, and whether they claim an activist identity. It begs the question, if we do not see ourselves as able to achieve this “perfect standard,” can we *really* claim to be “activists”? As Bobel (2007) notes:

Who, exactly, does satisfy the criteria for activist? Who can afford to devote nearly every waking hour to their chosen cause? And while this mythic activist is off doing the good work, who, after all, is caring for the children, preparing meals, washing laundry, [and] paying the bills? The idea of constant, relentless dedication obviously sets an incredibly high standard, a standard of constancy and commitment that few even self-described activists could satisfy. [Emphasis in original]

Bobel demonstrates how “perfect standard” is mythic in its portrayal of who an activist is and, in turn, who is not. Indeed, when I compare my own activism work against this standard of constant dedication and commitment to a chosen cause, I begin to self-doubt if I can—or whether I want to—satisfy these exceptionally high criteria for activist when I am still responsible for the mundane duties of home and career life. Movement participants may feel similarly, leading to questions of *if*, *how*, and *why* activists might construct different definitions of “activism” to comport with different standards of activism they believe they can meet.

Competing cultural perceptions of “activist”: the “Bad”

Activists, in addition to being considered a mythic selfless being, also get a “rotten deal” in our cultural conceptualizations of who they are. The word “activist” can paint negative stereotypes in the minds of those outside of the movement (Bashir et al. 2013), where they envision an emotional and irrational protestor (Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta 2001; Gould 2001; Gould 2009) who have a “better-than-thou...arrogance” (Bobel 2007: 153) with a radical ideology (Corrigall-Brown 2012) that shapes their revolutionary political agenda (Hardnack 2011). Indeed, the opening quote of this paper demonstrates how one activist I interviewed—Justin from SAGA—did not like the term *activist* because it was loaded with imagery of “very liberal...extremists kind of kooky people.” Defining oneself “as an activist is not merely a matter of semantics” because it has implications for movement participants (Corrigall-Brown 2012:115) and is elusive, fluid, and contested in its definition. Words evoke images drawn from cultural meanings (Anderson, Dewhirst and Ling 2006) that are processed mentally through schemas that selectively receive and organize these meanings (Sandstrom, Martin and Fine 2010). When activists are confronted with these diametrically-opposed cultural constructions of “activist,” it is inevitable that movement participants will begin to negotiate the definitions and construct their own identities in response. In this paper, I argue that these

different cultural meanings have significant impacts on movement actors because they create identity boundaries between activists, rooted in philosophies about “good” and “bad” types of activist tactics.

The concept of an activist identity has its roots in the cultural analyses of movements. An activist identity derives from a history of political activity outside of a broader movement, whereas organizational identity, building on Gamson (1991), “involves loyalty to a single organization and its fellow members” (Polletta and Jasper 2001: 293). A tactical identity focuses on an affinity to a particular style of action (Jasper 1997; Polletta and Jasper 2001). Gecas (2000:94) introduces the concept of value identity, which is “anchored in values and value systems.” Corrigall-Brown (2012) found that a value identity—not an organizational or activist identity—was most salient to members of broad, multi-issue groups that connect people based upon an interconnected set of beliefs. The concept of value identity helps explain why some movement actors imbue value systems into “good”/“bad” dichotomous “activist” identity based upon tactics of choice, but cannot fully explain how and why they set clear boundaries of appropriate “activists” based on tactical choice. I demonstrate in this paper that there are multiple ways in which activists parse the meanings of “activism,” and to fully explain these processes, it is important to understand both the cultural meanings and social psychological processes of boundary maintenance to develop a clearer picture of when and how movement participants may choose to claim an “activist” identity (and which one).

Gamson (1995) demonstrates that activists can engage in boundary disruption and boundary defending. Taylor and Rupp (1993) demonstrate how radical feminists engage in this boundary-setting between lesbian feminists and other feminists in order to sustain a movement during times of abeyance when the sociopolitical environment reduces political opportunity structures for movement success. Gamson (1995) argues that secure identity boundaries (e.g., gay, women) are politically efficacious, whereas fluid ones (e.g., queer) challenge the dichotomous symbolic meanings of identity that reify political oppression. The queer paradox that Gamson notes emphasizes activists’ ambivalence when “collective identity is both pillaged and deployed” (Gamson 1995: 402). Similarly, Bobel (2007) finds that women involved in menstrual activism also create an us-versus-them dichotomy of “good” versus “bad” activists, but one that is differentiated by core values of humility and rigor, rather than essentialist notions of gender or sexuality. In her research on four social movements (both conservative and liberal), Corrigall-Brown (2012) uncovers similar “activist” identity claims of boundary-setting, but with a twist: that particularly those activists who held a rightist ideology were less likely to consider an activist identity salient because of its liberal connotation. This distinctive organizational feature of conservative movements may also play a role in how movement members identify (or reject) the value identity of “activist.”

Movement participants create boundaries of us-versus-them and, in turn, these boundaries can impact when and how one claims an “activist” identity. It is not

unusual or unexpected for activism to follow an “us-versus-them” model (Cortese 2006; Gamson 1995; Ghaziani 2011), and construct an identity based on group distancing and border construction. In this social psychological concept of “identity not” (Freitas et al. 1997), groups define themselves primarily by what they are *not* versus what they *are*, creating an identity of “us” that is intrinsically relational to “them” so that it is almost impossible to separate the two. For example, if one claims that they are a “good kind of activist,” the implication is that the primary definition of activist is one who is “bad” and therefore, this person is not “one of them.”

The research on boundary-creating and defending shows that this social psychological process is not unusual. However, the boundaries that are created may lead to competing constructions of activism, and movement participants might even reject an “activist” identity altogether because they do not see their work as “activism.” The process of boundary-creating may be the impetus of further social psychological processes that lead one to reconcile their activist work with an identity that does not always fit the cultural definitions we may use to consider behaviors as “activism.”

Competing cultural perceptions: I am an “activist” because everything I do is activism

The “activist” identity is imbued with the concept of “activism” because they are related categories: to be an activist means one is *doing* activism. That does not mean that the cultural *meanings* of “activism” and “activist” are monolithic. Nor does it mean that everyone doing what culturally is defined as “activism” will claim an “activist” identity. The fluidity of social psychological processes in identity construction help explain why one may reject an activist label, even when they are doing what we may consider “activist” work. But, the fluidity of definitions and the expression of human agency in the social cognitive processes (Bandura 2001) of reconciling “activist” identity with “activism” as a social construct can lead to a circumstance where one sees themselves as an activist because everything they do is activism—even if others may not see their work as comporting with the cultural definitions of “activism.”

Researchers have identified a number of reasons why movement participants may reject the “activist” label. As explored in the previous sections, movement actors may reject the “activist” identity because they fail to meet what they see as a “perfect standard” of activism, and therefore do not see themselves as truly being an activist (Bobel 2007). In addition, organizational cultures may shape whether movement participants reject an “activist” identity. Naples (1998) uncovers a different identity construction process than Bobel does. Community leaders and paid organizational staff of a grassroots movement in the “War on Poverty” (primarily working class women of color), perceived and experienced an “activist” identity from their social position within broader systems of inequality, and did not see themselves as activists because of their separation between the realms of politics and community work (Naples 1998). In other

words, they did not claim an “activist” identity because they did not see their work as “activism” and, therefore, to make such identity claims for themselves would be inappropriate. Corrigall-Brown (2012) found that those women involved in four different social movements also constructed an “activist” identity in contextual ways. Those who lacked time to dedicate to activism earlier in their lives due to familial and career demands were also less likely to see themselves as activists. For these movement participants, there was a competition of which identity (activist, familial, occupation, relationships) was most salient amongst their social identities (Corrigall-Brown 2012; See also Hardnack 2011; Stryker 2000), and may choose not to identify as an “activist” in response.

In her interviews with menstrual activists Bobel (2007) notes that in their responses to her queries on their activism, participants imbued their definitions of “activism” with their identifications with “activist.” Indeed, Corrigall-Brown (2012) and Naples (1998) also demonstrate evidence of activists imbuing “activist” and “activism” simultaneous cognitive processing. We cannot know after the fact if the participants in their research were struggling with these definitions previously in their own identity construction, or if it was prompted on-the-spot by the interview where they quickly assessed their movement activities with competing cultural definitions of “activism” and made an identity claim of “activist” in a hasty response to the interviewer.

Regardless of who, when, or what prompted this identity construction process in their research (Bobel 2007; Corrigall-Brown 2012; Naples 1998), the self is a social product (Fine 1990: 122 from Yueng and Martin 2003) and the activists in their research engaged in the social psychological processes to evaluate oneself through the eyes of others and make identity claims of “activist” in response. Cooley’s classic concept of the “looking glass self” (See Franks and Gecas 1992; Sandstrom, Martin and Fine 2010; Yeung and Martin 2003) illustrates how the self is the result of the social processes where we learn to see ourselves as others see us (Yeung and Martin 2003). Using Cooley’s framework, we answer the question “Who am I?” not as Popeye might (“I am what I am.”), but more reflexively and through the eyes of others: I am what I think you think I am. This self-construction process occurs through processing an “interactional context, ...managing information strategically” (Yeung and Martin 2003:845) through sets of schemas that individuals use to understand, filter, interpret, and respond to situations through biological and cultural influences (Goffman 1974). These schemas, and the cognitive processes used in interpreting them, are shaped by value systems (Bandura 2002; Bobel 2007; Corrigall-Brown 2012; Gecas 2000) that can alter how one perceives “activist.” The result is that two “activists” with very similar roles within a movement can see themselves as an “activist” in remarkably differently ways because of the multiple possibilities of realities and interpretations one could use (Dewey 1969; Sandstrom, Martin and Fine 2010).

Applying the social psychology theories of identity construction explored in the paragraph above, how a movement participant identifies as an “activist” might

occur like this: An interaction with another person occurs where the question is posed: “Are you an activist?” The movement participant employs schemas of “activism,” with definitions drawn from culture, to assess its multiple meanings (both positive and negative) that people give to these actions. In this interaction, the movement participant rapidly and subconsciously assesses how the other person (and others) might interpret their actions: “Does the person asking me likely have a positive or negative view of activist? Would they see my work as activism? What definitions might they use to understand ‘activist?’” and immediately filters out multiple interpretations to complete the interaction and respond. The permutations of responses are situational and contextual. Hence, we can get responses from movement participants that seem to others as ambivalent, conflicting, or even illogical.

This paper will delve more deeply into identity construction processes of “activist” and build upon the theoretical concepts of “activist” identity construction strategies that can shape a sense of “good” versus “bad” activism. I build on the growing body of evidence that contends the collective identity category of “activist” is neither static, nor uncontested by movement members (Bobel 2007; Corrigall-Brown 2012), and that movement actors engage in boundary defending (Gamson 1995) and “identity not” (Freitas et al. 1997) border construction (e.g., I am what you are not—I am a “good activist” and you are a “bad activist”) to explain the differences between *Emphatics* from *Reconcilers* and *Demarcators*, and how these positions matter for scholars who study and activists who engage in social movements.

Methodology³

Thirty-nine interviews were completed, and from that set, thirty-five participants qualified for the study (Table 1). I analyzed the data using memoing of semi-structured interviews (Cortese 2006) and a content analysis using standard methods (Rose 2012) where I looked for specific sets of words or phrases that exemplified positive, negative, or ambivalent responses to the two relevant questions for the purposes of this study: *What is an activist?* *Do you consider yourself an activist?* I recoded demographics and responses to the questions into quantitative format, and generated descriptive, frequency, and crosstabs using SPSS, which helped inform my creation of the category types of *Emphatics*, *Demarcators*, and *Reconcilers*. I provide details of this mixed methodology in the paragraphs below.

³ These findings are drawn from two completed research projects on two different social movement organizations with distinct sets of research problems. As other findings from these separate projects are already published, I am no longer collecting data. The data that I use—for better or for worse—is all that will be available for analysis. These, and other limitations, are expounded upon at the end of the paper.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Name	Age	Gender	Sexualit y	SMO	Years Active	Position	Identity Category
Paul	64	Male	Straight	SAGA	4	Member	Emphatics
Adam L.	23	Male	LGBT	SAGA	2	Chair/Past Chair	Demarcators
Greg	32	Male	Straight	SAGA	2	Member	Uncategorized
Grant	28	Male	LGBT	SAGA	2	Member	Reconcilers
Vincent	33	Male	LGBT	SAGA	6	Chair/Past Chair	Reconcilers
Gloria	56	Female	Straight	SAGA	2	Member	Emphatics
Trey	20	Male	LGBT	SAGA	0	Member	Reconcilers
Taylor	52	Male	LGBT	SAGA	4	Chair/Past Chair	Demarcators
Chrissy	27	Female	LGBT	SAGA	1	Member	Emphatics
Casey	34	Female	LGBT	SAGA	1	Member	Reconcilers
Brooks	30	Male	LGBT	SAGA	1	Member	Reconcilers
Don	28	Male	LGBT	SAGA	1	Member	Demarcators
Marc	24	Male	LGBT	SAGA	3	Chair/Past Chair	Demarcators
Anson	58	Male	LGBT	SAGA	3	Member	Reconcilers
Edit	35	Transgender	LGBT	SAGA	4	Staff	Emphatics
Reid	55	Male	LGBT	SAGA	1	Member	Emphatics
Dixon	33	Male	LGBT	SAGA	1	Member	Emphatics
Joshua	40	Male	LGBT	SAGA	13	Staff	Uncategorized
Judy	58	Female	Straight	SAGA	6	Chair/Past Chair	Emphatics
Justin	19	Male	LGBT	SAGA	2	Member	Reconcilers
Raul	32	Male	LGBT	SAGA	3	Member	Emphatics
Sebastian	32	Male	LGBT	SAGA	7	Chair/Past Chair	Reconcilers
Melissa	25	Female	LGBT	SAGA	1	Member	Uncategorized
C.J.	35	Male	LGBT	SAGA	5	Chair/Past Chair	Emphatics
Chase	18	Male	LGBT	SAGA	0	Member	Reconcilers
Xavier	23	Male	LGBT	SAGA	4	Member	Uncategorized
Cameron	23	Transgender	LGBT	SAGA	1	Staff	Emphatics
Eric	58	Male	LGBT	NORM	10	Member	Reconcilers
Mark	42	Male	LGBT	NORM	6	Chair/Past Chair	Demarcators
Scott	41	Male	LGBT	NORM	1	Member	Uncategorized
Julian	55	Male	Straight	NORM	3	Member	Uncategorized
David	53	Male	LGBT	NORM	2	Member	Emphatics
Adam	62	Male	LGBT	NORM	4	Member	Emphatics
Chris	32	Male	Straight	NORM	2	Member	Reconcilers
Alan	47	Male	LGBT	NORM	10	Member	Reconcilers

For responses to the question *What is an activist?*, I coded response “positive” if the participant’s statement described activist’s behaviors as constructive, creating positive change, or educating people on social issues, and as negative if they described an activist as destructive, having a negative impact on society, or misinforming the public on social movement issues. I coded responses as ambivalent if a respondent’s comment delineated a difference between activists,

such as “good” or “bad” activists, “helpful” or “unhelpful” tactical use by activist, or other value-laden and/or ideal-typical construction of a “good”/“bad” activist.

For responses to the question *Do you consider yourself an activist?*, I coded responses “unqualified yes” and “no” if the participant answered affirmatively or negatively, respectively, and without equivocation. Responses of these types were typically terse with little further explanation; I probed all participants who provided quick responses to elaborate, and include their elaboration in the data. I coded responses as “qualified yes” if the participant equivocated their affirmative response, re-evaluated their identity of activist in relation to their earlier description, or created a new meaning of activist so that their activities would fit into their definition.

I organized the coding of responses in an SPSS file that includes all the names and demographic data of all respondents and creating two nominal variables for Definition of Activist (DefineActiv) and Self-Identify as Activist (SelfIdentAct). I eliminated any response without data. I used Select Cases function to parse out into new files those participants who responded positively for definition of activist, and unqualified yes for self-identity, and so on through the remaining eight permutations, which yielded three robust subsets that became the categories I discuss in this paper. Four permutations included no data, and therefore are uncategorized. Two permutations did not have enough data to establish a pattern and draw definitive conclusions (See Table 2).

Table 2: Cross-Tabulation of Definition of Activist and Self-Identify as Activist

		Definition of Activist			Total
		Positive	Ambivalent	Negative	
Unqualified Yes	Unqualified Yes	76.9% (10)	23.1% (3)	0% (0)	100% (13)
	Qualified Yes	68.4% (13)	31.6% (6)	0% (0)	100% (19)
	No	100.0% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	100% (3)

Key

- Emphatics = 
- Demarcators = 
- Reconcilers = 

I reviewed the three sub-sets for particular themes using memoing processes. I returned to the SPSS file to look for demographic commonalities, and identified similarities and differences to identify potential generalizations. Particular social locations (gender, sexuality, race, class) did not yield any relevant commonalities, likely a result of the overrepresentation of white middle class men due to the nature of the movement organizations. The multistep memoing and content analysis allowed me to see more deeply the relationships between definition and self-identity of *activist*. In the sub-sections below, I briefly describe the selection and demographics of the participants for this study.

SAGA participant selection

Straight and Gay Alliance (SAGA), a pseudonym, is an organization situated within the safe schools, anti-bullying, and LGBT social movements (Cortese 2006). It has a federated structure with a national headquarters and local chapters with goals to create safer kindergarten through 12th grade schools for LGBT children (Cortese 2006). I invited SAGA chapters from five regions across the United States to participate using an informational letter and brief description of my research project. Chapter leaders informed members to consider participation. I also selected participants through email by using published contact information. Once a chapter was selected and permission to interview was granted, I selected members through a snowball sample. I

interviewed SAGA members between March and September 2003.

NORM Chicago participant selection

National Organization of Restoring Men (NORM) is a social movement organization that is in transition. NORM is also organized in a federated structure. Participants are selected exclusively from the Chicago chapter due to its proximity to the author. Although the mission is one of “a support group for men who have concerns about being circumcised, are considering foreskin restoration, or are in the process of restoring their foreskins” (National Organization of Restoring Men 2012), the local chapters—such as NORM Chicago—follow an organization model more about activism and protest. While a participant observer in NORM for 2 years, I observed the group’s activist campaigns stop the routine infant circumcisions in the Chicago area through organizing marches, mobilizing writing campaigns to medical, political, and non-profit organizations involved in infant circumcision policies, protests at hospitals, informational booths in street fairs, and march in the Gay Pride parade in Chicago, Milwaukee, and other suburbs. I asked the organizational leader to forward my informational letter and brief description of my study to the organizational listserve, from which I met five; the remaining four I found through snowball sampling. I conducted semi-structured interviews with eight of the NORM members between February and September 2011; one did not complete the activist portion of the interview and therefore not included in this study.

Participant demographics

The median age of SAGA participants were 32-years-old (Table 1), with a range of 18 to 64-years-old, with most of them white gay males and members of their chapters and only three members of SAGA self-identified as a racial or ethnic minority (Paul, Raul, and Edit). Ten became involved with SAGA one year or less at the time of the interviews, eight involved for two to three years, and another nine being involved with SAGA for four or more years (Table 1). Seven respondents were currently or previously a chair or co-chair, with the remaining comprising mostly of chapter members. Three (11.5%) were staff in the National organization (Edit, Joshua, and Cameron).

All of the NORM participants are male and most are either gay or bisexual, with only two identifying as straight (Table 1). The median age of participants is 50-years-old with the range being 32 – 62. Most were white, with one person (Julian) identifying as Latino. One person (Mark) is considered the de facto leader because he organizes the meetings, but there is no official chair.

Findings

I uncover a categorization of responses when I generate a cross-tabulation of

responses to both the “*What is an activist?*” and “*Do you consider yourself an activist?*” questions (Table 2), and as noted in the introduction and theoretical framework. The focus of this paper is on three categories in particular—*Emphatics*, *Demarcators*, and *Reconcilers*. In each category, movement participants tended to share a similar perspective of activism, their self-identity of activist, or both. Six participants remain uncategorized (Table 2) because there is insufficient data to establish patterns and draw meaningful conclusions.

No participant expressed a negative response to the question “*What is an activist?*” (Table 3). Three-fourths of SAGA (20) and NORM members (6) expressed a positive response to this question (Table 3).

When considering both NORM and SAGA participant as a whole, responses to the question “*Do you consider yourself an activist?*” are interesting: Almost forty percent (13) express unequivocally that they are activists, almost nine percent (3) state they are not activists, and a little more than half (19) respond affirmatively, but with some equivocation or reservations (Table 4). When I separate participants by movement organization, responses are even more distinct, but due to the small sample of NORM activists, it is difficult to draw conclusions as to the reasons for the difference.

SAGA members, though, were almost evenly split between responding affirmatively with and without qualifications (Table 4). Only one SAGA member stated that he was not an activist because of his job in a state government lobbying organization and the lack of specificity in his definition of activist. Of the remaining 26 SAGA members I interviewed, they were equally split between an unqualified and a qualified affirmative response (Table 4).

**Table 3: Response to Question *What is An Activist?*,
 by Movement Organization**

Response	Movement Organization		Total
	NORM	SAGA	
<i>Positive</i>	62.5% (5)	74.1% (20)	71.4% (25)
<i>Ambivalent</i>	37.5% (3)	25.9% (7)	28.6% (10)
<i>Negative</i>	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)

Table 4: Response to Question *Do You Consider Yourself An Activist?*, by Movement Organization

Response	Movement Organization		Total
	<i>NORM</i>	<i>SAGA</i>	
<i>Unqualified Yes</i>	12.5% (1)	48.1% (12)	40.0% (13)
<i>Qualified Yes</i>	62.5% (5)	48.1% (14)	51.4% (19)
<i>No</i>	25.0% (2)	3.7% (1)	8.6% (3)

Emphatics: the dedicated doers

I categorize *Emphatics* as such because I find an overwhelming agreement between positive responses to both my questions of an activist and their self-identity as one (Table 2). Typical responses were emphatic, and most exemplify what scholars might define as activists. Similar to previous research (Corrigall-Brown 2012; Klandermans 2004), participants in this category tended to be those who put in demanding efforts of movement actors, such as those members who were personally invested in the organization by being a member for three or more years (55% of *Emphatics*), or paid staff in the movement organization (100% of all salaried staff members who participated), or people with long histories of involvement in all types of social movements (eight had been involved in movements for 5+ years, including other organizations).

Interestingly, *Emphatics* included many of the oldest members among all groups (median age 35, mean age 44). Even if they did not participate in activism in the 1960s and 1970s, the older *Emphatics* held positive memories of activism in that time, and not drawn from their lived experiences of activism backlash or abeyance during the conservative political and cultural environments of the 1980s through 2000s.

Adam, a 62-year-old (in 2011)⁴ bisexual man and member of NORM for more than four years details his activist dedication with gusto:

[An activist is a] person who is active in some goal or cause who either writes

⁴ I list the interview year next to the ages of participants to help the reader contextualize their experiences with activism and employ a schema upon which they gain meanings of 'activist' differently than those from younger generations, a concept I expand further upon in the *Demarcators* subsection of the findings. For example, participants who are in their 40s or 50s in 2003 referenced activism during their young adulthood in the 1960s, versus those who are in their 20s and 30s in 2003 or 40s in 2011 who seemed to perceive activism differently from their experiences in young adults in the 1980s and 1990s.

about it, or speaks about it, marches about it, demonstrates about it, which I have done. ... I am an activist on Yahoo! Answers in the intactivist cause. I'm an activist politically... [And you consider yourself an activist?] Very much so!

Gloria, a 56-year-old (in 2003) straight woman and participant in the SAGA chapter in the Pacific Northwest for two years responds how compelled she is to dedicate her life to social causes, stating that even the “bumper sticker on [her] car says, “To believe is to care, and to care is to do”. So, it's just, [I] can't not be doing those things:”

[What is an activist?] Someone who works for change, as opposed to just watching the world go by. I would say periodically I try and figure out how to scale back to a manageable level. ... I even suggested to my family at one point that, “I'm overboard and I'm gone all the time doing all these things, and I should probably stop.” And they all looked at me like, “Oh, my God, no, no, no! We don't want you here at home pacing the floors. This would not be good.” ... So, I'm an activist. I don't think I couldn't be an activist.

Adam and Gloria both describe activists as dedicated doers who work for the social movement goal they have. Both do not see themselves stopping: Adam confides that his hip problems will not keep him from representing the intactivist⁵ cause in the local Pride parade, and Gloria's family recognize that even when she is overwhelmed, her activism satisfies her.

Judy, a 58-year-old (in 2003) straight woman who has chaired the SAGA chapter in the Northeast suburbs for six years, describes what an activist is by being self-reflective while also evaluative of the other activists she has known:

Somebody who is willing to risk themselves, I guess. ... You have to be willing to act, you can't come and just talk. It doesn't work. You've got to do. You've got to be willing to lick the stamps and go out and talk and try to get money—maybe not everything—but you've got to be willing to do sort of a lot of things because it's not all one thing to be successful. ... [You] need to have a commitment.

Judy echoes other *Emphatics* who describe activism as doing, and sets a high expectation of activists, reinforcing the cultural meanings of activist as needing

⁵ The term “intactivist” is a pun that conflates the word “intact” (more colloquially, “uncircumcised” or “uncut” penis) and “activism.” The male penis is the only body part in Western culture where we have created a word to describe it in relation to its amputation status. As a number of respondents in my research on NORM noted, it would be very unusual for us to refer to a body part by the lack of an amputation upon it (e.g., a woman's breast as “unmasectomized” or a foot as “unamputated”). Intactivists argue that their word choice evokes a more positive image of the intact male body, rather than calling a penis “uncircumcised” or “uncut” which evokes a sense that circumcision is either necessary or pending.

to meet a “perfect standard” (Bobel 2007).

People use schemas to organize and simplify the interpretation of information (Sandstrom, Martin and Fine 2010), and *Emphatics* process what “activist” is through an “activism as doing” schema by understanding, “I am an activist because I do A, B, and C.” *Emphatics*, because they comprise mostly of the paid staff, older members, and those who have been involved in the movement for the longest time, are the ones who emphasize activism as doing the long-term and demanding tasks that the cultural meaning of “activist” typically elicits. Because “doing something” is a concept used by movement actors to create meanings of “activist,” it can be considered a meaning-making resource (Garfinkel 1967) that explains how movement participants make sense of “activist” as an identity.

In summary, because *Emphatics* emphasize activism as doing the really long-term and difficult tasks within a movement, they set the ideal standard of “activist” that others will use in their meaning making. *Emphatics* employ a schema that internally processes doing as the core component of an activist role, creating the “perfect standard” by which other movement participants will measure themselves against. Their embracement of this role is what distinguishes them from the other types.

Demarcators: I'm a “good” (but you're a “bad”) activist

I categorized participants who expressed ambivalence both to their definition of and their own self-identity as an activist as *Demarcators* (Table 2) because they engage in “boundary defending” (Gamson 1995) between “good” versus “bad” activists based upon tactics. As Polletta and Jasper note, “people develop a “taste” for certain tactics... Some may pride themselves on their moderate demands and tactics, others on being avant-garde or radical” (Polletta and Jasper 2001:293). In defending identity boundaries, *Demarcators* always present themselves as more reasonable than those who engage in radical tactics.

Interestingly, four of the six *Demarcators* are current or immediate chairs of the organization, and those who set the public face, direction, and tactics of the movement. It makes sense *Demarcators* in these two tangentially LGBT organizations would pride themselves on deploying moderate tactics given the ambivalence lesbians and gays felt in the early days of AIDS activism (Gould 2001), delinking militant lesbian and gay political activism and “channeling it instead into the direction of an internally oriented community pride that encouraged...the commendable path to nobly, responsibly, and quietly taking care of their own” (Gould 2001:143).

Although it is too small a sample to generalize, there still is some evidence that there is a generational split in this category that can reflect experiences with movements like ACT-UP, where half of the *Demarcators* were in their early to mid-20s (in 2003), or in their mid-40s and early-50s (in 2003), and one participant in his 40s (in 2011). This is revealed in some of the ways in which the movement actors describe “radical” activists like ACT-UP from their lived

experiences that focused on negative aspects of activism (e.g., “in-your-face” other “radical” tactics that had ample media attention in this timeframe). Many participants who were ambivalent about whether they saw themselves as activists because of their internalization of this interpretation the signified “activist” is negative due to the visibility of types of radical activism.

Marc, a 24-year-old (in 2003) gay man and former co-chair of a SAGA chapter for three years in the Midwest, states that highly vocal activists can be off-putting to developing a coalition. For Marc, “radicals like ACT-UP do more harm than good” to advancing LGBT rights. When I ask Marc, then, who helps SAGA, he states:

You get parents, you get teachers, you get just educators in general. ...Activists are not bad, as long as they aren't an antagonistic activist.

Adam L.,⁶ a 23-year-old (in 2003) gay man and chair for two years of a SAGA chapter in the Southwest, makes it a point to describe how he is not a “classical definition of activist” because he is not a protester:

I am an activist, although I don't think I necessarily fit the classical definition of activist. [What's the classical definition?] Somebody that's screaming. When I think of activism, I think of screaming. That's not who I am. I'm a consensus-builder and a relationship-builder.

For Adam L., the classical definition of activist is bothersome because he seems himself as a consensus-builder. Those activists who protest or, in his words, are “screaming” are unhelpful and, therefore, not what he wants to be known as in his activist work.

Adam L. and Marc set distinct boundaries between what they see are “bad” activists (screaming, antagonistic, and radical activists) and “good” activists (consensus- and coalition-builders). But, if we look closely at their words, they are engaging in “identity not” (Freitas et al. 1997) border construction, creating an “us-and-them” model of activism (Ghaziani 2011) where groups define

⁶ In a previous publication (Cortese 2006), Adam L. is known by his first and last pseudonym name (Adam Lieberman). NORM also had participant that I named Adam. Although an easy solution would be to change NORM's Adam to another name, I could not bring myself to change it due to his deep connection to it. In our interview, he describes an epiphany scene to the normalcy of the intact penis when he saw a statue of Rodin's Adam in the Art Institute of Chicago. Although he is an atheist, he has a replica on his étagère of the same statue of Adam from the Art Institute, and uses it as a reminder to him that Adam was “the first man [with] the first foreskin” and that it is not meant to be removed (despite, he notes, the Biblical story of Abraham). The “Adam” symbolism is so imbued with his activism that Rodin's Adam is his avatar in his online activism. Out of respect and to differentiate between both Adams, I added the last initial to the previously-published Adam from SAGA.

themselves by creating an identity of “us” that is intrinsically relational to “them” so that it is almost impossible to separate the two. That situates their identity in a value-laden schema that relationally links activist identities together with moderate tactics (e.g., I am a “good activist” because I’m not “bad” and a radical like you) and making it more that they are defining themselves as something they are *not*, instead of creating an identity on what they *are*.

For Adam L. and Marc, being children during the 1980s and 1990s may have impacted their cultural perceptions of activism; the meanings of activism may be different from those who lived during the time when protesting was more widespread. It is not unreasonable to assume that when this new generation of activists replaces previous generations of social movement leaders, the negative perception of “bad” activists can become institutionalized in some movements, which could create rippling effects on particular tactics, strategies, alliances, and outcomes – a result that is occurring between Labor and the Occupy Wall Street movements (Lewis and Luce 2012).

Activists who are older still defend boundaries between radical and moderate activists, but tend to frame them more specifically around episodes of violence in what are otherwise relatively moderate movements. Taylor, a 52-year-old (in 2003) gay man and chair of a SAGA chapter in the Pacific Northwest for four years, also intimately weaves his general (and positive) definition of activist into his own self-identity of activist that he does not really feel he is one despite being labeled one in the media:

I don't really know [what an activist is] because I've never thought of myself as an “activist,” but I'm always described on the news or in the newspaper as a “gay activist.” So, I guess I am. So, I guess to me an activist is a person who is actively involved in what is going on and what's happening.

Taylor continues his response uninterrupted, refining his definition of “activist” in that that a movement has “thoughtful” and “rioting” sides, each belonging to a movement. But Taylor engages in “identity not” boundary setting because he perceives rioting as a more immature or irrational tactic in today’s movements and he feels it weakens the public’s perception of activists:

...As a gay activist, one of the things that you always want the community to see you as is as a respected individual who has thoughtfully put together ideas and a plan for the betterment of the community and for it not to be a rioting kind of—disturbing meetings and throwing things. But, you know, damn it, I guess there is a piece of that too!

As Taylor continues his response uninterrupted, he draws comparisons between SAGA and “the black movement” that he—perhaps unintentionally—describes monolithically and in racist and/or white-privileged ways:

...I guess I look at the black movement and I don't think people started listening to black people until they started rioting and breaking and burning and looting and killing. ...Now, the part that I don't think the black community has got yet, or a lot of communities have gotten, which I think the gay community has finally figured out, which is what SAGA to me is all about, I think you have to educate.

...[Most] gay people are well-educated. Their parents expect them to go on. They are very well-educated. They are well-spoken. They have goals. They know how to set those goals. They know how to reach those goals. And consequently, the movement, I think, is moving along rapidly because of that.

Taylor is engaging in boundary-defending on multiple levels. First, in what are misinformed racial generalizations, Taylor is differentiating between race and class (e.g., “gay people are well-educated” and implying that African-Americans involved in “the black movement”—whatever that is—were not), assessing the LGBT movement as comprising of mostly educated white males who behave differently from “the black movement.” Taylor also maintains a boundary between activists based upon tactics, seeing education as a paramount tactic to rioting, even if the end result of equal rights is the same.

In summary, *Demarcators* construct an activist identity by demonstrating what they are not, and constructing and defending boundaries between “good” and “bad” activist categories. Unlike *Emphatics* and *Reconcilers* (below) who focus on what they do that qualifies them as “activist,” *Demarcators* focus on what they *do not do* to establish their “activist” identity.

Reconcilers: everything I do is activism

I categorize movement participants who have a positive definition of activist but express ambivalence or qualify self-identity as an activist as *Reconcilers* (Table 2) because they tend not to see their activist work as meeting what Bobel (2007) calls the “perfect standard” of activism. In her research, many of the activists who did not claim the activist identity felt that they did not or could not live up to the expectations of an activist (Bobel 2007). Unlike Bobel’s findings where the participants she interviewed rejected an activist identity, *Reconcilers* tended to define “activist” in two ways: changing the definition of “activist” to accommodate the level of their work in the movement or redefining activism so that their career outside of a social movement organization qualifies as activism. I call this latter term “occupational activism.”

Reconcilers were more likely than those in other groups to either be “members” who donate time and/or money to the organization sporadically as time in their lives permitted (42%). Three out of five (60%) were recent additions to the movement, joining within the past year at the time of interviews. Two were past-chairs of their organizational chapter (67% of all past-chairs across all categories). *Reconcilers* often described their activist work in ways that highlighted the challenges of work-life balance in activism, noting how their

involvement in the organization was restricted by their home and professional lives. This differed remarkably from *Emphatics* who described this activist work-life imbalance in more rewarding ways.

Twenty-year-old Trey (in 2003), among the youngest participants and a recent addition to the SAGA chapter in the Pacific Northwest, represents the first type of *Reconciler*, which is the one who tends to be a newer member and trying to resolve the dedication necessary to be an activist with the amount of work that he can dedicate to the movement. He conceptualizes “activist” as an achieved status that has a minimum threshold that needs to be met (he describes it as “becoming an activist”) by first recognizing the social issue, and then acting upon it:

Someone who feels strongly enough about an issue to act on it. And I think that before you become an activist, ...you really have to feel strongly about something. And once...you realize that it needs your help and it needs your energy, that's when you start acting on it, and that's when you're an activist.

Trey evaluates his participation and, although he qualifies his response at first, he concludes his explanation after redefining what an activist is:

Yes, to a degree. ...I think I could choose to be more active, and I think every activist makes that choice, to the extent of how active they're going to be. But I think that by being involved in [SAGA], and taking the opportunities to do some activities, that is being active.

Trey describes activism in terms of degrees and one could be an activist by having the “frame of mind [and] putting forth some energy” as the first step in activism.

...I think it's an active choice to join SAGA in the first place, and then what you choose to do from there on, is obviously to what degree you're going to be an activist. Sometimes being an activist could be just a frame of mind...thinking that there needs to be change...and that you're willing to put forward some energy to help that. So, sure, yes, I'm an activist.

At first he is an activist “to a degree” and then, upon redefining the qualities of an activist to have a lower threshold to qualify—in his mind—as an activist, then finally claiming with certitude that he is an activist. Trey’s ambivalence demonstrates that he wants to identify as an activist and, so, rather than claiming that he fails to meet an ideal he sees himself as not accomplishing at this moment, he proceeds to lowers the threshold of what he considers an activist to being “just a frame of mind.” With this redefinition, Trey is able to

reconcile his current participation in SAGA with a more broad definition of “activist” than perhaps *Emphatics* may have used to describe their work.

Eric, a 58-year-old gay man (in 2011) and an active NORM member since 1998, spends most days of the week standing with an “intactivist” sign in front of the university hospital nearby. The signage changes somewhat, but usually promotes something like “genital integrity for all.” At our interview he proudly wears a t-shirt that claims “I want my foreskin back!” and is worn at almost every public event he attends. One would think that he is an *Emphatic* based on his fervent dedication to intactivism. When I ask him if he is an activist, he says:

I have never marched for anything or about anything before. This is the very first and the only thing that I have ever done. I mean, I grew up in the 60s when you were supposed to be out in the streets doing all of these things, and I never did. ...It is such a personal issue to me that it has been in the background of my entire life the whole time. ...Not that I don't care about the other things, but you know, there are other people doing work on some of these other issues that I care about, but very few people are doing this one. So, this is what I'm going to do.

My assessment of his ambivalence rests on his facial expressions and body language. He looked down at the table and away from me and spoke in a slow, measured tone that seems to regret his non-participation in movements in the 1960s when “you were supposed to be out in the streets;” He cries as he describes how he failed twice to “save his nephews” from routine circumcision in the 1970s, and; “something in the back of [his] mind keeps telling [him that he does not] deserve to have a foreskin” because he was not involved in intactivism earlier out of fear of his family learning about his sexuality. For Eric, his activism is never good enough. It is always too little and too late, and he feels like he can never undo the damage that happens from his perception of “not doing enough.” Eric’s behavior epitomizes the internalization of a cultural standard of the “perfect activist” that is elusive for many activists to achieve. Eric sees himself as never truly achieving this “perfect standard” of activism because no matter how many times he speaks up, “kids get cut...and that’s devastating to me.” Despite all that he does to stop male circumcision, the fact that little boys still get circumcised devastates him to a point where he never *truly* feels like he has met an ideal standard of activism that he has set.

A second type of *Reconciler* is comprised of those who are what I term “occupational activists.” They consider their career in the educational system as activism, challenging the theories of identity competition (Corrigall-Brown 2012; Hardnack 2011; Stryker and Burke 2000), and a remarkably divergent construction of “activist” found in the literature.

Vincent is a 33-year-old (in 2003) gay man from the SAGA chapter in the Southwest, where he used to be a co-chair for several years. After six years in SAGA, he is now just a tangential member due to him having to refocus his energies on getting his Master’s degree in education before becoming a school

administrator. Vincent defines activism generally as “someone who is making a positive change in society.” He asserts how his career as a teacher makes him an activist:

Currently? No, not currently. More so in the past. Yes! I change my mind! I am an activist now, even though I'm not *really, really* active in SAGA, I'm doing something *very, very, very* powerful still, and that is serving as an openly gay administrator and teacher in our public school system. And that's probably more active than sitting on a board of [SAGA].

Vincent first evaluates himself against his ‘standard’ for activism, identifies his current work insufficient when compared to the time when he co-chaired the SAGA chapter for six years prior, and then he immediately reconstructs an alternate definition of activism that incorporates his current career as a school administrator. In fact, the language Vincent chooses suggests his work as a co-chair in SAGA was passive; it is as if sitting on a board entailed little in comparison to what is necessary to be an administrator and teacher in a public school, which he sees as being even more active than his being a co-chair in the local SAGA chapter.

Brooks, a 30-year-old (in 2003) gay man, is a high school teacher and a member of SAGA for a year. He is also a member of another LGBT student organization in the Pacific Northwest. Brooks defines activism in a general way as others in the *Reconciler* category:

An activist is someone who goes out and changes someone's mind about a particular subject. That's an activist.

Although his dedication to both organizations qualifies him in his mind as an activist, it is what he does in the classroom—presumably how he changes students' minds about LGBT issues by being a positive role model and through education that makes him an activist:

[Do you consider yourself an activist?] I think so. [Why?] [Long pause] I think that I change people's minds about being gay or being straight with the work I do at SAGA and ...[the other LGBT] organization I work with. I mean, I'm not like a billboard-toting picketer. I mean, I work with kids and talk about their experience, or play a game of pool with them and talking about their day, or something that someone said, and changing their mind about how they thought about how that went. Yeah, I think I'm an activist in that standpoint. Rallying kids up to go out and change the world. In that sense, I am an activist. But in terms of sitting down at the table with the policymakers, no I'm not. Or hanging outside a building, no I'm not. No, not like that.

Brooks's description of an activist as a "billboard-toting picketer...hanging outside a building" could be perceived as a negative. However, Brooks is not boundary-defending or assessing a value to these types of activists but, rather, using it as a cultural example as to why he, as an educator in school, still qualifies as an activist despite not carrying a sign in a protest. Brooks justifies why being a teacher qualifies him as an activist—someone who changes someone's mind—when it does not fit our shared cultural meaning of activist.

The problem with Vincent and Brooks engaging in "occupational activism" is that "when anything is activism, and, by extension, anyone is an activist, then the definitional power of the word is compromised" (Bobel 2007: 153). In the interviews, one can see how *Reconcilers* struggle to reconcile schemas of both "activism" and "activist" so that what they do can qualify as activism. Newer members constructed an activist identity so broadly that almost anyone as members of the social movement, could qualify as an "activist" despite not being able to achieve the mythic selflessness and dedication of a "perfect standard" of activism. When almost anyone doing just about anything can qualify as activism and unintentionally discount the work of *Emphatics* or weaken the cultural meaning of the word "activism" that could weaken the power of the words *activist* and *activism*.

