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Voices of dissent: activists' engagements in the creation of alternative, autonomous, radical and independent media

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Voices of Dissent:
Activists' Engagements in the Creation of Alternative, Autonomous, Radical and Independent Media

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Introduction

"Alternative media function as environments that facilitate the fermentation of identities and power positions. In other words, alternative media spin transformative processes that alter people's senses of self, their subjective positioning, and therefore their access to power." (Rodriguez 2001, 18)

In her seminal work on citizens' media in Latin America, Clemencia Rodriguez points out the pivotal role that alternative media practices have in empowering citizens to develop new understandings and images of themselves outside the corporate space of mediation created by mainstream media channels and outlets. The expression "citizen media", however, is only one of the many labels employed to speak about alternative media at large. For many years a marginal field of investigation, in recent decades many monographs, special journal issues and edited volumes have been devoted to alternative media. The emancipation of this subject, which is today considered a respectable academic topic across many disciplines, has gone hand in hand with the flourishing of terms and expressions related to those media messages, outlets and channels which are created and diffused outside commercial informational circuits (Atton 2007).

In the academic literature, various labels are used to name the grassroots creation of channels and/or contents outside commercial media and/or opposing the dominant system of meanings. These range from "radical media" (Downing 2001) to "citizens media" (Rodriguez 2001) and from "critical media" (Fuchs 2010) to "social movement media" (Atton 2003). Hadl (2007) has addressed the epistemological reasons for such diversity and richness in the academic field. Each expression, obviously, has different connotations and implies a different explanation of the main qualities characterizing alternative media. Without dismissing these important differences and the theoretical debates revolving around them, here we employ the broad and encompassing label "alternative media", which signals the existence of media that are alternative to corporate media in terms both of their production and their diffusion processes (Atton 2002).

Many expressions have also been generated by the conceptual work of alternative media practitioners, often at the crossroads between the field of progressive academia and radical social movement milieus. For instance, terms like "autonomous media" (Langlois and Dubois 2005), "tactical media", (Garcia and Lovink 1997), and "*media sociali*" (Chainworkers 2006) were first elaborated and circulated within the activist field, both online and offline, and testify once more to the importance of reflexive practices for the production of critical knowledge on the media environment and on its mechanisms.

The use of alternative media is frequently though not always linked to social movements and protest cultures. Progressive activist groups often employ alternative media as spaces to develop and share critical discourses on contentious issues. They become, therefore, important counter-public spheres where activists construct common understandings about mobilization, elaborate further reflections about themselves and propose an alternative point of view on their societies. Both in the latent and visible stages of mobilizations, alternative media serve as a space of counter culture which is intrinsically linked to the deconstruction of corporate media power. In this respect, alternative media practices often challenge mainstream / dominant discourses through the collective elaboration of powerful imageries that make visible alternative points of view about their societies. Alternative media, moreover, function as a space of socialization and organization for social movement practitioners around the world: they sustain connections across the inner borders of our globalized worlds and support the diffusion of activists' ideas and practices from one social movement culture to another.

Alternative media, however, do not develop in a void: they continuously challenge and are challenged by the presence of local, national and transnational media corporations and commercial platforms. They exist in a changing and evolving media environment, in which top-down and one-way communication flows develop in parallel and even intertwine with bottom-up, two-way communication flows. Always multifaceted and rich in communication channels, today's media ecology revolves around the intertwining of multiple platforms, applications, supports and outlets. Different levels of communication flows overlap: from the mass broadcasting of global television to the information provided by national print press; from local community street televisions to widespread user-generated content spread in social networking sites.

Furthermore, since the 18th century at least the history of alternative media has also been marked by processes where yesterday's (partially successful) alternative media become part of today's media establishment; where states and conservative forces have constructed their own media in the image of their grassroots opponents; and where the creative energy of popular media has been constantly commodified and turned into new sources of profit. This is at least as true for the relationship between early "Internet culture", Indymedia and so on and "Web 2.0" and social networking sites as it is for that between British and American subcultures of the 1950s and 1960s and the generation of today's

music industry, or indeed that between underground, democratic or working-class newspapers in 19th century Europe and the development of the "gutter press".

Another element of continuity, dating back at least to the European resistance if not the "Atlantic revolutions" of the 18th century and continuing to recent "colour revolutions" in the ex-Soviet bloc and current struggles in Asia, is the extent to which alternative media in particular can be attractive targets for funding from other states keen not so much to support popular protest in general as to destabilize the regime or support their own preferred alternative contenders. The combination of the small numbers usually needed to produce alternative media, the disproportionate impact of even limited amounts of funding and its potential for high visibility mean that it is routinely difficult, for local citizens as well as for outside observers, to distinguish between such "astroturf" (fake grassroots) media and media which are genuinely part of popular movements.

The diversity of alternative media, and the evolving nature of the political and media environment in which they are situated, demands that how they are defined, their role in society in general and in relation to social movements in particular, depends upon constant conceptual updates and critical reflections.

This issue of *Interface* gathers a range of contributions on alternative media as a shifting concept that acquires a diverse range of meanings across the globe, depending both on the activist political cultures involved and the types of media environment in which they develop and to which they relate.

Degrees of media alternativeness and radicalization: regionalizing the analysis

Most of the academic literature on alternative media focuses on Western countries and focuses on progressive alternative media (Atton 2007; Couldry and Curran, 2003). One of the main contributions of this literature is its questioning of media power in the 21st century and the redefinition of sources of power in a globalized society. Thus, as Couldry and Curran argue, "media power" is a multiform and fluid concept that remains at the heart of current debates about the role of alternative media. It can be manifested through the media's representational power, which is rooted in the direct control of the means of media production. At the same time, though, media power is "an increasingly important *emergent theme of social conflict* in late modernity" (Couldry and Curran, 2003: 4).

Both aspects of "media power" are central to alternative media practices in Western Europe and North America. The creation of the Independent Media Center (Indymedia) is emblematic in this respect. Defined as "a network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth", this centre was originally created in 1999 to

provide grassroots coverage of the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle (http://www.indymedia.org/en/static/about.shtml). During and after the demonstrations, IMC provided updated reports from the streets and broadcast some of its documentary footage through public access stations across the United States. While Western Europe and North America have seen the creation of multiple and, at times, very successful alternative media outlets in the past 10 years, the case of the Independent Media Center stands out in the history of alternative media in these areas because it represented one of the first efforts to open access to all sides of the conflict. Moreover, through its use of digital technologies along with traditional media, the IMC initiative demonstrated the potentially global reach of local media practitioners.

Alternative media models and technologies tend to spread across the globe, and in the process engage with a huge variety of social movements and protest cultures. In spite of their differences and their diverse contextualization, alternative media practices across the globe share some common traits. In a media-saturated environment, for instance, the use of information and communication technologies is increasingly frequent and diffused amongst activists and alternative media practitioners in a number of world regions. This trend also coincides with the creation of hybrid channels of radical communication, where different languages mix and a variety of technological supports combine (Cottle 2008; Gillan and Pickerill et al. 2008).

A good example of this is the creation of alternative icons to represent precarious workers in Italy. Subverting the Italian Catholic tradition, activists of the Milan-based Chainworkers collective invented *San Precario*, the patron saint of precarious workers, in 2004 (Tarì and Vanni 2005; Mattoni 2008). This icon, evoking an entire alternative system of meaning related to labour market flexibility, was first circulated during face-to-face meetings at protests against precarity in Italy and then at transnational preparatory meetings where small "saint's cards" were distributed amongst activists and people participating in protests. However, the icon also travelled digitally, across independent informational websites, activist blogs and radical publications. It became a physical statue to be brought into procession during protests against precarity in Italy; activists also created a Facebook profile to find yet another channel to spread their struggles against precarity.

This case is paradigmatic of recent trends in alternative media practices and outlets. On the one hand, they maintain solid linkages with the local communities from which they originate while simultaneously having a transnational and sometimes even global reach. On the other hand, such practices are originally conceived within a specific technological and discursive framework, but then frequently become "ubiquitous alternative media", linked through different technological sites and platforms. If these are the most striking similarities amongst alternative media, it is also important to highlight local differences and subtle meanings that this expression acquires across different regions.

In this context, it can be instructive to look at those geographical areas that have been largely neglected in alternative media studies. The case of Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet space is worth examining closely, not least because of its longer history: in the 1970s and 1980s in particular, "dissidence" was often particularly focussed on the production of alternative media of various kinds, which were also central to the global reach of movement actors who were often deeply isolated within their own societies. Since 1989, however, academic attention has largely ignored this region, despite the persistence in several states of a number of the same structural conditions which gave birth to "samizdat" and its many cousins. Even the persistence of essentially identical conditions in China has been fairly marginal to the discussion of alternative media, despite the massive quantitative significance of Chinese participation in contemporary media technologies.

In Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet space, social movements use digital communication and mobilization tools, including electronic alternative media, in much the same way as other social movements around the world. There are many web-based or web-facilitated networks of activists which function in similar fashion to their counterparts in the West. A good example of this is the Global Balkans Network — "an activist research, media, and organizing network that works in solidarity with Balkan social movements to investigate, publicize and impact political, social and economic struggles in the former Yugoslav and wider Balkan region" (http://www.globalbalkans.org/).

Another interesting example is the platform "Что делать? (Chto delat?) / What is to be done?" which was founded in Russia by a working group of left-wing artists, critics, philosophers, and writers with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism. Chto delat? has a well developed bilingual (English/Russian) website which, besides other social activism-related information, contains electronic versions of the platform's newspapers (also bilingual) and films produced by Russian activists — some of which are subtitled in English (see http://www.chtodelat.org/).

