

Activists' motivations and typologies: core activists in Ciudad Juárez

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Abstract

This paper investigates the factors that make people become engaged in social movements, in particular, what makes people who were not directly affected by the violence in Ciudad Juárez get involved in social movements. We find out that a strong commitment to social justice can explain their participation. We present a typology of social activists in terms of the degree and length of participation in social movements. We propose a core activist ideal-type, then we analyse the factors that helped shape a core activist identity, and the roles they play in movements.

Keywords: activism, leadership, social movements, core activists, altruism, mobilization, social change, activist identity, ideology

Introduction

On March 7, 2007, eleven days after being sworn in as Mexican President, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa announced the "Comprehensive Strategy for Crime Prevention and Combating Crime" (Aguilar V. and Castañeda 2009). The strategy not only included the deployment of the military personnel but also contained constitutional reforms in regards to criminal justice and law enforcement, which were approved in March 2008 (Chabat 2010). These legal reforms allowed the military to perform police work. The term of President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa (2006-2012) was marked by the war on drugs by the military, on the grounds of the supposed "co-optation of police institutions by organized crime, increasing public concern regarding the high rates of violence and the traffic of weapons from the United States" (Carbonell 2010). In Ciudad Juárez, the so-called Chihuahua Joint Operation began on 27 March 2008 with 10,000 members of the federal police and the army arriving at the city to battle drug cartels and reduce crime rates. Far from diminished violence in the city, their presence increased the level of violence exponentially.

The war strategy of the Calderón administration cost many lives. Julia Monárrez Fragoso, a well-known feminist scholar, documented an attitude of disdain for life by this militarized strategy. She pointed out that General Jorge Juárez Loera, an important commander of the Joint Operation Chihuahua asked the press to report the murders in Ciudad Juárez as positive news, "instead of saying one more dead, say a one offender less" (Siscar 2011, quoted by J. E. Monárrez Fragoso, 2013, p. 260). In 2008, the murder rate increased from 25.5 to 215 men killed per 100,000 inhabitants, and from 2.8 to 16 women murdered

per 100,000 inhabitants (INEGI 1994-2008). During the climax of violence in 2010, it reached a daily average of 8.3 murders. The violence reached a point where, in 2008, Ciudad Juárez was called "the national dump of the dead" (Turati, 2009, p. 11). Little was it known at that time that the violence would continue to the point where according to Monárrez (J. E. Monárrez Fragoso, 2013, p. 214) 6,000 people would be killed only in two years of the Joint Operation Chihuahua. Molly Molloy, at the State University of New Mexico, documented 11,114 murders from January 2007 to October 21, 2012 (Esquivel, 2012). In addition to the murdered people, the Paso del Norte Human Rights Center — an NGO located in Ciudad Juárez that has worked since 2001 on cases of forced disappearance and torture — documented 44 cases of torture committed by the Army and the Federal Preventive Police in 2011 and 2012. Moreover, Chihuahua's Human Rights Commission received 1,450 reports of human rights violations committed by the security forces during the Joint Chihuahua Operation (WOLA and Centro Prodh 2010, 10).

Social activists opposing the militarization of the city were especially targeted. On May 30, 2009, Manuel Arroyo Galván, social activist and professor at the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ), was killed. This marked the beginning of the repression against social activists either by direct actions of the State or by its inability to protect social activists. Violence continued with the killings of Géminis Ochoa,¹ on 30 June 2009; Marisela Escobedo Ortiz², on the afternoon of December 16, 2010, Susana Chávez,³ whose body was found on January 6, 2011; and the murder of members of the Reyes-Salazar family⁴ in 2008, 2010 and 2011. Social activists were also victims of intimidation. They were forced to ask for political asylum in the United States on the grounds that the Mexican army threatened them. Cipriana Jurado and some members of the Reyes-Salazar family are public examples of this need to leave their homes because of political persecution simply for belonging to an extended family that had some activist members. The violence became so generalized that an estimated 135,000 people left Ciudad Juárez looking for a safer place to live (Sandnæs 2011).

¹ Géminis Ochoa was a well-known leader of street vendors Juárez downtown.

² Marisela Escobedo became very vocal against impunity after the self-confessed murderer of her daughter Ruby was released free of charges by local judges. She was murdered in front of the city hall in downtown Chihuahua.

³ Susana Chávez was a poet allegedly killed for her open and public opposition against femicides.

⁴ Reyes-Salazar family had been involved in political activism since 1998 when it opposed the Sierra Blanca nuclear dump. Arguably, they were killed because they were denouncing the military human rights violations in Juárez Valley.



Figure 1: “We are all Manuel”



Figure 2: Candlelight vigil in protest at the killing of Professor Manuel Arroyo Galván. Mega bandera, Ciudad Juárez. 04 June 2009. Photograph: Diana Ginez. Used with permission.

The question then is: Why is it that even when these adverse conditions affect a vast majority of people, only a few choose social activism as a response? We found out that many residents of Ciudad Juárez trusted governmental institutions to fix the problems and remained politically inactive. Others did not trust the government institutions and did not expect the solution to come from them, but they remained passive with an attitude of resignation. Yet, there is a

small group of people who believe that another world is possible, and they actively pursue this goal themselves - we call them core social activists.

Our research question and theoretical concern here revolves around understanding altruistic action by core activists. We find that our respondents' extreme commitment to social activism helps them to survive the adverse conditions they are subjected to going from lack of support from fellow citizens, state repression, and in some unfortunate cases even to their own assassination as in the case of activist Miguel Angel Jiménez (Andrade et al., 2017). However, they persist in their efforts due to their commitment to the movement and their conviction that social change is possible and necessary. This is not to say that core activists are only committed to an abstract ideal. In fact, one of the reasons they remain active despite the adverse circumstances is their sense of personal responsibility towards different victims of oppression they meet during their participation in social activism. Levinas' concept of the "Other and the other" is useful to understand this notion (Levinas 1989). In Levinas' philosophy, the "other" (*autre*) represents the abstract notion of an impersonal other, while the "Other" (*autrui*) is the face of a person calling the "I" to meet his duty towards him (Levinas 1981). We proceed to the literature review, followed by a description of our methodology, and then to a detailed analysis of biographical aspects of core activists.

Literature review

We are influenced by the work of Charles Tilly and the literature on contentious politics (Tilly and Tarrow 2007). Besides Tilly's discussions around narratives and identity, his work on social movements often explicitly avoids looking at individual motivations and biographical events in the lives of social movement leaders and activists in favor of collective action and history from below (Castañeda and Schneider, 2017). While avoiding an over-emphasis on "great men" guiding history and dispositional accounts (Tilly 1984), Tilly overlooked the real influence that core activists have in starting and continuing social movements.