Limitations

Post-hoc research

These findings are drawn from completed research projects on two separate social movement organizations with a different set of questions to answer research problems. These findings are inductively generated from the interviews and I provide a post-hoc theoretical analysis of the findings. Had I intentionally created a set of research question to address the research problem of constructing an "activist" identity, I anticipate many of the identified limitations below would have been satisfactorily addressed.

Since I did not collect data with the intent to specifically to understand the identities of movement participants as activists, it would be unwise to make any predictive claims. Although one could argue that I am developing a typology for the sake of developing one, these empirical findings give us greater analysis into what we take for granted (that not all activists see themselves as such), but have not really been intentionally studied. The theoretical framing and typology is a launch pad for further research, and I encourage researchers to reflect upon these findings and their experiences within social movements to build a broader theoretical model to predict activists' identity politics.

Sample size and composition

Due to the limited sample size, I urge caution with generalizing how and why people may fall into a particular category due to their backgrounds or social locations. The three categories in the typology are not exhaustive because the

other categories have too few respondents to establish a pattern with any degree of certitude. The reader should be comfortable that there will be theoretical and methodological limitations with these data that cannot be resolved by these findings.

The reported findings may be atypical for activists in other types of social movements due to the imbalanced sample sizes and groups from which participants were drawn from; the race, gender, and sexuality (mostly white gay men), organizational structure (small chapters within a broader movement organization), and movement industry (tangentially related to the LBGT movement) may affect how one identifies as an activist.

Most of the research I cite in this paper include female-identifying activists as participants and, like my research, their analyses are post-hoc (e.g., no one intentionally sought to analyze “activist” identities). My sample of 35 includes only seven people who do not identify as male. It is interesting to note that I do not find a rejection of activism in the ways that the other researchers do. This suggests there may be a gendered dynamic to claiming an “activist” identity, but it is impossible to draw definitive links to gender without making questionable liberties in the research conclusions. The patterns comport with what others have found in other gender-specific organizations, which suggests that these patterns are not highly-gendered processes, but a part of the activists’ psyche and affect how activists construct their identities around cultural expectations and norms of what an activist is and the standards by which we collectively measure our activism levels to. The social psychological framework, therefore, is helpful to explain my findings of how movement participants claim broad definitions of “activist” so that everything they do is considered activism.

Interviewer effect

Since all of the research out there is ad hoc, it is unclear if activists make these identity constructions of “everything I do is activism” on-the-spot in response to our queries, or are really struggling with these questions themselves, and we happen to uncover them through our questioning. Is the researcher prompting these ambivalent identity claims and their responses are in defense to “prove” their activist identity in response to feeling questioned on their legitimacy? There may be an interviewer effect that prompts the activist to engage in the social psychological processes of meaning making on-the-spot and yielding explanations that they had not deeply considered before.

Although “occupational activism” may be similar in broad category type that Naples (1998) found in everyday activism of women, it is dissimilar in how men in this study claimed the identity. Rather than being modest or seeing what they do as not activism because it needs to be done, the two men in this study (Vincent and Brooks) seemed to make these claims during the interview, which one could interpret as a way for men to avoid failure amongst other men. Connell (1995) shows us that masculinity is tied into what we do and accomplish, and being a male interviewer, the interview itself may have been a

way for the two men to make claims of accomplishing masculinity by not “failing” as an activist despite their lower level of participation in the organization. This interview sample is too small to draw conclusions; it may have been gender, or perhaps the nature of the organization (i.e., taking an “educational approach” to ending bullying in schools) that may have yielded these results. Since I can no longer ask follow-up questions, future research will need to be mindful of these possibilities.

Conclusion

This paper helps makes sense of observed nuances of “activist” construction by exploring the growing body of evidence that contends the collective identity category of “activist” is neither static nor uncontested, and linking these processes to social psychological identity research on boundary disruption, defending, and border work. It may be true that social movement scholars assume not all movement actors identify as “activist”; however, this is the first paper to understand “activist” in multiple ways by explaining how social positions, cognitive processes, and individual personalities of movement actors affect how they construct and identify with “activist” identities.

Whereas *Emphatics* may be the focus in our research on activism, *Reconcilers* and *Demarcators* demonstrate that an activist can espouse an “activist” identity, but it depends on the interpretive processes and meaning making of “activist” before they claim the identity. I argue that these categories need not be distinct as Corrigall-Brown (2012) and Gecas suggest (2000:94). Individually, identity competition theories cannot fully explain the ways in which *Reconcilers* define “activism” to comport with what they do in a movement so that they can continue to claim an “activist” identity despite the encroachment of their lives into the time dedicated to activism, and vice versa. *Demarcators* hold ambivalent definitions of activist, and qualify whether they are activists by parsing “activist” into good and bad categories. *Demarcators* negotiate what Freitas, et al. (1997) conceptualize as “identity not” boundary work to construct clear and distant borders between “us good activists” who help the movement, and “those bad activists” who are a hindrance to achieving movement outcomes. *Demarcators* know who they are as activists and what an activist is by what they are not, instead of how *Emphatics* and *Reconcilers* know how they qualify as activists by what they do.

Building upon research on boundary work in movements (Cortese 2006; Gamson 1995; Ghaziani 2011), the *Demarcators* category adds new twist to ways in which movement actors define themselves as a “good” activist versus others as a “bad” activist, based upon their lived experiences of activism. This typology can be used to understand the internalization of cultural perceptions of “activist,” which can have lasting effects on the movement actors, the organizations, and the movement trajectories. Although the United States-based Tea Party (Berlet 2011; Rosen 2012; Williamson, Skocpol and Coggin 2011), Occupy Wall Street (Lewis and Luce 2012), and the Anti-Globalization

(Barr and Drury 2009; Brooks 2004) movements may still demonstrate examples of the “radical activism” in tactics and approaches to forging alliances that *Demarcators* criticize, there is some evidence suggesting the boundary-defending among activists may be occurring in a number of ways (Brooks 2004; Lewis and Luce 2012; Rosen 2012). For example, there are similarities in the ways the women-led Tea Party organizations and the liberal and feminist movements of the 1960s were organized and formed (Rosen 2012). Perhaps social movement scholars and activists do not consider how, why, or even if there are multiple ways to identify as “activist.” The findings of this paper helps future scholars and movement participants make sense of what positions *Emphatics* take on as compared to *Reconcilers* or *Demarcators* in ideological movements, and if these different positions (or others) would have different “impacts” for movements.

To create a more robust explanation of the collective identity processes in movements, establishing direct theoretical bridges between social psychology and sociology can help understand how and why the complexities of multi-dimensional and contested “activist” identities exist in social movements, but do not appear to adversely affect the movement. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura 2000; Bandura 2001; Bandura 2002) and Cognitive Sociology (Cerulo 2003) may be a fruitful approach to explain further the hows and whys movement activists might choose one “activist” identity over another. My findings on how *Reconcilers* construct alternate meanings of “activist” to identify with, and the *Demarcators* “identity not” boundary work lay the foundation for fertile new research areas that establish links between the individual’s sense of agency, self-reflectiveness about one’s capabilities, and the broader network of cultural/structural influences on social movements.

Reconcilers consider what they do in an organization—no matter how little or how unrelated to the movement organizational mission—as qualifying them to claim an activist identity, despite differing from the cultural and scholarly definitions. A subset of *Reconcilers* recast the “activist” role into a new concept that I call “occupational activism” that challenged the “perfect standard” of activist by diminishing the tasks they accomplish in the movement when compared to what they do for the movement in their careers as educators. This provocative finding, although comprised of a small subset, merits additional exploration in other ideologically based social movements.

Movement actors themselves can build upon the understanding of *Reconcilers* to help elucidate the processes involved in “becoming an activist” where new members may not yet be able to perform the activist role “appropriately” and measure their own behaviors accordingly so that they can still qualify as activists. *Reconcilers* also bring to light some reasons why movement actors who are “burned out” or fatigued from long-term dedication might choose to construct another, less-intensive activist identity to both affirm their dedication to the movement goals and qualify them as activists by considering what they did in the past.

It is important to note that the current body of research on the collective

identity construction of activist seems to arise serendipitously from broader projects. This paper establishes the importance of considering “activist” as another identity outcome from movements. Social movement scholars should not accept as a given self-identification of activism in the way *Emphatics* do. Having multiple and contested “activist” collective identities likely has implications for movements. In thinking of cycles of contention, how does activist identity construction play in movement insurgence or abeyance? Without further research, we are left relying only on conjecture. This paper aims to help scholars make sense of identity work on activism, and establish new areas of exploration into the micro-level processes within movement organizations.

It is interesting how a number of participants constructed activist definitions on the behaviors taking place in everyday sites of talk and interaction, thereby challenging the “in-your-face, radical” activism that some considered detrimental to movements. Are negative perceptions of activism leading to a change in perception from us-versus-them to us-and-them as Ghaziani (2011) and Cortese (2006) note in their research on the LGBT movements? We are left to wonder if some movement actors believe that activism as we know it is dead, and that the radical activists are the ones who killed it. What effects might that belief have on the life cycle of movements? How might this affect movement strategies, tactics, and mobilization? As social movement participants and scholars, knowing the identity politics of “activist” will be one way to stem the cultural tide that is working against us.

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Interconnections between anarchist practices and grassroots struggles¹

Tommaso Gravante

Introduction

Since the early 21st century, protests in Argentina led by the slogan ‘*Que se vayan todos*’ [‘They all must go’] have opened the door to a new cycle of mobilizations, both in Latin America and other places around the world (Holloway, 2010). These were led by social subjects (such as peasants or indigenous communities, homeless, *villeros*, rural students, *chavos banda*, unemployed, *cartoneros*, and housewives)² who were invisible in the analyses and definitions of collective action traditionally centred on the institutional and structural dimension of protest, calling what is ‘politics’ and ‘social’ into question (Zibechi, 2007).

Moreover, as John Holloway said, social change is “the outcome of the barely visible transformation of the daily activities of millions of people. We must look beyond activism, then, to the millions and millions of refusals and other-doings, the millions and millions of cracks that constitute the material base of possible radical change” (2010, p. 12). Recently, increasing attention to the cultural and subjective dimensions of social movements has raised the academic and political visibility of those grassroots groups characterized by self-managed and horizontal organization and projects, where anti-authoritative discourses and practices of anarchism can be observed.

Even though many social movement scholars are only just discovering the ordinary people’s struggles - or “nonmovement”, as Asef Bayat (2010) defined them, based on his experience in the Middle East - this interconnection between anarchism and grassroots protest is not new. In fact, following Malatesta’s words “Let’s go to the people”, an historical Mexican anarcho-punk told me: “we were always present in the social struggles, from the earthquake of Mexico City in 1985, the anarcho-punks were there, rescuing people, opening wells, etc., in the protests of teachers (1990s), in Atenco resistance (2006), in Oaxaca insurgency (2006), the anarcho-punks were always present”³. As for the anarchist subjects who make themselves present in many

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² *Villeros* are people that live in suburbs of Latin-American, big cities like Buenos Aires, or Santiago del Chile. *Chavos banda* are very young people, generally from rural and poor villages, who live like beggars in the urban areas such as Oaxaca, Mexico City, Guadalajara. *Cartoneros* are people who make their living collecting and selling salvaged materials to recycling plants. This movement began in Argentina in 2003 and has since spread to countries throughout Latin America. Most of these people live under the shadow of informal economy; they do not exist, nor are they represented by the ruling class (Zibechi, 2010).

³ Interview on June 2013, Mexico City (Mexico).

of these protests, whether local or national, they have always valued the space of daily practice as a focus for struggle and social change. However, it is only in the last twenty years that this interconnection has become more evident in academic circles. In my experience this is due to three main reasons:

- a. First of all, there seems to be more participants from grassroots movements and anarchist collectives in academia⁴, such as the *Bloque Libertario*, anarchist UNAM's student group in Mexico, or the students and researchers of Libertarian Youth (*Juventudes Libertarias*) in several Spanish universities. These researchers can offer a different focus in the study of social movements: one that is characterized by a “look from inside”, as discussed by Gould (2009).
- b. Secondly, the power and legitimacy of some state-centred left actors (such as unions and parties), which have tended to monopolize ways of protesting for decades, have decreased (Holloway, 2002). As John Holloway wrote, “there is one key concept in the history of the state-centred left, and that concept is betrayal. Time and time again, the leaders have betrayed the movement, and not necessarily because they are bad people, but just because the state as a form of organisation separate the leaders from the movement and draws them into a process of reconciliation with capital” (2006, p. 46). This “betrayal” could be observed in Europe in the last few decades, where these political actors are no longer the moral reference point for ordinary people, nor for those who pursue social change; and their declining legitimacy has allowed other actors, with other practices, to emerge.
- c. Finally, as several NGOs, professional consultants and researchers have played an important role in co-opting activists (Foweraker, 2001; González, 2007), mediating in social conflicts for both governmental and lobbies' interests (Aguirre and Matthews, 1989; Bermúdez, 1987; López y Rivas, 2012;), and in creating division among protestors (Zibechi, 2010), grassroots movements and anarchists have found more common ground.

To summarize, a loss of power and legitimacy among these actors has highlighted the existence of self-organized people, anarchists, and their connections. In order to understand the role of anarchists in these current grassroots movements, I will answer these key questions:

1. What elements and practices are shared between grassroots movements and anarchists?
2. How and why are anarchists important to grassroots protests?
3. How and why are grassroots groups important to anarchists?

My analysis is based on:

⁴ This is possible in a number of European countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece, and several Latin American countries, such as Mexico or Argentina, where there still exists a public high school system with low university fees.

- My personal experience as an anarchist militant in several anarchist collectives and projects for twenty years, including those in Italy (Anarchist Occupy Social Space *Libera*, Italian anarcho-syndicalist trade union *Unione Sindacale Italiana*); Spain (Spanish anarcho-syndicalist trade union *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*); Mexico (Social Space *Ruptura*, Zapatista support groups); the UK (Solidarity Federation), and International Workers Association's delegate (IWA).
- My personal knowledge of different anarchist networks.
- My fieldwork on social conflicts and grassroots movements, including qualitative techniques such as in-depth interviews, focus groups and life histories.

1. What elements and practices are shared between grassroots movements and anarchists?

Empathizing with victims of social injustice is one of the most important bonds between grassroots groups and anarchist subjects. These days in Mexico, for instance, “*Su dolor es nuestro dolor, su rabia es nuestra rabia*” [Their grief is our grief, their anger is our anger] is the motto that several anarchist groups are sharing with grassroots protests against the murder of six, and the disappearance of 43, rural students in Guerrero, Mexico, which occurred in late September 2014. Emotions, which have an important role in protest as the literature over the past twenty years suggests (Jasper, 1997, 1998, 2006 and 2011; Goodwin, Jasper and Polletta, 2000, 2001 and 2004; Flam and King, 2005; Gould, 2009), are one of the principal bonds between these two subjects. In particular, grief, anger or indignation, are emotions that result from empathizing with the ones who suffer. This process of empathizing is integral to participation and involvement in protest, and it can help to explain why people support groups and movements despite possible risks - not for material gain, but rather for intrinsic moral and emotional reasons, as the NoTAV movement shows.

Although left-wing parties and unions in Italy support the High Speed Rail Project in Turin –known as TAV – and “sell” it as a tool to improve employment and benefit national interest, local inhabitants are wholly disappointed with this project and, for more than twenty years, they have been struggling against it. The NoTAV movement has developed a struggle based on an injustice frame and emotional links such as place attachment and solidarity. Anarchists are taking part in this movement because they have recognized these emotional links as an essential set of values that are worth fighting for. Although the left-wing parties, unions, and many Italian intellectuals and scholars, endorse the project and legitimate the military government repression, the NoTAV movement has become an icon for grassroots protests both in Italy and Europe. After twenty years, it is less important whether benefits by the project are actually true or whether an alternative project is possible, since the protest against the High Speed Rail Project has been turned

into a struggle for people's self-respect and own dignity.

Another shared feature is that, in both grassroots groups and anarchist collectives, the political discourses are carried into everyday life practices - that is, their everyday needs lead their collective actions. For example, in Mexico, not only do anarcho-punk collectives and people from popular and poor barrios —which are excluded from all sorts of equipment in terms of education, culture, and health, among others— protest together against governmental policies of exclusion, but they are also setting up alternative social projects like co-operatives of self-managed work, soup kitchens, alternative farmer markets, and so forth, in order to satisfy their daily needs.

Grassroots groups share with anarchists the importance of starting their struggles and resistances from their own local territory. Recently, global protests against international organizations such as the WTO, IMF or G8 have lost some credibility, as local struggles have arguably become more salient on the grassroots agenda, and the time and place of the protest are less frequently dictated by professional activists from the World Social Forum, SMOs, NGOs or left-wing parties nor unions.

Grassroots groups and anarchist collectives also have some common self-management practices – for example, in how they tend to make a living. Often self-reliant, they fund their struggles from selling items such as T-shirts, stickers and food. The Do It Yourself practice is the core of both grassroots groups and anarchists. Nonetheless, the DIY practice does not only involve an individual dimension as a specific dexterity or skill, but also collective abilities and needs where “you” becomes a “we” turning the DIY into Do It Together. Therefore, the Do It Together practice permits not only independence from parties, unions, or NGOs, but also developing another important process that is learning by doing.

2. How and why are anarchists important to grassroots protests?

In my experience, anarchist practices and projects represent an alternative to the hegemonic system. These innumerable experiences around the world set a precedent for collective imagination. In the city of Modena, which has consistently been governed since 1945 by authoritarian left-wing coalitions, anarchists have occupied the social space *Libera*, which was set up in 2000, before they were evicted in 2008. This experience showed that developing other kinds of social policies and relationships beyond the co-opting and repressive policies of the Communist Party is possible. Now in Modena, different autonomous social experiences have sprouted up as a result of the *Libera* experience. Paraphrasing Bakunin (1871), anarchist collectives show ordinary people that the impossible is possible.

Anarchist subjects have also pointed out the importance of individuality as a noun and not the individual as an adjective. As Goodwin et al. (2001: 3) note:

“Marx, Lenin, Trotsky, and their successors portrayed revolutionaries as rationally pursuing their material interests”. Furthermore, Marxist scholars have rejected individuality as one of the main aspects for social change in order to regulate social injustices and increase public loyalty through creating the illusion of participatory politics while simultaneously preserving the interests of the State. Individual behaviours, biographical experiences, and emotions have often been eradicated from protest associated with several state-centred left actors, in favour of pursuing their own political goals, discouraging people from developing their own creativity, critical senses, and experiencing the pleasure of being in disagreement. Conversely, from an anarchist’s point of view - following Bakunin (1911) - the infinite diversity of people is the principal basis of their solidarity, evident between Mexican anarcho-punks and Zapatista communities, for instance. Anarchists have always emphasized the moral worth of the individual, and the importance of differences between each person, because this diversity draws people into a collective whole in which each person completes the whole while the others complete her.

Lastly, what I have observed in my experience and fieldwork is that anarchists play a central role in preventing the concentration of power when grassroots groups self-organize. Anarchist individuals or collectives are like an alarm bell, which ring every time someone tries to break the horizontal decisional process of the assembly or co-opt the most active participants – as is often the case when there is someone linked to a union, party, or other potentially co-opting cause, for example. This occurred in Spain where anarchists played an important role in 15M’s assemblies.

3. How and why are grassroots groups important to anarchists?

In spite of the fact that anarchist subjects constitute an important gear in grassroots movements’ machinery, the influence grassroots movements have had on anarchist collectives is arguably the most important. Indeed, in my experience, self-managed protests by ordinary people in many countries have been a breath of fresh air for local anarchist movements. The insurrection of indigenous communities in Chiapas in 1994, with the uprising of the National Liberation Zapatista Army (EZLN), is undoubtedly one of the most significant influences on protagonists of the Mexican anarcho-punk movement. Anarcho-punk collectives expand on concepts such as autonomy, *comunidad* [community] and *comunalidad* [communality]⁵, etc. with the very same act of solidarity towards the Zapatista communities. As an anarcho-punk activist from Guadalajara told me: “many of our fanzines were based on the issue of autonomy and the municipalities, of Caracoles, of living in indigenous communities, etc. I mean, the movement has been fuelled by this [Zapatista

⁵ The elements of *comunidad* [community] and *comunalidad* [communality] are described by Mexican Mixe indigenous anthropologist Floriberto Díaz Gómez (2004).

insurrection] a lot”⁶.

In the same way, environmental grassroots protests such as NoTAV in Turin and the NoMOUS movement in Sicily against the construction of the ground station developed by the United States Department of Defense, have been a milestone in the growth of anarchist collectives in Italy. In these kinds of protests carried out by ordinary people, the loss of legitimacy of institutional politics clears the way for anti-authoritative practices and values that build a bridge between grassroots movements and anarchists.

“People change themselves, changing the world”

The relationship between anarchist collectives and grassroots protests, which are characterized by self-managed and horizontal organization and direct action, is not new. Anarchists have played an important role in movements, protests and riots all over the world, such as the *Settimana Rossa* [Red Week] in Italy in 1914; the large rural strike in Patagonia (Argentina) in 1920/21; the Zapatista Mexican Revolution in 1910; the protests against Nuclear power in Europe in 70s and 80s, and more recently in educational spaces, neighbourhood libraries, soup kitchens, health care and housing support projects, and so on. Nevertheless, only recently has this relationship has gained academic and political⁷ visibility, due to the loss of power and legitimacy of several ‘traditional’ political and social state-centred left actors.

Several elements characterize this relationship. Perhaps the most important is collective emotions (Jasper, 2011). These grassroots conflicts are characterized by collective experiences, which create ties that can motivate participation. Moreover, the emotional dimension strengthens the reasons to continue being involved in the conflict - far beyond any material interests and cost-benefit evaluations, in favour of alternative moral values and other elements that affirm dignity, identity, place attachment, and so on.

The relationship between grassroots groups and anarchists is producing “another” form of doing politics, characterized by carrying political practices into everyday life practices. People who have participated in these self-organized protests, redefine their way of doing politics and seeing the world. For instance, they no longer legitimise the practice of delegating, but instead they start developing new political practices based on anti-authoritarian and horizontal values. As a woman, who took part in the Oaxaca insurgency in 2006, told me: “that’s how we are creating a community and other sorts of relationship, and I think that’s the best ever, the ways to relate to each other and be together”⁸. But above all, these experiences are affirming *hic et nuc*,

⁶ Interview on June 2013, Guadalajara City (Mexico).

⁷ State repression of anarchist activists and groups all over the world perhaps suggests that governments noticed this relationship before researchers.

⁸ Interview on December 2010, Oaxaca (Mexico).

here and now⁹, and their means of *prefigurative politics* reflect, or are somehow equivalent to the ends (Boggs, 1977a and 1977b). In other words, following Rucht (1988), Epstein (1991) or Franks (2003) among others, in the grassroots movements the ‘means reflect the ends’, and its organization and practices in some way anticipate or enact an ‘alternative world’ in the present, as it has already been achieved.

Finally, in my experience, the relationship between grassroots movements and anarchists is based on trust, respect, solidarity and mutual aid - elements which played, as Kropotkin claimed, a large part in the development and evolution of human beings. This kind of relationship is possible because anarchists want people to empower themselves, and not to join their anarchist collectives or become anarchists – in contrast to how parties, unions, and NGOs tend to operate.

To conclude, grassroots movements and anarchists are setting up a laboratory for political experimentation, where a process of social change is no longer hidden. This social change is possible when people empower themselves through a process of emancipation that cannot be fast and rushed, but is slow, constant, and gradually spreading. A process in which the protagonists of these experiences “change themselves, changing the world” (Zibechi, 2007, p. 15). As a Spanish 15Ms protestor told me: “you only have to change your awareness, this is where the change happens. You must not expect someone else’s to change, but you must demand a change in yourselves, your mentality has to change”¹⁰.

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⁹ While several other struggles have been characterized by religious and political doctrines, such as Catholicism and Marxism, which suggest that a better life is achievable only in a far away future.

¹⁰ Interview on October 2012, Seville (Spain).

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Revisiting the master's toolset: concerning pedagogy, privilege, and the classroom-to-war room pipeline

Michael Loadenthal

I.

I work as a professional terrorist apologist, instructing the future leaders of the world at what is deemed to be an elite, ‘inside the beltway’, Catholic institution of higher education. Now while that’s all well and good, the problem is, my work aims to dismantle the State and capitalism; to carve out a new world in the shell of the old. How does one reconcile revolutionary goals and Ivory Tower employment? To be honest I’m not quite sure yet but am hoping that by the end of writing this, we’ll all have it all figured out.

I teach, as many of us do these days. I am a precariously employed, on-again-off again adjunct. I work at a rather prestigious University, one that has graduated a king, 12 princes, ten Presidents, 21 Senators, 69 House Representatives, 22 governors, and literally hordes of White House staffers, Presidential cabinets members, Chiefs of Staff, executive advisors, Secretaries, Directors, Ministers, Supreme Court Justices, ambassadors, judges, military commanders, famous businessmen, scientists, lawyers and most importantly, David Palmer, the President of the United States in the fictional post-9/11 terrorist drama, *24*. Now while this non-exhaustive list is unabashedly stolen from Georgetown University’s Wikipedia page, I have no reason to contest its accuracy.

II.

Having an affiliation with such an institution is a component of a performative costume that I like to deploy when it suits me. Just like a funny hat or a pair of ass-less chaps, it can really surprise someone if you bring it out at the right time. My favorite time is when I’m working one of my other jobs, providing table service at a club-like lounge in DC. Now while the 4pm-4am weekend shifts don’t serve to add to my fieldwork, in a sense every mediated interaction under capitalism is a form of sociological inquiry and anthropological action research. You can learn to read patterns: What collectivities are the best tippers; How people communicate sex, gender and sexuality while trying to ‘hook up’; The group dynamics of splitting a \$700 tab five ways; What Washington insiders loudly scream about over the DJ’s beats while they’re drunk...It’s not quite observing religious rites of the indigenous hidden away in the Peruvian Amazon, but it is certainly not without its own truths to be had. But I digress.

Until we win the revolution, and higher education is liberated from the constraints of privatization, fiscal austerity and the like, folks like me will have to be Professor by day and drink slinger by night. In a sociological sense, its great field work to be on different end of the service provision spectrum. As a

professor, I am given deference, respect, and a presumption of professionalism and achievement, while as a club waiter serving out my shifts amongst a strip of bars known in DC as 'black Broadway', I get a different experience. Anyone who's ever worked in the service industry, especially food service, will get what I mean. Everyone who is rude and disrespectful to their server, remember that it could be me, and that some waiters are also professors. Moreover, I'm not the only person serving drinks on Saturday who has a 'real job' come Monday. One of our bartenders conducted netwar for the Army, and another worked tracking illegal weapons in North Africa. Others work for various branches of the federal government, city government or a host of NGOs. Shocked? Come on it's DC and it's a recession. So yeah, when a mean customer makes some asinine comment such as: 'Well what else do *you* do, don't you have a *real* job?', I can (and do) come back sharply with, 'Well I am also a professor at Georgetown, and while it pays less, it's no more 'real' then serving drinks and food to your entitled ass.' Like I said, having the 'I'm a professor' card to play when you want is a nice ego boost.

III.

Although I am a mere adjunct, the prestige of the University is enough to make one feel like a career trajectory of exploitation—in the traditional Marxist sense of course—is worth it. Without much of a sneer I can honestly call such murderous ruffians as ex-Colombian President Álvaro Uribe, and former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, co-workers. Yeah of course we've never met, but Madeline and I taught classes during the same time slot, so we were at least institutional colleagues. Sorry to say Madeline, but my class filled up during pre-registration too, so you're no better than the rest of us.

Anyway, I have had quite a time molding young hearts and minds one 2.5 hour lecture at a time. The *Program on Justice and Peace*, as lefty a department as this school can sustain, hired me way back in 2010, and I was tasked with teaching a course related to 'terrorism.' I thought about the topic—one in which I have prestigious formal training in [insert twirls of my fictional handlebar mustache between my thumb and pointer finger]—came up with a few abstract-length proposals, sent them up the food chain and crossed my fingers. My point in retelling this is simply to state that my job requirements are pretty vague as far as canonical requirements are concerned. Because of the University's counter-terrorist themed Security Studies program and its realist, neoliberal International Relations/Government programs, I am the sole (explicit) counterbalance on the topic.

For example, if you study the topic of terrorism at Georgetown and you're well read in the topic, you'll fight for a chance to take a class with Bruce Hoffman. Why? Well because he wrote the book on the modern field (as they say), has worked as a scholar in the field for three decades, and has former high level positions with RAND, FBI, CIA, Coalition Provisional Authority Iraq, Iraq Study Group, National Security Preparedness Group, West Point and Human Rights

Watch. Or maybe it's because he is a scholar-professor at six universities in four countries and the editor of the field's most prestigious journal. Or maybe it's his fieldwork conducted in Afghanistan, Argentina, Colombia, India, Kashmir, Indonesia, Israel, Iraq, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, the Philippines, Palestine, Sri Lanka and Turkey. So...you can take a class with Professor Hoffman—who after inviting him to my class I can positively say is an approachable, humble and super nice individual—or you can take one with me.

And what are my qualifications? My pedigree? I am a queer, vegan, Jewish, anti-authoritarian, political theorist with four interdisciplinary degrees under my belt. All of my studies have focused on social movements and political violence. I have seventeen years of experience working amongst and in solidarity with radical social movements. I have traveled a great bit of the world often doing fieldwork of my own...but I'm admittedly no Bruce Hoffman, not even close.

While we both may have FBI files, mine is not in the HR department. While we both may have spent time in Nablus, we had vastly different purposes.

So myself, Álvaro, Madeline and Bruce all teach about terrorism, and while three-fourths of us have dealt out lethal State violence, all but Bruce have been called 'terrorists.' While Álvaro earned his title killing scores of people and calling them FARC, and Madeline earned hers while wielding US power in the Balkans, Iraq and elsewhere, I just argue for a bit of evenhandedness in labeling violence. This is my academic goal and what separates me from the others. They are 'terrorist stoppers' and I am a 'terrorist understander', often called a terrorist apologist. This is what makes me the odd man out. That, and I'm the only one still a student, and with no experience in the service of Western-styled capitalism and empire.

IV.

This is all to explain that when a Georgetown student wants to study terrorism, they have quite a few respectable choices for professors, and yet year after year, for the past five years we've tried, my class has filled prior to the first day. This says to me that students are hungry for a counter narrative, eager to hear about stone-throwing anarchists, masked Hamas fighters, and anti-abortion survivalist assassins from none other than a septum-ringed, early 30s, in-your-face lefty. Just think, when someone says, 'Yeah I studied terrorism at Georgetown,' they could have just spent 12 weeks with me or with my colleges, yet on paper, it all looks the same. This to me is one of the peculiarities of the University system. Even within rigid degree requirements and a seemingly hegemonic frame of political reference, students can self-select a course of study to fit their preferred politic.

My students tend to me quite diverse. Some are activists eager to find affinity in an academic setting. These students tend to hear about the class through leftist social networks, email list serves and word of mouth. They usually make up about three or four out of 20. Then the remaining 16 or so tend to fall well dispersed along the political spectrum with many clustered around the self-

described 'progressive', 'liberal' or 'social justice' markers. They tend to be more than 90% female.

To demonstrate such diversity and build a classroom culture of cooperation, I try to display our collective political diversity through a series of activities the first weeks of class. On the first day I show a 'name that non-State actor' slideshow and have students mark their answers on papers for extra credit. With the promise of 5% added to their final paper, students are very participatory. What I have learned after doing this activity three times are some strange patterns. Everyone can pick out and explain the Klan and the Westboro Baptist Church. About half can identify the Black Panthers, the Zapatistas and Hamas, and nearly no one can name the Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh, or Hassan Nasrallah, the iconic and longtime leader of Lebanese Hezbollah. The activity has 30 cases to name. Those are the patterns as best as I can report them.

This to me is very telling.

Amongst other lessons, it says to me that we are not doing a good enough job as educators in teaching students about the complexities of violent social and political movements. If Hassan Nasrallah is just another Arab in a turban aligned with evil then its time to review the multi-decade, CIA-issued, iconic figure flashcards. Sorry to say but in 2015 if you are a student in IR, Government or Security Studies and you can't identify the ideological and strategic differences between al-Qaeda, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Lebanon's Hezbollah then you need to hold off calling yourself a 'terrorism scholar' on job applications to the Department of State or Defense.

So why is all this relevant to a discussion of social justice and education? For an answer we can turn to a quote often placed atop the syllabi of Profs who consider themselves to be revolutionaries...myself included. In 1968, Brazilian educator and radical Paulo Freire wrote:

Education either functions as an instrument which used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

When your school is a direct pipeline from high schools across the world and the megamachine of US-dominated Empire, keeping such goals in mind is key. Imagine you are a well-intentioned, 18-year-old attending high school at one of our many rapidly crumbling educational institutions. By the New Year you have one foot out the door, and by the fall you are settling into the four-year roller coaster that is undergraduate study. As soon as you cross that dormitory threshold, before your very first moment of self-doubt when your Introduction to Western Traditions Professor tells you that everything you know is wrong, even before this point a countdown begins. While some students take a while to

see the writing on the walls, the clock starts as soon as the first semester's fees are debited from your inheritance, or disbursed by the lender. This countdown is pretty simple. You now have less than four years to figure out what you believe, who you want to work for, and find yourself sustained employment. If any of this seems like a type-a exaggeration or over preparedness, we must teach at different schools. At my school, students get the job in their cross hairs early and they aim high.

So you buy your books, binge eat pasta, have some possibly homoerotic, possibly drug induced experiences, maybe discover some political truths, and after four years, you're done. As critical scholars have been quick to label the entry of vast numbers of youths into the jail and prison system the school-to-prison pipeline, at Georgetown we are the high school-to-State Department pipeline and for a few, I am a last stop. If we as educators take a second and consider this, it can be daunting. Certainly it carries with it a great deal of responsibility. Professors teaching thoracic surgery know that they may be the last voice running through the head of a new doctor slicing into a heart or lung. A Professor in structural engineering knows that the knowledge they construct for their students could be used to build bridges and tunnels that inspire awe or those which collapse and kill. Every Supreme Court Justice was once an undergraduate and I would venture that every foreign diplomat, Joint Chief, and CIA analyst had at least one undergraduate instructor that altered the trajectory of his or her politics in one way or another. Given this reality and Georgetown's history of staffing the embassies, court rooms, NGOs, palaces and secret smoky rooms of the global elite, I feel a weighty sense of responsibility that all educators should feel.

Let us not over sell this point but let's be clear. Some schools make great doctors, world-class brain surgeons, pediatric nurses, and anesthesiologists. Some schools make business folk. Some schools make critical theorists, continental philosophers, feminist scholars and radical geographers. Georgetown makes statesmen, big and small. While it has only graduated one US President, it fills the halls of government, the inner-beltway boardrooms of lobbyists, and the doomsday shelters hidden deep under the Cheyenne Mountains. Georgetown students get to see that big red button that if pressed, would end humanity. They grow up to be Alexander Haig, former Secretary of State, Supreme Commander of NATO forces and White House Chief of Staff. They grow up to be General Dunford, commander of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan. They grow up to be General Casey, Army Chief of Staff and commander of multi-national forces in Iraq. They grow up to be the Presidents of not only the US but also of Panama, the Philippines, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ecuador, Bosnia, Colombia, the European Commission. They graduate the Prime Ministers of Portugal and Lebanon and the King of Jordan.

They grow up to be Major General Enis, Deputy Director of human intelligence for the CIA. They grow up to be General Jones, Obama's former National Security Advisor and NATO Supreme Commander for Europe. They grow up to be General Petraeus, director of the CIA, and former Commander of

multinational forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. The CIA especially seems to have roots in the Georgetown alumni graduating three directors including Robert Gates (also former Secretary of State), George Tenet and Petraeus. So yes, it is not a stretch to imagine that Georgetown students self-selecting a course on political violence and terrorism may one day be in a position to operationalization such knowledge.

To be fair, it's not all a dark cloud of spies, statesmen, assassins and White Housers. Some alum go on to be Richard Mudd, imprisoned for conspiring along with John Wilkes Booth to assassinate President Lincoln. Some become Matthew VanDyke who fought in Libya alongside the Ali Hassan al-Jaber Brigades of the anti-Gaddafi 'resistance'. Then of course there are others who act in furtherance of justice, peace, equality and freedom but take a decidedly less murderous path. Within this vein the University has graduated great social justice activists working amongst a litany of local, national and international organizations too numerous to name. Recalling those known to me personally, we have key players in projects such as Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive, United Students Against Sweatshops, the DC Action Lab, the Wayside Center for Popular Education, Family and Friends of Incarcerated People and Advocates for Youth. Certainly, *these folks* are not small in number.

V.

In my short 'career' as an adjunct, I have already received emails from former students that confirm the hypothesis developed above. More than once, I have received an email that reads like this:

Hi Professor Loadenthal! It's Jane from your terrorism class last spring. Remember me? I am living in Kabul working for a logistics and security firm. Our work is mostly hush hush but I wanted you to know that I think about our class a lot and I think it has really helped me be a more effective team member here. In a few weeks we're off to Baghdad and then Mogadishu. Just wanted to say thanks for exposing me to all of the interesting perspectives in our class and if you're ever in Somalia, give me a ring.

Yes, that is an email received nearly verbatim, and it's one of a growing number. Now being a keen decrypter of government New Speak, I know exactly what "logistics and security" means and its not making sure your Amazon books arrive to their point of destination on time. In the realm of these providers, most famously being Blackwater USA (later known as "Blackwater Worldwide," then "Xe Services LLC", and now Academi) it means putting bullets into brown and black flesh and insulating US-affiliated interests through the protection of personnel and property. In the case of this student regardless of she spends her days behind a desk directing subordinates, behind a computer screen directing drones, or behind a rifle scope directing lead whatever experiences informed her

time prior to those actions will have a significant impact on her decisions. In those moments when your lecturing and it feels like its just not penetrating, I like to imagine I'm one of those miniature angel/devil figures perched on my students' shoulder and speaking into their ear. When they're flying that F-16 fighter jet, recommending sentencing for a defendant, or providing policy suggestions for their department head I like to think that some of the truths I tried to impart echo within. I like to think that before they add yet another Mohammed to that 'approved for assassination' kill list they consider our class's lengthy discussions about the asymmetric application of the rhetoric of terrorism. I like to think that my wee voice gives them a bit of that pang of doubt. I like to think that all the energy expended explaining "terrorism" and "politics" as two sites on a spectrum of power has an impact. When it really counts, in the moments before the drones are dispatched, the policies written, and the laws passed, I like to think that we make a difference for the students we encounter.

You may say that I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one.

About the author

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Sans-papiers on their March for Freedom 2014: how refugees and undocumented migrants challenge Fortress Europe

Heinz Nigg

Abstract

From 27 May to 27 June 2014 I followed on the Internet the March for Freedom, a transnational protest campaign of around 400 refugees, sans-papiers/undocumented migrants, and their supporters. At the end of their 500 km march, starting in Strasbourg, I joined them as a sympathiser in Brussels for a week of protest. I filmed their powerful final demonstration in front of the headquarters of the European Union. I highlighted some of the issues and problems of the campaign with a blog and asked myself how citizens, students, researchers, artists and other potential allies could become more involved in supporting human rights campaigns such as the March for Freedom 2014. In this case study I document the activities of the March for Freedom 2014, examine its use of media and show how the struggle for freedom of movement, utopian as it may seem, embodies a promising vision for deepening democracy.

Keywords: sans-papiers, undocumented migrants, asylum seekers, activism, grassroots organising, Frontex, European migration policies, border politics, democracy, human rights, social movements

Introduction

The March for Freedom began on 17 May 2014, just before the European Union Parliament elections. About 100 migrants from across Europe met in Strasbourg. Among the many groups represented were the *Coalizione Internazionale dei Sans-Papiers e Migranti (CISPM)* of Italy, the *Collectif des Sans-Papiers* (France), and the *Refugee Movement Oranienplatz Berlin* (Germany). I became interested in the march because the electorate of many EU countries – and also of Switzerland, where I come from – was clearly moving towards a national conservatism hostile to so called “illegal” or “irregular” migration, not least because of a nebulous fear of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, stirred up by right-wing populist parties. As a visual anthropologist and community artist who has done several projects for inter- or transcultural understanding in multicultural Switzerland during the last years¹ I

¹ In the Swiss community arts project *Here and Away. Living in Two Worlds* I brought together people directly and indirectly affected by migration in many ways, through collective recollection in oral history workshops and the exhibition of video portraits (Nigg 1999) Online: <http://www.migrant.ch/en/here-and-away-living-in-two-worlds/view.html> (DE/EN/FR/IT)

felt alarmed and challenged in this moment of crisis to support the sans-papiers movement in Europe in their struggle against discrimination. I became aware of the march through contacts with researchers and activists in Berlin and decided as a first step to follow the march on its website², record and blog my observations in order to win support for the march in my circle of friends. The March for Freedom 2014 touched key geographical sites of European border policy, places whose names have acquired tangible meanings in the lives of many refugees and asylum seekers, such as *Schengen*. Different symbolic actions and events marked the main stops of the march, which concluded with a week-long series of actions from 21 to 26 June 2014 in Brussels, seat of the European Union. More activist groups, human rights organisations, refugee and migrant solidarity groups supported the march and were organising solidarity actions in other European cities as well.

Both activists and researchers may profit from this case study on two levels:

- How and with what means of communication can campaigns like the March of Freedom make the voices of sans-papiers and undocumented migrants visible and heard?
- Is transnational organising an option for sans-papiers movements, and if so, what are the benefits to be gained and obstacles to be overcome?

The case study also shows how research can monitor the web activities of a social movement and combine the findings with an ethnographic approach of interacting with the movement in order to draw an in-depth picture of a movement. In this paper I look at the historic background of the transnational sans-papiers movement in Europe and examine its demands, forms of action, media strategies and the outcome of the March for Freedom 2014.