Other than the deeper digital divide and generally lower levels of confidence in the success of protest actions in Eastern Europe, which certainly affect the prospects of any popular mobilization, there are no major differences in this respect between Western and Eastern European societies, at least in terms of the strategic use of digital and non-digital media by activists. The difference is more evident, however, between the West and some former Soviet Union countries; less in the *ways* in which digital and non-digital media are used than in the *circumstances* under which they are used.

Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet region: the contexts of alternative media

Firstly, in some authoritarian ex-Soviet regimes, protest organizers must calculate not only the potential success of their actions, but also consider strategies for escaping repression. Another problem is that to hold a protest action the organizers need the permission of state or local authorities, which is frequently impossible. These two factors often affect the choice of protest form. For example, in Russia during the last five years theatricalized forms of protest (happenings, performances, flash mobs etc.) have become increasingly popular. One of the reasons for this is that, by contrast with conventional forms of contentious politics (rallies, demonstrations, pickets, marches, strike actions etc.), performances don't require the permission of the authorities (Zaytseva 2010). They can also often leave the police confused, disoriented and with no idea of how to respond to such kind of actions.

Another way of causing confusion and disorientation amongst policemen, state officials and other representatives of repressive regimes, widely practiced in Russia and Central and Eastern Europe, are methods of subversive affirmation and over-identification. These methods or "tactics of explicit consent" are forms of artistic/political resistance which, in an apparently affirmative way, overemphasize elements of the prevailing ideology or excessively praise the existing political regime, and in this way undermine the affirmation and turn it into its opposite. According to German researchers Inke Arns and Sylvia Sasse (2006), these methods of subversive affirmation and over-identification make visible the implications of a ruling ideology, in particular elements whose public formulation undermines the ideology's ability to reproduce itself. Arns and Sasse also argue that these methods were developed in Eastern European Socialist countries since the 1960s, subsequently became one of the few "Eastern imports" in the West during the 1990s, and finally penetrated many areas of contentious politics, including media activism (for more on this, see Arns and Sasse 2006; for analysis of the application of these methods in Russia, see Zaytseva 2010).[1]

Secondly, in ex-Soviet countries with authoritarian rule, political opposition forces have very limited access to the conventional forms of media; this makes the Internet and other ICTs the only device for organizing and reporting street protests. For instance, the Internet, cell phones and text messages were fundamental tool to incite protests in Ukraine in 2004, in Belarus in 2006, and in Moldova in 2009.

During the Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2004, the Internet became an important tool of citizen journalism in a censored media environment.

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[1] There are strong reasons, however, to disagree with Zaytseva's interpretations of these methods. Thus, marches with ironic and overtly mocking slogans like "Putin is our king!", "We support a price increase!" or "Long live the police state!" hardly can be treated as instances of subversive affirmation and over-identification. The methods of subversive affirmation and over-identification are dangerous for the ruling ideology precisely because of their emphasis on an over-serious identification with this ideology, instead of the obviously ironic imitation of its elements (see, for example, Žižek 1993: 4).

Moreover, mobile phones and the Internet were used to coordinate a wide range of activities including election monitoring and large-scale protests. For example, one of the protagonists, the movement Пора! (It's Time!) was led by well-trained and technologically savvy activists who used the Internet as a major mobilization tool. Its website served both as a source to inform the public and as a forum for activists to communicate among themselves. Some observers even argued that the Orange Revolution would not have happened without the Internet (Goldstein 2007: 8-9).

 In the wake of Belarus' presidential election in 2006, which the opposition believed was rigged in favour of President Lukashenko, critics of the government turned to the Internet to spread the word about their protests. Given the very limited media resources available for the Belarus opposition, the Internet became a crucial outlet for independent reporting. Several sites (for example Charter 97 at http://charter97.org) ran eyewitness accounts from the anti-Lukashenko protests and encouraged people to join the rallies. Pictures taken at the protests were also posted on image-hosting sites like Flickr (Usher 2006).

The role of ICTs (information and communications technology) during the "Twitter Revolution" in Moldova in 2009 has been well reported. Youth NGOs like Hyde Park and ThinkMoldova used a variety of social media tools to organize their protest actions and publicize the claims that the election, which returned the ruling party to power, was rigged. Relevant information was disseminated mostly through Twitter, Facebook, blogs, SMSs and e-mails (Barry 2009; Morozov 2009a). According to Evgeny Morozov, a researcher on the political impact of the Internet, it was the right decision for Moldovan students and activists to publicize the protests via Twitter, Facebook and YouTube and not via Friendster or LiveJournal, which are still the platforms of choice for many users in Eastern Europe. Had the protesters chosen these platforms, they wouldn't have gotten as much attention from the rest of the world (Morozov 2009b). The choice between external visibility and internal mobilization, however, does not always have such positive outcomes.

New Russian protest movements also increasingly use the web to mobilize support, a trend shared by movements as diverse as the older generations of human rights defenders, newer movements of young left activists (anarchists, anti-fascists (AntiFa), Trotskyists), and "Red-Brown" radicals (such as National Bolsheviks). These movements organize themselves through websites such as Facebook and LiveJournal. Video footages of protest events and government repression, normally with commentaries, are posted daily on the video blog Грани-ТВ (http://grani-tv.ru) at the Russian oppositional website Грани.Ру and on YouTube (Bowring 2010).

The theatricalized forms of protest in Russia discussed earlier in this editorial are normally aimed at gaining publicity and media attention rather than securing mass participation. Some activists see such spectacular media-oriented actions as the only way to awaken an apathetic and apolitical Russian society. For this reason, both mainstream and alternative media are becoming a crucial

part of activist strategy. Moreover, digital interactive media are often seen as the most appropriate means of gaining publicity. Some researchers even go as far as to say that if an action is not shot on video and immediately posted on the Internet, then there is no action at all (Zaytseva 2010).

Posting videos on the Internet, indeed, is becoming an increasingly popular form of protest among Russians. The goal of such video protests is usually to bring public attention to issues, stories or news which are not covered by corporate or mainstream media. Videos may show, for example, acts of violence by OMON (Special Purpose Police Unit in Russia) against demonstrators or abuses of various kinds by state officials. Thus, for example, one campaign challenged VIP cars using flashing blue lights to dodge traffic laws. To raise public awareness of the issue, activists disseminated a humorous video showing a man with a bucket on his head, who climbed on top of one such car, supposedly belonging to Russia's Federal Security Guard Service (Wave of web-protests ... 2010). Another example of this kind was two videos posted on YouTube in November 2009 by police officer Aleksey Dymovsky. In these videos the officer accused his chiefs and colleagues of corruption and asked Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to carry out an independent investigation of similar cases throughout Russia. The videos were viewed more than one million times and turned into a major scandal on the eve of Russia's national police day (ROAR: Cop goes online ... 2009).

It is interesting to note that Internet-based media and other electronic information and communication tools were widely used during the recent battle for Khimki forest: videos showing protest actions, including attacks on the local government building, were placed on YouTube, calls to sign petition letters were circulated via mailing lists, online support groups (such as Facebook groups "Khimki: Save The Forest!" and "Defence of the Khimki Forest") were established, and special websites (http://www.ecmo.ru, http://khimkibattle.org) and a blog (http://ecmoru.livejournal.com) were created to provide regular and up-to-date information on the conflict.

In one sense it seems that social movements in Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet area tend to imitate and adopt media strategies generated in the West rather than produce their own innovative approaches. On the other hand, activists in some former Soviet countries are sometimes highly innovative in the ways they organize major illegal rallies or political performances under dictatorial conditions, and more generally as a response to police violence, political trials, repressive laws, ethnic nationalism, the manipulative tactics of local elites etc. Although the successful use of electronic communication tools by grassroots activists in the ex-Soviet region (for example, in Russia and Estonia) was documented as early as 1996 (O'Lear 1997; O'Lear 1999), internet-based alternative media in the region are definitely still less developed than in the West. Thus, during the Moldovan Twitter Revolution, mentioned above, there were relatively few Twitter users in this country: only about 70 twitterers registered Moldova as their location (Morozov 2009b). In this case, despite getting considerable attention via Twitter from beyond Moldova, protest

organizers largely failed to make the oppositional agenda visible to their Moldovan compatriots*.*

Another independent media-related problem in the ex-Soviet region and to a certain extent in all Eastern Europe (except for some countries) is weak or underdeveloped traditions of "old" non-digital alternative media (print, television, radio etc.). Although after the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, such media have played a significant role in democratization processes, it seems that they still possess at least two considerable shortcomings.

Firstly, such media do not adequately show the diversity of the voices of dissent, being largely focused on the agendas of the major oppositional political forces. For example, the most influential Russian oppositional television station (RTVi) and radio station (Эхо Москвы) mostly represent the opinions of the liberal opposition, only rarely and very selectively covering the voices and practices of left-wing oppositional groups. A similar situation is found in Belarus. In Latvia, the most popular "dissident" television stations (Pirmais Baltijas Kanāls / Первый Балтийский канал, TV5) and newspapers (Час, Вести Сегодня) target exclusively the Russian-speaking minority, reflecting nothing but the activity of the quasi-oppositional political parties which claim to be defenders of this minority's rights and interests.

Secondly, non-digital oppositional media in Eastern Europe tend to operate in relation to "institutional content". This means that they offer criticism (sometimes severe) towards the establishment, but don't look beyond the narrow agenda of the establishment's practices and institutions. In other words, they set their news agenda by focusing mostly on the actions of the government or corporations and rarely cover social movements, unless these movements' activities are linked (directly opposed) to the actions of political and economic elites. As a result, there is a lack of genuinely movement-focused media, which would mean engaging not only in criticism of elites, but also in creating social alternatives, e.g. documenting the development of alternative models of decision-making, health care, food production, social networking etc.