We ask then: What makes people participate in social movements? Some of the academic literature calls this question "differential participation." Oliver (1984) divides participants into nonmembers, token members, and active members; McCarthy and Zald (1977) distinguish between beneficiary and conscience constituents; Wiltfang and McAdam (1991) point out the difference between low risk and low-cost participation from high risk and high-cost participation, and Passy and Giugni (2001) have written on the influence social networks have in differential participation. Even though they present the idea in different ways, their main claim is that differential participation is explained by microstructural factors such as social networks and affective interaction, expectations of other's people involvement, structural, and biographical availability.

As important as these approaches are, they obviate the role that personal beliefs play in participant's behavior. However, beliefs are important because "actions

depend in part on the meanings attached to our objects of orientation, differences in imputed meanings can yield differences in action, *ceteris paribus*" (Snow, 2004, p. 404). Snow's approach is a necessary first step because it explains the collective construction of meaning, but it is not sufficient because it leaves untouched the individual cognitive level. In order to bridge these two dimensions, Gillan proposes the "orientational frame," which he describes as "an analytical abstraction from various individual beliefs" (2008, p. 253). An orientational frame identifies a worldview that is used by individual members of a social movement to create an understanding of the events, to justify their response, and to formulate alternative social arrangements.

Even though Snow and colleagues use the terms "ideology" and "frame" almost interchangeably, there are important differences among these two terms. Allow us to explain them by first defining ideology and later compare this definition to the concept of orientational frame. Sometimes ideologies are viewed pejoratively as if they did not have epistemic content (Railton, 1995, pp. 392–393). Other times they are recognized as the set of ideas held by social movements participants that bring them to support or contest specific political arrangements (Freeden, 1996). Both these positions take ideology for granted and do not explain how it comes to be. Freeden moves in the right direction by describing ideologies as "ubiquitous forms of political thinking" that are "produced by, directed at, and consumed by groups" serving functions of "legitimation, integration, socialization, ordering, simplification and action-orientation" (1996, pp. 22–23)

Even though both orientational frames and ideologies refer to a structure of beliefs and they are very close in definitions, they should not be mistaken. Orientational frames look at particular kinds of action-orientation, while ideology motivates larger strategic planning. Also, opposite to ideology, which can be conceived as an elite activity (Oliver and Johnston, 2000), orientational frames work on a grass-roots level. Finally, ideologies tend to fix meanings, which are adopted by a large collectivity, whereas the orientational frames approach focuses on the analysis of the belief structures adhered to by individuals. Ideologies then are strong beliefs shared by a collectivity while an orientational framework refers to the structure of beliefs held by an individual.

This signifies that there can be several SMOs - with divergent ideologies - making up a large social movement. At the same time, there may be several orientational frames within a social movement organization (SMO). By looking at the constitution of the social movement against militarization, it is possible to see the difference between ideology and orientational frame. The movement was made up of different SMOs with divergent ideologies (Marxists, human rights activists, progressive liberals, among others (Díaz Cepeda, 2015a). To elaborate on the argument, while there was a consensus that the military presence was causing an increase on violence, members of a Marxist SMO claimed that capitalism is the source of all evil, including, of course, militarization. At the same time, human rights activists may argue that it is not a matter of an economic system, but a matter of basic human rights. Clearly they had different

ideologies. However, divergences did not end there, as there were differences between individual members of any given SMO. For example, within a Marxist SMO, members differed about who should lead the revolt against capitalism. Some favored the proletariat, others the students, and a few the peasants. These differences can be explained by the different orientational frames that individual members hold.

Building on the idea of differential participation, we make a distinction between people that get involved in social activism for a short time and people that make a long-term commitment to creating social change. On the one hand, the first group participates in social protest as a response to a specific situation that is affecting them – e.g. tuition increases, labor conflicts, the disappearance of a family member - but leave as soon as their problem is solved or forgotten. On the other hand, there are people whose involvement in social activism is not limited to the solution of a specific problem that may or may not affect them directly; but rather they are committed to long-term social change. Our research suggests a correlation between this long-term commitment and the structure of beliefs in the need and possibility of a better world. It is also important to notice that this belief does not seem to be attached to any particular ideology, as our research shows that individuals with divergent ideologies – e.g. Marxist, progressives, and liberals - hold the same belief and acted in consequence.

Methodology

We conducted this study in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, México during the period of 2007-2012, the years when violence was at its highest level in this large border city. The rationale behind this was that only people that are extremely committed to social change would participate in social movements in a context of extreme violence. This allowed us to isolate superfluous factors that influence social activists in easier contexts. We used two methods:

Participant observation was conducted for several years (2008-2012) in Ciudad Juárez. During this period it was possible to follow and participate in several social movement organizations (SMOs) and perceive first-hand the birth, growth, and decline of some of them. The first author attended public demonstrations and meetings with the permission of leaders and assemblies. Participant observation, e.g. the research is overt and the research is friendly with participants (Denzin 1989), was conducted to gain a better understanding of the specific circumstances of the city's movements, their context, as well as to be able to cross check the information provided by the interviewees.

In-depth interviews. We selected social activists that participated in the social movement against the militarization during the period of 2008-2012. The first set of informants were identified through participant observation, social networks, and mass media reports. Once the first contacts were made, we asked these initial informants to lead us to other people that could be relevant for our study using the snowball sampling method.

Core activists were estimated to be around sixty people. Gender, age, and social class of our informants were chosen in such a way that accurately represented the population. Twenty-five core activists were interviewed. Fifteen of the interviewees have more than ten years of experience as activists, including 6 with more than 30 years of activism. The age of the sample ranged from the late 20s to late 50s and averaged 46 years. Interviews took an average of two hours. To improve security and anonymity, most interviews were conducted in El Paso, TX. In situations where the informer was not able, i.e., a lack of visa, or willing to come to El Paso, interviews were conducted in Ciudad Juárez.

Historical Context

Ciudad Juárez is a key point of contact between the United States of America and Mexico. Its geographical location gives it a special place in the economic and cultural exchange between both nations. The strengthening of this exchange was crystallized with the Border Industrialization Program (PIF) launched in Ciudad Juárez and Tijuana in the mid-1960s. This program was the antecedent of the massive presence of maquiladora industries – tax favored factories that employ workers with lower salaries than U.S. based factories. With the arrival of these shops to Ciudad Juárez, demand for workers was generated and had to be satisfied. In consequence, a large number of people from southern México came to Ciudad Juárez looking for job opportunities, which led to the exponential growth of the city. Such rapid urbanization presented unmet planning challenges by the governments' low concern to create the conditions for economic development, social integration, and human development (Sánchez and Ravelo 2010). This brought about the weakening of a sense of urban belonging among the inhabitants of the city (Castañeda 2018). The sum of the economic inequalities and the traffic of influences, weapons, money, and drugs, created a fertile ground for impunity and injustice on this border city.