Historical context

Let me first have a look at some important steps in the development of the sans-papiers movement in Europe. In 1998 a first camp of the transnational campaign *No one is illegal* was set up at the German-Polish border. That protest was directed against European migration policy and the newly established border controls in Eastern Europe to shield the Schengen countries from migrants and refugees. In the following years activists began to develop the concept of *border camps* as a new method of resistance against Europe turning into a fortress to deter immigration from non-European countries, especially from east and south of Europe. This struggle is well documented on the website of the *noborder network*³, an umbrella organisation for the border camp movement and other struggles in Poland, the Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the US-Mexican border (Akers Chacón & Davis, 2006), Australia and other countries. To understand the dynamics of transnational mobilisation of the March for Freedom 2014, one implication of

² March for Freedom website: <http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org>

³ <http://www.noborder.org>

this historical context has to be especially considered: up to the present, struggles of sans-papiers always have been across borders, nations and continents, supported by grassroots groups, NGOs and by artists focusing their work on problems of border crossing⁴.

The struggle against Frontex, the European agency for external border security founded in 2004, also goes back some years. In a 2008 NGO statement presented to the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) a large coalition of organisations expressed their concern that asylum seekers were blocked from claiming protection by Frontex's campaign of deterrence and discriminatory border regime⁵. In the same year a campaign was launched under the name *Frontexplode* at a rally in front of the headquarters of Frontex in Warsaw, when a representative of the Mauritanian Human Rights Organisation emphasised the deadly consequences of Frontex operations along the West African coastline, and demanded an immediate stop to Frontex's *Operation Hera*. Activists from Poland, Italy, Greece and the Netherlands participated in this first round of protests. Out of this developed a transnational chain of actions against the European border and deportation regime⁶.

The March for Freedom 2014 from Strasbourg to Brussels marked a further milestone in transnational organising in its attempt to make the demands of the refugee and sans-papiers movement not only heard in some border regions of Europe but in the European capital itself. Here is a brief chronology of the March for Freedom based on its website, «Freedom not Frontex»:

27.12.2013:	Ideas for logos and slogans
03.02.2014:	Our demands
05.02.2014:	Map of people killed at European borders
13.02.2014:	Call for support
25.02.2014:	Mobilisation video
03.04.2014:	Let's crowdfund ourselves
28.04.2014:	Materials needed
03.05.2014:	Departure from Berlin to Freiburg/Kehl/Strasbourg
07.05.2014:	Creactivism Days (until 09.05)
15.05.2014:	Mobilisation video
16.05.2014:	Call for demo from Kehl to Strasbourg to cross borders
26.05.2014:	Arrival in Saarbrücken
28.05.2014:	Our stops to Brussels will be Weiler la Tour, Luxemburg, Steinfort, Heinsch, Leglise, Libramont, Libin, Wellin, Beauraing, Hastiere, Mettet Charleroi, Pont a Celle, Nivelles, and Sint Genisius Rode
29.05.2014:	Visit in the Lager Lebach, a holding camp for asylum seekers
29.05.2014:	Call for Action in Schengen

⁴ About art contributions: Projects *Performing the border* and *Europlex* by Swiss artist Ursula Bieman, website Geobodies: <http://www.geobodies.org/art-and-videos/europlex>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frontex#cite_note-11

⁶ More about *Frontexplode*: <http://w2eu.net/frontex/frontexplode/>

01.06.2014:	Border Crossing and Action Day in Schengen
12.06.2014:	March attacked by police in Luxemburg
12.06.2014:	Demand for the destruction of a colonial memorial in Arlon
16.06.2014:	March to Charleroi and bridge crossing in Dinant
23.06.2014:	Actions in Brussels
25.06.2014:	20 people arrested in German embassy
25.06.2014:	Invitation to press conference in the action camp
26.06.2014:	Demonstration against Summit of European Council

Demands of the March for Freedom 2014

How successful were the sans-papiers and activists of the March for Freedom in making the aims and demands of the March visible to a wider audience? Here an extract from the call for action published on their website *Freedom not Frontex*:

Let's March for our freedom! We are asylum seekers, refugees, undocumented migrants, migrants from many European countries, we are Europeans with a "migration background", we are all those who have no full privileges of citizenship, but also citizens who share a common anger against the racist EU migration policy.

The call for action concludes with a set of demands:

We have a dream:

- Freedom of movement and of residence for all asylum seekers
- Stop the Dublin trap and the obligatory residence in Lagers (holding camps) throughout Europe
- Permanent documents without criteria
- Stop the imprisonment and deportation of migrants
- Same working conditions for all
- Same political, social and cultural rights for all: right to study and to work
- Stop the European imperialist policies: no more free trade treaties and NATO wars
- Abolish Frontex, Eurosur and other anti-migration policies and measures.

Join us!⁷

⁷ Website of the March for Freedom:
<http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/post/2014/02/03/lets-march-for-our-freedom-may-june-2014/>

These demands are clearly stated, leaving no doubt what the activists were fighting against (EU anti-migration policies); and what they were fighting for (political, social and cultural rights for everybody). But I do not like terms like "racist" or "imperialist" repeatedly used as a kind of mantra for revolutionary change, without putting them in context. Militant rhetoric maybe helpful to stimulate group identity but it conceals the fact that many sans papiers/undocumented migrants may not share the specific worldview of some of their supporters, but may cherish values rooted in other conceptions of the world and politics. Another element of rhetoric used in the same call for action can be traced in the phrase "We have a dream". It refers back to the famous 1963 speech of Martin Luther King, which laid the ground for the modern civil rights movement in the United States. This kind of rhetoric appeals to a much larger community of people interested in the protection of human rights. And it is this larger community, which, in my opinion, has to be won over to show their solidarity with the sans-papiers in Europe today. Since the tragic shipwreck of 2013 when a boat carrying migrants from Libya, Eritrea, Somalia and Ghana sank off the Italian island of Lampedusa with 366 deaths⁸, the number of people in Europe becoming more critical of European asylum and migration policies has grown considerably. And it is indeed true that critical debate about the European border regime is much stronger now than at the beginning of the sans-papiers movement in Europe more than twenty years ago.

Human rights: A vision for deepening democracy

The demands of the March for Freedom focused on issues of human rights: freedom of movement and of residence for all sans-papiers. This call for basic human rights played an important role in the mobilisation of the March for Freedom. Each message of solidarity began or ended with the call for freedom of movement. But does this rallying cry for freedom reach all potential allies for a democratic Europe? Probably not, because it sounds too utopian to many ears, not appropriate for winning European elections. But this argument misses a point. The slogan 'Freedom for Movement' is primarily aimed at sans-papiers themselves and their supporters: it is a campaign slogan to unite, to make their voice heard in the struggles to come. And it is a warning to all politicians, from left to right: don't shove us around; we want to be equal partners at the negotiating table when it comes to decisions about our future in Europe. It can be assumed that all groups involved in the March for Freedom 2014 shared these basic values of inclusion and participation. In this respect they are also one with other social movements in Europe: the squatters, the unemployed, and the working poor.

⁸ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/22/lampedusa-boat-tragedy-migrants-africa>

Who is in and who is out?

The fact that sans-papiers have no say whatsoever about border regimes and migration policies constitutes a severe lack of democratic legitimacy in European countries. Asylum-seekers and undocumented migrants are denied political rights and are being criminalised. People crossing borders without papers are called "illegal", "illegal immigrants". From a democratic point of view it can be argued that the state has the right to determine its borders, that citizens of a democratic state have the right to determine who comes in and out of its territory because of the right of self-determination. That assumption needs to be questioned because it is fundamental to the idea of democracy that all who are subject to political power must have a democratic say. In the case of borders between countries the state exercises its political powers over both insiders and outsiders. If the principle of democratic legitimacy is applied to border control, then the straightforward conclusion is that all people subjected to border regimes, including the foreigners, should have a democratic say over it. This dream of including marginalised groups in society is far away from what can be achieved in the short run, but it provides democratic societies with a vision and a direction for deepening the process of participatory social change.

Forms of action

Surprise visits

On 17 May the March for Freedom started in Strasbourg. The marchers crossed the border between France and Germany to arrive for a two-day stay in Saarbrücken. The marchers set up a protest camp, expressed their demands with a demonstration and a street theatre performance. A first highlight of the March for Freedom was the visit of a "lager for refugees"⁹ in the German town Lebach. This visit is well documented in a video¹⁰ where activists can be seen talking to residents of the lager about their living conditions. They show solidarity with the residents, dancing with them on the street and celebrating their common fight for human rights. The video looks at the refugees not from an outside journalistic point of view but through the eyes of the activists exploring issues of human rights through their visit to the lager.

⁹ Sans-papiers and their supporters often use the term *lager* to refer back to the Second World War, when Jews, Sinti and Roma, homosexuals and opponents to the Nazi regime were imprisoned and killed in *Konzentrationslagern* (concentration camps or holding camps). The official terms in the German-speaking countries for refugee housing are *Asylunterkunft*, *Asylbewerberheim*, or *Flüchtlingsunterkunft*.

¹⁰

<http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/post/2014/05/29/March-for-freedom-visits-lager-lebach>



The March for Freedom visits a lager in Lebach, Germany





One room for a family. One toilet for 1 to 4 families. No shower in the apartment.

On day 13, the march reached the town of Schengen by crossing the border from Germany to Luxembourg. Schengen is the city in Europe where the so-called *Schengen Agreement* was signed in 1985. Out of it developed the *Schengen Area* consisting of 26 European countries. The Schengen Area has no internal borders and operates with external border controls for travellers and immigrants entering the area. The marchers demonstrated for the freedom of movement for everyone and exposed anti-migration policies in Europe. Before crossing the bridge over the river Mosel, a press conference took place to explain the reasons behind the protest march. A group of activists crossed the river by boat to make the danger visible for refugees and migrants crossing the Mediterranean Sea to reach the coasts of Europe. Just before reaching the other side of the river, activists jumped out of the boat and symbolically swam to their rescue. There, demonstrators had already decorated a sculpture commemorating the Schengen Agreement with barbed wire and the photos of dead or missing sans-papiers. Its aim was to expose the European border regime responsible for the deaths of thousands of migrants. The demonstration continued to the Schengen museum, where an exhibition told the story of Frontex. Tunisian activists displayed pictures and listed the names of missing persons and of people who had died in the Mediterranean Sea. Another group of activists climbed to the roof of the museum to hang up a banner that read 'Frontex, where are our children?' Another banner read 'Frontex kills!' Activists described the dramatic situation for refugees in Greece. The afternoon of action ended with food and a cultural event. Videos and photos of events such as border crossings and the action day in Schengen were also meant to serve as an invitation to the followers of the march on the Internet to join and support its activities.



Border crossing in Schengen

A few days later, another intervention shed light on how discrimination against migrants and sans-papiers, especially coming from the South, can be traced back to colonial times. When the marchers passed through the Belgium town of Arlon, they were surprised and enraged to encounter a memorial honouring King Leopold II, who was responsible for the exploitation of the Congo and the killing of thousands of people¹¹. He is remembered there as the Hitler of Africa. The demonstrators spontaneously wrote a letter of protest to the mayor of town announcing that they would destroy the memorial if he would not do it himself. Here an excerpt of the letter to the mayor:

And this [memorial to Leopold II] is especially dishonourable because people of African origin live close by the monument. To what horrors are they exposed every

¹¹ Leopold II extracted a fortune from the Congo, initially by the collection of ivory, and after a rise in the price of rubber in the 1890s, by forcing the population to collect sap from rubber plants. Villages were required to meet quotas on rubber collections, and individuals' hands were cut off if they did not meet the requirements. His regime was responsible for the death of an estimated 2 to 15 million Congolese. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leopold_II_of_Belgium

day! As if you would put a statue of Hitler in front of a Synagogue! We come from all regions of the world. We had been colonised and still suffer from the consequences. Take Sudan as an example. The colonial regime created a border separating north from south. This causes violent conflicts up till now and forces us to flee the country.

And this is how the mayor replied to the letter: “But then should we destroy all symbols of Leopold II in Belgium? This is impossible!”¹²



Memorial of Leopold II hit by mud, slung by demonstrators

Violence

Nonviolent methods of action are a powerful weapon for social protest¹³. The March for Freedom based its tactics on civil, nonviolent resistance, on marching, peacefully crossing national borders, or visiting *lagers*, singing and shouting slogans to identify and unmask authorities for their inhuman migration policies. Slogans such as ‘We are here and we will fight - Freedom of Movement is everybody's right!’ and ‘No border crossing is illegal!’ Fortunately the march was not attacked by bystanders or hostile groups. The only clash with authorities

¹² Website of the March for Freedom:
<http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/post/2014/06/12/destruction-of-colonial-memorial-in-a-ron>

¹³ About the use of strategic nonviolent action in conflict see Sharp 2005.

happened on 15 June in Luxembourg during a demonstration at a European Council meeting dealing with Schengen¹⁴. Police and security forces removed the demonstrators from the conference building. A video shot by a demonstrator and uploaded on the website¹⁵ shows demonstrators being carried or pushed away from the entrance of the building. In a press statement the organisers of the March for Freedom described the behaviour of the police as a brutal attack:

During their whole operation the police was not communicating with us in any way, even though most of the officers speak three languages (English, French and German). They ignored all our attempts to talk with them (...). Pepper spray attacks, beatings with batons, kicks and bites of the police dogs were the only answer we received. Then they started to arrest the people from the March, targeting mainly refugees. The protest March followed the arrested comrades to the police station escorted by dozens of police cars and police officers who on the way harassed over and over again those individuals from the March that were spreading flyers to the passing people. The March arrived at the front door of the police station and started a rally there. After several hours of protest our 13 comrades finally got released.¹⁶

On the Facebook page of the March for Freedom the "police attack" was hotly debated in French, Luxemburgish and English. Some commentators described the police intervention as harmless ("they just did their job"). Other commentators attacked the demonstrators for "complaining about heavy repression" whereas in their countries of origin they would be treated much worse. Again others questioned the relevance of the uploaded video because it did not show what happened before and after the scenes depicted. Other commentators took a stand for the demonstrators: "This was an abuse of power against them!"

A more detailed account of how it begun, can be found in a diary entry (in German) on the website of the March for Freedom:

On a small path we (demonstrators) walked towards the big glass building. Two policemen in white shirts with weapons, batons and teargas at their belts positioned themselves immediately in front of us. Because of how they moved we realised that they thought we would stop at once and turn back. But it turned out differently. We passed between the two policemen and headed towards the building. We started to run. We entered the building through the first open door. Inside escalators were leading downwards. We all went down there, not knowing

¹⁴ The Justice and Home Affairs Council of the EU was discussing among other issues the implementation of operational actions within the context of the Task Force Mediterranean and a report from the Commission on the functioning of the Schengen area. See 'meetings': <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/homepage?lang=en>, meeting calendar 5 and 6 June 2014

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=644924665594373>

¹⁶ Website of the March for Freedom:

<http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/post/2014/06/06/luxembourg-the-5th-of-june-2014>

where this would lead us. We didn't know where the conference room of the members of the European parliament was. We asked a woman from Luxembourg, who supported us, where to go. She said that the meeting was upstairs. We all went up. The doors to the conference were closed. We wrote Anti-Frontex slogans on the windows. (...) After shouting our slogans in front of the closed doors, the police began to push us to the outside. We held on tightly to each other, so the police could not separate us. A policeman brought in a dog. The policeman pointed with his finger towards a person the dog was supposed to bite. The dog went off to this person. This fight went on for a while. The police made use of teargas, hit us, and the dog charged at us. Of course we defended ourselves. During the skirmish a policeman fell in front of our feet. His eyes were wide open. He probably thought that he would get lynched now. We stumbled and fell on each other. We lost our shoes and photo cameras. The police didn't manage to get their revenge. But they dragged us down the stairs and kicked us out of the building. Our eyes and lungs were burning from the teargas. Our friends from medical aid gave us water and eye drops. (...) Later the police attacked us once again without warning. They pointed to several persons, one after another, pushed them on the ground, and handcuffed them. First they arrested 11 people, then another four friends who had joined us by car, altogether 15 arrests. We notified our lawyers to get our friends released from their arrest.¹⁷



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Clash with police in Luxembourg. Photo by Carole Reckinger (UK)

¹⁷ Website of the March for Freedom, daily reports:
<http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/daily-reports-journaux>

The challenge

The March for Freedom culminated in Brussels with a week of action from 20 to 28 June. It was an astonishing event. More than 500 people lived and worked together in an improvised camp with tents, kitchens, toilets, medical help, and a media centre, discussed and prepared protest action while at a summit of EU heads of state the latest decisions on migration policies were taken. The fact that the marchers made their long way to Brussels and managed to set up their protest camp was a success by itself. Feelings of victory and self-esteem found expression in celebrations of solidarity and hope, in the camp and during the demonstrations in the streets of Brussels. Brussels was a highly symbolic city to stage the week of action. Ranking between third and fifth in Europe (measured in Gross Regional Product), Brussels is one of the richest regions in the world. As a small world city it highlights the problems between rich and poor people in multicultural European societies: 15% of its population live below the poverty line¹⁸. It is a fragmented and segregated city. More than 50% of the population has roots or strong connections outside of Belgium. There are many political refugees and sans-papiers living in Brussels. This has led to a growing cultural diversity - a globalisation from below. Rich immigrants are to be found in the southeastern part of Brussels and in the suburbs. Poor immigrants live in the central part of the city, in the working-class neighbourhoods. The camp of the March for Freedom was located near Schaerbeek, a typical neighbourhood in Brussels with poor migrants.

The week of action included demonstrations at the German, Italian und Dutch embassies against Frontex. The most spectacular action took place on 26 June in front of a European Union building¹⁹. In a press release the March for Freedom summed up its position as follows:

We began marching by foot 500 km from Strasbourg to Brussels by crossing the border from Germany to France. At every stage of our March, we carried out political actions: In Schengen, we rewrote the Schengen Agreement, in Luxemburg we demanded to take part in the Summit of the Ministers of the Interior of the member states of the EU, in Arlon and again in Brussels, we denounced the colonial memorial honouring King Leopold II of Belgium. (...) Here, in Brussels, we will demand that the European Council [at its meeting] from 26 and 27 June 2014, sets a new agenda for migration with the collaboration of us refugees, sans-papiers and migrants²⁰.

¹⁸ The International Network of Urban Research and Action (INURA), a transnational NGO, monitors and compares the development of cities worldwide. How INURA portrays Brussels as a small world city:

http://www.inura.org/v2/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/INURA11_Brussels.pdf

¹⁹ It was the building of the European Union External Action Service (EEAS).

²⁰ Website of the March for Freedom:

<http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/post/2014/06/25/invitation-to-press-conference-26062014-1300-action-camp-boulevard-simon-bolivar-opposite-immigartion-office-brussels>

A symbolic act of confrontation

This is what I saw through my camera lens filming the event: the entrance to the EU building was fenced off with barbed wire. That prompted one of the speakers to comment: "Okay, this barbed wire stops us now from getting into the building, but not from voicing our protest." The tension between police officers in front of the building and a big crowd of angry demonstrators expressing their frustration with the European Union did not explode into violence. Some demonstrators, marked as security personnel, calmed down the situation by shouting: "It's not the police, it's the EU we are fighting!" Many speakers crowded around the open microphone to explain the reasons behind their protest. One speaker summed up the position of the March for freedom with a passionate accusation:

Today this is the policy of the European Union, according to its bilateral contracts: the freedom of hundreds and thousands of young people is constricted, be they from Africa, from Syria, from Palestine, Libya, Tunisia – from anywhere in Africa: Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Mali, just to name a few examples. It is the consequence of this criminal policy called regulation 'Dublin II'. How frightened you must be! We are unarmed. Our weapons are our voice and our will power. And even if you place armed forces at the border of the Mediterranean Sea, you will not be able to stop the free movement of people. At the same time weapons are sold to Syria, weapons are sold to Mali in the desert, weapons are sold to Algeria, weapons are sold to Palestine, weapons are sold to anybody and anywhere. And if you sell weapons, you organise war. And if you sell weapons, you kill people. And if you sell weapons, you have people dying in the Mediterranean Sea. This is not a misfortune. This is a crime committed by the European Union. This is a crime committed through the bilateral contracts. This is a crime committed by the International Monetary Fund. This is a crime committed by The World Bank. And this is also a crime committed by organisations which continue to exploit resources worldwide. That's why we are here: to demand the global regularisation of all sans-papiers and migrants!²¹

²¹ Video: <https://vimeo.com/99355697>



We demand the global regularisation of all sans-papiers and migrants.

Media strategies

Need for documentation

I thought it important to document the March for Freedom 2014 and write up this case study because it shows how sans-papiers can take a stand against oppression even with little resources and without powerful allies in the political arena. Let me first have a look at the web platform of the March for Freedom 2014. The number of activities during the march and the action week in Brussels looks impressive. Altogether 139 messages were posted (Table below). They fall into different categories: testimonials of sans-papiers, solidarity messages from and to other movements in Europe and Mexico/USA, calls for mobilisation and support, and self-generated media output such as posters, flyers, photos and videos documenting the March. I also found posts on the preparations for the march in Berlin, about spectacular actions and interventions during the march and posts on violent clashes with authorities in Luxembourg. The website also contains a list of media coverage, diary notes and links to groups and organisations of a loose solidarity network. Altogether the website of the March for Freedom constitutes a rich source of information to learn more about grassroots organising of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in Europe.

Categories of 139 posts on the web platform of the March for Freedom

Preparations / beginning	3	Aims / demands	9	Background information	5
Resources and funding	2	Mobilisation	15	Own media output	11
Media coverage	1	The march and activists	14	Actions and events	9
Solidarity with other movements	29	Solidarity from other movements	6	Violence	3
Testimonials	37	Analysis	4		

Categories of posts on website

Mobilisation: Video and photography for self-representation

How did the March for Freedom mobilise for its campaign in 2014? Napuli Langa, a 25-year-old Sudanese asylum seeker living in Berlin said in a short motivational video message:

We have to stand up and say: Enough is enough! It's the time for realising the problem: That the Europeans have their hands on those countries [in Africa]. So it is very important to march to Brussels. Every one of us: whether you are an individual or a group. You have to make use of your ability, this time: whether financially, or whether you are an artist. We need all abilities that we have...whether you are tall, short, black or white: we are one! And this is the beauty we have! Catch up with me and let's march to Brussels²².

²² Motivational video message from Napuli Langa, Sudan:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCmsABvfsuk>



Napuli Langa



Omar

Videos and photographs played an important role in the mobilisation for the March for Freedom. Napuli Langa's call for participation is a good example for how the March for Freedom appealed to its audience with conviction. Refugees with their stories placed themselves centre stage. They were the anchorpersons for the web audience to identify with the aims of the march not on an abstract but more personal level. These refugees know what they are talking about. Their statements reflect the multifaceted realities of the lives of refugees and undocumented migrants better than statistics and official documents on migration policies can do. The website of the March for Freedom contains a large number of such statements; one could call them *presentations of oneself*.

Motivational statement by Omar, June 16, 2014:

European citizens have to remember that refugees are no danger to Europe, and migration is not a crime. They need to be granted a chance to contribute to the society where they live. I hope you can support laws that give equal human and civil rights for refugees, and bring social equality by sharing the same human rights, that European people are enjoying right now, with immigrants and refugees²³.

First-hand accounts

In a video on the website of the Dutch branch of the March for Freedom²⁴, refugees and asylum seekers anonymously talk about their experiences. Here some excerpts of what they have to say:

²³ Excerpt from <http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/post/2014/06/15/statement-omar>

²⁴ Excerpts from video *Voices For Freedom* were shown on the Dutch website Freedom not Frontex: <http://freedomnotfrontex.nl>, which is not online anymore.

Voice 1:

I can't call it horrible, but it feels horrible in my mind. It's like... I see bombs in my home or some bullets in my street. And as a human being I run away just to survive. And someone will block and ignore me, to cross the border. And he will tell me: Go back to your country! But how can I go back to my country if I will die there?

Voice 2:

I say racism is a wind that blows nobody any good. Maybe you try to seek asylum? It's not really easy the way you are treated.

Voice 3:

I was one of the Syrian refugees in Egypt. In 2012 Syrian refugees were very welcome there. Then the president was ousted and the Syrians weren't welcome any more. I believe it is the same in any other country. Refugees are always used as a tool in politics.

Voice 4:

The more lucky places in this world have the right to love their lifestyle and the way they live. But at the same time they should help other people, because we are all human beings. And this is more than enough reason to help each other.

Voice 5:

In all countries of the European Union we can apply for asylum. But we do not receive anything. They give you nothing. And if you are transferred to a remote province you still must pay the bus ticket to get there. Even for the ones with papers it is difficult to renew them. And the jobs are bad. They make people work for 20 hours, for ten hours. It's really hard here. So I ask the state to review its laws, to develop new laws regarding migrants or refugees.

Voice 6:

I am not sure if it's disturbing or funny, how one barbed wire and a few kilometres from each side of it can make such a difference; like between hell and just another peaceful and quiet day. And when you manage to cross this border you still have all the papers to do. You only have an identity if you have papers; then you are a human being, with rights and with possibilities to do this or that. It's very disturbing to be without papers. But to be able to meet new people [during this March], who are interested in these problems and are aware of them, that really gives me hope, and power to say: Okay, I still don't have papers, but, hey, I am not alone. I still have people who recognise me as a person. And that is really a good thing. No Borders. No Nations. Just people!

Call for support

The website was used as a platform for the activists of the March for Freedom to call for material and financial support. From an outside position it was not possible to see whether the calls for support were successful or not. But it is interesting to see from the list below what materials are needed to organise an extraordinary event like the March for Freedom:

sleeping bags / sleeping pads / tents, buses / transporters (trucks) / trailers, mobile phones / charging cables (additional), laptops, printers (good and quick), sim-cards for mobile phones, internet access, walkie-talkie, good generators, energy-saving lights, cables and distributors for high voltage currents, mobile sound system, megaphones, tables / benches, water pipes / water hoses / water pumps (also for 1000 litres), canvas covers / ropes, fire extinguishers, 2 big tents for kitchen and a plenary room, water canisters, bins / bowl for water, plastic bins, disinfection material / soap, clothes for rainy weather, shoes and pairs of socks, washing lines, patches for blisters / pain-killing tablets, creative material / colour for textiles / cloth, technical tools (cordless screwdriver / screws), scoops, spades, brushes, plumber's helper, cleaning material²⁵

As a follower of the March for Freedom on the web I was invited to give financial support. The March for Freedom made use of *betterplace.org*²⁶, a state-of-the art platform for crowdfunding. 94 donors spent 2844 Euro for food, water and gas cookers. That was 85% of the sum needed. For the action week in Brussels an additional sum of 2480 Euro was needed to cover the costs for actions and infrastructure. But no donations came in. Was it because of a lack of communication, or because the activists did not find time to take care of their donation platform?

Outcomes of the March of Freedom 2014

Impact

How effective were the actions and interventions during the march from Strasbourg to Brussels? Local people on the way took notice of the demands and of the fact that migrants and sans-papiers were taking to the streets to demonstrate for their rights. The media coverage on the March was considerable²⁷. The national press reported on the March for Freedom as follows: in Belgium, 6 articles; Germany 8; Luxemburg 8; and Greece 1. There were 15 articles in the local and regional press in the countries that the march passed through. *Arte*, a transnational European television station, covered the event as well as a major German TV station. Radio stations reported as follows: transnationally 1 programme; nationally 3; and at regional and local level 4. There were 12 entries on blogs and online magazines. I counted 61 media items in total: 17 were short news articles and 33 in-depth accounts. Videos (13), and particularly photos (99), contributed to the coverage of the march. Not least

²⁵ Website of the March for Freedom:

<http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/post/2014/04/28/materials-needed>

²⁶

https://www.betterplace.org/de/projects/18002?utm_campaign=ShortURLs&utm_medium=project_18002&utm_source=PlainShortURL

²⁷ Press reviews: <http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/press>

because of the wide media coverage, the March for Freedom may well be remembered as an important step for the sans-papiers movements in Europe in attracting more attention for their demands. The march coincided with a sharp rise in the number of people dying in the Mediterranean²⁸. Because of these alarming facts and the strengthening of protest by sans-papiers, the European public may have become more aware of the connection between the European border regime and the rising death toll of people trying to come to Europe. In 2014 journalists and commentators in newspapers such as the *Guardian* and *Die Zeit* showed increasing dissatisfaction with European migration policies that did not solve problems but rather created them. Angry and frustrated refugees and undocumented migrants probably have received more media attention in 2014 than a few years earlier. I could well imagine that with refugees and undocumented migrants fighting for the dignity of their lives more desperately than ever, and with the multiplication of campaigns like the March for Freedom, it might be possible for the sans-papiers to strengthen their cause and win more allies.

Ambivalent media response

It is not surprising that the violent incidents during the March for Freedom received much media attention. Did this help the cause of the March for Freedom? In the newspapers of Luxembourg, the *Tageblatt*, the *Luxemburger Wort* and *RTL-Lëtzebuerg*²⁹, the incident was treated as shocking news: How was it possible for demonstrators to enter a EU building? Comments from readers showed little sympathy for "violent refugees". They said refugees should "be thankful for staying in Europe" and not cause any troubles; and that activists should stop blaming the "bad West" for the many boats of desperate people trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea. They should protest "against the corrupt regimes of their countries"; "Please solve the problems at the roots", and so on. But there was also a positive aspect about the media reporting in Luxembourg. Activists got an opportunity to explain their feelings behind their protest to a wider public. In a video interview with Amir, a spokesman for the demonstrators, published in the *Luxemburger Wort*, he said at the end furiously: "We are not considered to be human. We are the trash of capitalism!"

²⁸ Since 2000, 22,400 people have died trying to get to Europe. 2014 was by far the deadliest year since 2000. See IOM:
<http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/pbn/docs/Fatal-Journeys-Tracking-Lives-Lost-during-Migration-2014.pdf>

²⁹ *Tageblatt*:
<http://www.tageblatt.lu/nachrichten/story/Ausschreitungen-bei-Minister-Treffen-26455230>
Luxemburger Wort:
<http://www.wort.lu/de/lokales/freiheitsmarsch-wir-sind-der-abschaum-der-gesellschaft-53909a1ab9b39887080312f8>
RTL-Lëtzebuerg: <http://www rtl lu/letzebuerg/541817.html>

Backing accusations with facts and figures

It was a considerable achievement of the March for Freedom to remind the EU authorities in Brussels that since the year 2000 more than 23,000 people had lost their lives trying to enter the EU. These facts were updated continuously by a group of committed journalists with research data published in 'The Migrants Files'. According to this collective research project the number of dead and missing migrants in 2014 was 50% higher than official estimates indicate.

Mortality rates between migration routes varied widely, from 2% in the Canaries to 6% near Malta and Lampedusa. EU member states constantly have been closing the routes with low mortality, pushing migrants towards the more dangerous ones³⁰. No EU member state or EU institution has sufficient data on migrants' deaths. It is these sad facts and figures about migrants coming to Europe, and many of them dying on their way, that backed up the accusations of the refugees and undocumented migrants voiced during their demonstration in front of the EU.

Solidarity from local to transnational struggles, and back

What role did the solidarity and support network play in the successful completion of the March for Freedom from Strasbourg to Brussels? The march was initiated by group of asylum seekers and their supporters in Germany who for two years had occupied *Oranienplatz*, a square in Berlin, as a sign of protest against German migration policy and for the right to stay of all sans-papiers. Activists from Berlin were joined on their way from Strasbourg to Brussels by other groups from Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, and Belgium. More solidarity actions took place in the UK, Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey, Tunisia, Morocco and Mexico. The solidarity messages travelled both ways, between the March for Freedom and movements elsewhere. In all 26 messages were posted on the website in solidarity with other groups and six messages from other groups in support of the March for Freedom. The exchange of messages was a simple but effective method for mutual information and encouragement. Here is an example: the Dignity March in the UK³¹ left Bristol on Thursday 29 May 2014 and marched to Cardiff, arriving on 2 June. On their way they sent a message of solidarity to the March for Freedom. The activists of the March for Freedom replied to the solidarity message of the activists in

³⁰ It is helpful indeed for journalists and researchers to continue their fact-finding mission. The journalists of *The Migrants Files* noted that data sources often lacked compatibility since each organisation structured them differently. This requires data cleaning and fact-checking. The data for The Migrants Files are based on previous work by *United for Intercultural Action* and Gabriele Del Grande's *Fortress Europe*, as well as on additional research.

The Migrants Files: <http://www.journalismfund.eu/migrants-files>

Gabriele Del Grande:
http://fortresseurope.blogspot.ch/2006/02/immigrants-dead-at-frontiers-of-europe_16.html

³¹ March for Dignity 2014: <http://asylumseekersinbristol.blogspot.ch> (Website is still available, but the detailed account of the March for Dignity 2014 is missing.)

Bristol:

We greet all refugees and supporters in the UK and in every place in Europe. Thank you a lot for your courage to fight this struggle and for your empowering words. To know that you are with us, gives us even more power. Also we support you with our whole heart and we send you from Luxembourg a lot of love and energy. Even if you are far away from us, we share the same heart, we fight the same struggle and we have the same goal: to revolutionise the European asylum and migration system. We are one! Together we are strong!³²



³² Website of the March for Freedom:
<http://freedomnotfrontex.noblogs.org/post/2014/06/04/dear-fighters-of-the-dignity-march-from-bristol-to-cardiff/>



Solidarity pictures from the Dignity March 'Bristol to Cardiff', UK

Forging links across borders

What impact did this solidarity network have on the March for Freedom? And how was it organised? Collective actions by, with or on behalf of refugees, migrants and sans-papiers can take place in different places and on different levels, be it NGOs directly lobbying institutions internationally, or grassroots movements active at local, regional and national levels. Groups and organisations of the network around the March for Freedom 2014 belong to this second type of collective action, with fewer resources than big NGOs. More astonishing for me was to realise how easily and efficiently the activists of the march managed to forge links to groups in different countries to raise their local/regional struggles to a more transnational level. From this case study I tend to conclude that transnational organising seems to become an everyday reality for locally and regionally active grassroots movements involved in human rights issues. Activists from grassroots movements such as the March for Freedom are well enough equipped to mobilise on a transnational level. They are now in a position to challenge power holders everywhere: in small provincial towns as well as in hotspots of power such as the German capital Berlin, or centres of European institutions such as Luxembourg or Brussels. Organising through web platforms and the use of audiovisual communication tools through social media make it possible to cross national borders more effectively than at the beginning of the sans-papiers movement in Europe some 20 years ago. Autonomous or grassroots social movements may thus become part of a new European public sphere of a multitude of social, cultural and political actors challenging fortress Europe against undocumented migration. I see this emerging Europe as a kind of public sphere based on social movements, political opposition from different civil society groups, intellectual debate and independent media. What all actors have in common is a genuine interest in the democratisation of Europe from below.

Conclusions

In this case study of the March for Freedom 2014 I have tried to show that a campaign by several groups of sans-papiers and their supporters from different countries can make itself heard even with little resources and without powerful allies in the political arena. The demands of the March for Freedom 2014 were clearly stated, leaving no doubt that the activists were fighting against inhuman EU migration policies and for the freedom of movement for everybody. The website of the March for Freedom constitutes a rich source of information to learn more about the grassroots organising of asylum seekers and undocumented migrants in Europe. The language used by the activists to draw attention to their cause and to mobilise supporters ranges between militant anti-racist and anti-capitalist slogans and a more inclusive civil rights rhetoric addressing a larger community of sympathisers. Videos and photographs played an important role in the mobilisation for the March for Freedom 2014, with refugees and undocumented migrants serving as anchorpersons for the audience to identify with the march's goals. Their statements reflect the multifaceted realities of life for refugees and undocumented migrants better than statistics and official documents on migration policies can do. The website was used to call for material and financial support. Crowdfunding helped to raise money to cover minimal costs for food, water and material. The repertoire of action ranged from demonstrations, happenings, a surprise visit to a "lager" in a German town and a symbolic border crossing in the town of Schengen, to radical acts of symbolic decolonisation in a Belgium town.

The impact of these interventions and the final week of protest in Brussels can be guessed by the media coverage on the march. The considerable media coverage in local, regional and national media will make the March for Freedom 2014 one of the better remembered manifestations of the sans-papiers movement(s) in Europe in the last few years. A violent clash with the police in Luxembourg triggered even more response in newspapers, but with mostly negative comments from angry citizens about "violent refugees". Whether this was helpful for the cause of the March for Freedom 2014 is difficult to say. Overall it was a great achievement of the march to remind the EU authorities in Brussels that since the year 2000 more than 23,000 people had lost their lives trying to enter the EU. It also was astonishing to realise how easily and efficiently the activists of the march managed to forge links of solidarity with groups in different countries.

I conclude from this case study that transnational organising is becoming an everyday reality for locally and regionally active grassroots movements involved in human rights issues. They are now in a position to challenge power holders everywhere: in small provincial towns as well as in hotspots of power such as the German capital Berlin, or centres of European institutions such as Luxembourg or Brussels. Autonomous or grassroots social movements may thus become part of a new European public sphere of a multitude of social, cultural and political actors challenging the fortification of Europe. The fact that sans-papiers have no say whatsoever about border regimes and migration policies constitutes a severe

lack of democratic legitimacy in European countries. The dream of including marginalised groups in society may be far away from its realisation, but the March for Freedom 2014 has provided democratic societies with an exciting vision for deepening the process of participatory social change.

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An interrogation of the character of protest in Ireland since the bailout

Mary Naughton

Abstract

This article identifies and examines the features of protest events in Ireland in the aftermath of the EU-IMF bailout in order to understand why the patterns of protest in Ireland have not mirrored those in the other EU countries that received bail outs. To identify characteristics of Irish protest I used contemporary newspaper articles to compile a database recording objective features of protest events that took place in Ireland between 22 November 2010 and 1 February 2013. Participants from three protest campaigns were then asked to respond to a questionnaire aimed at establishing their motivations for participating in protest. The results of the research show that the largest protest events recorded during the period were in response to the bailout and that the bailout was the most frequently protested issue, challenging the characterization of the Irish as a passive nation dutifully taking its medicine.

Introduction

Since 2008 the financial stability of the Euro zone, even its very existence, has been under threat due to a severe economic downturn. Spain, Greece, Portugal and Ireland have been the economies worst affected, with the latter three states accepting bailouts from the EU and IMF in order to ensure the viability of the European banking system. In response to the crisis, and as a condition of the deals negotiated for bailouts each country has implemented a policy of austerity, imposing cutbacks across services and social welfare, reducing public sector pay and significantly increasing the burden on the taxpayer. In Greece and Portugal the response to these measures has been fierce, sustained protest on a massive scale (Mann 2012). The majority of protestors are young people; unemployed graduates and the working class. For the most part the protest movements have arisen independently of official labour and pre-existing civil society organisations (Mann 2012; 184).

In Ireland, where the government had already turned to austerity to control the crisis (Hardiman & Dellepiane 2012; 5), the consequences of the bailout have been extremely damaging. Yet the massive mobilisations reported on the continent did not appear to have their counterpart in Ireland. The contrast between the Irish reaction and events in Greece, Spain and Portugal was highlighted by both Irish and international media. Ireland has been portrayed as the model pupil, uncritically obeying the edicts of the EU-ECB-IMF troika (Allen 2012, 3). The media has posited that the Irish are an innately passive nation, less inclined to protest than their Mediterranean counterparts (Allen

201, 3, Mann 2012; 188). This characterisation does not correspond with historical experience in Ireland. As one participant in protest points out ‘the history of Ireland is oppression, and the answer to that has been rebellion’ (Survey response 6, Ballyhea bondholders protest). The media accounts concentrated on what was not in evidence in Ireland; visible mass protests and riots. There was a lack of empirical data on what protests *was* taking place in Ireland, and the commentary overlooked questions such as what issues were protests addressing; who was organising these protests; whether any pattern could be discerned in the types of protest taking place and; if so what were the reasons for this.

This article challenges the view that the Irish do not protest and that the consequences of the bailout were accepted quietly. In order to understand why protests of the type seen in Greece and Spain did not develop in Ireland I examine the nature of interaction between the state and civil society in the years leading up to the bailout, and the type of protest that took place before it was imposed, in order to gain an understanding of the types of issues that have generated protest before and the characteristics of these protests, applying social movement theory as a frame of analysis. Based on this examination I hypothesise that rather than displacing them, the bailout would tend to reinforce previous patterns of protest.

In order to determine the nature of the protest after the bailout, and to test my own assumptions, I compiled a database of the protest events that occurred in Ireland from November 2010, when the bailout was agreed, to February 2013 by searching the archives of two national newspapers and five local newspapers. Participants from three protest campaigns were also contacted in order to examine individual motives for protesting and subjective interpretations of the significance of protest.

The data demonstrates that, contrary to common assumptions, protest in Ireland has been frequent, has arisen predominantly in response to issues resulting from or linked to the bailout and has involved a broad cross section of Irish society.

Analytical approach

The purpose of this study is to examine why Ireland responded differently to the acceptance of a bailout package and the consequent imposition of austerity policies and to increase understanding of the factors that influence protest and the form it takes. The Irish experience in the years 2010-2013 was held up as exceptional because macro level changes in Ireland, Spain and Greece did not yield a uniform response. The media accounts painted a general picture of the Irish as innately passive, conveniently forgetting that recent Irish history is rife with examples of successful mobilisations and protest movements. The anti-nuclear movement’s resisted the establishment of a nuclear power plant at Carnsore Point was a victory that gave courage to the international anti nuclear movement and inspired further environmental activism (Dalby 1984-5, 31).

Further consistent, creative and confrontational opposition to the construction of a Shell pipeline in Erris, Co Mayo has been ongoing since 2001. The accounts focused solely on the imposition of the bailout and austerity policies while ignoring other macro and individual level factors that influence the emergence of protest. I used Karl Dieter Opp's structural cognitive model (SCM) as a framework for identifying these factors and integrating them into my analysis.