The challenges for alternative media practitioners

Despite the distinctive features of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet countries, this discussion highlights some practical issues which are more generally relevant, such as the obstacles to creating and employing non-digital media - which on a global scale are still far more significant than digital media - by movements of the politically excluded (such as anarchists and autonomists) or the socially excluded (such as movements of the poors, *dalits*, or migrant workers). These issues - which amount to the question of the "ownership of the means of intellectual production" - are in some ways reproducing the old Soviet-bloc situation in the majority world, so that a politicized minority can use alternative technologies (today, digital means rather than carbon paper) to

challenge elites on their own terms, either around the political concerns of the dissident minority or through providing technical and intellectual support to the struggles of the marginalized.

Another challenge is the ability of new alternative media to overcome the general political apathy affecting wide sections of the population in many states - a particularly acute issue in the ex-Soviet region but a more general problem in the age of neo-liberalism, which relies on the relative demobilisation of the kinds of mass interest group politics that characterized Keynesian welfare states, national developmentalism in the majority world and (in its own peculiar way) state socialism.

Overcoming these challenges, in the ex-Soviet region and the majority world, may require a return to traditional awareness-raising practices such as mobilization in the workplace, grassroots organizing, street meetings, face-to-face oral agitation in public places, written / printed material (flyers, newssheets, brochures, etc.), visual material (posters, exhibits, etc.) and other forms of active interaction with the general public. It also may require charismatic leaders and dedicated agitators with a talent for persuasion and a readiness to be engaged in routine and exhaustive face-to-face meetings with various strata of society. The sporadic individual production and scattered diffusion of videos, photos and audio-recordings are hardly able to persuade wide sections of the population to change the way they think and act. In the same way, the producers of such videos, photos and audio-recordings can hardly play a role similar to that played by charismatic leaders in former times. In the ex-Soviet area, as well as in other regions of the world, contemporary independent media appear to address the organized, engaged and motivated parts of the population - although here as elsewhere studies of alternative media *audiences* are notable by their absence, most empirical research focussing on the far smaller group of active *participants*.

One obvious approach is to combine new alternative media with "old" forms of activists' interaction with society. It is certainly wise to avoid idealizing any single method or tool. In particular, the power imbalance *within* movements between those with the relevant technological skills and access to the necessary equipment and those who do not, needs to be more widely thematized. At present, many movements - while accepting arguments as to the increasing centrality of media - have paradoxically relinquished all control over their own media strategy to specialists with their own preferences and agendas; a process every bit as risky as allowing a movement's parliamentary or indeed military wing to set its own direction in isolation from the wider movement. While academics have been bitterly critical of organisational claims to "represent" movements and social groups, there has to date been little serious reflection on the appropriateness of allowing those who happen to have a computer and understand how to negotiate social media to "represent" particular movements.

Another important challenge in reflecting on contemporary alternative media is what in countries of the Global North is the increasingly ubiquitous presence of portable technological devices that allow people/citizens to reproduce slices of

social realities through audio-recording, photographs and video materials. At the dawn of the 2000s, the expression "media activism" was frequently employed to label activists involved in radical news-making processes which led to the production of accounts and reports presenting social movements' point of view on contentious issues and on grassroots mobilizations.

In the last 10 years, however, portable technologies have exploded. Mobile phones, in particular, have become a daily device of personal communication, while also offering the opportunity to record in different ways what is going on around the phone user. The last generation of mobile phones, moreover, combines this function with direct internet connections. Multi-media user-generated contents can thus be easily produced everywhere with sufficient wealth and can even be uploaded immediately on the web. Potentially everyone attending a demonstration, therefore, can produce her/his own personal account of the event.

On the one hand, this multiplies the digital memories related to mobilizations and creates a dispersed archive of documents related to protest events. At the same time, however, portable and personal digital communication devices also put into question the very notion of "media activism" and "alternative media". The challenge is, therefore, to rethink the place of alternative media practices and to deconstruct the very concept of alternative media. The idea that the production of alternative media is based on horizontal interactions and dialogues amongst people belonging to the same (protesting) collective actor, for instance, is challenged by the individual production and diffusion of short videos, audio-recordings and photographs. Are these contents still alternative media contents and according to which definition? Are the producers of such contents still alternative media practitioners and according to which definitions?

A key issue here is the ways in which the possessors of very traditional kinds of media power (often major newspapers, the digital giants and so on) construct spaces for "citizen journalism" which generate profits for their owners from this upsurge of popular participation in media production - while simultaneously censoring, constraining or marginalising both political content in general and the possibility of generating collective action in particular. Movements are certainly able to work within and around such constraints, but often the new technologies can produce the illusion of popular engagement while undermining active control.

A telling contrast might be that between the use of SMSs - widely effective *because of* their minimal formal elements in organising protests in a huge variety of different contexts - and YouTube, effective at diffusing images, but more commonly feeding into the substitution of opinion (in the privacy of one's own home) for action. An adequate *comparative* analysis of the different new technologies, however, has yet to be developed - not least because the investment, in time and emotional energy, in particular technologies and their associated social worlds, is substantial, and neither researchers nor activists who have invested heavily in one particular mode are keen to admit that it may

be rather less effective or significant than they hoped at the start. More generally, the investment in "new technology" per se is often one which marks an individual's academic career or movement position, and it is hard not to play up the significance of such an investment. Presumably as (or if) the new media landscape stabilizes and these new forms become less dramatically new it will be possible to develop more adequate assessments of their relative significance. In this respect, the broader "lay public" has a role to play vis-à-vis the interested claims of specialists.

Nevertheless, it is clear that - whatever final evaluation is made of the relative significance of digital media vs old media, and of different kinds of digital media, today's proliferation of digital activism has enabled a horizontal circulation of information, in western countries in particular, that often escapes the narrow frameworks of institutionalized media. This bottom-up approach has generated a more diverse and, perhaps, democratic use of media technologies to raise awareness and challenge the status quo in a variety of national and cultural settings.

At the same time, though, the enormous effort and energy put into this kind of activism, and the associated notion of "alternative media", has been challenged in two related ways. One is the activist concern that particular kinds of technology (such as digital petitions and online protests) can be a passive, living-room based substitute for real-world demonstrations and direct action. As with other kinds of media, it is clear that this is not always the case, and as noted most contemporary movements in western countries use digital media as part of their organising strategy. However, no observer can deny that - just as in the past some movements "only existed on paper" - we now have movements and organisations which "only exist on the Internet". This poses particular challenges to international solidarity (since outside observers are only rarely in a position to assess the significance of movements abroad separately from their online material) and for relationships between the metropolis and the periphery (since in peripheral contexts association with a virtual organisation may be a crucial lifeline for radicals or the marginalized, and what appears as instrumental political action may in fact be a form of personal support).

The other challenge is the observation that the relative efficacy of digital activism can be hampered by a generalized passivity of publics who feel disengaged or disempowered by the overwhelming role played by mainstream media. Present-day Italy is a case in point here. The duopolistic television system of the Rai and Mediaset groups, along with prime minister Berlusconi's stranglehold on both print and broadcast, seem to have generated a widespread indifference towards alternative forms of media. Hence, even interesting media initiatives such as the street television network Telestreet remain as localized experiments that hardly reach beyond the confines of their target neighbourhood and thus provide little resistance to popular mainstream media.

In view of this, a key challenge faced by alternative media practitioners is that of engagement with social movements that question the practices of mainstream media. Another challenge, therefore, consists in the attention that needs to be

paid to the evolving relationship between alternative and mainstream media because it is only by engaging in a dialogue that reassesses the power of institutionalized media that a more constructive critique and more effective alternatives can be proposed.

We have, of course, been here before, and in many different ways. The overthrow of absolute monarchies, dictatorships and empires has almost always taken place in the teeth of the official or mainstream commercial media (and usually in a context of severe censorship). Media monopoly is not new, even if its relative significance may now be greater; and most if not all successful movements have managed to generate their own media. Indeed, it is only in the last two or three decades that western European newspapers in particular have lost their traditional characters as representatives of particular parties, interest groups, ethno-religious constituencies and so on. The generation of newspapers, magazines and radio stations created by the upheavals of 1968 and subsequent years have taken very different routes in different cases: here reproducing the "movement-representative" character of earlier epochs, there speaking to a "niche market" defined by age and social class, and elsewhere again "mainstreaming" themselves to the point of homogeneity. Thus an over-insistence on the absolute newness of the current situation (whether in terms of monopoly or in terms of technology) can lead to an inability to evaluate its actual characteristics, which can only be done historically and comparatively.

Two yet broader questions can be raised, if hardly (at the present stage of research and activism) answered in any definitive way. One is the implications of the "digital divide", that of access to the capital, equipment and skills required to adequately produce and consume the new technologies. Shaped by gender, class, age and education in western countries, this divide becomes acute - and politically debilitating for movements - in many majority world countries, where it is a huge struggle to hold together the oral, face-to-face technologies characteristic of much indigenous, peasant and shanty-town organising in particular, the "old media" structure of many political parties, trade unions and NGOs, and the "new media" world. In some cases, these gaps are papered over rather than fully addressed, with the result that what is said on the ground, what is done in parliament and what is produced on the Internet can be three radically different things, particularly for large movements like the Brazilian landless people's movement MST or the Indian NBA movement against the Narmada dam projects. In other cases, these different worlds exist side by side, overlapping but rarely fully.