For at least two decades, there have been several efforts by several local SMOs and individuals coming from different backgrounds to revert, or at least alleviate these social problems. Julia Monárrez was one of the first scholars to research and systematize knowledge about femicides (J. Monárrez Fragoso, 2009), the killing of women because of their gender. Ana Laura Ramírez Vázquez (2014) documents how this violence reached even police women. Susana Báez (2006) highlights the value of literature, which keeps the memory of femicides. In *Courage, Resistance and Women in Ciudad Juárez: Challenges to Militarization in Ciudad Juárez*, Staudt and Méndez, (2015) both feminist scholars and border activists, analyze from a feminist perspective the paradigmatic cases of the cotton field, the confrontation of Luz María Davila – mother of one of the students killed in Salvarcar – with then-President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa), and the arrival to Ciudad Juárez of the “Caravan for Peace with Justice and Dignity” led by Javier Sicilia. Through this analysis they find that “women initially made the hidden public and joined with other men and women who challenged militarization with principles like peace, justice, and a changed culture” (Staudt and Mendez, 2015, p. 160).

David Barrios Rodríguez (2013) also discusses some of the organizations that protested against militarization, especially the actors who did not negotiate with the government, i.e. Pastoral Obrera, #I am 132, adherents to the Zapatista organizations Sixth Declaration of the Lacandona Jungle and of the Other Campaign, and Center of Human Rights Paso del Norte. Barrios argues that there was no war against the drug cartels, but that there was a process of social cleansing. In words of an activist from the Other Campaign, "all you see is poor people being killed. We know that the people from below are being killed, but never the drug lords or the powerful" (Barrios Rodríguez, 2013, p. 131).

We divide the organizational ecology of Ciudad Juárez into four categories according to their primary ideologies and zone of influence.

1. Leftist groups

This block was among the first to denounce that the presence of the Army would increase human rights abuses. They were also one of the first groups to question the objectives of Calderón's war. In this sense, they argued that the war on drugs was taking place in the context of a class struggle, in which the army was being used by the bourgeois State to avoid a possible uprising of the population and to make a social cleansing of the young and poor. The participants in this group were perceived and often self-identified as radicals, seeking substantial changes in the political system, as they rejected the bourgeois State. Their demands included not only a halt to militarization but also the resignation of State authorities. They also organized demonstrations against the United States government for its intervention in the internal affairs of Mexico. This group was mostly made up of social organizations declaring themselves close to or fully Marxist, such as the National Front against Repression and the Left University Committee.

2. Human rights groups

People in this category were also close to the left but were more moderate. They actively opposed militarization based on a discourse to defend human rights. Their strategies included a combination of pressure and dialogue with the State and institutions. They operated as much in protest in the streets as in the negotiating room with local and state authorities. This ability allowed them to organize mass events such as the hearing of the Permanent Peoples' Tribunal, and obtain permission to use the facilities of the local university to host the Caravan for Peace with Justice and Dignity. They also served as liaison with United States solidarity organizations, mainly from El Paso, Texas. One of the most influential groups was Pact for Culture, later called Articulation Group Justice for Juárez.

3. Business groups

In a third area we find groups of small businessmen and professionals who have an ideology closer to the right, but given the insecurity lived in the city during these years, they became politically activated. The participation of this group contributed to legitimize, in spheres outside of militant social organizations, the rejection of militarization. The Medical Citizen Committee was among the most relevant organizations.

4. International Groups

As Ciudad Juárez is a border community, the important contribution of SMOs beyond the border cannot be ignored. Among others, there were humanist, college professors, Chicano groups, and Zapatista-affiliated, political-partisan groups. This diversity carries with it a range of ideologies, which makes it impossible to name one as the dominant group. The common factor was solidarity with Ciudad Juárez. Some of the organizations that participated were the Border Network for Human Rights, Annunciation House, among many other organizations and individuals.

Typology of activists

The increment of violence in Juárez that started in 2007 and climaxed in 2010 affected the majority of its inhabitants. During this time, there was virtually no individual that had not suffered directly or indirectly through an act of violence. Some people blamed the violence on a war between drug cartels for the control of Juárez, and they expected that once there was a winner, the violence would stop. Others wanted the government to take control of the situation so that the violence could stop. A third position held that there was no war on drugs, but it was only an excuse to control the population. These different diagnoses caused different reactions, in Waldo's⁵ (age 54) words, "the medical doctors marched demanding peace, victims demanding justice, other movements demonstrated against militarization."

It is important to note that at the beginning of the militarization process, most people, including other social organizations, did not agree with the first social activists that argued that the military was at least partially responsible for the increase in violence levels in the city. Nevertheless, as more people were directly affected by the violence and noticed that the military presence had increased the violence, some of them started to share the belief that in order to diminish the violence it was necessary for the militarization process to stop. In consequence, a larger number of people joined the movement against the militarization, either as an individual citizen or as a member of one of the different social organizations that were demanding the federal government to withdraw the military and federal police presence in the city.

⁵All names have been changed to keep confidentiality.

A large segment of our interviewees, then, agreed that the vast military presence in Ciudad Juárez had come to aggravate the already violent situation, which caused the killing and disappearance of more people, resulting in an average of eight murders per day during 2010. Some groups thus demanded the withdrawal of the military from Ciudad Juárez. The government started to brutally repress them, which triggered a strong feeling of solidarity among them. For every time they were repressed, more people joined the movement. Based on participant observation, ethnographic fieldwork, as well as conversations with different participants in social activism, we found that there are different levels of commitment among social activists. In order to make these distinctions clear, we divide them into different categories according to their level of commitment with progressive social change. These categories range from people that occasionally participate in a social movement, to people whom social activism is one of their highest priorities. These categories include faddish activists, occasional activists, part time activists, and core activists. These terms are defined as such:

Faddish activists

This is the largest group in numbers; as such, it serves as the main source of new activists. They are people that get involved in activism when there is a lot of media attention. Most of them cannot make a lifetime commitment. Only a small fraction of them will move to a larger level of personal investment. They leave activism because of a lack of strong interest in the issues, or because they did not find an inviting environment in the activism scene.

Occasional activists

They stay longer in social activism and have a large interest in social change. They attend protests and marches regularly, but they do not participate in the organization that holds these protests and marches. They are not affiliated with any social organization. Their participation in activism is subordinated to other interests such as school, work, and personal life. Most of them are young and will leave social activism soon after they make major commitments such as marriage and professional jobs.