Dieter Opp developed SCM in response to approaches such as resource mobilisation theory and political opportunity theory which privilege macro level variables in their explanations. According to SCM macro level factors, eg. A change in government, changes in a country's economic fortunes, an opening of the political system, influence the emergence of protest and the form it takes only to the extent that they affect variables on the micro level, the main determinant in the emergence of protest and the form it takes is individual choice. In other words an event like the bailout on its own is not sufficient to explain protest, researchers must examine how this event affected individual incentives to protest.

Employing rational actor theory (RAT) as its starting point, SCM assumes that individuals make choices to maximise their utility or well-being by analysing the balance of incentives for a given behaviour (Dieter Opp 2009; 46). Incentives at the micro level include preference for the public good and the perception that one's own contribution to the protest will influence the outcome (efficacy) (Dieter Opp 2009; 89). There are also social benefits and costs to participation-individuals may protest even if they do not believe that protesting will influence the achievement of the good (Dieter Opp 1986; 87); there can be social rewards for cooperating or individuals may identify with the group that is to benefit from protest meaning group success is related to their own sense of self worth (Gamson 1990; 57). At the same time social norms can add to the costs of protesting; where protest is not seen as normal or acceptable this will act as a disincentive. Protest can also involve an economic cost, where participants must travel to demonstrations and meetings or take time off work (Dieter Opp 2009; 157).

Changes at macro level, such as the imposition of a bailout can influence the balance of incentives to protest eg. by creating or enhancing grievances or removing structural obstacles to protest, but it is not inevitable that they will have such an effect, nor will they always affect incentives in the same way, as Ireland's contrasting response demonstrates. According to SCM to understand why a macro level event produces a given outcome, researchers must look at the 'structure of cognitive preferences', that is the existing attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of individuals regarding protest in a given society (Dieter Opp 2009; 328). Of course the structure of cognitive preferences varies from one society to another and is influenced by structural macro level features such as culture, political system and the level of deprivation. Further the behaviour of activists themselves influences individual attitudes and how events at the macro level are interpreted. Activists employ narratives that frame events as threats or opportunities in order to garner support (Benford and Snow 2000;614). SCM

assumes that all relevant macro variables enter the framing processes of individuals but their effect on the cognitive system will only create incentives to protest if the existing structure of cognitive preferences is favourable, and these preferences will also determine the type of protest which emerges.

In the following section I apply Dieter Opp's model to develop hypotheses on the characteristics of Irish protest after the bailout. In order to get a sense of the structure of cognitive preferences I outline features of the Irish political system as well as the nature of civil society participation and the characteristics of protest prior to the bailout.

Irish political culture and protest before the bailout

Protests in Ireland in the first decade of the twentieth century, prior to the bailout, tended to be small scale, motivated by a single demand on the state rather than an appetite for systematic reform of the political system, and organised by local organisations and communities (Leonard 2007; 463). Scholars have identified Ireland's political culture, specifically populism, clientelism, and the dominant political discourse of nationalism, as salient macro factors in explaining this phenomenon (Laffan 2008; 186-187 Cox 2006; 218). Here I add to this explanation by sketching the origins of this political culture and how it could have impacted on the structure of cognitive preferences. I will then speculate as to how the changes at macro level brought about by the economic crisis and bailout have interacted with these preferences to change individual incentives to protest, and what I expect the character of post-bailout protest to be.

Irish politics are often characterised as non-ideological. The two largest parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael are both considered to be catch-all and centre right in their outlook and policies. The absence of a left/right divide has influenced the style of these parties in government and in turn the political culture that has developed since independence. Fianna Fáil, has been by far the most electorally successful of the two, holding power for 69 out of the past 89 years. Its approach to government has been populist rather than programmatic. Where dissent emerged the party adopted an often successful strategy of co-optation, offering the aggrieved constituency piecemeal reforms and small scale projects that responded to the immediate problem, rather than attempting to engage in a holistic re-assessment and revision of its policies (Kirby and Murphy 2009;10).

However, closer analysis reveals that several protest movements have emerged in Ireland as a result of successive governments' attempts to implement right-wing economic policies. From the late 1950s Fianna Fail began a transition away from policies of autarky and economic nationalism towards a greater reliance on international capital (Dalby 1984-5; 4). As the neoliberal economic logic gained hegemonic status the government increasingly linked progress to economic growth and sought to attract international investment and boost economic output. While some constituencies benefited from this shift, many sections of

society and their needs were simply left out of the picture, and these constituencies would make their voices heard..

In the 1970s the government's drive to increase economic production and growth generated a proposal to build a nuclear power plant at Carnsore Point in Co Wexford. The energy minister at the time was committed to nuclear power as a means of increasing energy output and commissioned only minimal research into the possible safety and environmental issues such a plant could create (Dalby 1984-5, 9). In the wake of the announcement of Carnsore as a site, an energetic anti-nuclear movement which used both pressure group tactics and visible, creative protests to challenge the proposed construction (Dalby 1984-5, 14). The movement organised several mass rallies, the first of which drew over 20,000 attendees and succeeded in pressuring an obstinate Fianna Fail minister into holding a tribunal investigating the safety of such a plant and eventually into postponing the development (Dalby 1984-5, 14-16).

While on the surface the Carnsore protest on the surface seems to have been in response to a single issue- the proposed construction of the nuclear power plant, Dalby's analysis shows that for many the movement was about challenging the government's chosen path to development and economic growth (Dalby 1984-5, 35).

In the 1980s and 1990s communities in inner city Dublin organised protests against decisions of the local planning system which proposed displacing local communities in order to create space for the proposed International Financial Services Centre. Street protests, leafleting and a 3-month sit in were just some of the actions organised at a grassroots level to resist the detenanting of the inner city. While destruction of the social housing complexes went ahead in many instances, the protests put pressure on the government to rehouse people locally and drew attention to the moral issues involved in the urban regeneration policy. As one activist pointed out the government's actions suggested that attracting international investment was the most urgent priority, while the people living in these parts of the city were expendable (Punch 2009; 95).

The establishment, in 1987, of social partnership profoundly changed how the state related to civil society, particularly trade unions. As Allen notes, prior to the imposition of social partnership, there was strong support for economic nationalism and solidarity in the Irish labour movement. However social partnership purported to link workers' interests with those of Irish capital (Allen 2012, 4). The parties' dependence on reaching agreement in order to secure wage stability and funding made it difficult to question state policy and stifled meaningful debate from emerging within that space. The community and voluntary sector were also included in the social partnership process. The trade off for their participation was that these groups, which had their origins outside the state and had emerged as a response to social exclusion, were now expected to act as service providers and were discouraged from taking a stance on political issues.

The deeply controlling nature of the Irish state thus muted the ability of the trade union sector and the community and voluntary sector to be socially transformative (Kirby and Murphy 2009; 12). This had an impact on the balance of incentives for participating in protest at the individual level. Participating in protest is costly in terms of time and resources. Presumably where the demands of protest are for large-scale or systematic change these costs will be even higher. However the costs of individual participation will be reduced where a social movement organisation with social networks of activists and experience in successfully mobilising constituencies exists already as individuals will not have to build a movement from scratch. However in Ireland the civil society groups which might have had the necessary resources to form such an organisational core were co-opted, so the costs for individuals of attempting to mobilise for systematic change remained high. Thus nationwide protest movements seeking broad policy change have not generally been part of the repertoire of contention of Irish protestors in the early 21st century.

Their involvement in social partnership also meant that many social movement organisations found themselves inside the boardroom' (Punch 2009,), trying to win funding from state officials for their projects. This changed their structure and how demands were made and in turn affected the incentives to protest. Previously, though movements for change may have been 'out in the cold' they belonged to their members. The people who were affected by the issue the movement addressed were also those organising the meetings, handing out leaflets, attending protests. Involvement in social partnership meant that community groups' activities moved from organising within the community to engaging with state officials, writing proposals for funding, research on policy: activities that required specialist skills. Meanwhile traditional forms of protest activity came to be frowned upon since groups were working within state structures and wished to maintain cordial relations with the government (Cox, 2010, Cox 2011, 5). This reduced the incentives for non-professional members of movements to protest. Where before they had been participants in their own struggle now the message was that their participation was no longer required: they were expected to behave as consumers of services won for them by NGOs rather than participants in their own struggle (Cox 2010).

Cultural norms and localism also affected social incentives. Community rights have been an important discourse in Irish politics. Where mobilisation was around a local issue, activists often drew on traditional discourses of community rights in constructing their claims (Garavan 2007; 848). Since protests were often based in rural areas with small populations there was an increased probability individuals would be integrated into the social network that was promoting protest. Prior contact with protesters affects selective incentives to participate as it can introduce social costs for non-participation, while offering increased status for those who do protest. Since the group is mobilising for the good of 'our community' it creates a norm to protest for other members (Dieter Opp 2009; 116).

Defence of the local community has been a prominent element of protests that have taken place in Ireland since the turn of the century. While at first glance it may seem that protests on decisions affecting one locality are not challenges to the broader economic policy of the government the two are often linked. While the narrative of a movement may be one of community defending itself and its own frontiers, often the need for a community to defend itself arises because neoliberal economic policies ignore the local and the specific.

The most prominent example of such a community mobilisation is the conflict in Erris, challenging the construction of a gas pipeline through the coastline. Since 2001 the local community has opposed the project. Activists have framed the pipeline as an attack on a local space and participation has been motivated, at least in part, by the sense of a local duty to defend this space against ‘the prioritisation of corporate profits over local concerns’ (Leonard 2006, 378). The experience in Erris demonstrates the importance of selective incentives to the individual decision to protest. After members of the community were imprisoned for refusing to obey a High Court injunction restraining them from preventing Shell from laying pipes on their land many people who had previously favoured the laying of the pipeline joined the movement out of the duty to defend friends, family and local property (Leonard 2006. 380).

The economic downturn and the bailout have impacted incentives in several ways. The overall decline in national wealth coupled with the imposed policy of austerity has led to an increase in grievances. The provision of public goods such as hospital services and primary education has suffered, with cuts having a particularly severe impact in rural areas (Lucey 2011; 9, Walsh & Ward 2013; 5). Thus individuals continue to feel grievances at the local level.

The media’s treatment of the bail out and austerity may also have impacted incentives. The carefully circulated message was that the government had no choice but to implement austerity, that it was not the result of a political choice but the only realistic option (Allen 2012(a), 9). The conduct of the nominally left-wing Labour party as minor-partner in the coalition reinforces this. Labour have defended their implementation of austerity with a rejoinder of ‘our hands are tied’. It is possible that would-be participants in protest have interpreted this as meaning that the conditions of the bailout preclude a top-down solution: even a change in government did not lead to any reversal of austerity, the message is that it must continue, and that the battle ground where choices can still be fought relates to which cuts will be made and which services and projects will survive.

If individuals willing to take part in protest in the period under review operated under these assumptions, they would have been less likely to perceive that their participation in protests that aimed to bring about a radical change in economic or redistributive economic policy could make a difference. At the same time the success of mobilising around a single issue, for example retaining ambulance services to a given area, would still appear to have a viable chance of success. For the individual deciding what to protest about, the latter would appear to score higher in terms of efficacy. This type of protest is also likely to involve

strong social incentives, potential activists can employ the same community frames that have previously been successful in creating protest norms. These are likely to have been even more compelling post-bailout as all kinds of important services had become ‘fair game’ for cuts under austerity and activists could conceptualise these cuts as threats to the community. The costs of non-participation and the power of the protest norm would also have been enhanced by the fact that communities were now in greater competition with other groups seeking to prevent their services from being cut.

Taking these consequences of the bailout into account my expectation is that the data will show that the patterns of protest in Ireland that persisted in the first decade of the 20th century will be reinforced, rather than displaced. Protests will address decisions affecting their local community. People in Ireland have experience organising protests in response to decisions affecting their local community or county and such protests have been successful in achieving their goals in the past. While the challenged decision or policy may result from the government’s pursuit of neoliberal development the rhetoric of the protest will not necessarily challenge this underlying logic. The efficacy of protesting on individual issues rather than for system wide reforms arguably increased after the bailout, as did the social incentives to protest about issues which affect one’s immediate community. Meanwhile the costs of mobilising for systematic reforms remained high due to the lack of existing nationwide social movement groups, and I would expect that the potential efficacy of such a movement, as perceived by individuals deciding whether or not to participate, was reduced since perceived constraints on policy choice at government level meant that its demands would be unlikely to be achieved. Therefore we can expect when analysing the data collected for this study that protests will in general focus on single issues, relating to local demands and that mobilisation will involve discourses of community rights. This could offer some explanation as to why the international media has depicted Ireland as passive. If protest is mainly local, and concerns narrow issues rather than demanding systemic change that would involve violating conditions of the bailout, it is less likely to be front page news in Ireland, or feature in international media at all. So from the outside, or indeed to Irish people not directly involved in protest, it would simply appear that people are not protesting.

Sources and methodology

The object of the study was to establish the type of protests that have emerged in Ireland since the bailout and why they took on this character. My first task was to compile a database which recorded the objective features of protest events that occurred in the Republic of Ireland between the 22nd of November 2010 and 1st February 2013. In order to gather the necessary data I conducted a comprehensive search of the archives of two national newspapers, the Irish Times (IT) and the Irish Examiner (IE). I supplemented the national level findings with a further search of 5 local newspapers the Kerryman, the Corkman, the Tipperary Star, the Leitrim Observer and the Carlow People

(Oliver & Maney 2000; 495). The search of newspaper archives was conducted through the database NEXIS. I used filters for subject (protests and demonstrations) and geography (Ireland). The features I took note of were: the issue the protest addressed; the number of participants; the location; the form protest took; the organisation or group (if any) that coordinated the protest and; whether the participants were mainly drawn from a particular sector of society e.g. students, pensioners. When I had completed this examination I contacted participants from three campaigns and sent them a questionnaire aimed at establishing their motivations for participating in protest.

It is difficult to draw a bright line around what constitutes a ‘protest event’. Protest messages are not solely conveyed through demonstrations. Demands can be made through petitions or court cases or campaigns can have their primary presence online. For the purposes of this study however I limited the definition to a contentious, public display or gathering organised to draw attention to an issue or put pressure on a target to change their course of action (Peillon 2001; 96). The principal reasons for doing so were pragmatic; it was more likely that newspapers would systematically report on protests which fit this description. This is because deviance and drama are defining characteristics of what journalists deem to be newsworthy (Ericson 1998; 84). Protests which conveyed their message through a disruptive demonstration or a march are further from the norm than protests taken through court cases or petitions because of their dramatic form and hence more newsworthy.

Protests addressing local issues were those that made a demand or reacted to a grievance that did not affect the country at large but only one administrative area eg county, or within a county a town or village. The analysis also refers to ‘narrow’ issues or demands. By this I mean that the protest concerned one decision of government eg. a particular cut or closure, or a series of decisions affecting a single sector eg. nurses, rather than the overarching policy that was the source of the cut.,

I used news archives as a source as they represent the most readily available and continuous record of protests. However the ‘news hole’ –the amount of space available for news in a newspaper limits the number of events that newspapers can record on a given day (Oliver & Maney 2000; 466). The proximity effect—that is the tendency of media outlets to give greater attention to events that occur in their own metropolitan area, particularly in central locations- also has an impact on which events that receive media coverage (Oliver & Maney 2000; 495). I was concerned that the combination of these factors would mean that national newspapers would report more consistently on protests occurring in or near Dublin and that this would give an unrepresentative picture of the frequency and character of protest in rural areas. To account for these risks I chose national newspapers which were based in different parts of Ireland- the Irish Times is Dublin-based while the Irish Examiner has its offices in Cork. I included the local newspapers as a further safeguard against the news hole. My rationale was that the proximity effect would increase the chances of rural protests being recorded in local papers.

In order to grasp the significance of the data collected from the newspaper search I sought to gain perspectives from participants in some of the protest movements. Protestors involved in three campaigns agreed to answer some questions on their involvement and I sent a short questionnaire to each. The campaigns were: the ‘Save Waterford’ hospital; the Union of Students Ireland (USI)’s campaign against the introduction of third level fees and cuts to third level budgets and; the ‘Ballyhea Bondholder’ protest.

Save Waterford arose in response to the government’s proposals to downgrade services at Waterford General Hospital. I was interested in Waterford because it had the characteristics which were identified in the previous chapter as typical of Irish protest; it addressed a local issue, the change it sought was limited to a single narrow demand on the government, and its participants spoke of the need to defend their community (Kane 2012; 8). At the same time the campaign was distinguished from the majority of similar protests due to the size of the protest events; there were 15,000 people at the first rally, while a second attracted a crowd of 12,000. These were two of the largest protest events that took place in the entire period under review. I hoped the motives of individual survey respondents would indicate why this particular issue had attracted so many participants.

The student protests also had a mix of typical and atypical features. The student campaign dates to 2008 when the government raised the possibility of reintroducing fees for third level education. After the bailout it also campaigned on issues such as reductions to student grants and cuts to university budgets. Protests usually took the form of marches through Dublin culminating in rallies either outside the Dáil but there were also several demonstrations outside the constituency offices of TDs outside Dublin (Burke 2011; 8, see also responses to survey). The student movement was interesting because there was a pre-existing organisational structure which had orchestrated large-scale nationwide protests on the same issues before the bailout, as was noted earlier, social partnership had made the existence of such movements unusual in Ireland. Respondents were asked whether the existence of this structure had a positive impact when it came to attracting participants.

The Waterford and student protest movements were two of the most prominent movements to emerge in the years immediately following the bailout but as Cox points out, their stated aims- to preserve their own level of services, amounted to a request for special treatment in a context where nominally at least, austerity was supposed demand equal sacrifice from society as a whole (Cox 2011,2). Bearing this in mind I was interested to learn the attitudes of participants to the general policy of austerity.

Ballyhea was organised to express public anger at the decision to make taxpayers liable for bondholder bank debt. The campaign involved marches through the village of Ballyhea, which took place every Sunday after mass (Kelleher 2013; 7). Ballyhea was unusual due to the number of protest events it involved- 100- each following a set pattern. The protests occurred every Sunday from March 2011 until the end of the period under review. The campaign was

also unusual in that the events were based in a small town relatively far from the capital, it addressed a national issue- the bailout of the banks. Although it was a policy that affected the country at large the protestors seemed to be responding through their identity as members of the community in Ballyhea. Since the campaign targeted the Government's general economic policy as dictated by international obligations I was interested to learn whether participants believed their efforts would be efficacious.

Results

My search of national and local newspapers identified 415 protest events. The highest number of protest events reported occurred in Co Cork (158). One hundred of these were part of the Ballyhea campaign. Dublin city centre was the next most frequent site of protest with 135 reported events. Reports only contained estimates as to the number of participants in 219 of these protests. The average attendance at these 219 protest events was close to 1,700. Protests above 10,000 people were exceptional, with only 7 reported. When these were removed the average number of participants dropped to just over 900. The largest protest event was in response to the programme of austerity imposed by the bailout. The protest, a march on the house of the Oireachtas (the Irish parliament) in Dublin, involved 50,000 participants. The vast majority of protests targeted the government. Protest predominantly took the form of either rallies or marches though there were instances of more novel forms being used. For example the Occupy movements in Cork, Dublin and Galway set up camps near banks in city centre locations to protest against injustices caused by the global capitalist system (Nihill 2011; 5), protestors occupied the camps for over 6 months (Carberry 2012; 2). Each occupation was classified as one event. The vast majority of protests did not involve any violence. There were only 2 events described as 'riots' by either newspaper and these were in response to the state visit of Queen Elizabeth.

The largest proportion of protest events (53% of the number of events recorded) addressed the EU-IMF bailout or the government's policy of austerity. Both of these issues affect the entire public. Protests focusing on a single local grievance eg. loss of infrastructure, proposed development that threatened the environment, and protests in response to an issue that affected a particular sector of society nationwide eg. People with disabilities, teachers, farmers, accounted for about 20% of protests each.

Analysis of results

Several patterns can be discerned from the data. The majority of the protest events (90%) fall into three broad categories:

- i. Protests concerning an issue that affects the public at large
- ii. Protests concerning an issue that is national in scope but that directly affects only a certain section of society
- iii. Protests concerning a local issue where participants are from the affected community

The first two categories made up over 70% of Irish protest. It is clear that this does not conform to my expectation that the majority of protests would concern local issues. On examining the protests that have occurred, and the survey responses of protest participants it emerges that my assumptions about the structure of cognitive preferences were incorrect; the effect of the bailout on incentives across different issues was uneven; and I had not accounted for the extent to which variation in one incentive can have a knock-on effect on the balance of the others. However SCM can still be applied to analyse the protest that took place and to understand how the bailout interacted with the structure of cognitive preferences to produce these results.

The majority of the first category of protests (roughly 90%) addressed the issues of the conditions of the bailout and austerity. Some campaigns conflated the issues, others addressed one or the other exclusively. Protests on these issues took place most commonly in Dublin, which is unsurprising given that their target was the government. Usually the protest would involve a rally outside the Dáil, often preceded by a march. Marches often began at a historic site in Dublin such as the Garden of Remembrance or Kilmainham Gaol. Though this was never expressly commented on by any of the newspapers, my speculation is that part of the reason behind this was to infuse the protests with a sense of history and importance, though it could simply have been pragmatic; these sites would be easy to direct protestors to if they were not familiar with the city. Though the average size of each protest was around 1,200, a small number drew crowds between 20,000 and 50,000 (Whelan 2012; 14).

Examining the campaign at Ballyhea, which accounted for the lion's share of protests against the bailout, helps to clarify where my predictions that protest after the bailout would predominantly concern local issues and/or narrow demands went awry. I expected that the bailout would reduce the likelihood of people making broad demands through protest because the increased constraints on the government made it less likely that such demands would be efficacious. The survey responses of participants in the Ballyhea protest reveal that in spite of the bailout obligations individuals still believe that protesting could challenge and reverse its conditions and austerity policies and change the behaviour of both governments and financial institutions (Survey responses 3,5,6,7, Ballyhea bondholders protest). In particular I did not account for the effect that participation itself has on efficacy: according to some respondents, their initial incentives for protesting were social rather than a belief that protest would bring about a change in policy, but the act of protesting as well as interacting with others who shared their anger over the bailout made them

believe the campaign could make a difference (Survey response 6, Ballyhea bondholders protest), participation had a similar effect on efficacy in the Save Waterford campaign (Survey response 1, 2, Save Waterford).

At the same time, while the campaign departed from previous patterns of protest insofar as it aimed for systemic change, the campaign still has many of the characteristics of Irish protest that were typical before the bailout, and these help to explain the persistence of the protest. The campaign was locally based and the organiser is a well known local figure who started the protest by contacting friends. Though numbers at the first protest stood at just 18, the small size of the village and the fact that the marches took place after mass on a Sunday make it likely that most residents would have had prior contact with at least some of those protesting and this would have increased the costs of non-participation, even for individuals for whom efficacy was low. Thus by the 100th week of the protest, about 250 of the village's 1000 residents had participated at least once in the march and the average number of marchers per week rose to about 60.

The nature of the grievance itself also seems to have influenced the characteristics of protest. As previously mentioned, prior to the bailout there had been success in organising protest against economic grievances that were local in character, often framed as threats to the local community. The responses of those who participated in the Ballyhea campaign indicate that the bailout was also represented as an attack on 'us' which created a duty to 'take a stand' but this time its consequences affected the entire state and therefore the us, the community in question was the Irish people (Survey response 3,5,6,7, Ballyhea bondholder protest). The leaders who had accepted it and were implementing its conditions had failed as stewards of independence and brought the Irish people under a foreign power once more (Anon 2010; 17). Participants saw protesting as an act of rebellion against oppression which was part of their Irish identity, and felt a duty to future generations to protest (Survey responses 3, 5, Ballyhea bondholder protest).

This perception of the bailout as a new event in the narrative of independence helps to explain why, even though the existing structure of cognitive preferences had tended to lead to protest on local issues, there were a large number of protests addressing the bailout and these had relatively high levels of participation. Framing it as a loss of sovereignty (Collins 2010; 1) and a betrayal of those who had lost their lives fighting for independence (Anon 2010; 17) gave it a special emotive significance. Since it was no ordinary grievance it was not enough to respond with the type of protest that was ordinary before it was imposed.

In protesting the conditions of the bailout and the behaviour of the banks, the Ballyhea participants were also challenging the current economic model. This marks a significant departure from previous patterns of protest and state interaction with civil society where the headline demand of a movement tended to focus on a single issue. However as noted above, often the grievances addressed in these protests flowed from the state's pursuit of neoliberal

economic policies and some participants protest was directed against this logic as a whole.

Many protests addressed the social consequences of the bailout such as unemployment and evictions due to high levels of mortgage debt and criticised the injustices that flowed from the application of law. While it is unlikely that all those participating in these campaigns aimed for the abandonment of the neoliberal economic model, the fact that some of the most well attended protests during the period under review belonged to this category, is evidence of the strength of public opinion against the bailout.

There were almost as many protest events concerning issues that were national in scope, but directly affected only certain sectors of the population, as protests concerning local issues. I expected that demands would be local as single issue campaigns would have more chance of success, however a campaign that is national in scope can still address a single issue, as where the decision affects a single sector of society, e.g. people with disabilities.

These protests were also something of a departure from the type of protest that preceded the bailout. As noted above the collaborative nature of social partnership and the favourable working conditions negotiated under that structure had reduced the preference for protest. However the impact of the bailout increased the incentives to protest. These protests most often addressed either: proposed cuts to health services; work conditions for a particular sector eg nurses, teachers, farmers or; cuts to education (including third level). As was the case with protests challenging austerity people often travelled to Dublin to stage their protests about these issues and marches and rallies were the mainstay in terms of protest form and the average number of participants was 1,317.

Even though they do not concern local issues the fact that protests made narrow demands eg. for services to be retained, is consistent with the effect I expected the bailout to have on efficacy. A participant in one such protest framed the proposed cuts to services as being ‘within [the government’s] power at the stroke of a pen to reverse’ while acknowledging that there were certain areas in which the government no longer had any flexibility (Nihill 2011; 8). The data on protests concerning cuts to the health and education sectors in particular support the statement that the bailout increased the norm to protest.

However the norm to protest was not strengthened across all issue areas. Responding to the survey the organisers of the student protest campaign found the campaign was damaged rather than galvanised by the bailout as public sympathy for the movement declined. In protesting cuts to resources the movement found itself in conflict with other civil society groups, such as trade unions, who were also trying to maintain their levels of funding (Survey response 4, Third level funding protest). Arguably a norm *not* to protest had emerged as the public now expected students to ‘do their bit’ and get on with it’ like everybody else who is dealing with the consequences of austerity (Carroll 2012; 8). The explanation for this variation would seem to be the nature of the

grievance the students were protesting. The entire public avails of the health service and primary and secondary level education and the majority can accept that they are among the most vital goods the state provides, and must be protected even in the face of significant costs. There is not the same level of consensus as to whether third level education should be free. Realising the students' demands would force the government to make up the cost elsewhere and this could be through further cuts to another sector which the public values more.

The experience of these campaigns has interesting implications for the impact of costs on the emergence of protest. As noted earlier the existence of a social movement organisation with experience in protesting the grievance at issue lowers the individual costs of participation and thus increases the likelihood of participation. Yet if we look at the Save Waterford campaign, the group did not exist before the services at Waterford hospital were threatened. Further, the two women who started the campaign did not have any previous experience of activism (Survey responses 1,2 Save Waterford). Yet the campaign succeeded in organising several large rallies. This would seem to be in line with Dieter Opp's prediction that until costs reach a certain threshold they will not prohibit the emergence of protest where the other incentives are present to a sufficiently high level (Dieter Opp 2009; 60). This can be contrasted with the experience of the student movement, which did have the advantage of a pre-existing organisational structure. The grievances affecting students had also increased since the bailout, while the financial and logistical costs of organising protest had remained stable. Yet the difficulty its leaders experienced in attracting participants after the bailout suggests that overall the bailout reduced the incentives for participation, by changing perceptions of the urgency of their grievance, and reducing students' belief that protest could be efficacious (Carroll 2012; 8).

Though the proportion of protests that concerned local issues was lower than I had expected, those that did take place broadly followed the patterns anticipated. The local issues that were addressed by protest fall into four categories: cuts to health services; cuts to local schools; loss of infrastructure and; environmental issues. The large number of protests that concerned the first two types of issue support my observation that the high value society places on these services being universally available creates a strong norm to protest when they are threatened. Protests were often outside the constituency offices of local TDs, at local authority headquarters or events that government Ministers would be attending. Community frames were also widely used, with the loss of services or infrastructure commonly cast as 'the death of the community' or 'tearing at the local fabric' (Holland 2012; 4). Interestingly the groups that coordinated local protest campaigns to save services were often *sui generis*, popping up in response to whatever issue was at stake. Many participants had never protested before but felt a duty, where services like education were threatened 'to protect our kids' (Irish Examiner 2011).

While the results of the study did not reflect the expectations set out above, we can still draw on the data collected to explain why the media has characterised Ireland as passive. Although there have been frequent, relatively well attended protests addressing the bailout, those that have been reported in mainstream media have had different characteristics to those seen in Greece, Portugal and Spain. The majority of protests targeting the bailout have been part of a small, sustained local campaign, taking place in a village in Cork where it is less likely to attract the attention of national and international media due to the proximity effect. The majority of the larger protest events that took place (those numbering above 10,000) tended to address the social consequences of the bailout, such as cuts to hospital services (Save Waterford), third level funding and the difficulties experienced by certain industries. It would be more difficult for journalists writing about Ireland from the outside, lacking an understanding of the nature of participation and protest in Ireland to make the link between these protests and the bailout, and to perceive the Irish as passive.

Conclusion

This study only offers a glimpse of the characteristics of protest in Ireland since the bailout. However, even from this brief introduction one can see that protest is taking place. While the protests addressing the bailout have not been as visible as those seen in other states where a bailout was imposed there have been a large number of protests addressing the issue and its social consequences and the average participation has been quite high relative to the population. The fact that protest in Ireland displays characteristics that can be contrasted with protests seen elsewhere does not justify the characterization of the Irish as passive.

Although protest did not have the characteristics I hypothesized they would have based on SCM, this model remained useful both for explaining the gap between my expectations and reality, and analysis of the data on protest and survey responses were in line with the central propositions of the model. The contrast between protest in Spain, Greece and Portugal and protest in Ireland in response to austerity and EU-IMF bailouts supports Dieter Opp's central proposition in developing SCM: that the emergence of protest and the form it takes do not depend solely on macro level factors. SCM holds that to understand what causes individuals to protest and the type of protest they engage in we must examine how macro level factors affect existing preferences and incentives at the micro level.

Based on the type of protest that took place before the bailout, those participating in protest felt a strong sense of community and attachment to their local place, and this meant that frames which conceptualized government actions as a threat to that community were often successful in incentivizing protest. The preference for local control and the sense of duty to protect services in the community influenced the types of protest that addressed the bailout. Though protest addressing national issues became more common these often

followed the patterns of earlier protest since these are the patterns organizers were familiar with. The organizers of the Ballyhea campaign named it the Ballyhea Bondholders Protest, ensuring that there was a link with their community even though the issue they were addressing affected the entire country. It was a call on people from that community in particular to stand up and be heard.

Campaigns on national issues relied less on framing issues as attacks on a particular village or area but other existing beliefs and attitudes in the structure of cognitive preferences were drawn on to engage people in protest. Prior to the bailout Ireland's people felt relatively secure in Ireland's sovereignty and this may explain why protest on national issues was less prominent. Unpopular government decisions tended to disproportionately affect one community more than another and so it was their own community, rather than the Irish nation, that people felt bound to defend. After the bailout government policy threatened the welfare of the whole country, and the bailout itself was represented as a loss of hard won independence. This led to a reawakening of latent nationalist sentiment and changed the balance of incentives to protest on national issues.

The data on protest after the bailout also gave some insight into the importance of efficacy in determining the type of protest that emerged. I expected that in the case of Irish protest after the bailout the result of this proposition would be that protest addressing the bailout and its consequences would be less widespread than those addressing narrow issues because there was more likelihood of changing narrow policy decisions. In reality the majority of protests did address the bailout and its consequences, but efficacy was still an important incentive: those participating responded that they did believe their protest would be efficacious and that they would not be protesting otherwise. The results also highlighted the importance that social incentives have in Irish protest. Participants from each of the campaigns surveyed spoke of a duty to protest in order to defend a common good. Survey responses also highlighted the interdependent nature of incentives and how the balance of incentives can change as a campaign develops: participants may get involved initially out of a sense of duty or of identification with a group rather than a belief that protest will make a difference but the experience of protesting and interacting with a wider group changed their measure of their own efficacy.

As well as providing evidence that protest is part of the repertoire of contention in contemporary Ireland, the findings demonstrate how the characteristics of protest in Ireland changed after the bailout. Protest came to focus predominantly on national and industrial issues. There was a move away from the patterns of participation and protest seen before the bailout, when contention was limited to piecemeal reforms rather than broader change. Protests that address austerity and the conditions of the bailout, and that challenge the current economic model and advance a different vision of justice became much more prevalent.

The far reaching impact of the bailout is also evident in the rise of industrial conflicts and the utilization of nationalism in framing protest. The reduction in

economic resources and autonomy in policymaking reduced the capacity of the social partnership model to contain conflict. The state also found itself the frequent target of protests in its employer capacity. The conciliatory relationships that had prevailed between state, employees and employers had broken down in favour of confrontation. The struggle for independence is at the centre of the Irish national identity and historical narrative. The characterization of the bailout as a betrayal of sovereignty and a reversal of the gains made in the struggle for independence gives it a special significance that is reflected in the protest that emerged in response to it. While these may have been less dramatic and visible than those seen in other countries, the prominence of large scale protests addressing a national economic issue was a new departure for Irish protestors in the 21st century.

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The Irish water war

Rory Hearne

Ireland has been held up as an example by the international political and financial elite, the Troika, and particularly European leaders such as the German government, as a successful bailout model that maintained social order and achieved popular acceptance of the necessity of austerity and financial sector bailouts. A series of austerity Budgets implemented from 2008 to 2014, along with conditions imposed as part of the international bailout from 2010 to 2013, involved cumulative cuts to public spending, social welfare and raising of taxes, predominantly on middle and low income households, of over €30bn. The bailout of the private banking sector and developers cost the Irish people €64bn, equivalent to just under a third of Ireland's GDP. Proportionally, the Irish people paid, per capita, the highest cost of bailing out the financial institutions in Europe. The impact of these policies has been visible in the deprivation rate rising from 11% of the population in 2007 to 25% in 2011 and then, in 2014, to reach a staggering 31% - almost 1.4 million people. This includes 37% of children suffering deprivation (which is up from 18% in 2008).

Yet, the question remained – why were the Irish people not protesting? While anti-austerity protests raged across Europe and new movements such as the Indignados emerged, there were no protest movements on such a scale in Ireland. This apparent absence of protest in Ireland has been the subject of international comment and domestic debate (Allen & O Boyle, 2013; Brophy, 2013; Cox, 2011; Hearne, 2013;). The former Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan, commented in April 2009 that other European countries were ‘amazed’ at the Irish Budgetary adjustments and that there would be “riots” if these were introduced in other countries. Indeed, the Irish Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, was ‘rewarded’ with an appearance on the cover of Time Magazine in October 2012 where he explained to the world that there had been no large-scale demonstrations in Ireland because “(Irish) people understand that you have to do difficult things to sort out our own public finances”. In this context many expressed surprise at the emergence of the water charges protest movement in 2014 that involved direct community resistance to the installation of water meters and hundreds of thousands protesting on the streets.

Questions have been raised about whether or not this new water movement is a single issue campaign, an anti-austerity movement, or if it represents a more fundamental transformation of the Irish people’s approach to and involvement in politics? In order to address these questions myself and a group of interested Masters students from Human Geography in Maynooth University developed and undertook a questionnaire survey of water protestors. In just over a week, 2,556 participants filled out the detailed questionnaire which covered three broad areas including protestor’s rationale for engaging in the protests, level of involvement in the movement, views on the effectiveness of the movement, next

steps, the role of the media, voting intentions and desire for a new political party. The results of the survey are detailed in the report published recently entitled, '*The Irish water war, austerity and the 'Risen people'*'. Before describing some of the main findings I will provide a short overview of the emergence of the water movement.

In spite of the portrayal of general passivity, the truth is that the Irish people did protest against austerity and within these protest lie the origins of the water protests. For example, tens of thousands of pensioners, students and community projects protested in 2008 and 2009. More than 100,000 participated in the Irish Congress of Trade Union (ICTU) organised march in February 2009 and 150,000 attended in November 2010 against the imminent Troika bailout. But ICTU's opposition to austerity was restricted to just four one-day national protest events in the period between 2008 and 2013. ICTU organised no protest in the entire two-year period between November 2010 and February 2013 and did not even participate in the European Confederation of Trade Unions' coordinated day of 'Action and Solidarity' against austerity in October 2012. Senior trade union officials argue that they were trying to maintain social peace because they were worried about collapsing the banking system, frightening off foreign investors and they were afraid of 'losing the battle' and the imposition of even worse conditions, and worked on selling pay cuts, pension levies and other cuts to their own members.

At the 2011 General Election the Irish people expressed their anger at the bailout and austerity in the 'pencil revolution' by decimating the conservative party that had dominated Irish politics, Fianna Fáil, and electing another conservative party Fine Gael, in coalition with the centre-Left, Labour Party. But it became apparent to many that the new government's promises of standing up to Europe, bondholders and the Troika would not be fulfilled. ICTU, and many other civil society organisations decided not to protest due to the reasons outlined previously, but in addition, they now also supported the Labour Party in government and thus any hint of potential opposition was considered disloyal and counterproductive. There was silence from the civil society 'insiders' such as the leadership of ICTU and the large public sector trade unions, some charities and NGOs as they decided they were on the side of the defending the establishment while the most vulnerable paid the price of the crash through austerity policies such as cutbacks to social welfare payments, reductions in funding for social housing, lone parents and disability payments, the household charge, and to funding community projects.

In this context those who wanted to oppose austerity, the government failures, the bank debt etc – the middle and low income workers, the discriminated and marginalized - realised that they would have to take action themselves and look beyond the traditional parties and civil organisations to organise and mobilise resistance and get their interests represented.

Into this vacuum small grassroots community and Left activist protests emerged to support in resisting austerity. These included the Occupy protests in 2011,

anti-austerity Budget protest organised by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions, disadvantaged communities who were being decimated disproportionately from the cuts ('the Spectacle of Defiance'); the anti-bank debt 'Ballyhea Says No to Bondholder Bailout' group set up in March 2011 (involving ordinary citizens with no previous political involvement, starting in a small rural town in Co. Cork organising weekly protests that continue to the present, and 'Says No' groups spread to a number of other towns and cities across the country). There were also very large protests in response to the rationalisation of hospital services, with 8,000 people attending a protest in Roscommon town (population of 12,000) in August 2010 and 15,000 in Waterford city (population of 50,000) in 2012. While these could be seen as traditional particularist protests what is significant is their scale and that they were organised by local community activists rather than traditional organisations. They show that where protest was organised, large numbers participated. It also highlights a concern with the downgrading and dismantling of the public health system, an issue that worsened under austerity. There were also disability groups, new youth protest groups (We're Not Leaving), lone parents, special needs assistants, and successful protests against plans to sell off the national forests.

April 2012 saw the largest anti-austerity protest, and the foundations for the water charges campaign, when half the population refused to pay the newly implemented household or 'property' charge. This protest is not given sufficient recognition as it contradicted the narrative that the Irish passively consented to austerity as the necessary 'medicine' for recovery in contrast to the Greeks, Spanish and others. The 'Campaign against the Household and Water Taxes' involved socialists from the far left trotskyist parties, Left independents, community independents, anti-debt activists, and community groups. Tens of thousands of people participated in protest marches and local actions. This movement contributed to the largest expression of resistance and opposition from the Irish people to austerity prior to the water charge movement. There was a mass boycott of the charge initially when 49 per cent of the 1.6 million households liable for the charge refused to pay it by the deadline of April 2012. Indeed, by September 2012, there was still a 40% non-payment rate nationally. The transfer of power to the Revenue Commissioners to collect the charge from wages or welfare packets made it very difficult for the campaign as people had no choice but to pay the charge. The leadership of the campaign also fell apart as a result of infighting between the two far left Trotskyist parties.

The Anglo Not Our Debt Campaign also gained momentum in this period as public opposition grew in 2012 and early 2013 against the annual repayment of €3.1bn of the €30bn Anglo Bank debt. In February 2013, ICTU organised its only protest against the current Government. A reported 100,000 marched across the country against the Anglo debt and austerity. In the run up to this protest, the government proclaimed a 'deal' on Irish debt. However, it was no deal of substance and €25bn of the Anglo debt remains. The Irish Central Bank is in the process of converting it into national debt. Further revelations emerged

in 2013 about Anglo Bankers in the Anglo Tapes adding to people's growing sense of injustice.

What is clear from this short overview is that the water charges protests didn't suddenly emerge out of nowhere. They were building upon a small layer of newly emerging community activism from 2010 onwards but were building upon a small, but growing layer of newly emerging community activism and Left political parties that had been growing slowly since 2010.

For example, of the respondents in the research, of those who stated that they had protested before, the most referenced was protests against austerity and cuts in areas such as the water and household/property taxes, cuts to the community sector, public sector cuts, lone parents, student fees, Special Needs Assistants, medical card, the health service, and cuts to local hospitals. Respondents also protested against the bank bailout and the bank debt. Another major issue that respondents had protested over was the issue of reproductive choice, Savita Halappanavar, women's right to choose, repeal the 8th Amendment, and abortion rights. Anti-war protests were also significant. Therefore, we can see that grassroots campaigns had been building and learning from each of these struggles which were then brought into the water campaign.

It is within this context that the Irish water movement burst on to the Irish (and international) political stage. It cannot be over emphasised the historical, social and political importance and significance of this movement on many levels both for Irish society and Irish politics and internationally for social movements and democratic politics. In regard to Ireland it is correct to state that this is one of the largest and broadest, and most sustained, social movement in Ireland since independence in 1921. At a local level communities have been engaging in protests against the installation of water metres for well over a year. At a national level there have been five demonstrations that have drawn between 20,000 and 150,000. To put this in a comparative context, a demonstration of 100,000 in Dublin would be equivalent to a million people protesting in Madrid.