This overlap is heightened by the tendency in contemporary capitalist production towards the generation of niche markets - in media, and in technology, as in everything else. Increasingly, the *movement* problem is one of creating relationships between (say) groups of middle-class teenagers skilled in the use of social media; subcultures oriented towards the production and consumption of particular clothing and music styles; on-the-ground organisations capable of distributing large numbers of flyers and posters; popular milieu oriented around particular styles of talk and sociability;

academic or political professionals able to negotiate the worlds of technical discourse; and so on.

All too often, alliances fail *here:* in the fact that different movements, or organisations, represent such different "ways of doing things" - in the first instance, such different media and modes of discourse - that meaningful conversations *across* media (as opposed to the branded diffusion of a single message on multiple platforms, which is not at all the same thing) do not develop. These gaps have been bridged before; and perhaps, in the face of large-scale economic crises, they can be bridged again. This is of course in part the hope represented by the *Interface* project in the slightly different context of modes of discourse and article formats.

In this issue

This issue of *Interface* seeks to provide answers to some of the abovementioned challenges and proposes some thought-provoking articles about alternative media in different regions of the world.

Focusing on Scandinavian countries, Tina Askanius and Nils Gustafsson investigate what happens to alternative media contents when they are circulated/publicized through social networking sites. The article focuses on the use of Facebook and Youtube during the demonstrations during the 2008 European Social Forum in Malmö, Sweden and the 2007-2008 grassroots mobilizations before and after the eviction of the Youth House in Copenhagen, Denmark. In doing so, the article raises important questions related to the activists' use of commercial social networking and content sharing sites to spread radical and alternative messages. Grounding their theoretical reflections in empirical material, the authors explicitly address critical questions about the commodification of protest cultures and the mainstreaming of alternative media messages.

Patrick McCurdy's article explores the media politics of the Dissent! group around the 2005 Gleneagles G8 summit. While a binary opposition, celebrating activist media and demonizing mainstream media, certainly existed within Dissent!, McCurdy argues for the emergence of a pragmatic orientation within which mainstream media are seen as a site of struggle and alternative media are seen as complementary to the mainstream. He notes the distinction between the formal rules of the Hori-Zone convergence space and (some) activist-level talk which articulates this latter perspective. Criticising the "spiral of silence" which excluded debate on interaction with mainstream media, he argues that it serves to mask the existence of more pragmatic approaches and give the illusion of consensus around "anti-media" positions.

Italian artistic activist projects are the main subjects of Tatiana Bazzicchelli's article, exploring politically oriented forms of art which rest on (social) networking practices. She does so from a cross-temporal perspective and by

taking into consideration the use of different technological supports: from the practice of mail art to Neoism, from the Luther Blisset Project to the creation of Anna Adamolo. Tracing the origins of (social) networking in politically oriented artistic practices, Bazzichelli puts social networking sites and the practices associated with them in a historical perspective. Her contribution is therefore a first step towards the development of a critical model to single out and compare different types of (social) networking in contemporary societies.

The long-lasting experience of the media art platform Public Netbase, in Vienna, is at the centre of Clemens Apprich's article, which discusses practices of urban resistance through media art interventions. Already active at the beginning of the 1990s, Public Netbase engaged in seminal public performances related to the digital network culture and became a relevant artistic and political actor in the Viennese urban space and beyond. In 2006, however, the City of Vienna severely cut its financial resources. Apprich analyzes the practices of Public Netbase in the re-appropriation of urban space after its marginalization within the Viennese artistic scene and discusses the importance of such projects for the development of counter-hegemonic engagement in the public space.

From South Korea, Dongwon Jo addresses how activists used different types of media outlets and technological platforms during the 2008 Chotbul Protests in Seoul. These lasted about four months, initially against the U.S. beef import negotiations and then widening to a broader criticism of the government. Activists and protest participants employed information and communication technologies creatively. The combination of mobile phones, websites and offline demonstrations resulted in multifaceted media practices that went beyond the development of grassroots journalism. Beyond the 2008 experience, this article also illustrates the peculiarities of media activism's relationship to the South-Korean media and political systems.

Brigitte Geiger and Margit Hauser discuss the complexities of creating and recording feminist knowledge and history. The approximately 40 archives in German-speaking countries, operating within movement contexts such as women's centres, face challenges in defining what should be included and have gone through lengthy processes of professionalisation. The article offers histories of feminist and lesbian media production since the 1970s as well as discussing changing issue focuses. The article's methodology, highlighting the practicalities of developing movement-centred archives, offers valuable insights both into the construction of feminist and lesbian movement knowledge over time, and into the contemporary construction of movements' own historical sense of themselves.

Margaret Gillan's exploration of working-class community media in Ireland, drawing on an extended interview with community activist Robbie Byrne, highlights the difficulty of developing media which are accountable to, and produced by, marginalized communities in struggle. The combination - in broadcast media in particular - of capital costs, technical requirements and state regulation poses enormous challenges. Such communities have often gone through a double disappointment: first in discovering the barriers to their

organized voice posed by the mainstream media, and secondly in the encounter with radical, independent producers who are keen to produce *about* the community but accept (or impose) technical and production requirements which in practice disempower and exclude working-class people. The article outlines some of the choices and strategies which have been used to enable media production on the terms of communities in struggle rather than those of the state or the independent / arthouse sector.

Maria Cristina Guimarães Oliveira and Odalisca Moraes' action note "Communication: historical and cultural indicators of Pina" explores the communicative dynamics in processes of cultural resistance within grassroots development projects in the "Comunidade do Bode", a shantytown in the neighborhood of Pina, Brazil.

The action note "Extension or Communication? Audiovisual technologies as facilitators of communication in the Olga Benário MST settlement" by Lívia Moreira de Alcântara and Elder Gomes Barbosa, discusses the effects of using audiovisual technologies for communication within the Olga Benário MST settlement, located in the Brazilian municipality of Visconde do Rio Branco, Minas Gerais.

Peter Waterman opens the special section on on alternative international labour communication by computer with discussion of an online survey which he carried out in early 2010. Waterman has developed the ideas expressed by respondents, providing his own vision of the relationship between labour movement and computer-mediated networking. In the last part of the article, under the rubric of "What is to be done?", the author offers 26 propositions on networking, labour and solidarity in the context of a contemporary globalized and informatized capitalism. Waterman's propositions and his general approach assume the priority of networking activities over other mobilization strategies.

Waterman's article is followed by two responses to his survey, which suggest radically different orientations. Both respondents represent web-based international labour media projects (LabourStart and Netzwerk IT). The first response is provided by Eric Lee and it takes a sceptical view of global solidarity movement based on the web as an alternative to traditional trade union organizations. It also casts doubt upon the claim that the new media would create something utterly new, something different from and even opposed to the existing trade union movement.

The second response is offered by Dave Hollis, who prefers the network form, non-hierarchical structures and the newest global social movements rather than traditional trade union organizations. Moreover, he believes in the ability of alternative labour media to challenge, subvert or overcome union hierarchy. Unlike the first respondent, Hollis thinks that the new media, their power and effects, are underestimated.

The "key document" section includes a declaration on politics, knowledge, and art by the interesting Russian group "Chto delat / What is to be done?" which unites activists, artists, researchers and philosophers. The document outlines

the main principles of organization and coordination within the group, its basic program and ideological platform. A special focus in the declaration is on the tasks of contemporary art, the importance of twentieth-century avant-garde thought for the rethinking and renewal of the leftist philosophical and political tradition, and the place of revolutionary art in a time of reaction.

Stefania Milan's review of Rodriguez, Kidd and Stein's *Making our media: global initiatives towards a democratic public sphere* highlights how this two-volume collection, documenting and reflecting on the experiences of movements involved in the OURMedia / Nuestros Medias network, deepens the field of alternative media research and creates a participatory conversation between a vast range of experiences and approaches in the service of praxis. Tomás MacSheoin's review of Clifford Bob's *The marketing of rebellion: insurgents, media and international activism* reads it as a "cookbook" for local groups seeking international (above all NGO) support and highlights the realism with which Bob reads the relationships between local campaigns and international NGOs - and the ways in which the former "market" themselves to the latter, while noting that matters might be different when the international solidarity in question is social movement rather than NGO-based.

As usual, there are also articles, notes and reflections not directly related to the main topic of the issue.

Philippe Lucas' article highlights the structural similarities between the "CSX" movement of consumers, survivors and ex-patients in mental health institutions and the medical cannabis movement. Both organized around struggles over cognitive liberty and the right to make core decisions about one's health without incarceration, the article discusses these movements' struggles to position their participants as central to public debate and policy rather than mere objects. Lucas also discusses characteristic differences in the psychological orientation of these movements' participants, and concludes by proposing that cognitive liberty and freedom of thought may provide core principles around which alliances could be forged.

William K Carroll's article analyses the potential for the creation of a counter-hegemonic bloc within which practices and social visions capable of fashioning a post-capitalist economic democracy could begin to flourish. In the context of the current crisis of neoliberal capitalism and the deepening ecological crisis, the author seeks to discern elements of practice that might weld the present to an alternative future. The objective of the article is to show how a Gramscian problematic furnishes activists with an analytical and strategic lens that can illuminate practical answers.

Raphael Schlembach's article on "anti-German" activism explores this controversial strand of "pro-Israeli, anti-German" communism. Those taking this position have evolved from anti-fascism, via the critique of anti-Semitic and nationalist positions in the German peace movement and the left more generally, to a position of unconditional support for the Israeli state and for US foreign policy - as well as provocatively celebrating the firebombing of Dresden.

Schlembach argues that "anti-Germans" represent not only an identity politics in the supposed defence of modernity against barbarism, but also in some ways a logical development of Frankfurt School-derived critical theory.