Part timers

They already developed a strong commitment to social change. They actively participate in protests, as well as other forms of social change events. They are part of social organizations, but social activism is not their priority. Their life is not strongly tied to social activism, as they have other obligations, and activism is an activity done in their free time or in rare events. Mostly they stay tied to friends with whom they share their social change interest. The largest cause for their abandonment of social activism is due to personal disagreements with the other members of their social organization. Others are not active beyond their

organization. A few of them will be in active contact and later work to develop larger social movements.

Core activists

They are deeply committed to social change. They organize their life largely around social activism. They have contact with local, national, and international activist networks. They became politically involved because they want to help people living in oppressive conditions. They are not involved because they are looking to pressure the government to solve only a specific situation that is affecting them, but rather to change the social conditions for all people living under those conditions. They are fully committed to a long-term agenda of progressive social change. They work with or create different social organizations as they fight different battles throughout the years.

Allow us to go deeper on the core activist description, as, for the most part; they are the ones that carry the long-term social movements.

Core activists' profile

Core activists' main goal is to create a larger positive social change beyond what may affect them directly. They accommodate their life to the demands of social activism. Their commitment to the movement goes beyond their mere direct participation in organizing or attending events. This includes staying informed about the country, state, and city's political life, so they can have a sound participation that allows them to work on promoting social change.

Our research shows this group in Ciudad Juárez in the period of 2008 to 2012 was a group of approximately sixty people strongly committed to social change. It was composed of similar proportions of men and women with ages that range from their late twenties to late fifties. It is also important to note that social organizations that work on femicides, most of them women, are an exception to the otherwise fairly equal gender distribution.

In contrast to the people that leave when a movement demand is addressed or not, a core activist remains involved long after the immediate feelings of courage, indignation, or sorrow have gone. People who are heavily interested in social change, stay and make contact with other organizations, creating larger networks. It is possible to see this process in Julio's (32) words,

I started in a leftist university committee, it was a committee of students who had a number of concerns about the high fees in UACJ [University of Juárez], and so we did activism for that. I first met ... a group of young people that were already organized and me and others with similar concerns joined them. Once there, I began to understand discussion mechanisms, the assembly method, and we discussed other problems. For example, we started discussing what was going on with the state-owned companies that were being privatized, why public education

was being privatized too, the looting that was happening in PEMEX, and all those discussions took us to the conclusion that they were just different aspects of the same problem; that it was a wider systematic problem.... All problems had a common axis, which I later realized was capitalism.

Core activists stay involved in social activism even after the personal circumstance that leads them to get active has been resolved. They continue to do so because their commitment to social change is substantial and they believe that their actions can bring a new social order. In consequence, once one specific problem has been solved or is in the process of being solved, they continue working on another issue. This can be seen in how the core social activists who demanded the demilitarization of the city, later participated in movements that asked for the overturning of the 2012 presidential election and have also participated in the Ayotzinapa social movement, among other causes. It is also important to note that other activists like the ones working on femicides have remained working on the same issue for more than two decades now, because, unfortunately, this problem has not been resolved.

The process of becoming a core activist

The circumstances in Ciudad Juárez mobilized some people to at least alleviate the situation. They got organized in different SMOs, some of them already existed, while others were created *ex profeso* against the militarization. Members of the different SMOs have different ideologies – e.g. Marxists, progressive, liberals, among others- and, consequently follow different forms of struggle (Díaz Cepeda, 2015a). However, after analyzing the interviews, we identified that the most committed members share the desire for a better society. In this section we identify, describe, and analyze the common factors that influence life-long participation in social movements.

Role models

The first factor appears at an early age when a person meets a role model that shows the actor alternatives to the status quo. The notion that another world is possible is communicated to them through book recommendations, conversations, advice, and in the case of social activists whose parents are already social activists, through direct participation in political protests, organization meetings, assemblies, training camps, etc.

This role model can come in the form of a mentor, parent, family member, and often a teacher or professor. It is important to notice that the importance of a mentor was mentioned by all of our interviewees regardless of class. As the Doctor said: “My family was poor, there were no books at my house, but my elementary teacher let me borrow his books and talked to me about a more just

world.”⁶ In Mexico, “the average number of books read per year per person is 0.5 books a year” (Marcelino 2009). However, our research shows that core social activists are raised in an environment where reading is encouraged. Consequently, book reading levels of core social activists are higher than the national average. Our respondents read at least two different newspapers, magazine articles, and several books weekly; e.g. Bernie (45) reads eight newspapers before he leaves home to work. This constant reading results in a high level of politicization and in-depth knowledge about current social problems as reported by mainstream and alternative media.

These early reading habits later become crucial for their involvement and permanence in social activism. Most social activists are well educated, not necessarily in the academic sense, measured by the degrees and credentials that they hold, but in their familiarity with the social, political, cultural, and economic factors that affect their city and the world. Their education helps them make more in-depth analyses of the political environment around them and conceive of possible alternatives. Even though the notion that it is possible to improve adverse social conditions is already embedded in their minds, it needs to be fed by the following factors.

Critical event

It is often the case that an event in someone's personal life detonates their participation in social activism. This personal circumstance can be what they consider to be an unfair arrest or intimidation, as in the case of Evaristo (28). He was arrested under false accusations, and he views the government's response to drug trafficking through those lenses,

Seeing the police closing the streets, to see the power that these state agents have, right? They are inside the government, to how many have they done this [acusé them falsely]? I mean I felt it, how many people have they killed, scapegoated... Later, [Subcomandante] Marcos came with the Other Campaign caravan and walked here and I got filled with emotion... then Calderón came with his militarization; I think it started in 2007 and several citizens we took the streets in protest.

This process can also start because of the killing or disappearance of somebody close to the core activist: a family member, a close friend, a student, or a neighbor. In Daniela's (52) words,

In 2001, an event changed my life and my family's life, it was the disappearance and later murder of one of my students; she had been my student for three years

⁶ All the interviews were conducted in Spanish and translated by the authors who are Spanish native speakers.

while she was attending high school, her name was Lili Alejandra Garcia Andrade... We have to keep fighting in memory of those who have been killed; they are not collateral damage, they have a name and surname.

The direct suffering or the witnessing of these cases awakens the sense of solidarity that core activists already have embedded in their mind.

In another example, after José Darío Álvarez Orrantia (19) was shot by the federal police in front of the University of Juárez while he participated in a protest against the militarization of the city where a group of students occupied the campus and demanded the end of militarization in Juárez. Also, despite the fear of being attacked again, they organized a march under the banner, "If they Shoot one, they Shoot Us All" (Angestra, 2010) on November 2, 2010. Approximately 3,000 people participated in this march, which by Ciudad Juárez standards was numerous. They shouted slogans like:

"Juárez is not a barrack, take the military out," "We want schools, we want work, we want hospitals, we don't want the military," "people listen, this is also your fight," "Darío lives, the fight is on" as well as "you said no, but we are back on the streets".