Water charges were introduced in 2014 as part of fulfilment of the Troika bailout conditions. The Memorandum of Understanding between the Fianna Fail-led government and the EU/IMF/ECB (the 'Troika') in 2010 included the introduction of household water charges "with a view to start charging by the end of the EU-IMF programme period" and the setting up of a 'national public utility setting and providing for the establishment of Irish Water in its final form'. This new public utility, Irish Water, was to take responsibility for all water and waste-water provision away from local authorities. In April 2012, the new government announced that Irish Water, water charges and meters would be introduced in 2014.

In May 2014 the Minister for Environment, Phil Hogan, announced that the average household would pay €240 per year in water charges and said that those who didn't pay would be faced with reduced water pressure. At a grassroots community level, particularly in the large cities of Dublin and Cork but also in smaller regional towns protests had been growing since the start of

2014 blocking the installation of water meters with some areas effectively stopping installation. In particular, the 'Dublin Says No' and other groups in Dublin stopped meter installations. Hundreds of social media groups also began to emerge – with activists organising local meetings, and arranging to block off access to streets, as contractors arrived. Increasingly protests took place at the visit of senior politicians to various local events. Wider public disquiet grew when controversy arose in relation to the spending of up to €180 million on private consultants to set up Irish Water, the allocation of the contract to implement water meters to a company belonging to Ireland's billionaire oligarch and political party funder, Denis O'Brien, and the requirement of people to provide their personal tax and welfare identification details to the new utility. The issue of the potential privatisation of Irish water was also raised as one of the principal concerns.

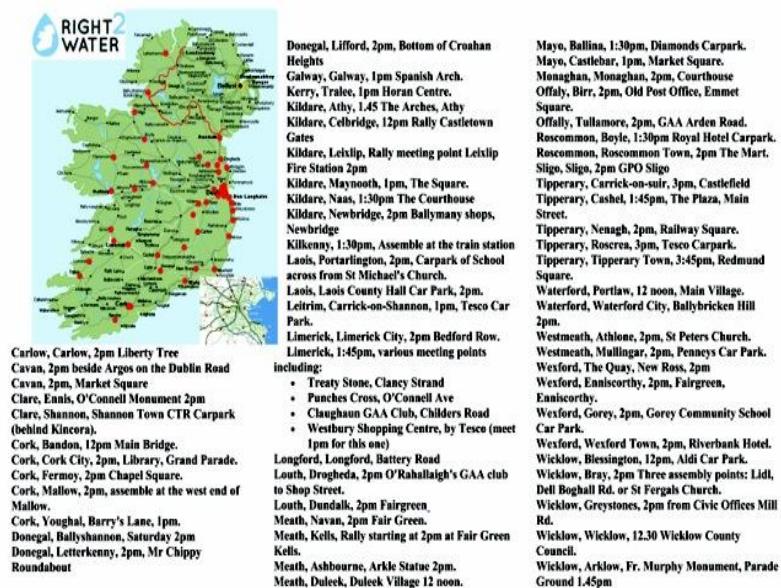
As public opposition to water charges grew the "Right2Water" campaign was formed in September 2014 as "a public campaign by activists, citizens, community groups, political parties/individuals and trade unionists who are calling for the Government to recognise and legislate for access to water as a human right" and to "abolish the planned introduction of water charges". Right2Water involves a number of small trade unions (Unite, Mandate, the Communications Worker's Union, the CPSU and OPATSI), as well as the Left parties of Sinn Fein and the united front organisations of two Trotskyist parties (People Before Profit and the Anti Austerity Alliance), and the Workers' Party. The campaign is also supported by a range of community groups and individual activists. Right2Water started with a petition which aimed to collect 50,000 signatures before the October 2014 budget. Within one week of the Right2Water online petition being launched, over 35,000 people had signed it asking the Irish Government to abolish domestic water charges and respect the people's 'human right to water'.

The first national Right2Water protest took place in Dublin on October 11th 2014. The massive turnout surprised organisers and most political commentators when between 80,000 and 100,000 attended the protest. The same day, an Anti-Austerity Alliance candidate who had run a focused anti-water charges campaign – won a seat in parliament in aby-election. Sinn Fein was expected to win the seat but their decision not to support non-payment of the water charge and a lack of focus on the water charge issue was deemed as the reason they did not win the seat. By the first deadline of October 21st only a third (500,000) of the 1.5 million liable households on the public water network who would be customers of Irish Water had registered their details with Irish Water, forcing it to seek permission from the regulator to extend the registration deadline to November 29th. Then on November 1st the largest local level, cross-country, protest in recent Irish history took place. **Over 100 local Right2Water protests took place around Ireland** with well over 150,000 people participating despite horrendous weather conditions.

Figure 1 November protests around Dublin. Source: Indymedia.ie



Figure 2 November 1st protests across Ireland. Source: Indymedia.ie



*Figure 3 Images from November 1st protests across Ireland:
Wexford, Swords, Sligo. Source: Indymedia.ie*



In the weeks following this protest there was increasing focus by the media on a small number of more ‘direct action’ or ‘civil-disobedience’ type protests. The protest against the new Labour Party Leader and deputy prime minister, Joan Burton, in Tallaght in November 2014 received a hysterical media response and was seized on by government spokespeople to try portray the protestors as ‘sinister dissidents’.

The government undertook a significant u-turn on November 19th and stated that the water charges were to be reduced, with two flat rates introduced – to be in place until the end of 2018. This included capping the charge at €160 for a single adult household and €260 for all other households until 2018. The fees were to be subsidised with a water conservation grant of €100 per year for eligible households, leaving the net cost per year at €60 for a single adult and €160 for other households. The grant would also be paid to those on group water schemes who are not customers of Irish Water. Furthermore, in an attempt to address concerns about privatisation the government introduced legislation that a ‘plebiscite’ would have to be held if a government planned to privatise Irish Water.

Despite the government reduction in charges the next Right2Water demonstration, which took place at 1pm on December 10th, a mid-week working day, in Dublin, attracted a crowd of around 30,000. The media focused on the actions of a small group of demonstrators who blocked traffic in O Connell Street. The Right 2 Water campaign highlighted the plight of the residents of Detroit in the US as the future for Ireland unless the charges were stopped. They brought over activists from the Detroit Water Brigade who addressed local meetings and the protests. The campaign pointed out that “the commodification of water has already plunged thousands of Detroit families into water poverty, while countless Irish households will face the threat of water poverty unless domestic water charges are abolished”. It also countered that in fact a referendum was still required to guarantee the public ownership of water as any government could change the existing legislation without having ‘to go to the people’ for consent.

On December 13th an Irish Times opinion poll showed that 33% of respondents stated they would not pay the water charges, 10% were undecided and less than half, 48% said they would be paying. In Dublin 39% stated they would not be paying the charges. While in terms of class, 69% of the highest socio-economic group stated they would be paying the charges while only 35% of the lowest socio economic group said they would be paying.

Significantly, protests organised a few days later by local ‘Says No’ Groups in Dublin, Cork and other places and the newly formed Communities Against Water Charges, built mainly through local community activists on Facebook, attracted 30,000 to the Dublin protest, with another 20,000 marching across the country.

By Jan 15th 760,500 of the 1.5 million liable households had registered. By February 2nd, the next deadline for registration, 850,000 homes had provided

their details to Irish Water out of the estimated 1.5 million customers who will receive their first water bills in April 2015. The deadline for registration was then extended to June 2015. About 35,000 households returned their registration packages with no details.

In February 2015 the Gardai arrested 20 protestors involved in the Tallaght protests against the Tanaiste. There were accusations of ‘political policing’ as an attempt to try break and divide the movement. Local activists claimed the Gardai were “terrorising” the community and questioned why groups of up to ten officers were turning up to make the early-morning arrests. Protestors also reported violent tactics by the Gardai at local water meter installation protests with numerous ‘you tube’ videos showing this to be the case. The jailing of four water protesters for breaking a court injunction on staying a certain distance away from water meter installations, lead to further large scale protests. The protesters were sentenced to between 28 and 56 days in prison – however they were all freed early after two and half weeks in prison after a surprise ruling from President of the High Court Nicholas Kearns, who found there were a number of errors in their detention.

In February, an opinion poll carried out by Millward Brown for the Irish Independent showed that only 40% of respondents stated they would be paying the charge, 30% stated they would not be paying, 10% were undecided and 10% stated ‘it depends’. By March 15th, at least a third of households liable for the water charges had not returned their registration forms. Irish Water claimed that registration had reached 990,000 households to make up 66% of their potential total customer base. While government Ministers tried to talk down and dismiss the water movement, 80,000 attended the Right2Water demonstration in Dublin on March 21st. A march organised by the Anti-Austerity Alliance on April 16th focused on non-payment of the water charges had 10,000 in attendance. In a sign of their fear of the growing support for non-payment the government is now discussing legislation that would enable water charges to be taken directly out of people’s wages and social welfare.

Our research of over 2500 water protestors shows that the water movement is unlikely just to dissipate and is in the process of transforming Irish politics and society. It found that those protesting were motivated by a range of factors and not just water charges. People are protesting at the impacts of austerity (which was the most cited reason for protesting), a desire for complete abolition (and not just reduction) of water charges and against the privatisation of water. They are also motivated by the belief that the current (and previous) government have, through austerity and the bailout, put the interests of the banks, Europe, and the bondholders before the needs of the Irish people, and that the working, poor and middle income people have paid an unfair burden of austerity. Respondents identified ‘corruption’, ‘cronyism’ and a belief that the ‘establishment parties look after a golden circle of wealthy business people and corporate elite’ as reasons for public anger.

It also found that protestors believe that the water campaign will be successful and 92% stated that they do not intend paying for water charges. This indicates a high level of confidence among protestors that the water charges and Irish Water will be abolished. 90% felt the tactics of the Right2Water movement have been effective and is, therefore, very supportive of the Right2Water trade unions, political parties and grassroots 'Says No' groups. The holding together of the different political parties and various groups in the united campaign of Right2Water, despite differences over non-payment and civil disobedience, is very significant. It indicates the Right2Water trade unions and political parties understood the extent of the desire amongst the grassroots for a united, serious campaign and that in order to represent this sentiment they would have to work together despite their usual behaviour of working against each other. The trade unions and community groups involved (and in particular a few key individuals within these) have played an important role in ensuring that the media focus was on the issues in the campaign – particularly around the human right to water and against privatisation. They also played an important role in mediating differences between the various Left political parties and in ensuring the emphasis has been on building the campaign rather than political rivalries. The self-organisation of communities gave them a power and influence that meant political parties and unions could not just do their 'business as usual' either through typical one off marches or dominating the campaign with their own party interests.

Survey respondents believe the protests brought the water charges to the top of the political agenda and made the government "take stock and realise that the people of Ireland have had enough" and that "they are not taking this one lying down". They explained, how "Mass mobilisation has resulted in the political classes starting to get the message; resistance of meter installation has shown people that civil disobedience is equally or more important than street protests, and can work". While others stated "Yes they have been effective and it is a building process. Right2Water can help build people's confidence and let them find a voice that has never been used, the voice of protest the voice that tells the government that enough is enough and they shall take no more from us to pay bankers and bond holders"

Protestors intend to extend the campaign to boycotting the water charge. Furthermore, a majority of respondents (54.4%) stated that they had not participated in any previous protest indicating that this is a new form of citizen's action and empowerment. Respondents felt the water protests have been successful because it "is a genuinely grassroots and local movement and has mobilised every village, town and city of this country" and "rallied Irish people from all walks of life". The respondents explained that, in their view, they have the power to stop the implementation of the water charges through large scale protest, non-payment and protest at water meter installations. This is different from other austerity measures such as the household charge where people did not have the same power to protest as it was enforced by revenue or cuts were made directly to wages and public services. Respondents explained, "The

government are worried they have made some changes, it has awoken the Irish people to the unjust way this country is governed”, while another said, “We have empowered people with knowledge. Knowledge of how corrupt our government is. The mass protest movements have already seen impacts through the government reducing the charges, capping them for four years etc. But they have to be abolished. I want a fair society for all not just the rich”. Another respondent similarly stated, “They have galvanised the anger which already existed against austerity and the Water Tax from ordinary people, the silent majority if you like. This has already ensured several u-turns on Water Tax issues from the scumbags in government. There is a growing sense of empowerment amongst the man and woman in the street.”

Very significantly, 45% said they voted for the main large parties (FF/FG/Labour) in 2011 but indicated that they are changing their vote to the opposition Left parties and independents in the forthcoming election. 31.7% said they will vote for the People Before Profit and Anti-Austerity Alliance, 27.5% said for Left Independents, 23.9% for Sinn Fein and only 5.6% for ‘Right’ Independents. 77% of respondents said that they believed the most effective way of getting change was through protesting while only 28% saw contacting a political representative as effective. Respondents explained, “In the last election and the next election my decisions are increasingly based on who's left to vote for. In both cases the main parties of this country have left me little choice but to not vote for them. To be honest, one is left very disillusioned by the whole thing. Independents are all that's left unless one chooses to not vote at all. And both of those choices are not particularly healthy for the country either, but no way are Fine Gael or Labour getting my vote, and I'll likely never vote for Fianna Fail again after the shambles they left this country with for decades to come. My grandchildren will be bearing the ill effects of that government and it saddens me”, while another said “Our political system is broken, our politicians and political parties are owned by corporate elites who act in their favour. I'm not standing for it anymore. I want a government for the people”. Despite the strong support for ‘Left’ parties, a large proportion (79%) want to see a new political party formed. They identified that the issues such a new party should stand on include anti-austerity; anti-corruption, anti-cronyism; radical political reform and democracy. They want it to stand for fairness, equality, social justice, and the right to housing, health, water, education and protection of the poor and vulnerable. It should also stand up to Europe (particularly on the debt), and ‘take back’ Irish natural resources (gas, fisheries etc) ‘for the people of Ireland’.

At the grassroots level in communities protests are continuing against the installation of water meters but these are facing increasingly violent police repression. Other grassroots actions are also taking place around homelessness, repossession and cuts to welfare payments of lone parents while strikes have recently taken place over precariousness and plans to privatise transport. However, the connections between these newly emerging movements are weak and require strengthening to continue the process of citizen mobilisation and empowerment and build solidarity across society. With a general election likely

to take place in the next 10 months the Right 2Water unions have started of process of trying to develop a common policy programme amongst the various constituent parts of the water movement that could form the basis for a potential alternative Progressive Government, that would for the first time in Ireland see a Left-led government. Other new citizen's initiatives are exploring the possibility of creating a new Podemos-type political movement that would try to create a new way of doing politics based on citizen and communities leading the new political movement and standing candidates in the coming election.

There are significant challenges to all of this, not least the difficulty of achieving broad unity amongst diverse political groupings in a traditionally sectarian context with recent failures due to far Left in-fighting and disrespectful political approaches, but there is some ground for optimism that the water movement and grassroots citizens action is forcing a change that could lead to real political transformation in Ireland.

This action note summarises key aspects of the research report “The Irish water war, austerity and the ‘Risen people’”, available at https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/TheIrishWaterwar_o.pdf

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Protest and public relations: The reinvention of the US Army School of the Americas

Selina Gallo-Cruz¹

Abstract

While much knowledge has been generated on how social movements framing strategies affect mobilization, we know much less about how targeted institutions utilize those movement strategies for institutional regeneration. In this study, I have traced archived documentation of the former U.S. Army School of the Americas' response to movement to close down the institution's foreign military training in Latin America. I examine the development of how movement claims shaped institutional strategy and I outline the SOA's stages of closure and reopening of a new, more public affairs-savvy institution. I explore the strengths and limitations of framing and counterframing strategies and provide some suggestions for movement strategists.

Protest and public relations: the reinvention of the US Army School of the Americas

Each November, thousands of protesters gather outside the gates of the US military base at Ft. Benning, Georgia. They protest a foreign military training institute housed within, formerly known as the US Army School of the Americas. This institution, now known as the Western hemisphere Institute for Security and Cooperation (hereafter WHINSEC), is charged by protesters to carry on a legacy of neo-imperialist diplomacy through the US funded foreign military training of Latin American high-ranking officers. While the current institute claims to be a military leader in human rights instruction, the former School of the Americas was closed on contentious ground, of which the movement to close the School of the Americas was a leading force. WHINSEC, like the old SOA, retains a reputation for being a "School of Assassins" and teaching torture tactics through Cold War Psychological Operations courses. Here I discuss the closing of the former School of the Americas in response to the intensive critical framing of the movement to close the SOA. I explore both the successes and the unexpected twists and turns taken in the framing and counterframing battle between a social movement and its targeted institution.

While much knowledge has been generated on how social movements framing strategies affect mobilization, we know much less about how targeted institutions utilize those movement strategies for institutional regeneration. In this study, I have traced archived documentation of the School of the Americas'

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response to movement claims and outline their stages of closure and reopening in a new, more public affairs-savvy institution. I explore the strengths and limitations of framing and counterframing strategies and provide some suggestions for movement strategists.

The birth and death of the US Army School of the Americas

The US Army School of the Americas (USARSA) was a foreign military training institute created in 1946 in Fort Amador, Panama during the intense ideological conflict of the Cold War. Through US-subsidized Spanish language instruction, USARSA aimed to share US military skills and facilitate networking, diplomacy, and hemispheric military cooperation between the US and Latin American countries. The curriculum initially included counter-insurgency and civil engineering, and both US and Latin American students attended. In the 1950s and 1960s, the student body became overwhelmingly Latin American as the school discontinued the engineering classes to focus on military strategy and command courses geared toward US Army Jungle Operations addressing counter-communist and insurgency efforts in the region. And the school became a network for US-Latin American diplomacy with upper-level Latin American officers who could claim graduation from the US Army's premier Latin American institution acquiring regional prestige (a prestige that continued to grow with the school's move to the US, see Gill 2004).

In 1984, following a treaty between the US and Panama mandating the administrative transfer of the then US-military base, For. Gulick, to Panama, the school made what was meant to be a temporary move to Fort Benning, Georgia. The school assessed its options for a permanent location at this time and altered its mission based on the perceived growing threat of "neo-Guevarism" (Cuban-exported communism) throughout Latin America, adding technically focused courses to manage field operations. During its early years in the US, the school concentrated on building up the student body, expanding the faculty base, and making the case for increased funding to support these efforts. USARSA presented itself to the Department of Defense (DoD) as the US Army's most valuable foreign military initiative in Latin America as the only institution to provide US military training in Spanish. The school's administration argued that this approach opened economic and cultural access to Latin American diplomacy in ways not possible through other US Army institutions.

Despite its best efforts to gain legitimacy on the grounds of professional excellence, the USARSA earned a negative reputation at the launch of the longest-running protest movement against US intervention in Latin America, the movement to close the School of the Americas. The movement, still in operation, first targeted the institution in 1987 after links were made between the USARSA training and a 1980 El Salvadoran massacre of four US churchwomen. Multiple links between the school and other atrocities were uncovered by School of the Americas Watch (SOAWatch), an organization established to advance the movement's claims and investigate crimes

committed by USARSA graduates (see Hodge and Cooper 2005; Nepstad 2000). In 1989, a US congressional investigation began to scour the course materials for advocating methods of torture against insurgents. A decade of criticism against the school ensued. The School of the Americas formally closed on December 15, 2000, following the FY2001 defense authorization bill. This bill also created the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security and Cooperation (WHINSEC), which opened in the USARSA's place in 2001.

WHINSEC currently trains military students from 11 different countries (sometimes including US and Canadian students) and operates on an \$8.4 million budget. The organization's website prominently displays its leadership in human rights and claims a commitment to transparent operations and democratic relations throughout the hemisphere. Colombia remains WHINSEC's biggest client. The protest movement continues to uncover links between the legacy of training at the SOA and WHINSEC and human rights abuses such as those surrounding the Colombian drug war and other paramilitary operations in Latin America.

SOAWatch claims the establishment of WHINSEC is little more than a cosmetic makeover for the School of the Americas, informally dubbed the "School of the Assassins" (see Donnelly 2000, Pallmeyer 2001, SOAWatch 1998). The protest movement pursues a three-pronged strategy: lobbying Congress to close the school, lobbying Latin American nations to withdraw their students from its training program, and protesting annually at the institution's gates on the November anniversary of the Jesuit massacre in El Salvador. The movement's success includes Argentina, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Venezuela withdrawing from the school, and tens of thousands protesting at the gates of the SOA/WHINSEC each year. The protest weekend is an annual vigil for human rights activists and something of a combined movements pilgrimage and networking conference. It incorporates a rally with often high-profile speakers and artists and a street market, a solemn vigil "funeral" march, and a weekend-long series of workshops to mobilize around global human rights issues. The SOAWatch agenda and mounting claims against WHINSEC can be reviewed on its website (<http://www.soaw.org/>; see also McCoy 2005).

Red carpet to reinvention

My first visit to WHINSEC was intended as a straightforward, contact-making visit. I planned to conduct fieldwork on the contentious interaction between the movement and this target of the then-30-year crusade to close the US Army foreign military training school. The movement has invested judicious effort into empirically proving the links between the school's instruction and torture tactics used by its graduates against countless Latin Americans from the 1970s to today. I was interested in studying the process of framing and counterframing between the two opponents, and each organization's argument development in reaction to the accusations and position of the other.

What I thought would be a “meet-and-greet” session to make the institute more amenable to the idea of me studying these interactions, however, turned into a red carpet reception—the entire leadership rearranged their schedules to accommodate my visit. With only a day’s notice, the public affairs officer had scheduled me for a full-day tour and in-depth, one-on-one meetings with the institute’s leaders, instructors, and administrators. I met with the instructors of human rights and democracy, international law, theology and “just war theory,” a former graduate and institute archivist, the institute’s captain and director, the director of curricula, and I had several debriefing meetings with the public affairs officer throughout the day. For me, this was “serendipitous” data collection about the institute’s interest in making a good impression. I certainly had not expected my first stop at the institute to be a whirlwind day conducting a full roster of high-profile interviews.

As I sat in my hotel room that night, I felt perplexed about what had just happened. Not only had my attempt to make introductory contact become six hours of formal interviews, but I was a first-year graduate student. Given my humble credentials, I had not expected that by merely appearing at this major military institution for a research paper, I would be treated as an honored foreign diplomat. Several weeks after my red-carpet reception, I was permitted to have an in-depth phone interview with a commanding field-instructor in Guatemala, where many of the confirmed atrocities occurred. Later I was also given a phone interview with the former director and commander of WHINSEC who had since moved onto another appointment at the Pentagon. Even given my novice perspective, it seemed too easy to gain access to the institution.

Another intriguing aspect of the visit was that each of the school’s representatives avidly insisted that WHINSEC was a completely different institution than the SOA, claiming the SOA’s legacy was unfairly attributed to WHINSEC. My objective—I plainly told them from the start—was not to study the legacy of torture or WHINSEC’s culpability in the many assassinations and massacres of which they had been accused. Instead, I wanted to study the discursive interaction between WHINSEC and the protest movement. More generally, I sought to understand how two political opponents respond to the other’s accusations and how this discourse shapes organizational identity and position relative to each other.

Understanding my purpose—different from that for which the officials were well-prepared—put them somewhat at ease as conversation moved away from the institution’s responsibility for the alleged atrocities. On the other hand, as the discussion focused on interactions between the two groups, it became clear that though the institute sought to portray an image of civility, diplomacy, transparency, and openness to dialogue, information on the transition between the USARSA and WHINSEC was not forthcoming. I was repeatedly told by everyone throughout the day that they could not discuss anything of the old School of the Americas; this was a new and entirely different institution. To gather information about the SOA, I was told that I must visit the National Security Archives which housed the former institution’s documents. In fact, this

was repeated to me by many of those who were former administrators of the SOA.

Through observation and interviews, I spent three years studying the discursive battle between the movement to close the SOA and the subsequent WHINSEC. At the end of this study, I published an article discussing how the dynamics of framing and counterframing and the packaging and counter-packaging of institutional identities and objectives work to restructure the moral boundaries of contention that so often define the outcome of any institution's or movement's public legitimacy (Gallo-Cruz 2012). What was unique about this particular interaction, I explained, was that the opponent's strategy was not to directly counter the protesters' claims. Rather, they worked to discursively agree with their opponents on a general level to position the targeted institution (themselves) within the boundaries of legitimacy that the protest movement had so skillfully defined. After analyzing the current dynamics of this oppositional discourse, I headed to the National Security Archives to determine whether I could find anything out about the former institution and its closing that would provide a new perspective on this discursive process.

In this article, I explore the events leading up to the closing of the School of the Americas. To generate a deeper understanding of the promises and pitfalls of discursive conflict, that part of social movements work that scholars refer to as framing and counterframing, I outline the three-stage institutional transformation of the US Army School of the Americas in response to the mounting social movement pressure which effectively shut down the old institution. I delineate these stages as: 1) Organizational anxiety—the institution's realization of a disconnect between private and public classifications, 2) Organizational panic—the scramble for institutional legitimacy, and 3) Strategic institutional reinvention- the recreation of a new institution designed for political immunity against protesters' claims. I review these stages in the institution's history in response to mounting movement pressure, and I evaluate the strategic structure of the document entitled, "School of the Americas Reinvention Plan" (National Security Archives 1999). I explain how sociological research demonstrates—and the Reinvention Plan affirms—that organizations are deeply cultural beings following shifts in the broader culture in which they are embedded. I then explore the implications for movement strategists who may have to contend with institutional reinvention based on the themes scaffolding their claims against those institutions.

Building on prior research on the conflict between the movement to close the School of the Americas and WHINSEC which now stands in its place, this discussion generates several new insights about how that conflict came to its current stalemate First, I introduce in some detail the School of the Americas Reinvention Plan, a piece of empirical evidence previously undiscovered by the movement to close the School of the Americas. This plan explicitly outlines the institutional reinvention and counterframing strategy of the former SOA. Next, where framing scholars tend to focus on how framing shapes solidarity within the movement, I examine the effects of framing strategies on the targeted

institution's counterframing. In turn, I consider how counterframing shapes mobilization through institutional reinvention, not discussed in movement scholarship. I refer and add to findings from my investigation of the current debate between protesters and WHINSEC to explain how the movement's framing and the institution's counterframing led to the development of WHINSEC as a politically reinvented USARSA. Finally, I explore the strategic implications of these findings on movement framing. I argue that the Reinvention of the School of the Americas demonstrates that, in the short run, protest framing strategists should consider the potential for a target institution's use of general discursive agreement to have a negative impact on the movement's progress. Movement strategists should develop concrete frames highlighting contradictions in the distinctions between commonly shared general values and distinctive policy interpretations. In the long run, movement strategists should envision the success of how their framing efforts work toward "cognitive liberation," or the collective realization that the targeted behavior is unjust and should be changed through collective action (see McAdam, 2013), and the deeper ideological work that feeds into other forms of resistance and solidarity.

To learn about the SOA's demise and its legacy in WHINSEC, I extensively researched the USARSA collection at the US National Security Archives. I began this inquiry with two rough claims, and a general, open-ended question in mind. First, there was WHINSEC's argument that the old School of the Americas had been completely laid to rest. WHINSEC's officials claimed it was a wholly new institution, with a new objective, curricula, and no formal links to the SOA, nullifying all allegations of the former school's culpability. Then, there was SOAWatch's claim that WHINSEC was nothing more than an organizational attempt to "WHISC" away the past (protesters coined this term in an early protest banner to play on the institution's first acronym, "WHISC," quickly prompting the institution to expand its acronym to WHINSEC). In addition to these contradictory claims, my broader analytical objective was to understand how both sides' orientations to disparaging discourse may direct the outcome of conflict and structural changes undertaken by targeted institutions.

Movement pressure and "organizational anxiety"

In the organizational management world, the term "organizational anxiety" denotes the typically internal and conflictual collective sentiments that lead organizations to question their identity, organizational strategies, and future. This research aims to treat organizations as unique social actors, akin to individuals experiencing a psychological crisis. That is, where organizations face the possibility of ceasing to exist, they engage in struggles similar to those of individuals facing death. The literature provides steps for effectively addressing "threats" to organizational health and survival (Baruch and Lambert 2007).

A sociological understanding of organizational anxiety shares the view of the organization as a common social actor experiencing a crisis in identity, vision,

and—potentially—structure (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). Sociological institutional theories view organizations as deeply cultural creatures, however, for which threats to organizational stability are not rooted in rational, internal, assessments of “real problems”, but emerge from sociological shifts in organizational legitimacy (Powell and DiMaggio 1991). These internal shifts follow broader, social contextual shifts in which institutions are embedded. Thus, conceptualizations of organizational changes often refer to how an organization is cognitively positioned among a constellation of other social institutions and authorities (Clemens and Cook 1999).

A classic text in the cultural theory of institutions is Mary Douglas' *How Institutions Think* (1986). Douglas develops this theoretical treatise on the institution as a cultural, social actor to outline the ritualistic ways in which institutions, including formal organizations like USARSA, owe their loyalties to sacred cultural systems in a larger sociological environment, like the ideal of American-exported democracy. Douglas outlines and explains some typological forms of institutional behavior. These include grounding in the social-cultural context in which an institution operates, social control of the institution's behavior by both positive sanctions (socialization within that broader social context) and negative sanctions (threats to the institution by external authorities), how institutions form and reshape their identities in response to changing moral landscapes, and the analogies of “sacred” and “profane” on which they are founded and continuously recreated. All of these qualities could be found in USARSA's paper trail in the National Security Archives.

In fact, USARSA was so fundamentally changed by the movement which came to redirect the sociological field in which it operated that reference to the unavailability of the infamous psychological “torture” manuals characterized the impact of the legacy of these manuals in shaping reinvention. I was repeatedly told by officials of the new school that if I did go to the National Security Archives, I would not view the manuals that sealed the symbolic delegitimation of its training; they were classified. When I finally arrived at the Archives, I was given a series of bright yellow notices indicating that I would not have access to these manuals, and several of the archival clerks reminded me that they were unavailable. I took note of these cautions, sociologically interesting to me because I was there to look for the institution's movement-driven “cognitive changes” including how its identity responded to the social movement. The eradication-of-the-torture-manual badge certainly seemed to be one of these changes.

In my opinion, both congressional and activist researchers did an effective job of judging these psychological operation manuals to be inappropriate for foreign military training. I was impressed, however, by how formative the legacy of this tarnished reputation had been in redefining the institution. First, I found a clear break from institutional business-as-usual to a heightened sense of anxiety over the threat of institutional death just when movement frames gained widespread resonance, sparking US public concern and outrage. Until the early 1990s, the school's organizational history was routine. Beyond the mundane, everyday

details of the financial operations, curricular materials, networking notes, and records of graduations, ceremonies, organizational milestones, etc., the school's biggest concern in its early US years was for additional funding (not because it was struggling but because of a desire to expand). The only conflict I could find was the case of a secretary purportedly dismissed for damaging a typewriter. The institution was in its growth phase (and Douglas argues that in early institutionalization, survival means growth).

While USARSA's earliest opposition began soon after its opening in Panama in the 1950s, conflicts in its external environment did not affect the school's identity or mission (on the inside) for several decades. Its early organizational histories detail the suspicious reception on the part of the Latin American left as coming from "communists, leftists, and nationalists who view[ed] it as an imperialistic 'Yankee Beachhead' in Latin America" (Ormsbee Jr. 1984). This early account notes that Panamanian newspapers accused the school of serving as a training ground for dictators and characterized it as an "academy of torture" (Ormsbee Jr. 1984). Critics targeted an early course that was explicitly designed to derail communist mobilization. Even newswires in the USSR condemned the school's attack on communist mobilization. All that mattered to the institution during this early phase, however, was maintaining good standing in Latin American military circles. This positive reputation in Latin America continued through the early 1980s. The school's own assessments during this period grouped together anything appearing to oppose democracy in Latin America as "leftist" ideology—communism, socialism, and other forms of insurgency. The criticism bore no importance to USARSA's own assessment of organizational health because it did not care whether or not anyone criticized it for trying to combat communism.

Daily operations at Ft. Benning remained stable even as a few national news pieces criticized the school's involvement in Latin American atrocities. In 1987, a handful of activists protested the school's link to the 1980 murder of the four US churchwomen in El Salvador. Even before the first US critique of the school, USARSA's 1989 institutional assessment report lists a long roster of DoD, Army, and civilian expectations it had to address to become a premier Spanish-instruction school. The biggest concern, the report concluded, was that the institution's charter must clearly spell out its mission to make explicit its valuable and unique contribution and to ensure legal viability. Only in a side note does the report mention that some recent bad press had "confused the locals."

The institution's public standing took a sharp turn in 1990, after a congressional report found that USARSA graduates committed the 1989 El Salvadoran murder of six Jesuits, their housekeeper, and her daughter. Following this discovery, the school endured persistent negative press that influenced its standing within the local community and the DoD, as well as boosting the rapidly growing social movement protest outside its gates. An internally drafted school history, which attempts to recast the school's "half century of professionalism" (dated at its closing), notes a shift in the school's focus from its "US reconsolidation period,"

and clearly documents efforts to ramp up the school's presence as a respectable US Army institution, to a "post-Cold War era" in 1990 (Leuer 2000). A careful examination of the school's own archival reckoning of its public identity throughout this period of heightened organizational anxiety illustrates how movement pressure fueled its panic and eventual reinvention.

Panic and the scramble for institutional legitimacy

Through the lens of institutional transformation, we can more fully understand the sociological foundations of how organizational anxiety emerges and develops into organizational panic. This panic prompts a scramble for the legitimacy and approval needed for survival, which can lead to institutional transformations benefitting or inhibiting movement objectives.

After 1990, the school became consumed with organizational anxiety over its public reputation, its professional standing within the DoD based on that reputation, and the unremitting condemnation of its graduates' culpability in the torture and assassination of a growing roster of victims. Mary Douglas describes these institutional crises as mirroring personal, psychological crises of conflicts between public and personal classifications. Douglas explains that, like individuals, institutions experiencing crises have two options for responding to such discrepancies: They can disagree with the public and hold to their own classification (leading to a state of deviance), or they can uphold the worth of the public classification "but know that he or she is incapable of meeting the expected standards" (Douglas 1986: 98), which leads to another form of deviance. In his seminal work on suicide, Durkheim explains that individuals deal with these discrepancies by ending their lives (and as Douglas also notes, institutions make "life or death decisions" in the same regard). The study of counter-movements considered here, however, points to a third option, which is the strategic contestation of those classification discrepancies through a process movement scholars refer to as "counterframing." In the case of the US Army School of the Americas, this effort resulted in perhaps the most extreme form of counterframing—institutional reinvention. Douglas describes institutional forgetting as a strategic process of holding to an institution's own classification against contrary evidence that this classification may be inaccurate. In this case, the School of the Americas both actively shifted its classification to align with a public counter-ideal (e.g., by promoting values of transparency and diplomacy) and worked to erase its connection to the deviant image of the former institution (e.g., by restricting access to the psychological "torture" manuals).

Counterframing is the strategic response to framing, or, in social activism, the development of interpretive arguments about a particular social actor, behavior, or policy that directly or indirectly counters the opponent's arguments. Developing such interpretive platforms to defend the accused institution can be key to the course of debate between opponents, because frames (and counterframes) define what issues to scrutinize and how. Counterframes not only contest the substantive claims presented by dissenters, but the very terms

on which the debate should ensue. In the case of the SOA's reinvention, we can trace how the institution's counterframing followed the process steps Douglas outlines in *How Institutions Think* (1986). Specifically, the institution acts in accordance with shifts in the broader context in which it is embedded, enacting changes that are structured by the positive and negative sanctions of both supporters and opponents, repositioning itself among favorable moral themes, and ultimately recreating a more favorable public identity based on widely held analogies of good and bad institutions.

First, as the context of foreign military training shifted, the SOA was also called into question. The first sign of scrambling for organizational legitimacy surfaced in early 1990 when the US Army School of the Americas dropped the "US Army" from its title and continued simply as "the School of the Americas." This modification was a response to the hot-off-the-press discovery that a US Army school had trained those responsible for the 1989 massacre of American humanitarians in El Salvador, the 1980 brutal rape, torture, and massacre of four US churchwomen, and the slaughter of the now-famous Archbishop Oscar Romero who was targeted because of his tireless advocacy for the poor in El Salvador.

Once the Army rejected an association with the SOA, the institution sought a new legitimate institutional protectorate under which to operate. The institution appealed to various military branches, including those directed toward Latin American nations and general branches of the US military, such as the Navy and Air Force). As well as addressing the question of its legitimacy within the US defense structure, the SOA began to actively worry about its partnerships with other foreign defense institutions. In 1992, the institute's director, Colonel Alvarez, embarked on a series of diplomatic trips throughout Latin America to try to maintain a Latin American student population. His efforts drew the school's first Chilean students, but course enrollments suffered in the years to come. The SOA also revised its curriculum. In 1993, it added courses on international human rights law, even as its compliance with such law was being called into question by congressional lobbyists working to cut the school's funding.

The scrambling became more pointedly directed by the increasingly negative sanctions placed on the institution. Upon the first draft and vote of an amendment to close the school, the SOA established an Interagency Task Force to directly lobby congressmen to oppose the protest group. Already support was declining rapidly in Congress, the public, and client nations. Pressure on the Army due to its association with the school prompted the formation of a special public affairs office to deal with SOA criticism in 1995. By this point, the school was desperately inviting congressmen to visit and discuss its programs' validity and worth. After another contentious congressional debate and vote on the floor in 1996, Secretary of the Army Togo West Jr. declared the SOA's Interagency Task Force an illegal lobbying operation and ordered it to disband. At that time, Congress also was investigating the SOA's purported "torture manuals".

The SOA continued its fight for legitimate jurisdiction as an institution fulfilling general Army and DoD objectives. The school proudly claimed in early 1996 that it could prove how 32 of its courses addressed one or more of the DoD's strategic objectives in Latin America. The school developed peace operations and democratic sustainment courses, achieving what it considered an "updated validation of its worth in the US foreign policy arena" (Leuer 2000: 22). Despite these efforts, 1996 continued to be a bad year for the SOA's institutional legitimacy and over 10,000 protesters now marched at its gates annually.

In June 1996, a presidential intelligence oversight board reported the use of SOA intelligence manuals in Central America and issued a three-part investigation into the role the school's training played in Central American atrocities. When questioned about its support for the SOA, the Army was reluctant to issue any answer; by 1997, SOA officials claimed the Army had issued a "gag-order" (Leuer 2000: 24). The school's officials fought legislative attempts to close the SOA in 1996, 1997, and 1998. Desperate to regain Army approval and avoid becoming "the US Army's sacrificial lamb to appease the critics of the US policy of containment of communism in Latin America", the school's leadership restored "US Army" to the school's name to try to "recover with the public its intimate association with the US Army" (Leuer 2000: 24).

In 1998, USARSA experienced another change in commander when a public affairs expert, Colonel Glenn Weidner assumed leadership. Weidner had a reputation for significant "interagency work" through Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs. He immediately implemented a two-pronged strategy of direct dialogic engagement about the merits of USARSA training and programs with both the protest movement organizers and the general public. He spearheaded the organization's internal revision to emphasize and incorporate human rights themes. The school hosted numerous congressional delegations to publicize favorable information about its programs, and even sought and received official Army certification that its training was consistent with US values and the general military training curricula. Despite this last ditch effort, the House of Representatives voted 230-197 in favor of closing the school in early 1999. The last act of scrambling for institutional survival culminated in the drafting of the Reinvention Plan.

Reinventing the US Army School of the Americas

WHINSEC emerged from the Reinvention Plan. The school's curricular director had held the same position within both institutions. One of the most interesting points he made was that he believed the protest movement improved the organization. He went so far as to call Father Roy Bourgeois, the Catholic priest who initiated and continues to lead the mobilization against the school, the "father of WHINSEC." In my earlier article detailing this research, I noted that WHINSEC's public affairs officer was also incredibly forthcoming about the organization's explicit strategic affairs agenda and even gave me a copy of the document entitled, *WHINSEC's Strategic Communications Plan*. This plan

systematically outlines a series of “talking points” that the organization should follow to effectively reframe its identity in a way that denies accusations made by the protest movement. Referring back to the Reinvention Plan which preceded WHINSEC’s creation, however, details how the former institution passed through several stages of panic and scrambling to redefine itself. It is now evident how this new strategic communications document begins with a continuation of the organizational panic and scramble for legitimacy that characterized the entire 1990s for the SOA. The report’s talking points strive to demonstrate the new institution’s position under the jurisdiction of the Army, the DoD, and in accordance with international human rights law. The second bundle of “themes” in the document (which has been posted online by SOAWatch at

http://www.soaw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1035) begins with the statement that “WHINSEC is different from USARSA” in a number of ways that may be articulated through strategic discourse.

The SOA’s reinvention depended directly on the analogies of good and evil redefined in the wider context in which the protest movement became so influential. In my research examining the ongoing debate between WHINSEC and its opponents, the movement to close the School of the Americas/WHINSEC², I identified three principal protest frames that attack the legitimacy of the school. These are that the school contributed to a legacy of *impunity* for its crimes against innocent Latin American protesters and civilians, that it continues to operate under *secrecy*, and that it fosters an agenda of military-driven *neoimperialism* in Latin America. My analysis of WHINSEC’s counterframing efforts reveals that its counterframing strategy has been neither to change the terms of the debate nor deny the relevance of the principal themes of the movement’s criticism. Rather, WHINSEC employs a strategy of discursive alignment within the positive counters of those frames, claiming to be an institution that promotes humanitarian aid and democratic *beneficence* in the region, embraces *transparency* and judicial oversight of its programs, and ensures *security* through military coordination and cooperation (Gallo-Cruz 2012). These counterframing efforts exemplify the institutional orientation toward analogies between what had become considered morally sacred (e.g., objectives promoting democracy and human rights) and profane (e.g., objectives that violate these values) (Douglas 1986).