Tomás Mac Sheoin's bibliography introduces the main theme of the next issue of Interface, which will be devoted to repression and social movements. The bibliography provides a comprehensive set of resources on the policing and repression of the anti-globalization protests and movement, assembling a variety of material from the news media, the movement, academia and the security forces. The bibliography includes classic contributions to the literature on the policing of protests, pieces dealing in general with policing and repression of the anti-globalization movement, and references concerning the relevant events in particular countries. Wherever possible, a free downloadable Internet address is given for material.

Iyad Burnat's action note comes from the resistance in Bil'in, a small Palestinian village to the west of Ramallah, against the wall being constructed by the Israeli state, isolating 29 Palestinian towns from the West Bank and separating many Palestinians from their homes and land. The note describes the forms and methods of protest used, discusses the factors that contributed to the success of the resistance, shows Israeli military response and highlights the sacrifices made by the residents of the village.

In a short piece, Peter Waterman responds to Colin Barker's article on Solidarnosc in Poland in *Interface* (2/1). Waterman criticizes Barker's assumption that Solidarnosc had the potential to be a socially revolutionary movement, and highlights nationalist and religious elements within and around Solidarnosc, as well as the problematic mediating role of the dissident intelligentsia in the movement. Barker's response highlights the internal diversity of Solidarnosc and hence the genuine choices it faced. In a situation where workers across Poland had built alternative institutions in opposition to the official ones, these were understood by the regime as posing a challenge to existing social power structures; the Solidarnosc leadership shared this understanding and sought to limit the challenge. Barker defends the importance of intra-movement debate and the continuing value of arguing for different strategies.

Maite Tapia's review of Jo Reger, Daniel Myers and Rachel Einwohner's *Identity work in social movements* stresses the relationship between the "identity work" carried out by movements and the dialectic of "sameness" and "difference" that activists use to construct the sense of collective similarity and opposition. Finally, Laurence Cox's review of John Charlton's *Don't you hear the H-Bomb's thunder? Youth and politics on Tyneside in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties* highlights the importance of such oral histories of movement generations and movement participation in shaping our own lives as activists.

This issue, finally, sees the launch of our new website, which we hope will make Interface easier to use and enable a deeper dialogue between the activists and researchers who read the journal. Our next issue (3/1, publication date May

2011) will focus on repression and social movements; the editors are Lesley Wood and Cristina Flesher Fominaya. The final item in the current issue is the call for papers for issue 3/2 (publication date November 2011) on the topic of "Feminism, women's movements and women in movement" (editors Catherine Eschle, Sara Motta, Cristina Flesher Fominaya and Laurence Cox).

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Mainstreaming the Alternative:
The Changing Media Practices of Protest Movements

Tina Askanius, Nils Gustafsson

Abstract

The article argues that contemporary protest movements are facing a convergence of what has traditionally been coined as mainstream and alternative media. Traditionally, the broad term 'alternative media' has been employed to embrace a wide range of oppositional media channels that can be considered to carry on the tradition of the early radical and party press: micro-media operating at the grassroots level, discontinuous, non-professional, persecuted or illegal. Today, heavily commercialised media and online communities such as Facebook, YouTube and MySpace constitute a common part of the repertoire of communication channels for activists engaged in alterative politics and protest movements. Are these new media channels a necessary means in order to reach beyond the circles of the likeminded? Or, do the use of these media point towards a mainstreaming process of political cultures of resistance to the establishment, eroding their very raison d'être? Combining a theoretical discussion of the inherent paradoxes in the celebration of new media technology as a source of democratisation and empowerment of civic cultures with an empirical focus aimed at exploring the changing repertoire of communicative tools used by social movement actors, this paper analyses two cases of online media practices in contemporary Scandinavian protest movements: 1) A series of civil disobedience actions and mobilisations of mass demonstrations before and after the eviction and destruction of the Youth House (Ungdomshuset) in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2007-2008; 2) The popular demonstrations in connection with the European Social Forum in Malmö, Sweden in September 2008.

1. Changing activist media practice?

When looking at the official Facebook page for the 2008 European Social Forum in Malmö, Sweden, the message of "building a more sustainable, democratic and accountable society" is juxtaposed alongside advertisement banners for, among other things, magicians and blue jeans (see Fig. 3 below). Although the political content is clearly separated from the ad banners, the graphics serve as a reminder that social movements are moving parts of their communication into commercialised spaces that are owned and controlled by private corporations, such as the social networking giant Facebook. Departing from the puzzle of the co-existence of subversive politics and commodified, private communication, we wish to create a discussion of what this might entail for contemporary protest movements and their media-oriented practices.

During the past few years, social media of various shapes and forms have boomed. The world has seen occasions of rapid mobilisation facilitated by the use of ICTs being capable of bringing thousands of people to the streets in short time (cf. Molnár 2010; Goldstein & Rotich 2008; Goldstein 2007; among others). One would expect that social media should be a vital tool for protest movements, creating new vistas for

transnational as well as local campaigns, effectively connecting thousands of dispersed activists around the world. In this article, the term "social media" denotes social network sites and other services, both commercial and non-commercial, used for personal communication building on digital technology sometimes grouped under the term "Web 2.0" (boyd & Ellison 2007; Beer & Burrows 2007). A strong trend in contemporary Internet culture is, however, that millions of people are settling on a few commercial, free services, such as the Google empire, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, etc. (Hindman 2008). A winner-takes-all model creates economies of scale but also potential threats to non-commercial or subversive elements of society. When studying local protest cultures in Scandinavia, we found that activists in the circles of the radical Left were not reluctant to place their entire communicative infrastructure in the hands of corporate media despite a mounting concern amongst media activists that protest movements navigating today's media face the constant threat of being co-opted into the cyber-market.

In order to better grasp these tendencies, we take a closer look at two recent protest events in Scandinavia; the Youth House riots in Copenhagen 2007-2008 and the popular demonstrations connected to the European Social Forum in Malmö in 2008. Our cases give us variation in the type of protest as well as a common ground for comparison. Sweden and Denmark have a lot in common, both countries being prime examples of social democratic welfare states with a high level of organisational life as well as pioneering countries concerning trends such as individualisation, globalisation, post-industrialism and information-driven economies (Bjereld & Demker, 2006). They are also pioneering nations in the online world: broadband access is omnipresent and penetration rates of social media are high (Smith, 2008). Therefore, we would expect that protest movements in both countries to be heavy users of social media and good cases for exploring online practices. In terms of the differences between the two cases, the Youth House might be seen as more openly confrontational with respect to the state, actively proposing illegal methods of protest, whereas the organisers of the European Social Forum worked closely with the city authorities, even receiving financial support and explicitly condemning illegal activity during the forum. As to the degree of violence of the actions, the autonomous movement behind the Youth House riots were on the more radical end of the spectrum and often on thin ice with regard to Danish regulation of civil disobedience. This difference is important, for comparative purposes, as to the question of whether members of the Youth House movement (who we see as more radicalised than ESF participants) were more wary of using commercial media platforms.

In our contribution to the ongoing debate on social movement media practices, we demonstrate how the activists affiliated with both the Youth House movement and ESF 2008 used corporate social media as part of their communicative toolbox. We also disentangle the way in which these platforms were appropriated and shaped by the activists to meet their needs for effective mobilisation. On this backdrop, we pose the following research questions:

1) How are corporate social media used by political activists in the mobilisation for the two distinct protest events?

2) How can these media practices be understood in terms of an alternative/mainstream media dichotomy and problematised from the vantage point of data security, ownership and the political legitimacy of the political actors involved?

In the following section, we briefly sketch out the contours of two dominant camps in contemporary theory on the role of media technology in democratic development. This is followed by a brief note on methodology, after which we give an account of our empirical findings. The paper is concluded by a short discussion on the paradoxes of alternative politics being mediated through corporate mainstream media and suggestions for the direction of future research in this area.

2. Digital media and political mobilisation

Accounts of the interplay between media technology and political activism is, to put it crudely, split between two conflicting narratives on the potentials of digital media in democratic development. New media technology is thus either celebrated as a vehicle for social change by expanding political discourse beyond the here and now into transnational political communities as well as closing the moral distance between world citizens (Chouliaraki, 2006; Fenton, 2006; Drache 2008) - or, alternatively, such technology is condemned for undermining the authenticity of discourse and interaction by failing to fulfil the ideal of co-presence in offline political action often coupled with the viewpoint that the internet fosters an ultimately neoliberal system of commodification requiring persuasion and impression management in order to be seen and heard in the cacophonic jungle of the world wide web. (Putnam, 2000; Dahlberg, 2005, 2007). These two conflicting narratives seem to beg the question of whether technological development leads to a degradation of political participation or an enrichment of democratic development.

Rather than dismissing either of these two viewpoints, we depart from the general assumption that, in order to understand the interplay between the opportunities and constraint these technologies entail, we need to start from the vantage point of social movements--what people actually do with media (Couldry, 2004) and how technologies are integrated into people's everyday lives and political engagements (Dahlgren, 2008). Although at first glance sites such as YouTube or MySpace might not be categorised as political per se it is precisely in these seemingly popular, non-political spaces that people start to form publics and take baby steps into engaging politically. In this line of argument, even issues that tend to reside on the fringes of what would traditionally be characterized as political or as expressions of participating in democracy shouldn't be neglected analytically. Popular culture or issues of a seemingly private character can become a springboard for political concerns and impinge on people's sensibilities for social engagement (Dahlgren, 2008; Dahlgren & Olsson, 2007; Barkardjieva, 2009; Graham, 2007).

In adapting this perspective, we take into account not only media texts as an outcome of these practices but, similarly, draw upon activists' own reflections on their use of corporate mainstream media as a platform from which to examine the contentious politics of a specific event.