These chants reflected the shared idea that the military was causing more problems than they were solving, as well as their call to other people to join the *movimiento* despite the risks it implied because they too have suffered or witnessed an act of violence during those years.

Participation within large social movements

A person is more likely to become a social activist if that person believes that another world is possible, this is to say if she believes that her efforts will have an impact on the social and economic conditions of her community. This belief is strengthened by participating in large social movements.

An advantage of a large social movement is that it provides activists with protection, a safe place to talk to other people with similar interests, and reinforcement of the idea that the fight is worth it and possible to win (Tilly, Castañeda, and Wood 2019). A large social movement that has achieved some tangible results shows a social activist that a change is in fact possible. A case in point: according to our interviewees that now are in their 30s and 40s, Zapatism is one of the most important movements that directly influenced them. Some of them participated in Zapatista support networks to bring national and international resources in solidarity with the movement of the Lacandon Jungle. Sometimes, as in the case of Kiko (34), where his parents were deeply involved with the Zapatista Army, they were sent out to summer training camps in the Zapatista communities where they helped build schools and farms, interact with the indigenous community, and learn about the Zapatista ideology.

Consequently, it is possible to see how this movement, as with other large movements, has a considerable influence in today's activism, in the form of "history - and memory – of contention (Castañeda, 2012; Della Porta and Tarrow, 2005; Tarrow, 2011, p. 29)

Younger activists in Juárez influenced by the Zapatista movement, as well as the femicides, the violence, and the strong military presence have created several social movements to fight back against those elements. Several social organizations were founded in Ciudad Juárez after an extreme event occurred, leading people to get organized in demand of solutions to the event. Some of these organizations include, Bring Our Daughters Back Home (*Nuestras hijas de regreso a casa 2001*), which was created after the murder of Lilia Alejandra García Andrade; Citizens Plural Front (*El Frente Plural Ciudadano 2010*), created after the killing of sixteen students in a high school student's party in Villas de Salvarcar neighborhood; Pro-Culture Pact Movement (*Movimiento Pacto por la Cultura 2001*) was constructed out of a concern about how the city was being ruled; *Lomas del Poleo (2006)* was organized to defend the inhabitants of an informal settlement neighborhood being displaced; and more recently the local chapter of the national student's movement *#Yo Soy 132* (2012) was created as a response to what was perceived as an unfair presidential electoral race (Díaz Cepeda, 2015b).



Figure 3: Participants getting ready.

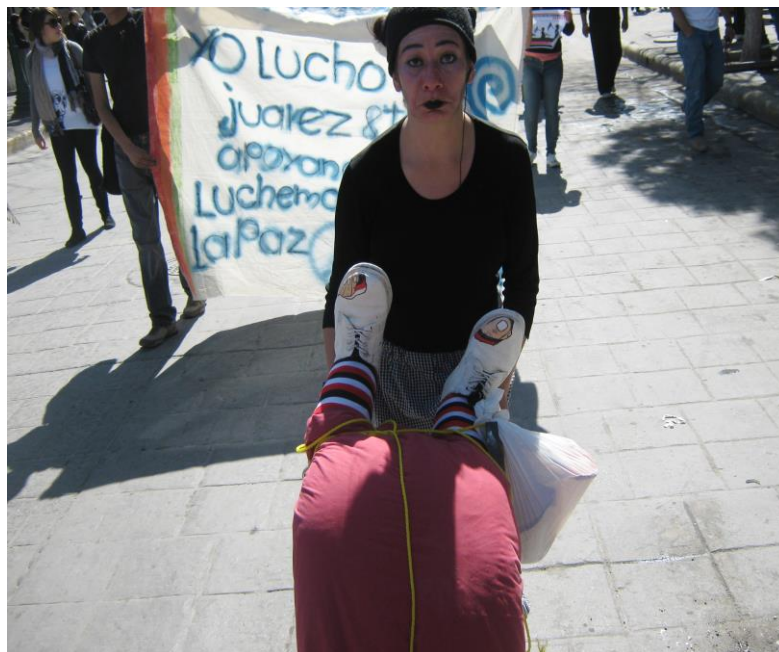


Figure 4: Performance during the protest



Figure 5: Well attended march



Figure 6: End of the march in front of the Santa Fe International Bridge

**Ire, Sorrow, and Amends March (*La Marcha de Coraje, Dolor y Desagravio*. 31 January 2010, Ciudad Juárez.
Photographs: Diana Ginez. Used with permission.**

When a social movement is able to deliver its message to the general audience, its numbers will increase. When that is the case, a larger number of people feel that the relation between effort and results is more adequate than when they have to start a movement from scratch. Since the meetings are open and rely on the number of attendants, it is easier for newcomers to find people that share the same interest. Large social movements then become a place where people can socialize without any major risks. A good number of faddish activists leave the social movement, once it is no longer popular and it loses momentum, but other people- part-timers and core activists- will stay involved in social activism. As stated above, they are the ones that join or create another social organization. Although there are some cases where a social organization does not go as planned and disappoints, a person, in consequence, may decide not to get involved. As Charlie (38) said,

I did not like my first experience in social activism. To be honest, it seemed very chaotic, disorganized; I got a bad impression when they could not even agree in when the next meeting would be. It left a bad aftertaste and it lasted several years before got involved in activism again, now many of the leaders are my buddies.

Getting organized

One way people get involved in social movement organizations is that they get invited to participate in an organization that already exists. These invitations by larger groups reinforce the sense of belonging and achievement in the newly developing activist and make his or herself develop a stronger sense of commitment. As people get together and socialize under the same umbrella of a larger social movement, they get to know each other. Most of the time, they come in groups of friends where they are already part of an informal network and meet with other people with similar interests — thus reinforcing their belief of the validity and usefulness of the particular movement.

A second way to get organized is by starting a new organization. Activists get to know each other not only during organized meetings but also in other places such as schools and social events not necessarily related to social activism. It is during these occasions where they start talking in an informal and relaxed environment of ways to get organized and promote social change.

At first, some of these organizations function around a friendship nucleus when they are teenagers or in their twenties. It is not rare to see that some of them join the activism scene for a pure sense of belonging, just like a person joins a sports team or a student club. Others do it out of a sense of ethical duty. New activists, then, may create an organization, starting from scratch. They are unstable at this first stage; their permanence is based more on personal loyalties to the other members of the group than to the social cause itself. As a consequence, members are susceptible to leave social activism due to internal conflicts that are not related to the social cause. It is often the case that these groups break apart because they do not get along in a personal way or because their personal issues have been resolved; e.g. as Simone (55) said “I just want to find my daughter and forget about this nightmare, as soon as I find her, I am gone, and I cannot take it anymore.” In these cases, individuals participate in social activism, but due to the stress and anxiety that comes with activism, they may either leave as soon as their problem is solved or will lose all hope that the problem will ever be solved and eventually will give up and leave as well.