The Reinvention Plan laid the groundwork for this new institution, strategically designed to counter opposition, exemplifying the final link between organizational anxiety, panic, and the creation of a protest-resistant identity. Figure 1 depicts the cover for the printed and bound “School of the Americas Reinvention Plan,” which was drafted in 1999 when Congress stipulated that under no condition could it continue to fund an organization with the name School of the Americas. The former SOA officials decided to create a new

² Because the movement asserts that WHINSEC is an organizational continuation of the old US Army School of the Americas, it maintains its mission as closing “the SOA/WHINSEC” rather than just “WHINSEC.”

institution “with no political baggage or controversial history” that could fulfill all the same objectives as the original (Leuer 2000: 27).



Figure 1. The US Army School of the Americas Reinvention Plan

Movement activists especially should take note of the Reinvention Plan because it points to a crucial juncture at which protest effectiveness may steer institutions away from the “death decisions” they may make in defying contender claims and toward an alternative type of renewed “life” decision forged in part by protesters’ successful framing efforts (Douglas 1986). Figure 2 depicts a PowerPoint slide entitled, “The School of the Americas Reinvention Information Campaign Plan.” This presentation illustrates how the foreign military training institute reinvention should target a diverse range of informed supporters and opponents including Congress, human rights groups, other governments of the Western Hemisphere, “Interagency Influencers,” and religious organizations. It also suggests re-socializing members of the previous institution into this new, strategically-devised classification. This resocialization would entail reframing the institution’s identity in relation to senior officers, soldiers, civilian staff, family members, and the array of DoD officials directly connected with the school. The document advises the new institution’s creators to “conduct an aggressive campaign to leverage communication strategies and products to inform and educate internal and external audiences about the

excellence of the new school as a DoD institution and its importance in supporting US foreign policy objectives." (National Security Archives 1999)

On the back of one of these PowerPoint slides, a handwritten note cautions presenters to be "careful" to avoid "the notion of the campaign as manipulative"; the note instructs that a savvy "packaging of the issue" will be key to its success. The new institution would effectively receive the complete reallocation of all resources slated for the SOA through an institutional reinvention that included a Board of Visitors oversight, an annual curricular review by other branches of the Army, a revamped curriculum that emphasizes human rights and other forms of democracy-building (changes already made at the SOA), and new networking initiatives to bring in faculty with new, politically legitimate expertise. To finalize the full public and symbolic identity-break from the old institution, the plan mandates that the closure of USARSA requires: 1) All students to graduate and depart, 2) An appropriate military closing ceremony, 3) Retirement of the USARSA name and school code, 4) Files and institute website materials to be sent to the Military History Institute, and 5) Storage of all USARSA memorabilia.

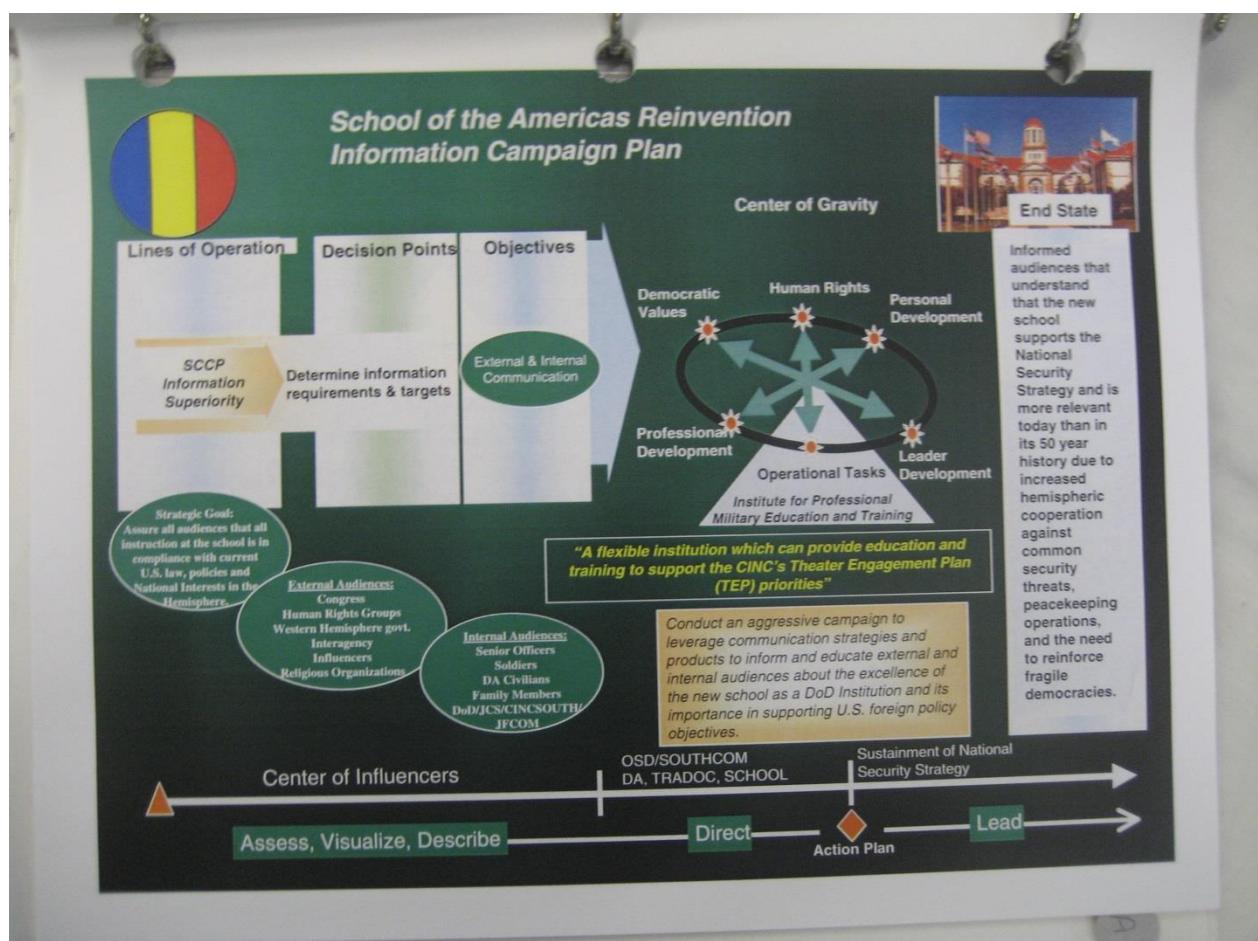


Figure 2. The School of the Americas Reinvention Information Campaign

The next step of the plan, “Establish New Institution,” explains that with new legislation passed, the new institution should include: 1) A new DoD directive in place to legitimate the new institution’s mission, 2) A new motto, school colors, and crest, 3) New signs, printing, and stationery, 4) An opening ceremony organized as a “high profile media event,” 5) Permanently deleting commando, artillery, cavalry, intelligence, and “psyops” (psychological operations) courses and replacing them with international law, disaster relief, inspector general, counter drugs, and information operations courses, 6) The development of a “civilian track,” 7) An expanded focus beyond the Peruvian-Ecuadorian case in the border patrol course, and 8) Adding intelligence oversight training. To make the institute presentable to a critical public, the plan advocates completing a “100% scrub of the curriculum,” developing an International Fellows program, acquiring a new school code, providing market training to recruiters, and highlighting curricular changes in new course numbers.

The plan also devises a new organizational structure that extends power and oversight to people with international and public affairs expertise. This model is contrasted in a side-by-side comparison with the old organizational structure, a conventional, hierarchical army chain of internal command. The plan concludes with an ambitious multi-million dollar budget expansion, as well as a clear timeline for all interagency initiatives requiring completion to bring the new institution into formal existence.

The promises and pitfalls of framing

The movement to close the School of the Americas framing proved to be both incredibly beneficial and deleterious. On the one hand, the movement established a lasting symbolic identity among the general public for the US Army’s “School of Assassins” exposing its legacy in training paramilitaries, coups, and dictators. This exposure helped to make certain types of foreign military training unacceptable. On the other hand, the movement’s resonant themes of democracy and human rights have been used as a template for institutional reinvention that provided a political backdoor through which the old School of the Americas could develop into a new, better-funded institution.

This paradoxical outcome provides important insights for movement strategists when thinking about the role of framing. I argue that the birth and reinvention of the School of the Americas exhibits how framing is necessary but insufficient to movement strategy; greater attention should be focused on framing against institutional counterframing, as well as how framing fits into the overall ideological scheme of movement objectives. Where Douglas explains that institutions are sometimes called to make life or death decisions, movement framing strategists must consider how their frames may be coopted into forging life-regenerating paths for contested institutions.

Framing and counterframing strategies

Most research on framing done by social movements focuses on the links between framing and mobilization: Specifically, how do types of movement claims and the processes for developing these claims shape which constituents join or support the movement and in what ways they engage? Much less research exists on how framing processes lead to success in terms of broader social change. There are key insights from framing and mobilization literature and the study of framing and counterframing, however, that can illuminate how and why this movement's efforts shaped the Reinvention of the SOA and its concurrent effects on the ongoing movement.

On one level, frames have to be general enough to be easily anchored in widely held social values, a process called “frame alignment” (Snow et. al. 1986; Benford and Snow, 2000; Zuo and Benford, 1995; Benford, 1993). On another level, frames will be contested by opponents and met with counterframes that either directly critique claim-makers’ arguments or put new themes on the argumentative table. These counterframes may work to shift attention away from initial, general claims or at least contest the movement’s entitlement to have their claims identified with general values. In this sense, more specific claims contribute to the success of framing and counterframing efforts in several ways.

Strong frames concretely diagnose the problem, offer a specific prognosis for change, based on the causal claims made between the targeted practice and the social problem at hand (Snow and Benford 1988), and motivate supporters to act with clearly defined tactical plans (Zuo and Benford 1995). Challengers’ counterframes may therefore attempt to demobilize opponents and bolster their own public legitimacy by attacking the logics of diagnostic framing (Benford 1993; McCright and Dunlap 2000). Counterframes may also work to obscure the prognosis specifics in a way that garners counter-mobilization against claimsmakers (Esacove 2004). Counterframes may further challenge the legitimacy of claims-makers’ tactics with the aim of derailing support for the claims-makers in a more peripheral form of attack (such as debates surrounding the use of violence versus nonviolence in a protest, see Ackerman and Kruegler 1994; Gregg 1939; Helvey 2004).

We see examples of each of these discursive maneuvers in the School of the Americas movement’s claims and the institutions’ counterclaims. The first identifiable movement framing success was the way in which the movement set the terms of the debate early on. The grounds on which the movement to close the School of the Americas based its claims were never contested by its opponents. USARSA could do nothing but enthusiastically agree with them that human rights, transparency, and democratic solidarity are essential American values that should never be violated by a US institution.

There was also some early success in linking general beliefs and values to specific policy initiatives in the process of diagnosis and prognosis. The movement’s framing tapped into general, widely held beliefs about human

rights and democracy. Specifically, the movement's framing prescribed that an institution that can be empirically proven to have violated these values should be closed. The targeted institution could neither contest that abuses occurred at the hands of its graduates, nor that such abuses were shameful and wrong (Gill 2004; Hodge and Cooper 2005; Nelson-Pallmeyer 1997). Nevertheless, USARSA also skillfully counterframed.

USARSA first worked to shift attention away from concrete claims by engaging in an intensive rhetorical battle over whether it should be culpable for atrocities committed by students or for defense initiatives from higher-up institutions. USARSA then countered the movement's claimed prognostic links between training and abuse through curricular revisions, boosting the institution's professional identity, and—when that failed—devising a complete institutional reinvention to remove the empirical evidence necessary for prognostic framing. Reinvention became the final and most effective manner of counterframing the movement's formidable critical frames against the SOA (at least enough to appease Congress).

Another way framers can anticipate and prepare for such counterframing strategies is to clearly demarcate “who’s in” and “who’s out” of their movement’s favorable moral boundaries (Silver 1997). In the “dialogic dance” of framing and counterframing (Esacove 2004) between the SOA/WHINSEC and the movement, the movement built up a strong support base. In addition to its historical foundation of clergy and religious supporters, this base expanded to include veterans, scholars, NGOs, politicians, and even a former instructor at the SOA who spoke out against the school on behalf of the movement. This framing established that those on the side of human rights were those who fought to directly invest in civil society and advocate for the poor and the just.

Agreeing with this positioning (if only because they were cornered into an organizational life or death situation), the SOA’s Reinvention Plan specifically addresses the need for recruiting active support from religious organizations, NGOs, and other citizens’ support groups. The new institution has also actively engaged the academic community, inviting scholars to open house discussions at the institute and elsewhere.³ Moreover, the targeted institution has worked to delegitimize its opponents by drawing attention to the honor that should be accorded to “those who have served our country” (although this is inaccurate and rather surreptitious as the movement attacks the outcome of training initiatives, not the willingness to serve). These continued efforts to distance WHINSEC from the SOA and pacify the ongoing movement against it symbolize the lingering anxiety of the new organization. The public affairs officer was the first person to contact me some years ago and enthusiastically point out that Father Roy, founder and key organizer in the movement, was facing excommunication from the Catholic Church following his attendance of a woman’s ordination.⁴ The officer was certain this loss of official legitimacy

³ Then commander-Colonel Weidner began this effort in the SOA’s final year.

⁴ Father Roy recounts his own story of this process in his recent book, Bourgeois 2014.

within the hierarchy of the Church would effectively demobilize the movement. Just as I complete this draft, years after my original research was completed, the same public affairs officer has contacted me again to assure me the institution was finally clearing public pressure against it writing,

I'm not sure if the reason is my brilliant(!) arguments, time passing, SOAW's illogical premise, or all those and more, but the protest movement has faded to minor background noise. From a high of around 15,000 in 2006, the numbers were around 1300 last November, and that may have been a generous count. Mr. Roy (he got excommunicated and defrocked because of his efforts to ordain women as priests) doesn't seem to get as many speaking engagements as in past years, but he still lived (sic) in his gate-side apartment. The SOAW website reflects efforts on all sorts of issues that don't involve "SOA." (Personal communication 2015).

And he included a brochure of an updated history on WHINSEC.

In this sense, the primary counterframing strategy of the SOA/WHINSEC can be identified as a general discursive agreement with the broader values of the movement (democracy and human rights), and a more targeted “frame-shifting” strategy in concrete policy claims about the school’s content and identity. To achieve this “shifting,” counterframers employed a two-pronged approach. First, they worked on one level to shift the actual substance of institutional content and identity (not to the movement’s approval, but merely to realign that substance in a more general way with its own interpretations of democracy and human rights). Second, they worked discursively on another level to shift the attention of these debates toward dimensions the targeted institution thought would bolster their legitimacy (primarily its service to the military and now to delegitimize the movement as rightfully fizzling out).

One reactionary assessment of this transformation might be that the institution simply “coopted” the movement’s claims. In social movement analysis (and political analysis more generally), however, cooptation means the takeover of movement initiatives by a targeted institution that involves the active involvement of both the co-opters and the co-opted (Coy and Hedeen 2005). The SOA/WHINSEC neither wants to coopt the movement’s claims and its vision of a better form of hemispheric relations. Nor does the movement agree with any of the ways the SOA/WHINSEC has transformed itself into a democracy-promoting institution. Rather, WHINSEC has reengineered itself based on the broader themes of democracy and human rights which anchor the deep moral core from which the movement holds its ground. This points to a source of both the successes and limitations of the movement’s framing efforts.

Counterframing and institutional ideological work

Beyond establishing the terms of the debate over the old SOA, the movement has motivated hundreds of thousands of supporters, as well as several Latin American heads of state, to question the responsibility of an institution for the legacy of its participants. The annual vigil at SOA/WHINSEC's gates serves as a movement "halfway house" (see Morris 1986), a central networking and training grounds for thousands of activists annually. Within this safe-space, activists build awareness of human rights issues and share skills in how to effectively advocate for those rights. The protest weekend has become a deeply symbolic place for holding vigils on behalf of the victims of human rights abuses. The vigil gives life to the legacy of those victims and to those whose lives are forever marked by the victims' memory. Finally, the protest movement effectively established the links between WHINSEC and the SOA in public consciousness. A historical-news database search, for example, shows that every year throughout the 1990s there were 15-20 major national articles criticizing the School of the Americas. This number more than doubled in the 2000s, and these articles directly connected the old school to the new one.⁵

Yet, the targeted institution's counterframing points to a number of ways in which reinvention has limited mobilization against the SOA/WHINSEC. The first limitation comes from the target organization's linking general, resonant themes with concrete policy critiques and proposals for change. This means work involving frames that are at once diagnostic- identifying the problem with the institution, and prognostic- articulating how best to solve the problem. The second dimension consists of the more complex ideological work from which these framing tasks can effectively emerge, work that in this case taps into deeply held beliefs about democracy, human rights, foreign affairs, and the military. Together these two aspects of discursive work comprise strategies that can serve to mobilize public sympathy. These aspects also underscore the need for more carefully considering the socio-cultural context in which discourse shapes institutional transformation. Douglas' two options for how institutions might respond to delegitimation both signify a type of public death for the institution. Here, a third option is shown through which the institution can be reborn. Movement strategists must take this third option into account in a professional world that increasingly invests in public image-engineering.

During a diplomatic exchange with Colonel Weidner of the former USARSA, Father Roy of SOAWatch suggested the funds spent on military training for young Latin Americans be invested in their professional education at some of our US colleges (Interview with Roy Bourgeois 2008). Weidner also told me of this in our phone interview. He claimed that he asked for regular college education funding for some of the students, "but no one would hear it" at the DoD (Interview with former Colonel Weidner 2008). This idea supports Father Roy's cogent point, "democracy cannot be taught through the barrel of a gun." SOAWatch has also repeatedly pointed out that Latin American countries use

⁵ This search was conducted using LexisNexis and covered the years 1980 through 2010.

military training for conflicts within states rather than interstate ones. This brings to the fore serious questions about the role of the military in abuses of power.

The SOA/WHINSEC has instead pushed forward a prognosis for building up a culture of democracy through military honor by: 1) The repeated rhetorical emphasis given to the “honor” of those who have “served” through both the SOA and WHINSEC, 2) an annual counter-demonstration known as “God Bless Ft. Benning Day” in which the Army busses thousands of military families to downtown Columbus to enjoy an Army-sponsored event with high-profile speakers and fun family activities, and 3) in the counter-argument that visiting soldiers are notably receiving special education in US civil-military relations (Gallo-Cruz 2012).

Additionally, the reinvented institution has done little in the way of contesting movement claims of neoimperialism, but indirectly promotes the more positive sides of military diplomacy-secured capitalism (*ibid*). In fact, the colonel, during the closing years of the SOA was quite forthcoming in suggesting positive correlations between military engagement and direct foreign investment in Latin American countries that had an active relationship with the US Army training institute. He displayed a slide show on this relationship in some of his public talks at colleges and universities, for example, praising it as a positive incentive for more countries to send more students to the institute for military training (Trinity College debate, undated).

This is one point where the movement might make more targeted efforts in their framing of neoimperialist consequences, especially as the gap between rich and poor in these countries widens, and debts from foreign direct investments continue to climb. It is notable that when I questioned Colonel Weidner on the significance of this relationship in a later phone interview, he did not continue to praise that connection, instead charging private lenders with the responsibility for enormous debts caused by these investments. This shifting of his earlier prognostic framing calls into question the legitimacy of these claims. Is he now emphasizing the illegitimacy of the link between the military and private investments?

These prognostic discrepancies also call into question the relationship between framing and the deeper ideological work in which framing strategies are embedded. Social-movement scholars have recently begun to give greater attention to the need for distinction between framing and ideological processes, both fundamental to mobilization and movement outcomes but distinctive in their development and effects. Oliver and Johnston (2005) explain that framing evokes a cognitive process of linking background meanings to particular events or policies, but ideological work consists of shifts in the whole system of meanings that underpins the relationships movements call into question. They note that framing and ideological processes are intrinsically linked, but pose a significant strategic difference between “marketing and resonating versus education and thinking” (Oliver and Johnston 2005: 195). They explain that “while a framing effort may persuade someone that a particular issue can be

explained by an ideology, framing processes do not persuade people to adopt whole new ideologies. At best they may initiate the journey” (*ibid*).

This is an important and often overlooked consideration for movement strategists and one which defines how well institutions may “live or die” in a particular cultural context, in the sense to which Douglas refers. It is therefore crucial to be cognizant of linking concrete actions to resonant, general themes. At the same time, it is incredibly important to pinpoint where ideological divisions surrounding the rhetorical expression of those themes diverge. As Snow and Benford note, “ideologies are cultural resources tapped into to construct frames, thus they are simultaneously facilitating and constraining of the framing process” (2005: 209).

One of the counterclaims repeated during a WHINSEC open house tour and question-and-answer session I attended was that the movement was taking on foreign policy in Latin America more generally, whereas WHINSEC deferred these objectives to the DoD. The movement must now successfully navigate between its concrete initiatives to close the school and its broader objectives of challenging foreign military training. This discursive wall represents a limitation of the different ideologies undergirding framing and counterframing efforts. Is the military a tool for building democracy and securing human rights or not? Thus, the reinvention has successfully shifted the debate into deeper ideological territory, one that poses a greater policy change challenge—ending foreign military training—than simply closing one school. Westby explains with regard to this ideological dimension of framing that “ideologies may limit the range of strategic discourse in framing, but also... strategic discourse in framing may deviate from and even challenge movement ideology” (2005: 221). In other words, if movement framing does not anchor deeply enough into salient ideologies it can undermine the movement’s goals.

Framing, necessary but insufficient

To conclude, I emphasize that good framing is a necessary but insufficient aspect of movement strategy. Important lessons can be learned from the case of the Reinvented School of the Americas. First, there are the complex challenges of battling strategic counterframing. By embracing the main themes and core American values scaffolding the social justice initiatives of the movement, the Reinvented School of the Americas “blurred the lines of contention” (Gallo-Cruz 2012). This makes establishing contradictions between claims by the movement and their opponent (Nepstad 1997) a difficult discursive process. As a result, the movement carries a particular discursive responsibility to highlight the precise points where the targeted institution does not agree. In this sense, a more complex semiotic battle must occur in a way that can hold public attention while the meanings of master frames salient to both sides of the debate are distinguished and analyzed. This requires greater attention to areas where discursive disagreement remains more distinct, while remaining cognizant of the deeper cultural processes of “how institutions think” in life or death

situations such as these and how framing and counterframing enters into such institutional thinking.

One way to prepare for defeating surface level changes is to scrutinize the counterframers' link between diagnosis, prognosis, and tactical implementation. The movement has not overlooked the importance of this. It has pointed out, for example, that adding a hand-picked Board of Visitors for institutional oversight is not as open and transparent as monitoring the activities of graduates. WHINSEC continues to redact the names of its graduates even in response to SOAWatch Freedom of Information Act requests (Gallo-Cruz 2012).

There are a number of other empirical burden-of-proof avenues the movement could take. These include qualitatively assessing humanitarian outcomes in the areas served by WHINSEC graduates, conducting evaluations of economic equality in these areas, accessing other measures of democratic openness in WHINSEC-client countries, or surveying civilian groups on their relationships with militaries and paramilitaries. For pragmatic-strategic reasons, it should be noted that the events initially sparking US outrage over crimes committed by SOA graduates have one central feature: They are crimes against high-profile victims, specifically religious workers and US citizens. Documenting and emphasizing crimes against women and children, the elderly, and religious and international victims may be a key part of continued framing efforts for short-term results. This focus raises the issue of failing in the short term to address the integrity of all lives, namely the poor and marginalized of Latin America. It could be argued, however, that this strategy targets broader cultural changes that could serve to protect them in the long term, by scrutinizing the military's role in perpetuating a culture of systemic violence.

Another important lesson is the need to more resolutely push beyond surface level debates in order to shift ideological commitments to human rights issues and specific policies. To close both this school and any new school that should (and actually has) developed in its place, is to argue that foreign military training is the fundamental problem (as opposed to the legacy and crimes of one particular school). If a great portion of the American public widely associates the general values of democracy and human rights with the need for military protection and alliances, this is where ideological work is needed to counteract the counterframing maneuver of reinvention. To suggest the cessation of all foreign military training in Latin America attacks the use of the military for protecting or expanding democracy.

Finally, movements that occur in an increasingly institutionalized context (where movement activity is both highly rationally planned and supervised by the state through permits, police accompaniment, etc.) must grapple with the loss of a crucial mechanism of protest and persuasion—the element of surprise. Surprise is often considered vital to protest effectiveness (see Sharp 2005), as targets plan for their own protection and strategic response (Kubik 1998). When targets are prepared for protest and persuasion and are well-versed in the frames of the movement, the potential to harness targets' vulnerability is lost.

The industry for professionally counterframing movement criticism has become a highly rationalized and an increasingly lucrative business (Yaxley 2013). A Ragan's Public Relations journal offers a series of steps all companies should take to prepare for protesters' targeting, urging companies to be prepared and "control the narrative" (Working 2012). Bob (2005) has also noted that often the side with the savviest strategy for framing its claims convinces the public instead of the side presenting the most compelling case of greatest social ills.

It is therefore imperative that movements think clearly about the strategic supportive role framing plays in other dimensions of mobilization strategy. The Reinvention of the School of the Americas represents an increasingly common model of institutional reinvention in response to the public shaming of institutions instigated by protesters, one to which scholars should give greater attention. To point to other salient recent examples, the term "greenwashing" is now common parlance for the big-bucks rhetorical, institutional makeovers engineered in response to targeting by environmental groups. International news headlines detailed Nigeria's efforts, including a 1.2 million dollar public relations contract to restore its image post-kidnapping crisis (Mnthali 2014). Bahrain also signed a 20 million dollar contract to restore its image following publicization of ongoing human rights abuses in the country (Kafai 2014). This money, if it were up to human rights activists, could be invested in civil society programs that expand the culture and institutions supporting human rights on the ground. Studies probing what otherwise would be successful framing maneuvers, however, show that even these are easily derailed when the opponent possesses more "hard" resources (Noy 2009).

Most social movements have significantly fewer economic resources than their opponents; how then can a movement effectively use framing? There are two ways I believe understanding the role of framing in any movement's overall strategies and tactical base may be helpful. The first comes from the insights of nonviolent studies.

In the literature on nonviolent protest tactics, there are four general families of nonviolent tactics. These include acts of protest and persuasion (e.g., rallies, demonstrations or framing efforts through media work), nonviolent intervention (e.g., roadblocks or institutional occupations), noncooperation (e.g., general strikes or company boycotts), and alternative institution-building (on nonviolent tactics see Sharp 2005). While protest and persuasion (which involves framing) is an important part of the "cognitive liberation" process, it is, as demonstrated by the Reinvention of the School of the Americas, insufficient.

It is important to note, first, that some organizations move more quickly from organizational anxiety to transformation. In her in-depth study of conflict diamonds, Franziska Bieri (2010) examines "how NGOs cleaned up the diamond industry" through the establishment of a voluntary global agreement to greatly reduce participation in the violent, illicit diamond trade. Bieri recounts an interview with one industry official who stated that they did not want to go through the public shaming endured by the fur industry. Thus, they were quick to move into the Kimberley Process which established regulation and

oversight on diamond mining. However, it is equally important to note that the quick public transformation of a questionable practice does not necessarily indicate an ongoing, in-depth engagement with monitoring implementation. In fact, effective implementation of the Kimberley Process remains a concern (Amnesty International 2013). Similarly, SOAWatch's complaints about the cosmetic makeover of USARSA demonstrate that the deeper movement goal of transforming US foreign military policy in Latin America also remains a grave concern.

In either of these cases, that movement framing affected organizational transformation is empirically evident. But deeper structural changes require targeted attacks on the structure of the social context that enables foreign military training to continue in a revamped form. This is where ideological work is more effectively expressed in varied forms of protest. How does one protest Plan Colombia, for example, which provides hundreds of millions of dollars of annual-aid to support anti-narcotics and terrorist efforts in the Colombian military? The growing literature on nonviolent studies shows that success lies not only in the strength of protest and persuasion, but also those efforts' effects on mobilizing wide-scale noncooperation and intervention among the right body of constituents with the power and influence to effect real change.

The School of the Americas Reinvention Plan represents a historical shift in US military-training public relations, from the focus on managing the image of war in the media that was born of the televising of Vietnam (Hammond 1990; Hammond 1996) to one that “scrubs curricula” and plants upstanding public figures in important positions of new, designer institutions. WHINSEC represents one such makeover where counterframing and public affairs receive a healthy chunk of institutional planning and—as Figure 3 illustrates, a picture of WHINSEC’s mock-protest weekend preparations—preparing for public opposition becomes another rote task on the institution’s annual agenda.



Figure 3. WHINSEC staffers prepare a mock protest to get ready for protest weekend as reported in WHINSEC's newsletter.

The combination of framing with other forms of noncooperation and intervention remain vital in this and other cases. Framers must learn to frame beyond the potential for counterframes and in accordance with other solid and promising strategies for noncooperation and intervention of the injustices they protest.

A second important point to consider is that framing efforts, and most strategic responses to counterframing efforts, including this extreme form of institutional reinvention, should include the envisioning of how the framing that has emerged from this particular movement will provide a discursive roadmap of where it hopes to go. Like the famed Highlander Folk School of the southern United States that served as a training grounds for decades of labor, civil rights, environmental and social welfare activists, the annual Close the School of the Americas vigil has, over the course of several decades, cultivated the resistance of a diverse range of human rights activists. One way of measuring framing success is to trace how the skills honed in this particular movement translate to the extension of democracy and human rights in other dynamic movements. To think beyond the closing of the SOA, the movement must more explicitly address the body from which the arm of WHINSEC extends: the legacy of foreign military training and armament in Latin America. The movement has ideas on how to do this, and framing has the potential to make these ideas grow.

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Summer school: Social movements in global perspectives – past, present and future

Eva Gondorová and Ulf Teichmann

During the summer semester 2014, Stefan Berger and Sabrina Zajak from the Ruhr University Bochum's Institute for Social Movements (ISB) convened an interdisciplinary summer school entitled "Social movements in global perspectives: past, present and future." The summer school was organised within the frame of the university's inSTUDIES programme, aiming at the advancement of teaching and enhancement of individual student profiles. At the heart of the summer school was an international and interdisciplinary conference, which took place at the Ruhr University in September 2014.

During the ten day conference students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds and from different academic levels (from B.A. to Ph.D.), approached the topic of social movements from a variety of perspectives. The conference included general overviews of social movements, theoretical reflections, comparative analysis as well as case studies. It addressed the basic concepts and the history of social movements as well as contemporary social movements from a sociological perspective, taking political and economic perspectives into consideration at all times. The overall framework was shaped by thirty-seven national and international guest lecturers representing various disciplines—such as history, sociology, political science and anthropology—and providing their expertise in ten different panels. The experts delivered keynote speeches, gave presentations and discussed the current state of social movement research with participating students. At the end of the conference, national and international activists joined the discussions and provided inside perspectives on social movements. This report focuses on the major overarching questions and issues that were dominant throughout the conference.

Global aspirations and the Western bias

The most central and repetitively emerging issue of the conference was the tension between the aspirations of developing a global approach to social movements and the status quo of research that has been dominated by Western European and North American scholars. Ludger Pries (Ruhr-University Bochum) opened the conference with a plea against "methodological nationalism," which takes for granted the nation-state as the primary unit of analysis, as well as against "methodological globalism," which takes the whole globe as a natural unit of analysis. He called for a "methodological transnationalism" that takes local, national, transnational, supranational and global entanglements of social phenomena into account. Therein he stated ambitions which not every talk was able to fulfil during the conference. Among other reasons, this was caused by a predominantly Western focus in most of the presentations. Even though a considerable number of guest lecturers included a

transnational comparison in their presentations, the focus of the conference lay predominantly on Western countries, in some cases only on Western Europe. Movements in the Global South were sometimes presented as only an appendix of their Western ‘role models.’ Stefan Berger (Ruhr-University Bochum) portrayed social democratic labour movements in the same line but, at the same time, he problematised this approach. Quoting Dipesh Chakrabarty’s notion, that Europe is “indispensable and inadequate” (Chakrabarty 2000, 16), he inquired as to whether it is possible at all to write the history of labour movements without starting in Europe, even if the conception of labour movements as “European export articles” may be inadequate in some cases.

The difficulty in overcoming the Western perspective as a starting point of reference may have been connected to the fact that we are used to differentiating movements by means of concepts that are deeply rooted in Western or European thought. For example, to justify his focus on Western countries, Frank Uekötter (University of Birmingham) emphasised that environmentalism is a predominantly Western concept. Environmental conflicts in the Global South, he argued, had a different character because of their firm linkage to social and economic problems. Thomas Lekan (University of South Carolina) re-framed the 1970s environmentalists’ call “think globally, act locally” and questioned how local actors - usually white male scientists from Western Europe and the United States - arrogate for themselves the task of “speaking for the earth.” Referring to Bernhard Grzimek and his romantic view on Africa, he further criticised the way environmentalism was connected to racist perceptions of ‘other’ parts of the world by Westerners. Focusing on peace movements, Holger Nehring (University of Stirling) tasked himself with exploring non-Western notions of peace or similar concepts in other contexts. He further asserted that European peace movements, defining peace as the absence of war in Europe, did not take into consideration wars in other world regions. At the same time, however, Western activists considered their concepts of peace to be valid for the whole globe. Therefore, Nehring called for a comprehensive historicisation of the meaning of peace in different spatial and ideological contexts.

The question of whether it is possible to approach social movements as singular entities, suggesting there is only one, for example, environmental, peace or women’s movement, was related to the participants’ effort to localise social movements and their underlying concepts in time and space. Ilse Lenz (Ruhr-University Bochum) answered this question for the case of women’s movements. By using the term ‘women’s movements’ in plural she underlined the subject’s plurality concerning issues, claims and forms of action as well as its changing characters throughout history.

A scepticism towards the Western bias was further presented by scholars with a research focus outside of North America and Western Europe. Focusing on the cases of sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world Kathleen Fallon (Stony Brook University) and Nora Lafi (Centre of Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin) claimed that social protests in these regions, while not being considered as homogenous,

have their own long history that cannot be conceived adequately from a Western perspective. Both scholars stressed that these regions have a long tradition of existing networks of political mobilisation, which was demonstrated by Kathleen Fallon through the example of ‘the women’s war’ in Nigeria in 1929 and ‘the Harry Thuku protests’ in Kenya in 1922. Furthermore, Nora Lafi pointed out that the research on the Ottoman daftar (registers of petitions) proved the existence of an expression of collective identity and civic consciousness in the Arab world prior to colonisation. She further emphasised that “present social movements in the Arab world are in no way just exports of Western thinking, democracy or human rights” and asserted that the lasting culturalist clichés in approaches to the Arab world must be overcome.

As studies on social movements mostly focus on protests in democratic societies, some presentations brought to mind that protests in authoritarian states face different political opportunity structures. Analysing mobilisations for workers’ rights in China, Chris King-Chi Chan (City University of Hong Kong) showed how workers’ protests emerge in an authoritarian state, and are exposed to other forms of counteraction since juridical persecution and bargaining negotiations are organised in a different way. He further posed the question as to what extent civil society as a Western concept can be applied to explain developments in China, arguing in favour of the thesis of a semi-civil-society. Additionally, Kuntala Lahiri-Dutt (Australian National University) explored how missing political opportunity structures can hamper the emergence of social movements, even in a state that is nominally considered a democracy. She stressed that social movement theory based on Western concepts is not able to capture the way peasants in India, who lack access to diverse resources, protest against land grabbing. Looking at the case of Jharkhand, she further explained how a coalition of the state and economic forces exacerbated the frequency of protests by victims of land grabbing caused by extensive coal mining. Along similar lines, Kathleen Fallon (Stony Brook University) and Nora Lafi (Centre of Modern Oriental Studies, Berlin) argued that social movements in sub-Saharan Africa and the Arab world emerged even though preconditions expected by the Western social movement theory, such as democratic opening, were not present.

The distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ social movements

Another contested concept of the conference was the widespread distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ social movements. Researchers of social movements with a social science background have focussed mainly on ‘new’ social movements. Therefore, historians had the prerogative of interpreting the developments of the ‘old’ labour movements. The presentations of Stefan Berger (Ruhr-University Bochum), Gerassimos Moschonas (Panteion University), and Kevin Morgan (University of Manchester) highlighted the emergence of labour movements out of social conflicts and pointed out the close affiliation of labour movements with a political party as an organisational principle. However, the question of whether labour movements lost their status as social movements based on prevalent definitions remained unanswered at this point. Moschonas

and Berger disagreed over the question whether social democracy has already been “ideologically defeated” (Moschonas) or is still adhering to its traditional agenda of “social justice and democracy” (Berger). The rigid dichotomy between ‘old’ and ‘new’ social movements was questioned by Kevin Morgan. He contested Claus Offe’s claim that new social movements had rejected “the organisational principle of differentiation, whether in the horizontal (insider vs. outsider) or in the vertical dimension (leaders vs. rank and file members)” (Offe 1985, 829). Contrary to this statement, Morgan argued that biographical approaches confirmed both horizontal and vertical differentiation of communist parties. He further claimed that communists have a strong ‘insider’ collective identity. At the same time, however, they are internally differentiated, depending on organisational hierarchy, cultural capital, social class, personal opportunity and status.

The decision not to differentiate rigorously between ‘old’ and ‘new’ social movements was acknowledged, though sometimes implicitly, by the social scientists who focused on contemporary international cooperation of trade unions. In particular Sarah Bormann (Free University of Berlin) scrutinised how current trade union activities can still be considered as grassroots activities, adopting a typical action repertoire of social movements. Referring to recent workers’ protests in Greece, Markos Vogiatzoglou (European University Institute) pointed out that the whole “social movement environment” influences trade union’s activities and therefore the differentiation between ‘old’ and ‘new’ movements is no longer valid in the Greek case. He underpinned his argument by giving the example of “precarious workers unions”, which are direct-democratic organisations of grassroots entities.

Holger Nehring (University of Stirling) and Frank Uekötter (University of Birmingham) also raised doubts about the differentiation between ‘old’ and ‘new’ social movements. In regards to peace and environmental movements, they talked about the importance of the historical context of social movements and underscored the significance of continuities, which are neglected by the theory of ‘new’ social movements. Moreover, Håkan Thörn (University of Gothenburg) doubted the validity of the theory of ‘new’ social movements, pointing out that their roots did not always lay in the post-industrial society but often were rooted in anticolonial struggles in the Global South. By the end of the conference it had transpired that the differentiation between ‘old’ and ‘new’ social movements cannot be applied without sufficient reflection.

Interplay between different levels: from local to global

Despite their transnationalisation, social movements still need to act and mobilise on the rank and file level, for example in the case of demonstrations. Therefore, the interplay between different scales of social agency from the local level on the one hand to the global level on the other, plays an important role for social movement research and belonged to the cross-cutting issues of the conference.

In her presentation on trade unions' multi-scalar comprehensive campaigns, Sarah Bormann (Free University of Berlin) gave an interesting example of this interplay. With reference to a T-Mobile USA workers' campaign she illustrated the movements' choices to act on different scales, and explained how they have been affected by the question of where the actors see the accountability for the problems posed: whilst workers in the USA acted on the shop-floor and the local level, they were also active on the national level by adopting action forms typical for social movements, such as leafleting and coalition-building with consumer groups, and called for international solidarity. This was reflected by the support of the German trade union ver.di and Deutsche Telekom's workers' council, which tried to pressurise the Deutsche Telekom management in support of their American colleagues.

Chris King-Chi Chan (City University of Hong Kong) and specifically Håkan Thörn (University of Gothenburg) outlined the importance of international civil society for protests and social movements in authoritarian states and therewith the importance of the global level for regional and national protest developments. Whilst Chan touched upon workers' protests in China that received support of the international civil society, Thörn focused on a social movement that took place on the global level but influenced South African politics on the national level. According to Thörn, the anti-apartheid movement was directly connected to the emergence of international civil society. Furthermore, Ilse Lenz (Ruhr-University Bochum) used a concept of "dialectics of internationalisation" to explain the correlation between the national and the global level in the case of women's movements. Women's movements mostly emerged in national contexts but created "blended compositions" in discourses on issues such as suffrage and prostitution. She further argued that the national organisations have sought to organise themselves internationally in order to strengthen their impact. This in turn led to the foundation of new national women's organisations, mainly in countries that previously lacked strong women's organisations.

Globalisation and social movements

As globalisation has been an ongoing process for centuries, it is hardly surprising that even social movements developed internationalist tendencies since the 19th century, as Stefan Berger (Ruhr-University Bochum) and Holger Nehring (University of Stirling) explained in the case of social-democratic labour movements and peace movements. According to Håkan Thörn (University of Gothenburg) anti-apartheid was the most important global social movement of the post-war era due to its geographical dispersion and diversity of participating groups.

The United Nations were considered a central actor for promoting social movements' issues on the global level in the 1970s. For example, Frank Uekötter (University of Birmingham) and Ilse Lenz (Ruhr-University Bochum) pointed out the significance of the 'UN Conference on the Human Environment' held in

Stockholm in June 1972 and the ‘UN Decade For Women’ (1976-85). They both claimed that these events contributed to the development of environmental and women’s movements and especially their transnationalisation. The 1970s also saw the rise in popularity of human rights movements, especially in Western Europe and North America. Jan Eckel (University of Freiburg) linked this development to the process of globalisation and identified “ethics of interdependence”, which made a global, but mainly Western, community feel responsible to support human rights in countries that had lacked basic rights such as the freedom of speech.

Additionally, the speakers all agreed that economic globalisation influenced the developments of social movements. Whereas social movements in the 20th century mainly targeted the state, more and more activists have tried to influence economic actors such as firms. This development was outlined by Frank de Bakker (VU University Amsterdam). Bakker analysed how activist groups have tried to bring an institutional change to the economic field, urging firms to comply with their corporate social responsibility claims. Therefore, the activist groups used different tactics, radical or reformist—depending on their ideological positions—to bring symbolic or material damage (e.g. boycott, sabotage, petitions, negative publicity) or alternatively gain (e.g. “buycott”, cooperation or positive publicity) to the firms. Furthermore, Gerassimos Moschonas (Panteion University) asserted that, due to the present conditions of globalisation, social democracy was no longer an effective force for democratisation and had ceased to function as an agent to remedy inequalities and control economic modernisation.