Both case studies are locally situated, place-bound to a specific regional context, but each have, in their own distinct ways, a global reach in the sense that their causes

stretch beyond the locality of the events, raising issues that provoke engagement and strike chords amongst people in transnational communities. Hence, although the dispute between left-wing activists and Copenhagen city council over the legal right to the so-called Youth House might seem to be a purely local one, the struggle to keep the building became a symbolic event in a greater political process of mainstreaming traditional autonomous enclaves in the city (such as Christiania). It was also an attempting to de-radicalise political subcultures in general, as well as an illustration of the lack of non-state, non-corporate, non-religious free spaces for young people all over Europe today. Therefore, the lengthy struggle over Ungdomshuset became the centre of attention and a defining issue for young activists across borders, joining them in a transnational community of common interest and in a cause reaching beyond the Danish context and the specific case itself. By contrast, the ESF is a transnational event, which unfolded and was articulated in a local, Swedish setting.

The concept of alternative media is a much disputed one – as is the dichotomy of alternative versus mainstream media. The use and creation of media by political activists fall under various headings such as alternative media, citizens' media, community media, tactical media, independent media, counter-information media, participatory media, Third Sector media, social movement media, etc. The term has no fixed meaning. It has been attached to a heterogeneous set of media practices developed by a very diverse range of groups and organisations and is used as a broad term for a disparate body of practices (Harcup, 2005). Research in this area consists of two somewhat overlapping types of research: studies on the use of ICTs for mobilisation and coordination purposes and second, studies on the creation of independent media in an effort to challenge the hegemony of mainstream media (McCurdy, 2009). Definitions stressing the non-commercial character of alternative media underscore that while the message-based news format of mainstream media is designed to draw consumers to advertising and subscription services, the range of alternative anti-market and anti-authority news sources are free and participatory (Drache, 2008: 91). Other definitions highlight social change by stressing the fact that alternative media should, in some way, advocate change in society (Atton, 2002:15). When referring to and using the term 'alternative media', we integrate these different positions and conceptualise alternative media as a non-profit, democratic space where people communicate, organise and debate for politically progressive ends.

3. A note on methodology

Social media is still an under-researched phenomenon that needs to be both studied and conceptualised as tools for and sites of politics. There are indicators that empirical as well as theoretical contributions are in the pipeline (See e.g. boyd & Ellison 2007; Turnšek & Jankowski, 2008; Gustafsson, 2010). From a methodological perspective, the so-called Web 2.0 constitutes a moving target, constantly changing its interface in a continuous flow of 'newcomers' being added to the list of social networking and file-sharing sites. The problems scholars face when exploring this field are numerous: the sheer mass of digital content available on the Internet, finding and cataloguing comprehensive collections through the use of key words, and search engine biases, pose major challenges (Turnšek & Jankowski 2008: 13ff).

Our analytical ambition is not to plunge into a thick description or close textual analysis of the texts produced by the activists in these platforms. Rather, what we offer is an analysis integrating both text and lived experiences of these practices informed by the concept of mediation in order to account for the various ways in which media - its content, producers, users, technologies, cultures and rituals — as an ongoing and reflexive process, is actualised through activists' media-oriented practices around mobilising and coordinating (Couldry, 2004; McCurdy, 2009).

In doing so, the analysis draws upon a wide range of empirical material. First, the empirical foundation consists of a number of media texts: YouTube videos uploaded by activists prior to and in the aftermath of the Social Forum and the Youth House eviction as well as user profiles and debates spurred online in the comments linked to each video. Specifically, in the case of the ESF, the largest ESF 2008 Facebook group and MySpace page are also included in the scope of the material. In the case of the Youth House, in addition to YouTube videos and profiles, our data consist of the largest Facebook group connected to the movement, "Ungdomshuset blir", as well as the major MySpace profile for Youth House News, 69newscph. The end result is a motley sample of multimodal texts all stemming from an online realm.

Secondly, this study draws on secondary data of previous studies conducted on our two cases; these include ESF participant surveys and reports (Wennerhag et al. forthcoming; Björk, 2008) as well as quantitative and qualitative data of the digital media use by the Youth House activists (Andersen & Larsen, 2008). The empirical insights provided by these studies are brought into play and weaved into our analytical framework. In addition, the empirical framework leans on a series of debate articles produced by alternative media practitioners dealing with their first-hand experiences with trying to gain visibility, support and legitimacy in today's media environment.

4. The paradoxes of online protest

In the analytical vein of inquiry we propose, the Youth House riots and ESF 2008 are approached from a media-centric perspective by looking at some of the web-based activities of key stake holders within the two movements, such as the organising committee of the ESF, as well as central organisations and individual activists affiliated with the two movements. Following a fairly straightforward outline of how different digital media were put to use and assigned a given role within the movements, we question how placing the communicative infrastructure on corporate platforms could possibly affect the radical, often anti-capitalist discourses of the movements' messages and, by extension, the political legitimacy or credibility of the actors producing these discourses. In order to discuss the growing tendency within the activist milieu to resort to websites controlled by corporate media when organising and debating direct actions in a more general perspective, we begin with two specific examples in two Scandinavian contexts. In the subsequent section, we broaden the discussion of a problem that applies to different areas and contexts.

4.1 The fight for the Youth House in Copenhagen 2007-2008
The Youth House (Ungdomshuset) was a building handed over to the Copenhagen squatters' movement in 1982 by the city authorities. For the next two decades, it was a centre for leftist youth culture in Denmark. In 2000 the political climate in

Denmark started to change and the building at Jagtvej 69 was sold to a Christian organisation - Faderhuset (The Father House) - that had the explicit intent of demolishing the house. On 1 March 2007, the squatters were evicted by the national police task force and the building was razed.

An outbreak of violent street fights followed the eviction. Thousands of protesters took to the streets, building barricades, setting cars on fire, and throwing cobblestones at the police. Demanding a new building from the authorities, a network of activists spent the next year organising happenings, small support events, minor squats and a series of largely peaceful demonstrations, one of which attracted over 10,000 people (Karpantschof & Mikkelsen, 2008). In April 2008, the city authorities started negotiating with the movement, which led to a new Youth House being prepared and handed over to the movement. The new house was inaugurated on July 1st 2008.

The Youth House movement network consisted of a core of dedicated activists (having regular meetings, the so-called "Monday meetings"), with groups of more loosely attached activists participating in actions less frequently and/or meeting up at major events. The actions were characterised by a mobile and largely unpredictable nature, mirroring new policing tactics focusing on fast, concentrated efforts (Karpantschof & Mikkelsen, 2008). Digital media was a crucial component in mobilising this movement which quickly exceeded the city borders and grew over time to represent a much broader cause than the support for the Youth House alone. It evolved into a more general struggle for free spaces in the city and a symbol of the struggle against the neoliberal politics and the 'normalization campaign' led by the Danish government.

In a recent study of the use of and meaning attributed to digital media by the Youth House movement, Andersen & Larsen (2008) identify two key types of media use linked to what activists articulate as planned and spontaneous actions. Websites, social networking sites (various MySpace and Facebook profiles) and most importantly Gmail accounts such as Blokrnu@gmail.com constitute the main digital platforms used to coordinate and mobilise the numerous planned protest events, whereas activists would rely mainly on mobile phones and chain text messages when it came to spontaneous actions.

Activists tended to conceive of the three official websites; ungdomshuset.nu, blokr.nu and jagtvej69.dk as external rather than internal media - a window where the "outside world" could get an idea of what the movement was up to - and not so much as a practical tool used by the activists themselves who considered the information there as redundant and the websites as somewhere you would go to confirm the information you already had (ibid: 9).

Absolutely vital to the activists, on the other hand, were chain text messages on mobile phones. A spontaneous collective action was, contrary to the planned actions, characterised by the fact that activists would use this single means of communication as a way of spreading information quickly and widely. The messages were always articulated in a impersonal manner and never contained any information which could be potentially harmful to the receivers. It is important to stress that the chain text messages served to coordinate – not to plan. The actual long-term planning of an event would take place during (physical) meetings where everyone would take out the batteries from their phones before the meetings to avoid being traced by police. Equally relevant to questions of data security and the activists' perceptions of the

risks associated with the use of mainstream media, the same study showed that media use dropped radically during a planned protest, even at the actual time that people were on the streets. This obviously has to do with the fact that people had turned from the computer screen to take to the streets but more interestingly this reflects how activists, when engaging in planned events, leave their cell phones at home to avoid being arrested on the basis of the data on the phone (Andersen & Larsen, 2008: 7).

These facts tell us that Youth House activists were, indeed, self-reflexive and cautious when it came to issues of security, state surveillance and the constant threat that their means of communication could potentially be used against them by authorities.

In addition to the two types of usage discerned by Anderson and Larsen (2008) we found that a third kind of media use can be identified in terms of employing social media for building and sustaining support for the cause in a more long-term perspective. The YouTube videos on the eviction of the Youth House in 2007 that seek to reinforce the fighting spirit of the protester fall into this category. Although providing images of an event fixed in time, the different ways of portraying the eviction and the following riots in Copenhagen seem to have the function of reinforcing the fighting spirit of the protesters and create sympathy for the movement amongst a broader public. This would be of special importance since the strategy of the movement in the wake of the eviction was to claim a new building as soon as possible by tactics such as taking over new buildings and protesting in the streets. These videos construe an ongoing narrative where the "spirit of the Youth House "will live on long after it's destruction" as one YouTube user puts it. In this sense, activists seem to be using YouTube not only to promote their cause but also as an audio-visual archive of their offline activities. In doing so it become a place of memory where activists can return to in order to view documentation of their own participation or that of others in previous direct action events. In a recent study of two London-based social movement organisations and their management of visibility in popular social networking and file sharing sites, the author demonstrates how photos from offline events can help sustain commitment to the group, as visual self-representations enable emotional engagement in relation to a cause and foster commitment to the act of participation (Uldam, 2010: 312).