If those who attended a meeting, an assembly, a protest, or some other sort of social activism overcame these difficulties, felt comfortable, welcomed, and with a feeling of a possibility of contributing to bringing about social change, it was more likely that they would remain and participate and become a core activist. As established before, core activists are not responding only to a specific problem, but rather are looking for social change. Therefore, they may not have a sense of urgency to get as quickly organized as would somebody who has a family member illegally taken by the military. They take the time to build an SMO or to join one that already exists.

Influences on core activists

Ideology

A good number of social activists have a leftist political ideology; however, there are important differences within this leftist ideology. Some of them claim and/or are perceived to be Zapatistas, Marxists, Trotskyists, Neo-Zapatistas, or anarchists. Most of them declare to be politically involved, but not to be affiliated to any political party. These different ideologies influence the way social activists lead the social movement and are both: a source of union and division, for their understanding of the circumstances in Ciudad Juárez, thus compelling them to act in different ways. For example, activists with a strong commitment to their ideology are more reluctant to negotiate and work with other sectors of the movement; i.e., social organizations with a strong commitment to an open decision-making method such as the use of assemblies are reluctant to work with activists who are used to working in closed groups and vice versa.

Another consequence of the differences in ideologies is how far people think it is necessary to go and are willing to go. Some progressive and liberal activists think that the change needs to be fought in small battles, step by step, working to some degree with the system. Others, self-identified as radical Marxist, want to overthrow the state and argue for the need for a revolution based on the antagonism between them and us (Laclau, 2005). This difference makes them take different paths.

Socioeconomic status

Social activists come from different economic statuses. Some of them, especially the youngest ones, struggle to stay out of poverty. However, living in a precarious economic situation does not prevent them from being involved in social movements. On the contrary, this first-hand experience of the consequences of an unfair social and economic system encourages them to challenge it. Most of them take less time-consuming jobs, so they are able to spend a larger amount of time in social activism. They take free-lance jobs, live with their families, teach, travel to different cities where they are supported by the solidarity of the social activists' community, and a few have made social activism a paying career in government positions or in NGOs. Clearly, the kind of job they get depends on their age, education level, and the particular skills they have.

There is also a portion of activists that enjoy a more comfortable situation where they have access to more resources. They work as college professors, medical doctors, small business owners, or managers. Politically active college professors have played essential roles in the building of SMOs against militarization, i.e. BASTA and a support group for the People's Tribunal audiences in Ciudad Juárez in November 2014. In fact, some of them teach out of concern for others. As Doctor (54) stated, "Freire said 'teaching is an act of love.' I try my best to respect my students' ideas and not to attack their ideas."

Often academics also function as brokers between groups of different social and class origins.

As our research shows, the difference in access to economic resources plays an important role when it comes to making decisions about what is the best strategy to use in order to enact positive social change. Allow us to develop our argument. On the one hand, there are activists that, due to their positions, have more access to resources, but have more time limitations and prefer to work towards a specific goal. They are more willing to work with the authorities, make alliances with businessmen, and make decisions in closed groups made up of representatives of different social organizations, e.g. some of them accepted the invitation of the federal government to join the Security Board (*Mesa de Seguridad*), which is in charge of coordinating the efforts of local, state, and federal governments altogether with organizations of civil society. On the other hand, usually, activists with low-income jobs are more inclined to engage in direct actions such as demonstrations, sit-ins, and wall paintings. As their power comes from their numbers, they prefer to get organized in public assemblies where it is easy for new people to join. As many of them have directly experienced abuse from the military or police officers, they are reluctant to work with the government.

At the beginning of the militarization process in 2008, there were strong differences between the groups that protested militarization and upper-class people that supported the presence of the army so that the State could take control of the situation. However, by 2010 groups of medical doctors, lawyers, managers, and business owners that usually would not agree on using strong collective reactions became more involved as they were becoming more directly affected by the violence and perceived that the government was not doing enough to help them. Before this, they trusted that governmental institutions would solve or at least alleviate the violence and other social problems. When they saw this was not the case, they also took to the streets and used other strategies to pressure the government to stop the violence.

Belief that another world is possible

Core activists are committed to change the social system as a whole for one they consider to be juster. This, of course, is a long-term project that can only be sustained if it is met with the idea that a better social order is possible. Social activists spend a considerable amount of time in the company of other activists with whom they share the belief that another world is possible. This shared time, as well as the success of the activities they organize together, reinforces this belief, and keeps them working in favor of social change. This belief is supported by the existence of a major social movement and reinforced through social interaction with other activists and through the support of certain segments of the population. As long as this belief that the activist's efforts contribute to making this change possible exists, it is more likely that a social activist will remain involved in the movement.

A fulfilling life

An important experience shared by core activists is their ability to draw fulfillment from activism. This helps explain their willingness to take the risks and financial limitations that come with honest social activism. In contrast to the economic advancement that most people pursue in life, social activists find self-actualization in helping other people as well as the joy that comes with social interaction with other members of social movements, cultural, social, and political scenes. Beatriz (35) said humorously,

Thanks to my activism, I have a richer life, I have been able to do things that otherwise, I would not have been able to do, I had dinner with [writer] Elena Poniatowska, among others; I have traveled, but more importantly, I see how the children are looking forward to coming to the library on Sundays.

Beatriz is an exceptionally intelligent and talented person. She had plenty of job offers but decided to reject all, except for a position in Chihuahua Cultural Institute (ICHICULT), so that she could spend her time developing their art collective's project: *Biblioteca Independiente Ma'jauna* with the other two core members of *Palabras de Arena* (Words in the Sand), their feminist collective. This library opens every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. for the children of colonia Virreyes, a dangerous and poor neighborhood. The library is part of the house where she lives, which is in poor condition. However, instead of dedicating her efforts to bettering her living conditions, she uses her talents and skills to improve the library, i.e. Beatriz has a project for a better library at a cost of \$40,000 USD.

Private life and social activism

There is a small but very important difference between social activists' private lives and their social activism. As Charles (38) said,

The person and the profession are the same, and that makes me get involved in these issues, because even if I wanted to be content with my specialized academic work and just give numbers... since I share the idea that knowledge must be shared and not to be kept among the elites, I open this extension of my profession to issues that could be considered activism, but they are part of the same calling... It is hard to live as an activist all the time, it is quite exhausting, and then if you do not have the resources to cover your expenses, you starve to death... I also have to work. Besides I am not sure to what point it is healthy not to keep a private life, right? To completely give up your life, as some kids did in the 70's. They enrolled in the guerrilla. That is praiseworthy, they gave up their lives, but then you think: was that the only way? [If they had not gone that route] Maybe they could still be alive and contributing. Yes, activism is a way of live, but it should also take place according to your possibilities.