According to Ludger Pries (Ruhr-University Bochum) trade unions have also been pressurised by the globalisation of the economy. Nevertheless, he made a clear statement against the lament: “capital is global, work is local, everything is fatal.” Adopting an institutional approach, Pries explored how the interplay between different kinds of labour regulation could make a difference in the globalised economy since not all value chains were exclusively imprinted by the market logic. Instead, considering companies as institutions would reveal that they act according to expectations that they perceive in their environment. This, Pries argued, opens the opportunity for other actors to influence the decisions of companies. In addition, Peter Waterman (Dublin/Lima) asked to what extent the international trade union movement has responded to the challenges of neoliberal globalisation. He claimed that the international trade union movement has responded defensively and in retreat, for example by compromising over rights, wage levels and work safety standards. He further questioned if there is any real basis for international labour solidarity and how effective transnational worker initiatives have been in countering the power of global capital.

The importance of inclusion of a political economy perspective in the analysis of social movements on a global level was underscored by Sabrina Zajak (Ruhr-University Bochum). She asserted that the political economic view brought advantages to the study of social movements such as seeing the connection

between movements, understanding the interplay of global and local levels in movements, and identifying new forms of transnational activism. Zajak further took the Polanyian idea of embeddedness as a starting point for the analysis of the role of social movements in the construction of national and international institutions governing capitalism.

A concrete example of challenges of globalisation was presented by Anannya Bhattacharjee (AFW International Secretariat, India), who introduced a particular campaign to improve labour regulations in the deeply globalisation-affected Asian garment industry. The Asian Floor Wage Campaign (AFWC) unites labour and other groups in order to pressurise the multinational companies to pay a 'living wage' to Asian workers in the garment industry. As a wage increase in a national framework made the companies leave the respecting countries and the power of strike was not present due to the competitiveness of the region's labour market, Bhattacharjee argued, the AFWC had to adopt the strategy of negotiation on an international level. This example illustrated that Western experiences of organising protest were not automatically transferable across spatial and temporal borders.

Additionally, an apparently non-economic movement such as the anti-apartheid movement was facilitated by the increasing economic interdependence as shown by Håkan Thörn (University of Gothenburg). He explained how the cooperation of Western companies and banks with the South African state was an incentive for protests in Western countries. Furthermore, Bengt Larsson (University of Gothenburg) analysed the case of transnational cooperation in the globalising economy, or the lack of it, in recent years, in Europe. He posed the question of what it is that hampers the transnational cooperation of movements through the example of European trade unions. Besides other reasons, he strongly emphasised that the trade unions have had difficulties in coordinating their agendas grounded in varying traditions and ideologies as well as in the different resources the trade unions could bring into a transnational coalition. Furthermore, Larsson came to the conclusion that 'hard' industrial relations factors have constituted more important obstacles to transnational cooperation in comparison to 'softer' factors such as cultural, linguistic and religious differences, whereas sectorial differences must be taken into account at all times. In his talk on peace movements in West Germany and the USA in the 1980s, Stephen Milder (Rutgers University) examined the extent to which transnational movement cooperation has been hampered by varying interests of different national movements. In this case, cooperation became difficult because the West German peace movement pursued a more radical aim (the removal of all nuclear weapons out of Europe) in comparison to their partners in the USA who favoured the 'Freeze-campaign' (the freezing of further armament). He further explored how the role of Petra Kelly in shaping green politics was perceived differently in West Germany and the USA.

Thomas Lekan (University of South Carolina) scrutinised how the emblematic power of the image of the globe as a symbol of globalisation influenced environmental movements. He outlined the history of the 'blue planet' as an

icon of environmental movements since it was first photographed from the universe in 1968 until the creation of Google Earth. Lekan asserted that this icon drew its power from the ability to make national interests, famines and other factors with negative connotations invisible. As the climate change is a border transcending issue, Matthias Dietz (University of Bremen) introduced the climate movement as a transnational actor. He explored how the movement's crisis, caused by the failure of the Copenhagen summit, did not lead to the end of the climate movement but instead was overcome thanks to the implemented survival strategies, which eventually led to the revitalisation of the movement. He described a process of radicalisation and the search for new partners and projects as the most important survival strategies and posed the question of whether similar survival strategies could be found in other social movements.

Diffusion of movement ideas and practices

The importance of taking the diffusion of social movements' tactics into consideration was put forward by Graeme Hayes (Aston University) who argued that it enables us to detect how tactics are interpreted, negotiated and transformed. He further underlined that political opportunity structures, as well as the cultural mapping of movement tactics, have a crucial influence on the process of diffusion. He asserted how a seemingly strong case of 'modular' repertoire diffusion produced very different outcomes and subsequently very diverse trajectories in different countries. Through the example of mobilisations against genetically modified crops, he showed how activist groups in Belgium and Great Britain adopted an action form derived from the French group, but reframed it due to varying police tactics, criminal persecution and 'group culture.' Based on these findings he emphasised that even seemingly identical actions may not be the same actions in other contexts. He further highlighted how varying institutional configurations created different advantages for distinct actors. In the panel on peace movements, Jared Donnelly (Texas A&M University) and Sean Scalmer (University of Melbourne) focused on the transcontinental diffusion of civil disobedience and Gandhi's Satyagraha. Portraying how civil disobedience and direct action was implemented in the West German peace movement in the 1960s, Donnelly raised doubts about the concepts considering diffusion as a linear process. He explained that the tactic's diffusion from Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha to a sit-in in front of army barracks in Dortmund was a nonlinear process full of twists and turns that was driven by key individuals in the movement. Scalmer further explored the diffusion of Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha as the way of nonviolence and explained why it took several decades for this concept to be adopted in the Western world. According to Scalmer, the influence of cultural misunderstandings and institutional and contextual barriers in the world threatened by organised violence between the 1930s and the 1940s, were the main reasons for the slow diffusion of nonviolent protest. Both Donnelly and Scalmer put forward the importance of key individuals in the process of diffusion, who experienced the

movements' tactics in the region of their emergence and experimented with them in their countries.

Taking the process of transnational diffusion into account, Ulf Teichmann (Ruhr-University Bochum) focused on linking 'global 1968' with the 1968 movement in Bochum. Asking if and how the characteristics of 'global 1968' reached the movement's periphery in Bochum, he claimed that the perspective on processes of transnational diffusion has to be widened. Arguing that the global level of social movements encompasses more than the connection between international movement centres, his presentation was a plea for taking local and regional, as well as transnational levels of social movements into account, even if a global framework is intended. Holger Nehring (University of Stirling) further examined to what extent protests in different parts of the world have been interlinked. He explored how the translation and transfer of protest across the borders in the case of peace movements led to the reinvention of protest methods and argued that the categories changed their meanings during the transnational transfer.

How different actors shape social movements

If we define social movements as "a network of individuals, groups and organizations" (Rucht forthcoming 2015), it is clear that social movement scholars come across a broad range of diverse actors. Consequently, the question of how different actors have shaped developments of social movements in general, and their globalisation in particular were present over the ten days of the conference. For example, Carola Betzold (University of Gothenburg) examined how the strategies of NGOs in international climate negotiations have been imprinted by their different characters. She emphasised that environmental NGOs apply more outside advocacy (addressing the negotiators via the public) while business groups prefer to use inside advocacy (addressing the negotiators directly). She assumed that this choice of strategy has to do with the easier access of business groups to power-holders in comparison to NGOs. The finding that social movement actors with a higher institutionalised power choose different ways of acting had already been brought in by Sarah Borman (Free University of Berlin) who introduced her case study of a transnational campaign against T-Mobile.

Furthermore, by focusing on revolutionary social movements, Kevin Morgan (University of Manchester) pointed out that social movements' actors always constitute minorities. Through the method of life history and prosopography he tried to answer what kind of minorities, for what reason and with what implications, participate in social movements. Marica Tolomelli (University of Bologna) examined different actors within the 1968 movement. She scrutinised the interclass cooperation between workers and students in Italy and West Germany and showed how the socio-structural proximity of these two groups as well as ideological commonalities led to a well-marked cooperation between students and workers in Italy in contrast to West Germany. Additionally, a

milieu-transcending approach was presented by Traugott Jähnichen (Ruhr-University Bochum). He elaborated on the transformation of the relations between Protestantism and the trade union movement during the 20th century and explained how the continuous socio-political cooperation contributed to overcome the alienation between milieus.

Historical and contemporary transnational comparisons of social movements

With regards to a particular aspect of the tensions between the national and the global approaches, several speakers presented transnational comparative perspectives on social movements in order to deepen the understanding of emergence, developments and outcomes of diverse social movements.

Throughout his comparison of slavery in the Americas and serfdom in Eastern Europe, Enrico Dal Lago (National University of Ireland) argued that “little attention has been paid to the crucial element of landownership as a means of economic and social control by the slaveholding and serfowning elites.”

Additionally, “the consequent importance that both slaves and serfs attached to owning land as an indispensable corollary to the acquisition of freedom and an indispensable requisite for the completion of the emancipation process” has not yet been sufficiently taken into consideration. He further compared the reasons for and outcomes of two revolts against slavery and serfdom during the 18th century: the Haitian Revolution and Pugachev’s Revolt in Russia. A historical transnational comparative approach was further applied by Marica Tolomelli (University of Bologna) who analysed commonalities and differences of the outcomes of the students’ movements in Italy and West Germany. Due to the different developments of the student movements in ‘1968’ they developed divergent stances towards the working class in its aftermath. Whereas students in Italy united with workers on the basis of identifying of overcoming capitalism as a common aim, most student activists in West Germany considered the workers’ movement in Germany as having lost its central role in the revolution.

Furthermore, Liviu Mantescu (Humboldt University Berlin) questioned how various aspects of social life were influencing environmental activism by comparing protests against fracking in Romania, the ‘Fuck for Forest’ initiative in Berlin and the case of environmental degradation of a protected area in Spain, excused by the implementation of ‘sustainable development’ through the production of renewable energy. Referring to these examples, he underlined the influence of social life and its daily practices on the understanding of social movements. Moritz Sommer and Franziska Scholl (Free University of Berlin) introduced a particular methodological approach of studying crisis protests comparatively in the Eurozone. Through the examples of Greece and Germany, they applied discursive actor attribution analysis to explore how crisis protests in these two countries were publicly interpreted. They argued that this particular method “brings the actor back in” and adds a new dimension to study of public discourses by analysing “who is to blame” and “what is to be done.” Additionally, Hans-Jörg Trenz (University of Copenhagen) analysed citizens’

resilience strategies in times of crisis, particularly how citizens' contestation in different European countries transforms the European Union. Above all he observed a "crisis of legitimacy" of European politics, expressed by protests connected to the emergence of the 'indignados' and 'Wutbürger.' Comparing crisis protest forms in Germany, Spain and Greece, Alissa Starodub (Ruhr-University Bochum) introduced a method of participatory action research. She described how she gathered empirical material for her study by participating in protests in the respective countries and taking part in everyday life of her fellow demonstrators.

Scholarship and activism

The question of how the political stances of scholars influence their research on social movements emerged repeatedly throughout the conference, as most social movement scholars traditionally seem to sympathise with their subjects of study (the activists). At the very beginning of the conference, Ludger Pries (Ruhr-University Bochum) stated the legitimacy of critical sociology that has a considered stance towards its subjects. Holger Nehring (University of Stirling) underscored that researchers focusing particularly on peace should critically reflect on their attitudes towards their research subject. He further invited the participants of the conference to reconsider the role research on social movements can play for their subjects and the relevance of 'critical theory' for this enterprise.

These discussions culminated in a heated debate between Dieter Rucht (Berlin Social Science Center) and Alissa Starodub (Ruhr-University Bochum) on the extent to which research on social movements should (or can) be neutral. Whereas Rucht warned of the identification with the subject of research and pleaded for a division between the roles of scholars and activists in order to meet scientific standards, Starodub questioned the possibility of neutrality and pointed to the necessity of an honest reflection on the interplay between these roles. Rucht further emphasised the difficulty of "changing hats" as a researcher and an activist and argued for finding a balance between closeness and distance to the subject of study.

Perspectives of representatives of social movements

The last panel was dedicated to 'social movements in action' and included discussions with national and international representatives of social movements. Dieter Rucht (Berlin Social Science Center) opened the panel with the analysis of activists' main problems: "how to organise" (horizontal versus vertical) and "how to strategise" (moderate versus radical). He concluded that organisational and strategic flexibility is needed to adequately adapt and react to changing conditions and underlined the importance of "tolerance for ambiguities and contradictions." His presentation served as a basis for following discussions with members and followers of social movements who shared their

opinions and experience. A local perspective was brought by Wolfgang Schaumberg (Forum Arbeitswelten) who presented labour struggles in the automobile industry with a particular focus on the Opel production in Bochum. He further elaborated on the exchange of experience between German workers' representatives and their counterparts in China. In the round table on the Gezi Park protests in Turkey Yusuf Doğan Çetinkaya (Müşterekler/Başlangıç) shared his experiences of protests in Istanbul in 2013 and explained the background, course of events and implications of these protests for Turkish politics. The session on the Arab spring with a particular focus on Tunisian revolution was led by Emma Ghariani (Pour une Tunisie des libertés), who discussed the revolutionary events in the Arab world with round table participants and shared her opinions on possible future developments in Tunisia. Furthermore, Victor Strazzeri (Partido Socialismo e Liberdade) explained reasons for social protests in Brazil, particularly taking into consideration protests against the last football World Cup. Whereas these experts mainly focused on contemporary social movements in a national context, Bettina Musiolek (Entwicklungs-politisches Netzwerk Sachsen) and Bilge Seçkin Çetinkaya (Clean Clothes Campaign Turkey) focused on a transnational perspective introducing the Clean Clothes Campaign and explaining field research on working conditions in garment industry in Eastern Europe and Turkey.

Final remarks

The conference provided a broad perspective on social movements from the local to the global level and emphasised the necessity to analyse the interplay between these various levels. The sometimes-criticised Western bias and the focus mainly on European countries was reflected straightforwardly and revealed desiderata for further research. Furthermore, transnational comparative perspectives contributed to overcoming tensions between national approaches and international structures of social movements. The conference led to a process of mutual inspiration between historians and social scientists in social movement research. Historians provided a broader context, the sensitivity for the historicity of central concepts and explored how comparisons with historical movements can contribute to our understanding of current developments. Social scientists acknowledged the importance of linking contemporary studies of social movements to historical developments and addressed current social movements, their actors, mobilisation strategies, action repertoires and current challenges. The fruitful exchange between historians and social scientists indicated that it is necessary to strengthen an interdisciplinary approach in social movement research in order to fully assess temporal and spatial scopes of social movements. With the help of the scholars from various disciplines as well as the students, the conference drew a line from the 19th century to a possible future of social movements and led to further reflections on how research on social movements can contribute to our understanding of societies in the present and the future.

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Book reviews: *Interface* volume 7(1)

Reviews editor: Mandisi Majavu

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Books reviewed this issue:

Cristina Flesher Fominaya and Laurence Cox, eds. (2013). *Understanding European Movements: New Social Movements, Global Justice Struggles, Anti-Austerity Protest*. London & New York: Routledge. (263 pp., £24.95 paperback, £80 hardback). Reviewed by Ana Cecilia Dinerstein

J.P. Clark (2013). *The Impossible Community: Realizing Communitarian Anarchism*. London: Bloomsbury (272 pp., \$45 paperback). Reviewed by Gerard Gill

Peter Dauvergne and Genevieve Lebaron (2014). *Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism*. Cambridge: Polity Press (206 pp., £15.99 paperback). Reviewed by Lika Rodin

Alexandros Kioupkiolis and Giorgios Katsambekis, eds. (2014). *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today: The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People*. Farnham: Ashgate (247 pp., £58.50 hardback). Reviewed by Jamie Matthews

Stefania Milan (2013). *Social Movements and Their Technologies: Wiring Social Change*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan (233 pp., \$90 hardcover). Reviewed by A.T. Kingsmith

Anna Schober (2013). *The Cinema Makers: Public Life and the Exhibition of Difference in South-Eastern and Central Europe since the 1960s*. Bristol: Intellect (241 pp., £25 paperback). Reviewed by Niamh Mongey

Donatella Della Porta and Alice Mattoni, eds. (2014). *Spreading Protest: Social Movements in Times of Crisis*. Colchester: ECPR Press (305 pp., £65 hardback) and

Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzelini (2014). *They Can't Represent Us! Reinventing Democracy From Greece to Occupy*. London & New York: Verso (250 pp., £9.99 paperback). Reviewed by Nils C. Kumkar

Cristina Flesher Fominaya and Laurence Cox, eds. (2013). *Understanding European Movements: New Social Movements, Global Justice Struggles, Anti-Austerity Protest.* London & New York: Routledge. (263 pp., £24.95 paperback, £80.00 hardback)

Reviewed by **Ana Cecilia Dinerstein**

In recent years, social movement scholars and activists have become interested in new European mobilisations such as the 15M/*Indignados* movement in Spain, the *Aganaktismenoi* of Syntagma Square in Greece or the ‘saucepans revolution’ in Iceland. These mobilisations are part of the wave of protests that have inundated the streets of European cities since 2010 and belong to a process of resistance to global capitalism and its recurrent crises.

“European Social Movements” (ESM), argue Cox and Flesher Fominaya in their introduction to this superb collection “have been central to European history, societies and culture” (p. 1). Yet, the English language literature has misrepresented or even ignored and neglected such significance. The latter is lost in generalisations and schematic presentations and comparisons that do not do justice to ESM’s rich traces, strong influences and vibrant history. The editors of the book – who are founders of the European Social Movements Research Network (Council for European Studies, Columbia University), contend that this is unfortunate, for ESM are not only the main shapers of the alter-globalisation movements or the global justice movement (GJM), but its precursors. Their aim is then to recover European-critical- Social Theory, for it was crucial for the development of European Social movements, in order to produce a “richer narrative” (p.8) of European Social Movements towards the creation of an European Social Movement Theory

With this opening, Cox and Flesher Fominaya engage the reader in what promises to be an outstanding contribution to the field. The book offers, for the first time, a systematic account of the richness of ESM, within different contexts and embracing different ideas and forms of mobilising. All authors discuss different aspects of multidimensional ESM, and their theoretical arguments are empirically informed. They possess a good inside knowledge of these mobilisations: they not only know *about* the movements’ context of emergence, past trajectories and recent developments but they know *with* the movements, i.e. they are activists or work very closely with the movements in question.

The layout of the collection is not random but matches the research priorities carefully given by the editors to specific topics. While chapters can be read independently, they are also connected by an excellent editorial work that organised the book in four parts that articulate the specificities of the case studies with more general substantial issues. These are the role of history and the significance of the movements’ trajectories to understand the present, the role of ESM as precursors of the alter-globalisation, the construction of

collective identity in transnational settings, and the importance of ‘situating’ the movements in geographical and historical context.

In the only chapter of Part I, Cox and Flesher Fominaya refuse to provide another typical account of social movement theory (SMT). They offer, instead, a critique of mainstream SMT that points to the inadequacies of the latter in understanding the trajectories, development and the future of the movements. Their critique is aimed at what they call ‘the origin myths’ in SMT. What does this mean? In the Anglo-Saxon world, they argue, we live under the spell of a foundational myth that has been and is systematically reproduced by both new scholars, who need to get grasp of the subject, and established scholars, who cannot be troubled to abandon the myth that they have constructed themselves. The ‘origin myth’ does not simply presents a partial view of ESM but it is simply a misleading account, which confuses a history of transition, reception, and interpretation within a US sub-discipline for actual European debates. Cox and Flesher Fominaya contend that theory has never been purely ‘theoretical’ but is the result of a broad mutual engagement between scholars and movements. There are macro-questions, claim Cox and Flesher Fominaya, that belong to specific European developments and, consequently, they cannot be grasped with the conceptual tools of US movement research. The present form of ESM is nourished by a tradition of European social theory. Cox and Fominaya argue that European social movements and European social movement scholarship theory have been rendered invisible by the lack of an articulated European social movement theory. The essential role of public intellectuals and critical theorists such as Herbert Marcuse, Simon de Beauvoir and Michel Foucault among others has been forgotten. At this point, the editors’ argument gets sharper as they censure what they call the “New Social Movement episode of the myth” (p. 16). This episode, they argue, has three ideological effects: the distinction of the study of social movement from Marxism (on this see also Barker et al. 2013); the production of a synthesis between “the ‘American’ and the ‘European’, the ‘strategic’ and the ‘identitarian’, the ‘political’ and the ‘cultural’” (p. 12); and finally, the academisation of the theory and its detachment from the movement activists’ own theorising.

But is there a European approach to ESM that contest these ideological functions of new social movements in SMT? Can the editors’ critique of the foundational myth begin to enunciate a different understanding of ESM based on critical theory? The answers to these questions are explored - in each of the chapters of the book, which is ultimately devoted to render visible both the significance ESM as precursors of alter/anti-/global movements and the importance of European scholarship, which live in the shadow of US dominated SMT.

Part II explores empirically the European precursors of the GJM. These chapters make the connection between past and present and point to the notable differences among different national expressions of the GJM. In Chapter 2, Osterweil shows the legacy of the ‘Italian anomaly’ and ‘the desire for another kind of politics’ (p. 41) that characterises the Italian ‘Movement of

Movements' (MoM), the *autonomy* of which is echoed in new movements such as the GJM and mirrors Zapatismo. In Chapter 3, Sommier and Fillieule offer a genealogy of the French anti-globalisation movements and activisms in France prior to the events in Seattle in 1999. These are precursors of the GJM but the authors contend that there is not only one transnational movement but rather "a mosaic, an amorphous collection of various mobilised groups characterized by history and special nature of their roots, which come together temporarily under the polysemic label of 'the fight against neoliberal globalization' and/or for the battle for 'global justice'" (p. 58). Chapter 4 explores how the anti-nuclear movement have motivated the GJM and points at the continuities between the former and the latter rather than arguing for 'radical ruptures' between them. In Chapter 5, Membretti and Mudu also investigate how previous movements have inspired present ones, in this case, how Italian Social Centers (*Centri Sociali*) inspired the alter-globalisation movement. The authors point to a mutual learning between the alter-globalization movement and the *Centri Sociali*. One of the legacies of the *Centri Sociali* consists of pushing for the "deconstruction of the North-South divide in Europe in relation to movements" (p. 91). The *Centri Sociali* represent "the main catalysts of the alter-globalisation movement in terms of spatialization" (p. 91). The French Confédération Paysanne (CP) as anti-capitalist 'peasant movement' is discussed by Morena in Chapter 6. Morena explores the peasant concept and peasants' mobilisations and establishes links between both the CP and the alter-globalisation movement. The author shows that peasantry and globalisation are in opposition to one another, which means that peasantry appears as the site for the mobilisation against globalisation. In the last chapter of part II (Chapter 7), Flesher Fominaya portrays the British 1990s anti-roads movement as precursor of the GJM. Based on ethnographic research, she points to five features of the movement that show this continuity: its ideology; the linking of separate issues to a broader anti-capitalist framework; the tension between vertical/reformist and horizontal/radical actors; the centrality of innovative repertoires of direct action; and the anti-identitarian stance. There is, contends Fleyer Fominaya, a "strong resemblance between key features of the British anti-roads movements and later developments of the anti-capitalist movement" (p. 120). In other words, "what is clear is that movement culture, strategies, frames and tactics developed in the fertile and creative ground of the anti-roads movement, evolved and flourished in the GJM" (p. 120). Her analysis works against any rushed assessment of the GJM as "spontaneous, new and unprecedented" (p. 121).

Part III explores the cultural process and identity in the construction of the European MoM. The topics are the cross national diffusion, autonomy in West and East Europe, space and mobility, and collective memory and identity. In Chapter 8, by addressing the process of 'cross-national diffusion', Scholl claims that Europe is a 'contagious space' where counter-globalization networks are formed. His case studies, the EuroMayDay parades/movement and the climate justice movement, illuminate how movements disseminate their ideas and tactics rapidly through networks. But diffusion, argues Scholl, ultimately

depends “upon the linkages of local and trans-local activists networks” (p. 128). In the next chapter (Chapter 9), Gagyi explores the meaning of autonomy in the process of diffusion of the alter-globalisation movement in Eastern Europe. By looking at the Hungarian and Romanian experiences, she demonstrates that autonomy is not a universal idea with a fixed meaning but as a “relational social fact” (p. 143). By “treating autonomy as an idea shaped by its context” (p. 154), Gagyi produces a critique of the notion of autonomy that is used by the alter-globalisation movements in these countries, for it is too close to the liberal notion of civil society, and has important political implications for the movements. Chapter 10 and 11 tackle the construction of a transnational collective identity. In Chapter 10, Daphi highlights the role of memory in the process of forming a collective identity across borders, which problematises the idea of ‘transnational’. By using a narrative approach to explore the construction of collective identity in transnational social movements “in relation to collective memory and the spaces to which it is bound” (p. 158), Daphi argues that collective memory is constitutive of collective identity. While memories of Italian and German activists differ in relation to content and structure, “central narrative elements coincide and allow a partial collective identity to be sustained” (p. 168). In Chapter 11, Owens, Katzeff, Lorenzi and Colin also investigate the construction of collective identity but, in this case, ‘oppositional identity’. They focus on ‘activist mobility’ in the case of a movement that, as they write, seems to mobilise for ‘immobility’: the European squatters’ movement (p. 172). Their argument is that “mobility strengthened and expanded their movement, building a robust network connecting different squatting cities and opened flows of ideas and activists within it” (p. 172). The fact that squatters are cosmopolitan and local, place and displaced, structured the movements in a way that provided the foundation for the European squatters’ movement and the contribution of the latter to the alter-globalisation movements.

Part IV features the ‘new’ European Spring. In Chapter 12, Júlíusson and Helgason discuss the roots of the ‘saucepans’ Icelandic Revolution of 2008. Drawing on Gramsci’s notion of organic crisis, they argue that the riots broke with the conservative period in Iceland and this resulted in a victory for the counter-hegemonic forces. One of the successes of the Iceland revolution, argue the authors, has been “in establishing a new and effective tradition of protest and democratic activism by the common people” (p. 201). Following Badiou, the authors suggest that the protest was not a ‘revolution’ but it ended the period of conservatism that preceded it and produced a collapse of divisive identities to become the multitude. In Chapter 13, Romanos looks at the collective learning process brought about by the emergence of the Spanish 15M/*Indignados* movement. Although the social media was an important tool for organising and coordinating protest, the author suggests that the persistence of the movement and its further developments relied on the internal dynamics of the movements connected to local experiences in the process of framing of collective action, the improvement of “deliberative organizational culture” (p. 216) and the consolidation of political identity. In the next Chapter (Chapter 14), Sergi and Vogiatzoglou compare the symbolic memory and global

repertoires by looking at the Tunisian uprising and the Greek anti-austerity mobilizations, which developed in the Mediterranean region during 2010–2011. They discuss how these two dissimilar movements linked the ‘global’ and the ‘local’ and how they used the notion of ‘universal citizenship’ during their mobilisations. In Chapter 15, Calvo brings the 15M/*Indignados* back to the debate. By using empirical data on protesters in Salamanca collected in 2011, he argues that the 15M is a novel movement that has managed to disrupt some negative features of Spanish political culture. By reflecting on the gender, age and educational backgrounds of the interviewees, the author highlights their role in the development of new forms of collective action brought about by the 15M.

This edited collection offers, like no other, a theoretical critique of SMT empirically informed by several case studies of ESM written by critical scholars and scholar activists, and an attempt (successful in my view) to articulate an European Social Movement approach. The book tackles two of the many problems faced by social movement theory, because of which it has arguably become ‘irrelevant’ (Flacks 2004). First, the theory propagates a disjunction between scholarly produced theory and the activist produced knowledge, particularly when it uses concepts and ideas that the movements want to challenge. SMT, argue Bevington and Dixon (2005), is not being read by the movements that the theory seeks to elucidate, partly because SMT have systematically ignored the theorisations that are generated by the movements themselves, outside academia (Cox and Nielsen 2008). This is particularly striking at the present conjuncture when there is an interesting process of ‘activist theorising’ (Cox and Nilsen 2007, 434) and publications available. Second, as mentioned in the book’s introduction, led by its American variant, SMT has subordinated the study of European Movements to a foundational myth that has been reproduced by established and young scholars alike, and which not merely presents a partial view of ESM but constitutes a misleading account of them.

The book reveals how movements mobilise the invisible traces of history thus contesting simplistic narratives about European people protesting in the streets since 2010 and offers instead a ‘richer narrative’ in which the historical trajectory of the movements is treated in relation to the present. In this collection, the past becomes an element of the present while the present is enriched with an understanding of the trajectory of the movements. The speeded paperback release of the book only six months after the hardback edition was out surely indicates that the book is filling a gap in the study and practice of social movements and activism in Europe. It contains essential material for those who are interested in the trajectories and landscapes of ESM as well as those who are interested in present developments empirical and theoretical. The “myth” has been exposed and the richness and complexities of European social movements began to see the light.

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J.P. Clark (2013). *The Impossible Community: Realizing Communitarian Anarchism*. London: Bloomsbury (272 pp., \$45 paperback)

Reviewed by **Gerard Gill**

Anarchism and anarchistic practices have achieved renewed currency in recent times. In light of this, books like *The Impossible Community* by John P. Clark hold particular relevance for modern social movement scholars. The book suffers in places from an inaccessibility which is admittedly hard to avoid when discussing topics such as Hegelian dialectics. Such topics are, however, relevant in terms of their influence on Clark’s views as well as on the thought of classical anarchists such as Bakunin (McLaughlin 2002). These parts of the book will

likely only be of interest to relatively few, while discussions on topics such as competing utopias, different conceptions of the common good, and various oppositional communities (both current and historical) are by far the more compelling sections for the general reader.

The introductory chapter states that the book “is in large part the elaboration of a libertarian communitarianism” (p. 1) which Clark argues exists as a long intellectual tradition as well as in community and movement practices. A few strands of thought are evident in the book from the beginning – a criticism of post-anarchism as beginning with valid critique but ending with a problematic rejection of material realities, evidence of innate human cooperation contra Hobbes, and an advocacy of dialectics as an anti-essentialist mode of analysis. As a microcosm of the book as a whole, this chapter begins with a theoretical discussion that borders on obscurantism (for instance at several points it includes quotes in foreign languages with no translation, assuming the reader will be familiar with the material) before moving towards content that might be more interesting or useful to an activist or activist-intellectual. While some of the theory is necessary for the argument of the book, much of it is rather inaccessible and it is possible that those pages might have been better spent on the more practical and case-orientated work which is the strongest part of the book. However, Clark does note the importance of reconciling theory and practice, and the second chapter contains some interesting real-world examples such as the Spanish Mondragon cooperatives.

Clark characterises the time we live in as the era of “there is no alternative”, and noting that even many Leftist claims fall within some kind of concession of this statement. In contrast, Clark’s argument essentially seems to be for a pre-figurative, or at least creative and expressive, politics. He notes that the Right is actually better at this, and the Left is left trying to work on the Right’s creations – for instance he notes that the religious Right’s successes owe much to their community-building and grassroots emphasis. Clark also cites Žižek quite regularly which might be seen as problematic to some given that author’s arguably authoritarian streak and hostility to anarchism (Henwood 2002; Wolters 2013).

The third chapter is called ‘The Third Concept of Liberty’. The first two concepts relate to Isaiah Berlin’s negative and positive conceptions of liberty, with the positive being self-determination and the realization of capacities, beyond simple non-coercion, i.e. negative freedom. Clark proposes a third, which is a dialectical synthesis of the two. He explains how, for Hegel, the state is the reconciliation of the universal and the particular. However, Clark argues that this is an unfounded claim that was simply Hegel’s way of defending the state. In opposition to this, Clark advocates a “search for truth in which essential dimensions of what one seeks can be discovered only through a creative process in which the idea finds concrete, determinate fulfilment in the act” (p. 91). This argument would seem like a natural segue into discussions about practice and action, however this does not get explored further for another two chapters, and

the next is largely concerned with classical anarchist theory, in particular Elisée Reclus, and the critical-dialectical tradition that emerged from Hegel.

One of the more interesting theoretical discussions in the book is the one on utopia, considered as the highest aspirations or ideal in some schools of thought. In this way, both the dominant utopia of neoliberalism and alternative utopias can be articulated. Clark describes utopian thought as divergent from its very origins, with exemplars of the two paths being found in Plato's *Republic* and Laozi's *Daodejing*. Plato's utopia is one of statism, unity or totality, and totalitarianism. In contrast, Laozi's is one of stateless freedom. Utopia as domination, totality, and hegemony, with dissenting elements suppressed can be seen in powerful common examples including consumerism and religious fundamentalism but also in less obvious places. For instance, Clark mentions the elitism and vanguardism evident in Bakunin's thought, seen in the authoritarian and consequentialist tactics he espoused. The chapter on utopia concludes with mention of some intentional communities and the utopian thought preceding and existing in them, which is largely neglected in most accounts.

From chapter six onwards, the book moves into more case-based discussion. Clark argues that people have forgotten or don't notice the potential of 'oppositional communities'. He argues that while there were real gains for the left in the 1960s in the US, these have since been beaten back again, and now the Right largely holds the grassroots while the Left is resigned to 'permanent struggle' with nothing beyond it. Clark looks to these oppositional communities for something more. He considers the global justice movement as one of the most important developments in this, in particular its affinity groups, as well as 'base communities' in Latin America. There is also some mentioning of Occupy and recent mass anti-austerity movements. These examples show that such communities are effective and potentially transformative, though this potential has gone largely unexplored and the question remains as to whether these groups can expand their scope into broader social change.

The chapter called 'disaster anarchism' is comprised of two pieces written during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. It explores how the social and political conditions created by disasters create opportunities for different political actors and ideologies. He notes that the US government's response to the disaster was woeful, and that the state actually even worked against grassroots efforts to provide aid. Of these efforts, he notes that "Seldom have I felt such a sense of the goodness of people, of their ability to show love and compassion for one another, and of their capacity to create spontaneous community" (p. 202). This is a powerful example of the kind of human potential that makes communitarian anarchism seem possible.

In a similar manner to the discussion on utopia, Clark discusses the concept of the 'common good' through two contrasting conceptions of it, epitomised by Nehru and the exclusionary development that took place under his government, and the Gandhian movement, *Sarvodaya*, which is described as libertarian, communitarian, and anarchist. However, he details the problems of the

transition to this particular utopia, such as misplaced trust in elites to act as willing allies in the project. Still, a legacy of the Gandhian movement can be seen in the *Sarvodaya Shramadhan* movement in Sri Lanka. Clark argues that as a grassroots development movement it has surpassed the achievements of Gandhi's original efforts.

The final chapter is a critique of Bookchin – in particular his political program of libertarian municipalism. Clark argues that despite its merits, this program remains stuck in 'abstract moralism' (p. 248) and neglects class (Clark notes that Bookchin has this in common with various 'post'-thinkers which he otherwise has little in common with). He concludes that the work has inspired many projects, but is also narrow and sectarian. While not without its appeal, this seems like a strange choice for a final chapter and does little to sum up or conclude the main body of the work. This is likely because it is one of the majority of chapters where portions have been previously published elsewhere, then repurposed for inclusion in the book. This sometimes works well, but this last chapter is probably the starker indicator of this process, and makes the book feel quite disjointed as it draws to a close.

Clark wears his philosophical sympathies on his sleeve throughout the book, which is not a bad thing as it allows the reader to understand where he is coming from with his arguments. He is a strong advocate of the dialectical process, and appreciates but is also critical of postmodernism. In the book, he displays both an affinity for traditional, Marxist-influenced anarchism and an engagement with more recent developments. Particularly compelling is his argument that events and practices in the global South can and should be a vital source of inspiration for movements in the North. While by no means perfect, this book is a worthwhile contribution to contemporary anarchist scholarship.

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Peter Dauvergne and Genevieve Lebaron (2014). *Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism*. Cambridge: Polity Press (206 pp., £15.99 paperback)

Reviewed by **Lika Rodin**

In this monograph, '*Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism*', Peter Dauvergne and Genevieve Lebaron, explore the changing nature and future of social activism. The book comprises six chapters with three central parts devoted to the major factors behind the ongoing transformation of social mobilization – the endangering of political protest, individualization and fragmentation of social life, and formalization of activism – which are integrated into a general analytical conversation unfolding in the introductory and concluding sections. The engaging style and unique data provided in the edition have a good chance to attract the attention of both the general public and academic audiences.

The first chapter problematizes the increasing collaboration between pro-profit institutions and NGOs, and the rise of *career activism*. This process, which is grounded in mutual interest, entails a perspective for many activist organizations to be incorporated into the order of globalizing capitalism. Simultaneously, more challenging and militant groups find themselves in political isolation, excluded in terms of economic support, endangered and labeled as anti-social. The authors "are sounding a loud alarm (...) about the consequences of the corporatization of activism for the possibilities of transformative change in world politics" (p. 5).

The first chapter differentiates *protest*, an impulsive mass or individual revolt driven by the "moral economy" (p. 5) of disadvantaged groups, from *activism*, an organized struggle over social and political objectives, projected in time. The authors are primarily interested in activism, and even more specifically in leftist activism, separating the discussion from the analysis of fundamentalist and right wing organizations. Leftist activism is said to employ a multiplicity of tactics – from peaceful performances to "hacking" and direct action – addressing political and economic institutions as its main opponents. Activism is, however, shown as increasingly affected by capitalist structures and ideologies. In this respect, an important distinction is made between *activist managers*, NGO leaders who have adopted morals and methods developed by the state and business organizations, and *radical activists*, "those who challenge political and corporate authority and call for structural change to alter the outcomes of markets and politics" (p. 26).

In the second chapter, Dauvergne and Lebaron argue that non-governmental organizations mirror corporate standards and approaches. According to the authors, the corporatization of activism involves the use of celebrities in the promotion of social issues and the inclusion of business people in activist decision-making structures. In the context of expanding capitalism and shrinking role of the state from the provision of social services, partnership with

pro-profit actors appears critical for NGOs to cope with economic challenges, and for the state to manage social obligations. It is stimulated and supported both on a national and international level. A related innovative socio-economic mode – *philanthrocapitalism* – is discussed as being driven by the idea of entrepreneurship and a desire to enhance the consumer capacities of typically excluded social groups, thus elevating profits. Celebrities, as “role models” or individuals who demonstrate a “will to care” (in terms of Hamington 2008), frequently represent and occasionally engage in governing of NGOs, such as Leonardo DiCaprio associated with WWF, or Angelina Jolie actively promoting UN’s projects. Involvement of celebrities morally reaffirms the position of those who have privileged access to economic resources. An expression borrowed by the authors from a contemporary philanthropist illustrates this claim: “being super-rich is fine (...) as long as you support a good cause or two” (p. 44).

Additionally, entrepreneurial spirit among NGOs leads to the appropriation of social problems for business promotion. Goods which are ethically certified or “branded with ‘causes’” offer “self-indulgence” for buyers rationalizing and defending their consumerist drive: “The more one buys, the more good one will do, turning capitalism into a dynamic solution for social ill” (p. 52). This trend is linked to the proliferation of liberal ideology, the individualization of social problems and reconceptualization of citizenship in terms of consumer entitlements. The authors warn that framing consumer practices as enactments of activism may undermine foundations of sociopolitical mobilization. Activists’ engagement with consumerism supports the general order of market relationships abandoning the very idea of alternative(s).

Chapter 3 opens a discussion on the causes of corporatization of non-profit organizational actors with a reflection on the phenomenon of *securitization* of social political activism that hits different types of activist groups. In the framework of antiterrorist politics, states across the globe have dramatically increased surveillance and coercion of sociopolitical resistance. Activists are frequently defined in terms of security threat; the related innovations in controlling and counteracting disobedience are observed, including the adaption by police units of military equipment and advanced combat technologies. The figure of USD 3 billion – the value of a recent donation of weapons and other military facilities made by the US Department of Defense to the police force – helps imagining the scale of the development. When a local police department can use an army tank against protesters, one will have to think twice before engaging in a demonstration or a blockade. Surveillance of activists, including the infiltration of police agents into activist organizations is another tactic used. The authors are concerned with the negative impact of police espionage on activists’ camaraderie and on recruitment of new members into activist groups. In addition, national legislation systems in many countries have transformed to integrate antiterrorist measures, which informed treatment of social movements as well, “criminalizing” (p. 65) civil protest in some parts of the world. Apart from coercion, economic means are increasingly employed. For instance, to discourage politically motivated individuals from engaging in

collective actions, governments issue direct and indirect payments for participation in grassroots events.

Chapter 4 is devoted to another macro factor of corporatization of activism, namely *privatization of social life*, which has come about with the promotion of the idea of self-efficiency, expansion of entrepreneurial ethos and consumerist practices, restructuring of urban organization and the related fragmentation of local communities. In this context, “[n]ot only are people living more private and insulated lives, but increasingly the values and choices about what to do with one’s time and energy reflect a life of ever rising consumerism” (p. 84). Self-referencing and consumerist ideology profoundly shape one’s subjectivity and related modes of action. Moreover, the transformation of the urban environment and expansion of new technologies alter coherence of everyday life and, eventually, “the infrastructures of dissent” (p. 83). Rising social stratification and social competition further contribute to the decline of social ties and solidarity.

Institutionalization of activism – the third factor behind the change in the nature of social political mobilization – is presented in the next chapter. Institutionalization is supposed to establish activist organizations as legitimate players within the realm of politics. However, Dauvergne and Lebaron argue that this unavoidably leads to hierarchization, bureaucratization, adoption of business style in management, and re-orientation of activists towards minor liable and rather non-critical towards the current system projects. Institutionalization of NGOs is crucial for the rise of the *non-profit industrial complex* celebrating “symbiotic relationships” between civil and non-civil domains marked by hegemony of “those with money and power” (p. 117).

There are two main themes running through the book: a somewhat idealized image of civil society and nostalgia for a radical class-based collective struggle. Those reflect a long-term theoretical discussion on the essence of political mobilization and its multifaceted effects. Recently, focus of the theorizing has shifted towards cultural dimension of social activism, as represented, for example, in elaborations by Jeffrey Alexander.