The "standard" pro-Youth House video on YouTube is a mix of still photography or moving images depicting clashes between police and protesters, set to forceful club music. At times text slides are used to back up arguments for why the resistance against the police should be violent. The images focus on the one hand on the bravery and strength of the protesters themselves, on the other hand on the brutality of the police - thereby providing a classic example of war propaganda, where the violent acts of the one side is pictured as heroic, whereas the enemy is condemned as a brute. The comments sections of the clips are, as often the case on YouTube, extremely polarised. Supporters of the movement post cheerful comments encouraging activists to keep up the struggle, whereas dissenters use crude language condemning the acts, creating a debate which for the greater part of the cases transcends into pure 'flaming' or hate speech. The users who upload the videos often have names that reveal their commitment, such as "danishpoliceviolence" or "ungerenblir" (the Youth House stays).

Fig 1. Opening image from the video 'Ungeren Blir': The text reads "Some things are worth fighting for. The Youth House '69' We will never surrender."

However, the myriad voices on YouTube are not in unison as these videos paying homage to the movement are juxtaposed on the very same platform with videos condemning the activists and their cause. The video 'Nej til Ungdomshuset' (No Youth House), draws upon the same kind of imagery as the videos supporting the event. The music used is from a German Neo-Nazi hard rock group vowing to fight for the Fatherland against intruders, and it is difficult to know whether the intent of the sender is to picture the movement as fascist in a pejorative way or if the sender is him- or herself a fascist. This kind of dissonance where seemingly conflictual material appears side by side and is specifically characteristic of YouTube demonstrating the multifaceted nature of such sites, a polyphony of mainstream, alternative, hegemonic and potentially subversive clips (Christensen, 2008: 156).

The Facebook group 'Ungdomshuset blir', was launched a few days after the eviction in March 2007 and contains links to the web site and the MySpace site. In March 2009 it had about 2,300 members (this is still the case at the time of this writing [October 2010]). It contains photos, links, information about events, and discussions about the Youth House. On the wall of the group, a slow but steady stream of posts has continued in ongoing conversation over the years. The posts can be divided into three groups: supporters of the movement giving calls for actions; opponents of the movement criticising it in various ways; and students looking for information about the movement or persons to contact for schoolwork. Over the two years the group has existed, it has only generated about 120 posts. This is an indication that the wall, as is the case of most Facebook groups, does not in reality have the function of a discussion board and that discussions among the activist within the network are still mostly taking place outside of the realm of corporate social media. When dissenting views are posted, however, supporters of the movement are quick with rebuttal, and the conversation quickly gets harsh, despite the supposedly mitigating factor of

Facebook users displaying their real names. The Facebook group would probably best be seen as a way for individuals to be able to publicly give their support to the movement (Gustafsson, 2010).

The MySpace site, 69newsCPH, is no longer active, but served as an information hub during the time immediately following the eviction. Compared to the serene built-in graphics of Facebook, the MySpace site shows more vivid imagery. Most of the content consists of a series of short newscasts, using YouTube streaming video clips to provide a news source coming from within the movement, rather than relying entirely on external media. This might be seen as a hybrid of alternative and commercial media, as the content is alternative (peer produced), but the platform (MySpace) is commercial. On the site, the friends of 69newsCPH are also displayed. In contrast to Facebook, most MySpace user profiles are anonymous or represent organisations. In the case of 69newsCPH, this network of friends provides links to other alternative networks, movements, musicians and artists. Although the number of friends are fewer compared to the Facebook group (about 1,400 in March 2009), the conversation seems livelier, containing links and information to other events as well as shout outs for the movements. Interestingly, there seem to be no negative comments in the guestbook. The fact that the MySpace site is not active might have something to do with the fact that MySpace in general over the past few years has seen sinking levels of membership.

In addition, Myspace and Facebook profiles seem to have yet another function in the way they are used - much resembling that of a flyer. Only with the advantage over regular paper flyers that digital flyers comes with a personal endorsement – a recommendation from someone within the activist's own network.

Fig 2. MySpace account using a poster promoting the protest event 'Blokr action' in 2008 in the profile picture.

One example is uploading a poster as your personal profile picture to promote an upcoming protest event or happening. This creates a way of effectively spreading the word in personal networks seeing how one's profile picture is shown in the profiles of others every time someone leaves a comment (Andersen & Larsen, 2008).

Particularly noteworthy of the use of the Gmail account blokrnu@gmail.com (bloc now) is the way in which the activists successfully shape technology and bend the hegemonic technological structures and rationalities to work in their favour. Youth House activists reported that E-mailing was absolutely pivotal to them when it came to mobilising - but not so much as a means to send information from one person to

another but rather in terms of a gmail accounts ability to work as a many-to-many form of communication (Andersen & Larsen, 2008). In this manner, all users within the network had access to the account and thereby were able to answer any incoming mail and communicative with everyone within the network in an ongoing asynchronous dialogue. By using the draft application to collaboratively make flyers, press releases etc, they transformed what is intended as a personal email account into a collective online working tool attesting to what Feenberg (1991) terms as the interpretive flexibility of technological artefacts present in the perpetual struggle over technological processes and producer-user relationships. Whether this kind of media practice can be called subversive is open to argument. But it is reflective of the creativity and adaptive appropriation with which the activists respond to the technological structures, constraints and rationalities they face when trying to navigate in the technological terrain and balance issues of visibility and dissent. In other words, they attempt to make use of the potentials provided by the online realm for publicity purposes, and at the same time use these spaces to debate, negotiate and coordinate dissent.

4.2 Online protest cultures 2.0 — the case of the European Social Forum 2008

The European Social Forum, the annexed little sister of the 'Word Social Forum', is often phrased as a counter-piece to the World Economic Forum held each year in Davos. The social forums of the progressive Left serve to counter the agenda of these forums with one more in keeping with notions of justice, equality and democracy. These annual global, macro-regional and national events function as an arena where organizations, affinity groups and networks - radicals and reformists - meet in a "real life" exchange of knowledge, experience and ideas to coordinate shared strategies and campaigns for another, more just world order. In this sense, the forum is both a physical manifestation of a larger social movement often referred to by scholars as "the global justice movement" as well as a symbolic event, which marks a political process of a worldwide popular struggle for social and political change.

In 2008, the event took place in the labour movement stronghold Malmö, in the southern part of Sweden. According to the organizers, the 2008 ESF attracted in total 12,544 participants who indulged in political and cultural activities all over the city from the 17th to the 21st of September. The official ESF demonstration was estimated to have attracted some 15,000 participants (Wennerhag et al., forthcoming).

The issue of inter-textuality is one the first things that jump out when digging into the sphere of social media use by ESF participants. When watching a clip on YouTube you can repost the movie on your personal Facebook profile or MySpace domain, thereby personalizing or customizing your profile by sampling material from the different file-sharing sites. In this manner, all three social network sites are explicitly linked up to one another. The ESF2008 Facebook group, for example, links to a MySpace profile (http://www.myspace.com/esf2008) dedicated to the artists performing live in Malmö during the forum as illustrated below.
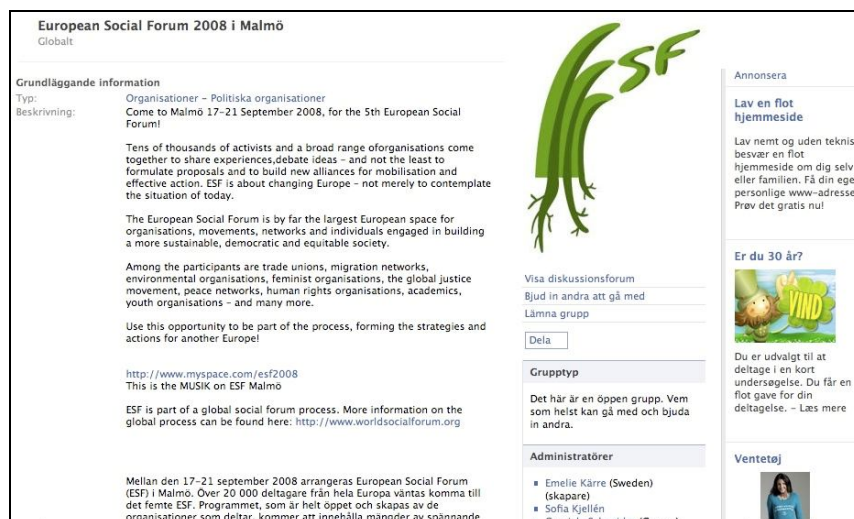
Fig 3. The official ESF2008 Facebook group

As illustrated in the screen shot above the ESF Facebook profile is, as in all platforms examined here, visually dominated by the advertisement banner figuring in the right hand side. To be sure, this could be seen to entail problems when trying to understand what distinguishes activists' politically embedded media use from other forms of public engagement in web-based media, a relationship often articulated in terms of an alternative versus mainstream dichotomy. In this regard, this somewhat trivial observation is emblematic of the kind of murkiness surrounding the web 2.0 platforms called into question here.   Activists are constantly negotiating community and commerce in a mash up of both user-generated amateur productions motivated by a desire for self-expression or community and professional media content driven by market motivations (Burgess & Green, 2009).

The official organising committee has made a few attempts to mobilise via YouTube by uploading videos with a plea to come to Malmö and concrete directions for how to get engaged in the forum process. Judging by the relatively low popularity of these mobilisation videos, having generated few hits and little posting response, it would seem that the video repository primarily serves as a spaces where participant have posted videos and comments in the aftermath of the forum to document their participation and give reports on their account of what took place in Malmö.