Interviews show that in order for core activists to support the pressures that come with social activism, they need to keep a private space outside of social activism. This place allows them to get some distance and enjoy some well-needed breaks from activism in order to maintain some mental stability. As Beatriz told us, "Sometimes I get depressed; you need to be in constant therapy. This is not going to change, I got too involved in my work, and there must be a balance otherwise there is nothing." If social activists do not take these breaks, their likelihood of getting tired of activism increases exponentially, and as a result, they will eventually abandon or considerably diminish their involvement in social activism.

Core activists that also gather meaning and fulfillment from spheres outside of activism are more likely to make decisions in function on what is best for the movement, not for them. On the contrary, people that draw all their meaning, pride, identity, and friends from their activism are more likely to bring personal conflicts to the movement, and to look for photo-ops and positions of power within a movement.

Family environment

Family pressure to leave social activism exists, but it is not a detrimental factor. On the contrary, the activists' families are aware of the risks they are taking, and even when they worry and take some precautions; for the most part, family members support their activism. There are different reasons for this support. In some cases, they come from a family tradition of social activism. Their parents were social activists, so they grew up used to this type of danger. In other cases, during their involvement in social movements, they met their spouses, as they were part of the social activism scene. Their spouses, then also, know the risks that come with social activism. This does not mean that families are not afraid; they are, but they overcome this fear. In this respect Waldo said,

My family worries, especially when I publicly say things they consider very strong words. In general, they support me, but sometimes they reprimand me. It depends on what is happening in the city. There were hard times in the city [for social activists] when they killed Marisela Escobedo, members of the Reyes family, Susana Chavez, etc.⁷ In times like this, they get more worried, but I cannot say that they do not support me.

⁷ In 2010, four members of the Reyes Salazar family, a life-long social activist family, were killed, arguably because they were denouncing human rights abuses by the military. They were declared missing. After there was local, national, and international political pressure, state police found the bodies a few yards away of a military post. Marisela Escobedo was shot to death in downtown Chihuahua, Mexico in front of the city hall around 7:00 p.m. The place where she was killed is surrounded by surveillance cameras and a strong police presence, yet nobody stopped the murderer. She had several disruptive tactics to pressure the legal system to enact justice for her daughter Ruby who had been murdered and the murderer had been set free by a court of law. Susana Chavez was a poet and activist that was murdered with extreme cruelty.

In other cases, young activists gain support from their families when family members see the repression and abusive treatment social activists suffer. Let us take, for example one of the last massive protests against the militarization: a march by the *Indignados* of Juárez on November 01, 2011. During this march, sixteen people got arrested for protesting against the violence in Ciudad Juárez, and twelve people were arrested later while protesting outside the police office. They protested by sticking plastic adhesive crosses on the walls and windows of banks, McDonald's, ATMs. These crosses represented the over 7,000 people that have been killed in Juárez as a consequence of the war on drugs.

A police officer said that they would allow a group of parents to see the detained, but later the judge denied the visit. This caused supporters and family members to be angry and to worry. They started to stick crosses in the police station as a form protest. The police then arrested a second group of people. Rose (23), one of the interviewees, was arrested on this second group of 12 people. She was detained when she was trying to prevent a partner from being arrested. In total, 28 people were detained for over 36 hours, the legal limit to present charges or free them. The police presented charges against them, and argued that the protesters had damaged their uniforms.⁸

Some family members got involved in social movements when they witnessed this unfair and abusive treatment towards social activists. Arguably, the repression that young activists suffered caused this group to deactivate. When we asked Rose if she was going to protest a later visit of President Calderón to Ciudad Juárez, she told us that she was not: "It is messed up, I do not want to end up in jail again, to be honest, I am a little afraid, besides I have tests coming up in the university."

Social activists say she was murdered because of her social activism, while the police declared it a crime of passion.

⁸ In May 2012, the indignados lawyer informed them that the cost of repairing the damage to the uniforms had been covered with the bail and that the charges had been dropped.



Figure 7: Police presence in “Los indignados march”



Figure 8: Repression of los Indignados.



Figure 9: Detainees released after 36 hours

Photographs: La Unika. Nov 01, 2011. Used with permission.

Solidarity

While the Indignados were detained, there were around 150-200 people protesting outside the courthouse day and night during the 36 hours that it took to set them free. They were members of all types of organizations that, despite their ideological differences and lack of cooperation in regular circumstances, remained there during that whole time. This, of course, is not a reaction unique to Ciudad Juárez, as most social movements gain support after repressive tactics are used against them, but it does prove that given a strong common goal they can work together.

These actions show the deep sense of solidarity that social activists have towards other social activists even when they may have political and strategic differences. They know that being the visible faces of protests makes them the main target of police oppression. Several social activists have been assassinated or forced to leave the city because of circumstances that suggest the direct involvement of the federal government or at the very least its inability to protect its citizens. It seems that when most people perceive their lives and possessions to be in danger, they will run away from those circumstances. To the contrary, core social activists' determination grows stronger when facing threatening

conditions. When there is a danger for one or more social activists, they unite, organize, and become stronger.

It is possible to see this pattern by analyzing the peak years of violence in Ciudad Juárez and the militarization of the city. It was during this time that several prominent social activists such as Marisela Escobedo, Susana Chavez, and members of the Reyes Salazar family, were assassinated. This is “a family that [in Sapphire’s (55) words] was hunted beyond death when they wanted to bury the Elias and Malena brothers, they did not allow the family to bury them in the town’s cemetery”. The repression continued in 2011 when Marisela Ortiz and Norma Andrade, Cipriana Jurado, and surviving members of the Reyes family, among others, had to leave the city fearing for their lives. Some of the social activists that left the city asked for political asylum in the United States; others went to unknown places within Mexico. Nevertheless, most of them continue with their involvement in social movements in Juárez. They just do it using different strategies like publishing blogs and organizing campaigns abroad.

It was during these sad occasions that activists gathered together the most frequently and, overcoming their fears, they took to the streets again and organized some of the most attended marches; as Julio said “to kill an activist is like throwing water to a gremlin, by trying to silence one, you get more.”



Figure 10: Supporting activists setting up a camp outside the courthouse.



Figure 11: Supporting activists collecting money to pay the Indignados bail.

Photographs: La Unika. November 2, 2011. Used with permission.