In his book ‘*The Civil Society*’ published in 2006, Alexander emphasized that through recent centuries the civil sector – a “plethora of institutions outside of the state” (p. 24) – was at times praised, and at times blamed for its close association with the “capitalist market”. Interpretations of capitalism varied from liberating and enhancing an individual self, to the association of market order with the domain of “antisocial” forces, although in major early social conceptions civil society appeared as essentially “bourgeois”. It was seen as being capable of “fixing” the social troubles generated by the state and market, but not overturning their power. As Alexander further highlights, an intellectual ground of revolutionary activism – Marxism – certainly did not count on civil society to be the engine of social change, trusting instead the logic of economic processes.

The values, norms, and institutions of civil society were opposed to the interest of the mass humanity, even if they did provide a space for contesting their own legitimacy in a public, counter-hegemonic way. Civil society was inherently capitalist. It was a sphere that could be entered but not redefined. Its discourse could not be broadened and redirected. It was a sphere that would have to be overthrown. (Gramsci cited in Alexander 2006, 29)

More recent theoretical trends grant the civil sphere a separate status from political and economic domains, though the boundaries between them are rather fluid and mutual infiltrations are relatively common. This dynamic shapes civil society in a specific way: “The contradictions of civil society make it restless. Its relative autonomy promises more than it provides. Its commitments of universalizing solidarity are never fulfilled” (Alexander 2006, pp. 213-214). The overlap of civil and non-civil realms manifests itself in the phenomenon of *double membership*, exemplified among others by the experiences of women who have got access to paid work and through this to the sphere of public life, transgressing but not entirely leaving their household responsibilities, roles and identities. The idea of double membership appears in the description of consumer activism provided by Peter Dauvergne and Genevieve Lebaron. It helps to explain the success of “appropriation” of activist symbolism by business organizations: the phenomenon of Che Guevara T-shirts. Capitalism manages “to commodify dissent and sell it back to dissenters” (Manites cited in Dauvergne and Lebaron, 103), namely due to boundary confusion (Alexander 2006) and the complex structure of individual identity mirroring the general complexity of the advanced modernity (Giddens 1991).

To counter individualization and consumerization of protest, Dauvergne and Lebaron advocate for the anti-authoritarian movements based on structurally grounded solidarity and the collective struggle over shared goals. However, new social movement studies show that the “revolutionary model” of activism is giving way to more culturally sensitive types of social mobilization capable of addressing a shift from material- to symbolic-based hegemony. In this new and rather discursive battle – the battle over representations – individual identity is placed at the epicenter as “the property which is now being claimed and defended” (Melucci cited in Alexander 2006, 225). Thus, to answer the initial question of the book – “Where are the radicals?” – it would be important to (re)define radicalism in the current context.

With the increased complexity of the power order, when diverse state, security and economic agents strengthen their command and control, various forms of social resistance have emerged. We can clearly identify the existing “will to believe” (Hamington 2010) in opportunities to make a substantial shift towards a more just and inclusive world. However, there is no consensus, neither among activists nor among commentators, on what this change will be and how it can come about. In this context, the Marxian idea of an “automatic” resolution of the social conflict (Alexander 2004) appears pleasurable as never before (see also Schouten 2008). *Protest Inc.: The Corporatization of Activism* does not

only trigger a discussion on the contemporary transformation of social activism but also provokes the reader's reflection on more fundamental aspects of sociopolitical and economic order.

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Alexandros Kioupkiolis and Giorgios Katsambekis, eds. (2014). *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today: The Biopolitics of the Multitude versus the Hegemony of the People*. Farnham: Ashgate (247 pp., £58.50 hardback).

Reviewed by **Jamie Matthews**

The wave of occupation protests and square-taking movements of 2011 presented academics and activists with the need to return to a variety of questions and problems inherent to the projects of the radical left. A particularly salient concern, proposed most explicitly by the Occupy slogan 'We Are The 99 per cent', has been the contested conceptions of the subject of emancipatory change. It is clear to most that the traditional proletariat, the industrial working

class, has been long displaced as this subject, but there is sharp debate as to what replaces it, and how a revolutionary project might be constituted. The alter-globalisation movement of the early 2000s saw the rise in popularity and relevance of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's idea of the 'multitude', a dispersed and horizontally-organised subject fitting to the challenges of biopolitical Empire (Hardt and Negri 2000). While the 2011 movements have frequently reflected similar tendencies, they have also witnessed the 'revenge of the hierarchy' (Mason 2013), as groups willing to organise in counter-hegemonic blocs and wield hierarchical power have ascended in places like Egypt and Greece. This in turn seems to bear out the claims of theorists of hegemony – most prominently Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985) – that the multitude is ultimately insufficient for the challenge of necessarily antagonistic politics. *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today* seeks to intervene in this debate, and the current political moment, presenting a series of chapters from scholars positioning themselves across the axes of this particular tension.

The editors usefully outline the key debates and theoretical positions regarding the 'people' at the centre of radical social change, as an important introduction to the chapters of the book. This naturally includes Hardt and Negri's claim that hierarchical centralisation of social movements is no longer desirable in the context of Empire's decentralised, biopolitical domination through enclosure and the production of our very selves. Instead, resistance must come from the autonomous networks of the multitude that resist identity and crystallisation. Other voices speaking from related positions are those of fellow autonomists such as Paolo Virno (2004), as well as Giorgio Agamben's (1998) works on bare life and the 'coming community' (1993) that does not rely on identity and representation. Against these positions the key voices have included Laclau and Mouffe (1985), who have maintained that the concept of multitude – which includes essentially everyone – does not allow for the antagonism that is necessary to politics, and is guilty of a spontaneism that incorrectly misses the need to construct a revolutionary project from conflicting groups and demands. Another key theoretical contribution has been that of Jacques Rancière (2010) for whom the essence of politics is the struggle between conflicting versions of the concept of 'the people'.

These are weighty theoretical questions that draw on a veritable library of radical political philosophy and concepts. However, it is evidently the ambition of the editors that readers newer to the debates at the heart of this volume be provided with some points of orientation with which to navigate the book's chapters. In this regard, Kioupkiolis's and Katsambekis's laying out of the conceptual terrain in their introduction to the book is very welcome. Similarly, it is made clear from the start that this apparently theoretical conflict is central to contemporary activist practice. The organisational tension between 'horizontals' and 'verticals' – itself often reflecting that between anarchists and autonomists on the one hands and political parties of various stripes on the other – was perhaps the tension of the previous wave of anti-capitalist protest, and in many

ways represents a dramatisation of the two tendencies at the centre of this book: are we to organise in disaggregated networks or (imperfectly) united blocs?

On the side of the (not unrevised) multitude are the chapters by Benjamin Ardit and Saul Newman. Ardit's 'Post-hegemony: Politics Outside the Usual Post-Marxist Paradigm' is rooted in the empirical example of Argentina's anti-government protests in 2001. Drawing on Virno's *Grammar of the Multitude* (2004), he offers a convincing account of a coalition so loose it barely justifies the name, seemingly truer to an amassing social multiplicity. His conclusion that this suggests the need not for a counter-power but an anti-power is taken further by Newman's 'Occupy and Autonomous Political Life', which uses Occupy Wall Street to assert a new paradigm of 'anti-politics'. This is a label that would surely be agreed upon by its critics who see the political as inherently hegemonic and antagonistic, though Newman reclaims this in the context of Occupy's claim that the conventional terrain of politics is in fact no longer anything of the sort, but instead a series of mechanisms of de-politicisation and securitisation.

While sympathetic to aspects of the multitude thesis, Richard J.F. Day and Nick Montgomery's 'Letter to a Greek Anarchist' contributes a much needed indigenist and feminist critique of the totalising and oppressive knowledge-power claims of both multitude and hegemony. They reiterate some of Day's previous (2005) critique of hegemony, and reject Hardt and Negri's suspicion of all identities, pointing out that in the context of neo-colonialism, indigenous identities provide a vehicle for radical exodus from the current dispensation. Their espousal of the indigenist acceptance of plurality leads them to claim that 'everyone is right', thereby offering an interesting uprooting of the assumptions of the debate around which the book is framed.

Jodi Dean's 'Sovereignty of the People' recognises the fact that the proletariat is no longer the appropriate subject of communist revolution, though firmly maintains that the multitude falls short as a substitute. Dean's main objection, which is echoed again and again across the book, is that the multitude is too inclusive, including basically everyone, and thereby missing out the need for the antagonism of an 'us' and a 'them'. She refers to Rancière's (2011) concept of 'the people as the rest of us' as a useful way of envisaging a political subject that is necessarily representative ('the people' for Rancière always involves a particular group representing its demands as universal) while remaining true to the idea of a minority 1 per cent's domination of everyone else. Yannis Stavrakakis's 'Hegemony or Post-Hegemony' reinforces the argument for hegemony by directly addressing through deconstruction the work of its principle critics, including Day, and outlining the several ways in which Laclau has already responded to his critics. This is a useful contribution to undermining the caricature that can surround the concepts at the centre of this debate.

It is in the chapters by the book's editors that the project of the volume becomes clear. They are both committed to an increased entangling of the multitude and the people, such that the 2011 movements are shown to reveal successful

moments of both. Read from the vantage point of these chapters, the whole book feels somewhat like a vehicle for the complementary theses of these two colleagues. Frequently rooted in the concrete example of Greece, these are very useful contributions that help us to think past the often excessively limiting categories of multitude and hegemony.

Kioupkiolis's chapter 'A Hegemony of the Multitude' proposes that hegemony be 'recast beyond recognition' but retained as useful, and affirms the need to look at concrete empirical examples of collective autonomy to trouble the stability of our concepts. His account stays true to the horizontal, anti-representation ethos of Athens' *aganaktismenoi*, but asserts that the constituent processes of the movement was a project of 'becoming multitude'. He maintains though that even in distributed networks, hubs of concentrated power will emerge, such that hegemony remains a constant possibility in the multitude's project.

Katsembekis's 'The Multitudinous Moment(s) of the People' hones in on the fact that even the resolutely leaderless Greek protesters were necessarily drawn into hegemonic representation whenever the movement spoke; chants, banners and media representations, he convincingly claims, reflect the ineradicable possibility of a dominant 'people' emerging from multiplicity. Marina Prentoulis and Lasse Thomassen's 'Autonomy and Hegemony in the Squares' functions something like an epilogue to the editors' claims, particularly in its account of the mutual contaminations of horizontality and verticality, autonomy and hegemony. The authors reiterate Katsembekis's claim that media representation imposed moments of hegemony from without, and importantly add that the very act of occupation that characterised many of these movements created camps-as-centres that undermined the multitudinous network ethic from within. The relationship between space and representation is developed further in Andy Knott's chapter on Occupy and UK Uncut.

Taken as a whole, *Radical Democracy and Collective Movements Today* is a valuable intervention which this recent wave of mobilisations has necessitated. If the alter-globalisation movement was a moment of the multitude – distributed horizontal networks that converged swarm-like on the summits of the WTO or G8 only to disperse again – it is right that this current period of empirical struggle be used to approach this problem again. While elements of the multitude remain, it is clear from this book (the arguments of its editors, the framing of the introduction, and the organisation of chapters) that Kioupkiolis and Katsembekis see this recent wave as the return to salience of a hegemonic politics of the people. Indeed, this makes some sense given the experience of their native Greece, where the rise of a unifying political party – Syriza – has captured much of the anarchic energy of the Syntagma Square demonstrators. These events would seem to bear out the Laclauian claim that from the chaotic multiplicity of social life, politics emerges when an equivalence of demands is articulated by a necessarily representative force; or at the very least that the hierarchical organisation of something like a political party can quickly undermine the structures of horizontal autonomy, at least once the explosive early moment of insurrection has passed. Their proximity to this example

perhaps excessively determines their theoretical claims, but these are useful precisely as contextually situated, rather than universal, knowledge.

The volume is particularly useful in helping readers to overcome the sometimes overly simplistic presentation of the concepts of hegemony and the multitude that are relied on by their respective critics. Readings of key theorists are frequently nuanced and reflect how positions have shifted over the years in dialogue with one another and in response to empirical events. What emerges is a messier and more useful series of concepts for considering the subject of struggle today.

Sociologists and anthropologists of social movements will likely be frustrated by the level of abstraction that is characteristic of the kind of theorising that is the tendency of radical political philosophy; the use of empirical examples from actual movements is frequently instrumentalised to illustrate and support grander points, rather than to confound or trouble them. This reflects differences in disciplinary priorities rather than fundamental flaws. One should hope that the theoretical claims of this book be furthered by research more explicitly rooted in activist practice. For activists and movement participants themselves, this volume is an encouragement to consider the deep ideological underpinnings of tactics and practices, and to locate these in the particular historical moment to which they must respond.

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Stefania Milan (2013). *Social Movements and Their Technologies: Wiring Social Change*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan (233 pp., \$90 hardcover)

Reviewed by **A.T. Kingsmith**

While somewhat neglectful of the politics embedded within the development of new communicative technologies, *Social Movements and Their Technologies* opens up new conversations regarding the socio-cultural embeddness of contemporary social movements by providing a useful overview of the relationship between social movements and 'liberating technologies' that demystifies the communications infrastructures that have made possible some of the major protest events of the past 15 years. To do so, author Stefania Milan centres her analyses around what she terms 'emancipatory communication practices' (ECPs), repertoires of collective action and social organisation that seek to create alternatives by challenging existing media and communications infrastructures.

Drawing from the work of Hackett and Carroll (2004), Milan distinguishes between two approaches to emancipatory communication practices: reformist (or offensive) and counterhegemonic (or defensive). Reformist tactics challenge existing hegemonic structures and powers in the communication field by influencing the contents of mainstream media and advocating media policy reform. Counterhegemonic tactics seek to create independent media outside state and corporate control, and to change the relationship between citizens and media by empowering audiences to be aware of the overwhelming influence of mainstream media.

Building on this methodological divide, Milan frames her exploration of ECPs around two distinct communication mediums: low-power community radio (reformist) and high-power Internet activism (counterhegemonic). For Milan, the two approaches share a focus on praxis as their main strategy of promoting change, a culture of emancipation, and empowerment insofar as they provide alternatives to commercial and state-owned communication infrastructure, and core features such as non-profit status, an orientation towards social change and

social justice, and the prevalence of volunteerism. Despite these similarities however, it is their differences that provide the focal point for much of the book.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to a historical analysis of the emergence of mobilisations on media and technology issues and an exploration of the context in which current mobilisations occur. For analytical purposes, Milan defines three decades, each characterised by distinct political, technological, and cultural developments. 1975-1985 is referred to as the 'institutional period,' a time when communication and information issues enter the development discourse. 1985-1995 is 'civil society engagement,' where the first media reform campaigns and national computer networks emerge. 1995-2005 is the 'renaissance of media activism', where emancipatory communication practices proliferate thanks to the diffusion of the Internet and cheap, user-friendly technologies. As Milan works through over thirty years of communicative history, she explores each period by focusing on three elements: the prevailing political opportunities, the evolution of technological innovation, and the socio-cultural environments that influenced activists. Further, Milan concludes with a section dedicated to the latest developments in media activism, including the spread of hacktivism and the role of social media in recent popular protest movements such as the Arab Spring, Spain's Indignados and 15-M mobilisations, and Occupy Wall Street.

After situating the different tactical methodologies within their preferred communication mediums and laying the historical foundations for contemporary techno-activist engagements, the remainder of the book is divided into four chapters which employ Milan's notion of ECPs to develop what she refers to as the four fundamental foundations of collective action: identity building and movement formation; organisational forms; action repertoires and interactions with authorities, norms, and policy arenas; and networking strategies.

In the chapter on movement formation and identity building, Milan focuses on how identities are produced and movements formed among reformist community broadcasters and counterhegemonic radical techies. She argues that collective identity emerges in both reformist and counterhegemonic organisations because activists believe that injustice pertaining to the media sector contributes to the reproduction of other forms of inequality, and thus fighting existing forms of media-related injustice has a positive impact on society as a whole. However, while radio practitioners emphasise the consequences of structural injustice, for radical techies it is the structural nature of injustice itself that matters.

Community radio practitioners identify with human rights activism, the freedom of expression discourse, and people-centred approaches to a collective notion of development, while DIY culture, punk subculture, cyberlibertarianism, hacker and free software movements, as well as anarchism and autonomism are what tend to inform the identities of radical techies. Hence the two sectors have little in common in terms of identity apart from an emphasis on the appropriation of enclosed spaces.

Milan points out that organisations are a source of identity reproduction and at the same time, identity works as an organising principle. Community practitioners and radical techies share an emphasis on participation,

horizontality, trust, independence, and a deep value of social relationships as organising principles. However, they stress different organisational elements of their collective identity, as well as different constructions of the 'other.' The communitarian orientation of radio practitioners emphasises openness towards the enlarged 'we' as their main organising principle. As such, community radio stations are characterised by an ontology of inclusivity that keeps barriers to access low. In contrast, the antagonistic orientation of radical techies focuses on radical opposition to the predominant social and economic sphere as its key organising principle, thereby stressing the 'I' or the individual within the larger group. Thus radical tech activism is characterised by self-managed collectives of purported equals.

When choosing an action repertoire, Milan contends that activists are influenced by five factors: the objective of the protest, the meaning and symbolic value associated with collective action, emotions, material constraints, and the presence of potential allies. When looking at collective actors engaged in the political process, Milan argues that social movement scholars have traditionally distinguished between 'insiders' (reformist) pushing a cooperative strategy or active engagement in institutional processes, and 'outsiders' (counterhegemonic) adopting confrontational forms of protest against institutions. Noting that some actors do not fit into this binary model, Milan adds 'beyond-ers' to the continuum: groups whose actions are prefigurative, operate regardless of institutions and norms, and aim to redefine social structures from scratch. Occasionally there are other configurations beyond this ideal-type activist spectrum, including coalitions of different groups working on a division of labour model, but for Milan, the cultural differences between insiders and beyond-ers in particular form a fundamental dividing line that hampers collaboration and the acknowledgment of being part of the same struggle.

In the final chapter, Milan explores how groups and individuals engaged in ECPs give rise to networks with their peers, and with activists engaged in other areas of media and technology activism. Community broadcasters generally form national and transnational networks of non-confrontational membership associations, which are instrumental in creating and reproducing connections across borders, as well as promoting a common belief system. Conversely, networks of radical techies are much more informal and submerged. Locally, techies tend to mingle with other activists on the basis of common frameworks (for example municipal political engagement), which foster the emergence of shared agendas. However, Milan distinguishes between three distinct types of tech networks: instrumental, exchange-based, and self-defense networks. As such, there are only sporadic connections between community broadcasters and radical techies, and thus Milan makes it clear that we cannot speak of a larger social movement dynamic. There can be movement dynamics at play when interests between the sectors occasionally align (for example the anti-SOPA/PIPA protests), but such a movement dynamic has never been sustained over time, and this impedes the emergence of shared collective identity and long-term collaborative mobilisations.

It is important to note that despite its comprehensive methodology, Milan's tendency to employ apolitical framing techniques and to oversimplify mobilisation dynamics present modest gaps in the study that, if closed, would tighten the organisational resonance of the book's conclusions. A key part of Milan's method is an emphasis on the microsociological processes behind the creation of liberated infrastructures as opposed to the content that such infrastructures broadcast. This conscious refusal to engage with the political content of social movements, and instead focus entirely on the supposedly apolitical ways such movements utilise various technologies, makes visible a lack of political reflexivity in the book. The political content of technology cannot be so easily separated from the technologies themselves because it is political acts that created and continue to develop many of these technologies in the first place (the US military's establishment of the Internet as an secure internal communication medium is one glaring example that comes to mind). From the NSA revelations in the Global North to the social media blackouts under repressive regimes in the Global South, political rationalities play a key role in the operation and accessibility of 'liberating technologies', and thus to focus specifically on the actor, while ignoring the context of the act, leaves out a key part of the larger socio-political picture. Moreover, drawing upon Gerbaudo's (2012) work on liquid organising and choreographic leadership, when addressing internal power dynamics, Milan could make more explicit the fact that hierarchies of power continue to be observed even within radical techie ECPs because the manifestation of a core leadership structure has so far proven to be inevitable during any sort of communicative mobilisation process.

Overall, Milan should be applauded for an ambitious attempt to bring together two disciplines that rarely speak to one another: on the one hand, social movement studies (and political sociology more broadly), and on the other, media and Internet studies. While over the past decade more and more scholars have made attempts to analyse alternative media, few have made use of sociological theories to understand grassroots participation in media production or the dynamics of cyberspace. Situated at the nexus of sociological processes and communicative activity, Milan's concept of ECPs represents a useful attempt to fill these gaps, and the in-depth examination of the cultural systems of community broadcasters and radical techies offers new insights into activists' motivations, emotions, demographics, identity-building processes, and the action repertoires of collective actors who employ both 'old' and 'new' media. Moreover, Milan's expansion of Hackett and Carroll's (2004) binary of counterhegemonic-versus-reformist tactical methodologies to include 'beyond-ers' in the continuum opens up a space for fresh conversations regarding the socio-cultural ontologies of contemporary social movements. Finally, Milan's conclusions that radical techies and community radio practitioners establish only episodic connections, and thus remain two distinct universes with two separate cultural systems of action, makes visible a deep divide in social movement praxis that must be more than merely acknowledged if there is to be any chance of bridging such a gap.

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Anna Schober (2013). *The Cinema Makers: Public Life and the Exhibition of Difference in South-Eastern and Central Europe since the 1960s*. Bristol: Intellect (241 pp., £25.00 paperback)

Reviewed by **Niamh Mongey**

The 1960s brought about political unrest on a global scale and with it a physical desire to revolt. This spurred a sense of creativity where citizens became active agents of their own environment. Anna Schober has documented the stories of the Cinema Makers in East and Western Europe during this period in order to situate us "in the middle of things" (Schober 2013, 5). Schober is thorough in her investigations. She displays an understanding and appreciation of these creative movements, she has captured a period where there was a shift in the way people consumed and recreated film.

Through reading these scenarios, the author places us in a world of upheaval. The stories show the transformation of the role of the cinemagoers began to shape the discourses of society through forming collective in urban spaces. She uses the concept of 'the other' as the feeling that provoked mass response in cinema goers. Through interviews with some of the main film makers of the time, she captures the sense of agency associated with cinema making at the time and reveals how a strict control enforced by socialist governments in one-party systems led these new authors to create their own form of cinema making and identifies the similarities between socialist led governments and pluralist democratic societies.

The main body of this book revolves around cinema as a physical movement. Schober identifies the movement of people across boundaries. She recounts the stories of those who transferred their positions as mere spectators. These cinema makers were provoked to create spaces for a new kind of cinema making

through their exposure to the unknown and foreign, to a world depicted as “the other” (Schober 2013, 3). Through Schober’s depiction of this world, we too become engaged spectators.

She retells the cinema makers’ stories of how they were exposed to “The other” as a world from which they were far removed, “a rapport of observation and identification” somewhere exotic, foreign and unfamiliar (p. 3). Despite its unfamiliarity, this “otherness” spurred a reaction from the artists of the time. These movies created a desire for change and action and provoked another level of thinking for the spectator.

It is from this renewal of ideas and a change in the way that people thought about cinema that the “Expanded cinema” emerged and non-traditional, ambivalent Black Wave cinema making became prevalent (p. 56). These films were a foray into what became an outright rejection of the status quo. They highlighted the darker side of the human psyche and were subtly challenging cinema making.

With her story telling, Schober shares an insight into the human suffering and oppression in these societies at the time. She explores innate human urge film making provoked in spectators to create something in order to understand their world better. “In ‘their’ cinema they all find everything that everyday life denies them” (p. 32). Conversely, the concept of a safe space where cinema activism began to emerge was precisely the mode of containment used by state power. The rulers used cinema as a spectacle and a tool of propaganda. In both Tito-ruled Yugoslavia and multi-party states in Western Europe, the cinema space was used as a place of comfort and seclusion with the aim of controlling people. “The fantasy of an egocrat, representing and incorporating the love of the ‘people as one’” (p. 105).

It is unfortunate for those in control used cinema as a form of control and oppression, produced the catalyst for consumers to transform themselves from consumers into artistic actors. Cinema was more than a safe, solitary space and a place to seek refuge or escape reality; it was now creating its own reality. Gradually, this form of cinema activism began to expand into a movement; the physical space became a shared community amongst transnational networks. Helping to emancipate the individual and create a sense of unity and alliance on a broader scale.

The book describes how a sense of liberation provoked more politicised film making but as a result, government responded to with more rigid controls. “After the first student protests in Belgrade in 1968, the considerable latitude for creating provocative image-worlds and discussions around film that characterized Yugoslavia in the 1960’s was sharply withdrawn” (p. 90). As a result of their success film makers were required to withdraw from the initially bold and fearless film-making that they had begun with and instead had to reflect on the impact and consequences of their film making. Schober highlights that film makers had made a strong enough impact as to threaten those in power.

The last point that Schober explores is cinema's transitioning into a contemporary context as a newer, imaginative form of direct action. The production of cheap or 'lo-fi' film making emerged, compromising aesthetics and rejecting the traditional, grandiose forms of cinema, taking the mystery or the prestige out of cinema making and instead producing satirical inexpensive and provocative films.

This book raises some very interesting conversations for activists about how we mobilise in order to communicate and how we stage visual forms of protests. It displays the power and potential of the creative medium. A critique of this is how cinema making is represented here as an entirely urban phenomenon. The impact of cinema on rural spaces is non-existent. All movement seems to have occurred solely within the urban sphere. The interviews cover only the potential to create great films in a new, urban environment. Interviews appear to credit leaving behind a rural landscape with experiencing a rebirth and an opportunity to experience true creativity. The whole process is discussed on an international scale, with cinema's impact on city dwellers alone. Schober discusses the idea of the 'Urban Stage' (p. 58). This isolates the urban sphere and raises the question of the rural/urban divide and the idea that cinema making exists in the city purely because of its capacity to be commodified.

Another issue worth noting is the gender divide that Schober neglects to discuss in great detail. She quotes film maker Birgit Hein "Interviews with activists indicate how it was an enormous problem to be acknowledged as a woman" (p. 74). Despite this acknowledgement, Schober makes no real attempt to rectify the issue by ensuring a stronger female voice throughout. Relying instead on a predominately male narrative, she seems to concede to the fact that there was a severe absence of a female presence. She writes that by the 1970's this was beginning to change but that most female contributions or acknowledgements seemed to be rather tokenistic and it seems to play out the same way in this book.

Schober has carried out a tremendous amount of work, with over thirty interviews the book has displayed a sense of being packed very tightly with an abundance of ideas and stories. Despite this, Schober sheds light on how cinema making created film makers, activists. Not just through the creation of the films themselves but the human experience of mobilising in opposition to a repressive regime. What is most striking about Schober's portrayal of the cinema makers is the immense capacity of the individual to become active in their own environment. We see how a wealth of work can be made out of human reaction and interaction.

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Donatella Della Porta and Alice Mattoni, eds. (2014). *Spreading Protest: Social Movements in Times of Crisis*. Colchester: ECPR Press (305 pp., 65£ hardback)

Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzelini (2014). *They Can't Represent Us! Reinventing Democracy From Greece to Occupy*. London & New York: Verso (250 pp., £9.99 paperback)

Reviewed by **Nils C. Kumkar**

The eruption of mass protests after the so called ‘Arab Spring’ came as a surprise for many. While some had wondered why the Great Recession that shook most of the worlds’ largest economies did not lead to mass-protests in the years before, it now all went really fast: The ‘Arab Spring’ was followed by mass protests in Greece and Spain, and in September 17th 2011 Zuccotti Park in New York City was occupied by a group that was later commonly referred to as “Occupy Wall Street” (OWS). On October 15th 2011, discontent articulated itself in mass demonstrations and occupied public spaces all throughout the US and Europe but also in many other countries. This culmination of protest with partially overlapping agendas and/or repertoires was, by participants and onlookers alike, perceived as one wave sweeping the globe.

However, this wave is neither easily captured empirically nor theoretically. The first publications on the movements usually remained at the level of rather abstract and general commentary, such as Castell’s *Networks of Outrage and Hope* (2012), Harvey’s *Rebel Cities* (2012) or Mason’s *Why It’s (still) Kicking off Everywhere* (2013). Some activists and journalists published rather ideographic but detailed descriptions of their own experiences in the respective movement (e.g., Blumenkranz et al. 2011, Schneider 2013). An early attempt to further contextualize and theorize the experiences made in one mobilization, OWS, was published by David Graeber (2012), but it empirically barely leaves the realm of the anecdotal. Empirically saturated case studies like Milkman et al.’s ‘Changing the Subject’ on OWS (2013) and special issues in sociological journals (e.g., Benski et al. 2013) can be seen as a starting point in the still only fragmentary process of reconstructing and defining what this culmination of protests actually was and is about. Both books that are reviewed here can be seen as engaging in this debate, even though from very different perspectives that one could heuristically define as the social movement studies’ and the activist-scholars’ perspective. Both are empirically rich comparisons of movements from a broad geographical range and will be of great value for everyone interested in understanding the commonalities of these movements. Despite their different approaches, however, the reader of both books is left with a number of

desiderata and potential misconceptions that future debates on the reasons for, the stakes in, and the overall scope of this wave of protests should address.

Spreading Protest – Social Movements in Times of Crisis (SP) is a collected volume mainly of papers presented at a workshop on ‘The Transnational Dimension of Protest’ at the ECPR-Conference in Bordeaux 2012. The geographical and temporal scopes of the protests discussed reach from the ‘green revolution’ in Iran 2009 to OWS in 2011 and the Gezi Park protests in Turkey in 2013.

The majority of chapters analyze the events through the lens of protest-diffusion – in the words of the editors, they ask “what” spread, “how”, and “why”. Some follow a rather classical social movement studies approach in checking for different concepts of protest diffusion and adaption and argue for a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Flesher Fominaya and Montaña Jiménez’ chapter on the spread of the repertoire of the “Escrache” might serve as an example illustrating this: originally the practice of publicly shaming the perpetrators of Argentina’s “Dirty War” in front of their own homes, Spanish activists of the PAH (“Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca”, Platform for People Affected by Mortgages) took it up to put pressure on politicians of the governing party that voted against a law proposed by the PAH. Another example is della Porta’s chapter on cross-time adaption of organizational repertoires between the Global Justice Movement (GJM) and the recent protests. Other authors experiment with innovative combinations of social movement studies and other disciplines. An example of this is Hyvönens’ chapter on the EU’s discursive processing of the ‘Arab Spring’, which he conceptualizes as transforming an eruptive event that was also related to policies of economic liberalization and austerity advocated by the EU into a normalized struggle for democracy that put it in one line with the ‘color revolutions’ of the early 2000’s.

All of the authors push the very specificities of the movements somewhat into the background. They also barely discuss the impact of the crisis, to which the title explicitly refers. It is briefly taken up in the introduction, when the editors state that the protests had spread with the “rhythms and twists of the crisis” (p. 9) and ask if they have to be understood as “a convergence of reactions to the global crisis” or “as a common struggle” (p. 4)? Unfortunately, these questions are not really taken up again. Accordingly, the conclusion by editors Mattoni and della Porta highlights the innovative impulses that the book gives to the discussion on concepts of diffusion in general (especially with regards to questions of failing diffusion, cross-time diffusion and the role of social media in protest-diffusion), rather than on any specificities of the spread of protests “in times of crisis”.

This abstraction from the specificities of the movements in the general framework of the book might be a result of the empirical diversity of the individual contributions. But it is without doubt typical for most of the current social movement studies, which often forgo a thorough analysis of general social developments and social strains in explaining the development of their social movements. Considering the limitations that edited volumes impose on the

editors this is understandable, but it is, nevertheless, regrettable. The isolation of the protests as case studies for social movement studies from their specific socio-political background changes the very nature of the thus constructed object (Bourdieu 1991, 33–68), in that it de-couples the protests from the very concrete social developments of the crisis that they responded to. This thwarts the interest in the (relative) importance of this very context the editors stated in the introduction.

In the conclusion, the editors insist that the advantage of this book as compared to other comparative volumes on diffusion is its reliance on a “quite homogenous set of case studies” (p. 277), but how this homogeneity is conceptualized is not completely clear. In the introduction, the editors seem to define this homogeneity through the movements’ supposedly shared trait of the “elaboration of radical imaginaries related to democracy (...) and experimentation with participatory democratic practices” (p. 10). At other points they seem to feel the necessity of broadening the scope through the use of the label “anti-austerity and pro-democracy protests” (p. 277). In other words, the question, if the movements are “a common struggle” or ‘merely’ a “convergence of reactions” to the crisis (p. 4), is still open for debate – one could even ask if some of the movements discussed are not even reactions to the same crisis but rather accidentally fell into the same sequence of time, as, for example, the “green Revolution” in Iran, but also the Gezi Park protests, as Atak seems to suggest in his chapter.

Without question, the high number of empirically grounded case studies that the book presents is unprecedented amongst other books that also attempt to cover the same wave of protests. The book will, therefore, be of interest not only for social movement studies scholars working on protest-diffusion, but for all those that aim for a clearer understanding of the wave of protests.

They Can't Represent Us! Reinventing Democracy from Greece to Occupy (TCRU) is a book by two activist-scholars, Marina Sitrin and Dario Azzelini, who have been active in the GJM, Leftist movements in Argentina and Venezuela, and OWS. Sitrin has been involved in OWS from the very beginning. Her book, *Horizontalism. Voices of Popular Power in Argentina* (2006) and articles in several movement-publications (e.g., Sitrin 2012, Sitrin and Azzelini 2012) have contributed to the popularization of the term ‘Horizontalism’ (or “Horizontalitat”), originally emerging from Latin American movements, for designating the non-hierarchical social relations that OWS tried to develop (for the historical and political lineage of this praxis in US-American left, see Taylor (2013)). This term gained such prominence that some researchers even started to use the term to define the whole wave of protests after 2011 (for example Jeff Goodwin - SP, back matter). Their book is a hybrid between manifesto for-, glossary on- and panorama of the movements they are writing about.

A short foreword by David Harvey connects the book’s arguments with the ones he put forward in *Rebel Cities* (2012) – a fact that shows how the recent developments have brought activist scholars from a rather classical Marxist perspective closer to those from the anarchist Left. Following this, in the

introduction, the authors explain their interpretation of the crisis and the movements. For them, the economic crisis after 2007 was just the triggering event that brought societies and movements all over the world to break with their accustomed way of doing things. In their eyes, the moment of crisis foremost signifies the recognition that representative democracy in fact is not democratic at all. They claim that the very core of the movements discussed is their new ways of practicing democracy as a break with the past.

The book is separated into three sections. It opens with a glossary which is very similar to Sitrin and Azzellini's earlier project *Occupy Language* (2012). Through anecdotes and comparisons they outline the meaning and importance of concepts such as 'Rupture', 'Horizontalism', 'Assembly', 'Protagonism' and the 'Politics of Walking' not so much for a theory of the movements but rather for the movements themselves. The second part discusses in depth the historical and theoretical context through which the new democratic movements and their break with the past should be understood. It emphasizes the gap or even antagonism between the concept of 'direct democracy' and classical liberal understandings of representative democracy, the latter of which, in their eyes, was an undemocratic endeavor from the outset. Instead the authors understand the practices of democracy employed in the movements as connected to the consensus-based decision making in the Student Nonviolent Coordination Committee (SNCC) and ancient Greece.

The third and largest part of the book is dedicated to the specific movements in Greece, Spain, the US, Argentina and Venezuela. These chapters open with a short overview of the national economic and political development in the lead-up to the protests and a timeline of the movements' development and goals. The chapters then continue with "Voices", thematically ordered, uncommented sequences of interviews the authors have conducted with activists in the respective movements.

The topics differ slightly between the national cases depending on their relevance for the respective movement (the question of fighting fascist movements, for example, is only discussed in the Greek case) but most of them are common across the cases: even the form in which, for example, the experience of crisis, new forms of political deliberation and decision-making or experimenting with different forms of social reproduction are discussed is surprisingly similar in many regards. This supports the claim made by Sitrin and Azzelini that these movements do indeed have enough in common to be summed up under a common label. Even if from a clearly interested and involved standpoint they thereby answer the question left open by SP, if the movements are to be seen as one common struggle or as a reaction to a shared experience of crisis, in a double way: yes, the interviewees experience their struggles as reactions to a common crisis of the legitimacy of representative models of democracy and of escalating inequalities, and yes, they express themselves in forms that, to the authors, indicate that they are indeed part of a common 'social movement'. Not so much in the (positivist) sense that they are held together by identifiable "dense informal networks" or "clearly identified

opponents” (Della Porta and Diani 2006, 20), but in the sense that they in tendency represent a common shift towards new forms of living together. Probably due to the book’s design as taking part in a common dialogue ‘in’ rather than ‘about’ the movements, *TCRU* does not close with remarks by the authors but ends rather abruptly after the last interview-sequence with a worker-activist from Venezuela summing up how the workers imagine the way to a socialist self-management of their factories. This might be a fitting document of the “politics of walking” as an open process, but leaves the reader with slight disappointment. The big historical questions, which were posed in both Harvey’s foreword and the authors’ introduction, seem to call for a deepening of strategic debates, which I am sure the authors can contribute to given their publication record. And even if one would agree with the skepticism towards academic expertise that was articulated in large parts of the movements discussed, the book would have benefitted from explicating some of the authors expertise. As it is, they restrict their contribution mainly to facilitating a dialogue among movements. I at least would also have liked to learn what the authors might find critical about the movements, such as an assessment of where wrong decisions might have been made or the right ones avoided. Be that as it may, the short introductions into the movements’ history and the rich material of the activists’ accounts on different topics make *TCRU* an interesting read for all those seeking an overview of the movements’ cultures and developments. The thoughtful compilation of interviews and texts into an eye-levelled discussion amongst each other is itself a fascinating documentation and example of the movement culture discussed and commented on. As such, it is also a highly recommended read for those who are, as activists, researchers, or both, already critically engaged with them.

Drawing a genealogical line in a way that includes the development of the Venezuelan and Argentinian movements of the last 20 years into the conception of the latest protest wave also sheds light on connections of diffusion that are barely discussed in the research on this wave of protests, including *SP*, with the exception of the mentioned chapter by Flesher Fominaya and Montaña Jiménez.

This points towards criticism that could be raised towards both books: the lack of sustained engagement with the ‘Arab Spring’ movements in the literature on this wave of protests. Although these movements are explicitly counted amongst the same ‘wave’ as the ‘Occupy’ movements of the Global North in both books, they are completely absent from the case studies in *TCRU*. They do appear in *SP*, but only appear in a passivized manner in *SP* – the main focus of Hyvönen is not the ‘Arab Spring’ but how the EU institutions discursively processed it. This might obscure conceptual weaknesses that, at least potentially, challenge the neat construction of a global “pro-democracy” movement: some commentators highlighted the fact that the word “Democracy” was absent from the slogans on Tahrir Square (e.g., Badiou 2012, 55) and also from the circulating list of demands (NN 2010). Moreover, there existed no central “General Assembly” or “Assamblea” as a decision making body of the protestors. Of course, the vocabulary and repertoire could still be conceptualized as being democratic in

praxis and aim. However, this would require a conceptualization of what designates this as “democratic” that explicitly abstracts from the movements’ own language. And this problem is not limited to the Egyptian case: the same might be said about Sitrin and Azzellini’s observation that, for example, many Greek activists hesitated to use the term “Democracy” in an affirmative sense (*TCRU*, 103) – maybe it being discredited through liberal democracy is not a sufficient explanation, and the clear emphasis on democracy as the defining feature of form and content is rather the result of the authors’ rootedness in the Hispanophone and Anglo-Saxon branches of the movement discourse (the same could be applied, mutatis mutandis, to della Porta’s and Mattoni’s conception of the “anti-austerity and pro-democracy movements”).

It could be argued that the two books avoid the thorny issue of what constitutes the unity of the movements they discuss through the way they position themselves vis-à-vis the movements. By taking the objectivist stance towards the movements and by abstracting from their concrete social contexts, *SP* does not really render visible the problematic, but implicitly presupposes the common sense notion that all these movements are connected. *TCRU* on the other hand, in its reluctance to speak about the movements as an object of inquiry, presupposes the unity of the movements by identifying with them. In that sense, *SP* suffers from a lack of reflexivity with regards to the objectivation of the movements, while *TCRU* would have profited from a bolder objectivation of the common threads documented in the multiplicity of subjective perspectives.

Another criticism is more sociological in nature. When the economic and social context of the movements is discussed, it is mostly by referring to very general macro-economic indicators – but crises do not affect the various parts of societies equally and protests are not (usually) carried out by “the people”, but by specific demographics. Della Porta’s and Mattoni claim that “the Global Justice Movement represented a warning that the worst was still to come for vulnerable social groups (...) while the present wave of protest was sustained by citizens who experienced the worst becoming reality” (p. 5). As convincing as this claim is rhetorically, it does not stand the test empirically, at least not regarding the US case: for example, a study of the geographic patterns of Occupy events in California even found these events to be negatively correlated with the rate of unemployment in the respective areas (Curran et al. 2013), and the study by Milkman et al. (2013) showed that the participants in OWS actually fared better than NYC’s population on average with regards to unemployment and available income. It therefore seems plausible to assume that indicators such as overall poverty or unemployment rates are not fine-grained enough to allow for understanding the experiences and perspectives of the social groups shaping the protests.

Maybe homologies in these experiences can provide a better understanding of the conditions of the possibility of the “thin” but also incredibly fast diffusion of repertoires between heterogeneous contexts that is only very insufficiently explained by referring to “the social media” as “actors in diffusion processes”

(*SP*, 282) as Sitrin and Azzellini rightfully note (*TCRU*, 6f). It might also shed some light on the question of how to explain the parallel rise of right-wing and openly fascist movements in many of the respective societies, a question that *SP* does not bring up, and *TCRU* only very lightly touches upon. But these criticisms do not diminish the value of these books for the still ongoing and fascinating debate on the nature and future of these movements but might rather be understood as desiderata for future research for social movement scholars as well as activist-scholars.

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