Crucial roles of a core life-long activist

Networking

A core activist serves several important functions within a social movement. Being fully committed to a social organization and the movement, in general, allows them to build influential networks. These networks give them the possibility to pressure Mexico's government from the outside; i.e., as Marisela Ortiz, one of the founders of *Nuestras hijas de regreso a casa* observed that Mexico's government reacted faster when there was international pressure. She found invaluable assistance in Amnesty International. In her words: "since 2001, when we started, I looked to make contact with Amnesty International, because we needed to learn from the people that know."

Most of them use this brokering position to make a movement grow faster. However, others are cautious about who they connect to their networks. There are at least three main reasons for doing so. The first one is to keep their networks safe from government infiltrators. The more radical the movement, the more secrecy there is. Another reason to keep control of these networks is to keep the prestige and reputation that the core activists may have. That is to say, a core activist who has built a reputation of being trustworthy and responsible will hesitate before she recommends a new person to an organization. In some occasions, a new member may need to prove their commitment before they are put in contact with other members of the organization and/or with other organizations. This is especially done in closed groups where they prefer to work with the same people in order to have faster results. A third reason is more personal. It is the case that sometimes core activists do not share their networks because they want to keep control of them and remain as the leading figures of

the movement with the privileges that come with that position. Sometimes, this attitude comes in the form of a confrontation where they hold the position of sole leaders. In Sapphire's experience some core activist leaders

... think that only they hold the true, and that they should impose it. I think there is activism that instead of welcoming participants, rebukes them, e.g. when people attend marches [in an irregular basis] they reprimand them and ask, why you had not come to the previous marches and meetings.

On the contrary, when an activist performs her networking function well, she serves as a hinge between groups with different ideologies. When they communicate with various groups, they carry messages between groups of people who are not able or willing to communicate directly with each other. This requires a humble attitude where they are open to learning from other perspectives. As Charlie said,

Assumptions about strategic planning may be in conflict with your opinions, but that is a good place for you to say: damn, I do not have the whole truth neither do they. Also, there you have to tie together all this knowledge because it may change your life or you may change somebody's life.

Networking allows them to build much-needed agreements and enlarge the number of participants in a social movement. It also serves to protect social activists. As Marisol (56) explained, being in contact with international organizations,

Somehow protected us, because we had a commitment from international human rights organizations. Therefore, it was not so easy for the government to harm us with things staying quiet; we had become known in the world.

This is a vital surviving tool for activists because the more visible they are, the higher the political cost of repressing them. The higher the cost, the less willing the state is to attack them.

Mentorship

Another function of fully committed activists is that they serve as mentors to the new generations. Amid the internal factors, core activists play a vital role in the possibilities of success of a social organization because they have a substantial influence on the people that join that social organization. For example, Rose, a relatively new member in the social movement scene, said she got her

information and inspiration from a pair of prominent and well-known social activists,

I read the newspaper, but there are issues that I understand better when one of them explains it to me. It is not that I do not understand the issues, but since they have more experience... I mean they are older and have read more than I have, so they can see the larger context better than I can.

Due to this level of influence on faddish activists, core activists can lead an organization to become an inclusive institution where different approaches on how to fight social injustices can be used to work together or they can lead it to become an exclusive organization where only people that think in the exact same way are welcome. As Sapphire said,

We should not start with ideologies, but instead start talking about the things that we have in common, students, factory workers, the medical doctors, etc. because we all have suffered. Because sometimes the discussion starts with how to organize a protest, and then it devolves in let's start a Bolshevik revolution by Wednesday...

It is clear then, that if a core activist does not evaluate properly the level of commitment and the different belief systems at play in a social movement, he or she may try to impose his/her own agenda. By doing so, memberships may decline, because now the social movement would be attractive only to the people that already share an ideology. On the other hand, if a core activist is tolerant of divergent sets of beliefs and levels of commitment, more people may be willing to join the social movement. Depending on what activists do, they will have growing numbers in their organizations and a stronger position to force social change. In other words, core activists play a very important role in mentoring the new activists who want to participate in pushing for a social change as well as making their movement appealing to more people.

Fire-keeping

Another important function of activists is their role as fire keepers, motivators, and guardians of the movement. Core activists keep a movement alive while it grows in numbers of participants and hence in political influence. This is to say, for them, it is not a matter of how much support their cause may have or how popular a struggle is or how extreme the conditions of repression they work under are. This is the life they have chosen, and they stick with it, sometimes to the ultimate consequence of being killed. This attitude keeps them working in an organization despite the low number of members during harsh times. This permanence on social activism makes them the natural point of reference to which people turn to when there is a breaking point that gains the attention and

participation of more people in the movement. They then lead to emerging social movements. We are not making a case for the necessity of a single leader, spokesperson or *caudillo*, but core activists often become default leaders due to their knowledge, experience, and contacts gained through the long participation on social movements. Although, sometimes new movements may bypass established union leaders, core activists, and leftist politicians not without causing tensions and resentments. For example, the social movements #YoSoy132 in Mexico City (Díaz Cepeda 2015), or the *Indignados* on Spain (Castañeda 2012) relied on new activists rather than on core activists. Nonetheless, the core activists were quick to come to the camps and to engage in discussions with the movement leaders.

Willingness to stand up when others will not

Selections from the poem “And the Risen Bread,” written by life-long core activist Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J. in memory of Washington DC homeless core activist Mitchell Snyder, summarizes the motivations and findings of this paper,

Some stood up once and sat down,
Some walked a mile and walked away.
Some stood up twice then sat down,
I've had it, they said.
Some walked two miles, then walked away,
It's too much, they cried.
Some stood and stood and stood.
They were taken for fools
they were taken for being taken in.
Some walked and walked and walked...
Why do you stand?
They were asked, and
why do you walk?
Because of the children, they said, and
because of the heart, and
because of the bread.
Because
the cause
is the heart's beat.

Conclusion

We have presented a typology to refer to different levels of participation in social movements. We have discussed the reasons why people may join social movements and their levels of commitment. There are people that get involved for selfish reasons, such as solving a problem that directly affects them in their

own private sphere. However, there are also people that participate in social movements as a way to pursue social change for the community. We divided them into faddish activists, occasional activists, part-time activists, and core activists. The formation of core activists is a long process that starts from a young age with the appearance of a mentor that, in accordance with existing literature, shows the young person that another world is possible.

Some will stay involved in activism because they find a place where they feel they can build a sense of community and purpose. For a vast majority of activists, social activism even when important is not their highest priority. They remain more loyal to friends or a specific cause than to a long-term social commitment. For the remaining activists, social activism is their absolute highest priority. In consequence, they build their life around social activism. They choose jobs, friendships, personal commitments, and so on in terms of their participation in social movements. If something is getting in the way of their social activism, they remove it from their lives. Building their lives around activism reinforces their identity as social activists, which at the same time increases their willingness to keep building their lives around social activism and to organize for the rights of strangers.

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