Unlike the mobilisation videos a group of videos which have however, stirred some degree of political debate is the "street account," a group of videos consisting mainly of unedited street-level footage taken using mobile phone camera of the actions on the night of the demonstration and the coinciding Reclaim the Streets party which lead to clashes between demonstrators and police and caused material damage estimated at around 26.5 million kronor (Westerberg, 2008). The vloggers all present their version of what happened and who were to blame for the conflicts and in particular the issue of violence and civil disobedience is continuously raised and fiercely debated in the postings around these videos. This quarrel represents a conflict that could be understood in terms of an internal dispute between reformist and radicals within the movement who assess the issue of civil disobedience and the use of violence as a political tool to create change from conflicting perspectives. But perhaps more incisively, the hostile nature of the debate could be seen as a

consequence of these 'texts' leaving the 'gated communities' or enclaves of likeminded on alternative media platforms. People posting comments tend to be very hostile - not only of the forum but of the Left in general and use the images of disturbances in the city to vent their antipathy towards the antifascist movement and the radical Left in Sweden. This kind of hate speech — often referred to as flaming when occurring in an online context — obviously has an effect on the ongoing debate, to some extent emptying it of its political value which instead turns into a mere act of mud-slinging - at least if approached from a non-agonistic, consensus-oriented conception of democracy inherent in the visions and stated goals of the social forum process. If indeed, the intent on the part of the ESF organising committee was to reach a broad audience or to incite public debate on issues at the heart of the forum process, both attempts seem to have failed.

5. Going Facebook - political forum or viral ad heaven?

*"(...) it's like holding all your political meetings at McDonalds and ensuring that the police come and film you while you do so" (*Yossarian, Indymedia activist, Nov. 2008. See appendix 3)

What is hinted at and critiqued in the above by this specific media activist working as a programmer on the global Indymedia platform is the recent turn in the nature of online political activism as activists increasingly turn to corporately owned sites when uploading and sharing their media productions and organising their political activities. Instead of advertising their political events on for example Indymedia, they put up a MySpace group. Videos go on YouTube and photos on FlickR. Email accounts are registered on Gmail or Hotmail rather than activist-run email services such as riseup.net or aktivix.org. The explosion of radical political content on the Web is according to this critical voice within the activist circles quite simply not happening in the context of radical media anymore. He bemoans the fact that media activists are uncritically putting the entire communications infrastructure of the radical left in the hands of "the enemy", indifferent or unaware of the implications this has to issues of security, data ownership, censorship of content, data mining etc. And, he continues, these events have to be seen in the light of history. The process of radical press and free media structures bowing under the pressure of the market is evident in several occasions in the past, such as in the context of the print-based radical press of the labour movement in late 19th and 20th century that fell prey to a monopolisation and mainstreaming process ultimately leading to its destruction. This activist's self-reflexive critique continues:

"(...) most people's experiences of the internet now happen inside the online equivalent of gated communities owned by the world's largest media corporations. Obviously we are organizationally outside these gated communities. I say "outside" because I suspect many Indymedia people do actually use corporate platforms like Facebook while regarding it as a sort of dirty secret. The question of how we interact with these heavily-defended enclaves on the internet is a crucial one, because they are where the majority of the world's online population live and work. If we want to change society, we need to deal with this, or we're no longer a group of radical media producers with advanced technical platforms (which we were in

2000-2003), we're the equivalent of a Geocities page - lost, lonely, and slightly crazy-looking".

Hence, at a more subtle level, what is described here is ultimately the felt or lived experience of neo-liberalism seen through the eyes of a media activist. Neo-liberalism understood as a particular mode of socioeconomic organization based around the primacy of the market — a process that is translatable into every single aspect of contemporary life. In the context of online political communication, this refers to, for example, lack of community, a collective 'we' and the way in which the social is being transposed into the individual and society into the market (See e.g. Couldry, 2008).

The dubious dimensions of "going Facebook" in the broad sense of the term touched upon in the above seems to be registered and reflected upon by some activists. However, the popularity and impact of these sites promising unseen potentials when it comes to reaching a broader audience seem to offset these issues as illustrated in this small closing remark and aber dabei in a group e-mail on the launching of Attac's Facebook group.

"P.S.: Of course there is a lot of valid criticism against Facebook. I think most Attacies are aware of it. Nevertheless, more and more people and progressive organisations use it as it has a huge potential for mobilization" (Sven Giegold, 'globattac' e-list, January 2008).

The arguments in favour of widening the possible contact points of their online presence are not hard to see. Besides the potentials for reaching large audiences by means of social networking in popular sites not hidden away in obscure corners of Cyberspace, the platforms offered by established media corporations are often user friendly and demand less technical skills than do alternative sites. So what is the problem apart from the somewhat obvious problems of data ownership and similar issues raised in the above? The argument brought forward here is that this change in media practice amongst activist entails a certain transformation of the format or 'genre' of media practice traditionally linked to political activism. It might even, to a certain extent, be seen to dilute the term in the sense that the credibility of the political message, the content itself is called into question by the contradictory context in which it occurs. When an ad for a quick money loan by SMS is right next to a debate stream on the causes and consequences of the global financial crisis on Attac's Facebook group, the inherent paradoxes in current media practice seem evident.

Regardless of how pivotal one might deem this seeming paradox, there is a need to raise the question of whether the indiscriminate use of these sites by political activists could be seen as an expression of a blurring of boundaries of the non-commercial space activists use, their developing of technical platforms and the line of argument representing global civil society as a democratic realm counterposed to a realm of self seeking, profit and power (Clifford, 2005:194). If considered from an historical perspective, alternative media platforms, such as Indymedia, were started - as a form of media direct action - by people worried about the negative social effects of broadcast forms of corporate media (see Appendix 5). The fact that a site such as Indymedia has been not only been overtaken on the inside by the very same corporate media they initially set out to circumvent, but that activists also now tend to rely on their 'services' is not only a paradox but can be a slippery slope towards eroding their reasons for coming to life, ultimately questioning the legitimacy of their political programme.

The question remains whether the activists become not only subject to but *part of* the very same neoliberal logic they try to subvert. In what way or to what extent does the political economy of these circuits condition the politically imbued media texts circulating here? To take the argument even further, these questions raise issues of a more philosophical nature, such as a possible critique of the existence of an 'outside'. As Heath & Potter (2006) argue, "today one of the most essential issues is the question of how active opposition, rebellion and articulation of alternatives is possible when all aspects of our everyday lives are implicated in the food chain of the pervasive consumer culture that reproduces and strengthens the existing power relations. Everything it would seen, protest included, can be turned into a commodity and used as an empty emblem of political correctness or radial chicness" (pp. ??).

In a brief return to the conflicting narratives accounted for in the theoretical section, social networking has often, in the techno-optimistic accounts, been inextricably linked to the dynamics and political practices of new social movements and seen to be emblematic of democratic and empowering practice. However, networking logics should not be romanticised. There is nothing inherently democratic in networked technologies and network logics have spread widely to other 'non-alternative' spheres. Media technologies have been popularised and the network logic is no longer to the same extent something characteristic of social movements only. This problem is articulated in the following way by a software developer in the Indymedia London network at their 2010 Software Summit in Whitechapel:

"Around 2005 the web changed - in a big way. It caught up with the stuff we had been doing from 1999 to 2005-2006. And now there are you know (...) Facebook, Twitter, YouTube. All these sites are fundamentally doing the exact same things activists were doing six years previously but they are doing it in a way that is on a scale and in a speed and a with a user base that is huge compared to anything that we ever did. We now need to react to that!" (for a link to the audio file of this keynote speech see Appendix 5)

From this vantage point, one might argue that what we are witnessing is not an activist community "selling out" to capital but rather an expression of corporate media having succeeded in commodifying the technical forms and participatory philosophy behind the user-generated media systems "invented" decades ago by media activists seeking to counter the broadcast media of the time. Consequently activists should not abandon a lost territory but find new ways to reclaim what was once theirs.

6. Closing remarks

As more online interaction is drawn to a small number of corporate spaces - including that of protest movements - a number of questions need to be raised. What are the dangers of public discussions and networks being controlled by corporate enterprises? What interests do owners and managers have in gathering information on potentially subversive issues and individuals? And how do commercial platforms change the nature of alternative media practices within a social movement context?

Further research will have to widen the scope to other forms of movements and other regions of the world, as well as include activists themselves more openly in the discussion. How do protesters perceive the paradoxes of alternative media practice

going mainstream? What are the views and strategies of corporate social media? What constraints in terms of service do they feel are necessary?

To be sure, the alternative media texts now circulating in popular online spaces are emblematic of a reorganisation of political space, but the question is whether this should be understood as a mainstreaming process of media practices or even go so far as to speak of a commodification of protest culture? Should the problem alternatively be understood as an outcome of increasing individualisation in society that produces individualised forms of activism? Some of the questions raised here have been left somewhat open and few answers are carved into stone. Our contribution shows some evidence of the ways corporate social media are used by activists and provides examples of the kind of internal struggles this media practice induces among activists working with programming and media production. More importantly, our study shows that, although an inevitable part of the communication repertoire for activists today, social media are not vital mobilising tools in terms of having the actual effect of getting people to take to the streets. Rather, they seem to serve primarily internal purposes of sustaining commitment and keeping abreast of peers within the network. For strictly mobilising purposes, e-mail lists, chain SMS messaging on mobile phones, and actual physical meetings prove far more efficient and secure.

Our argument is not a moralising critique or a finger-wagging at 'co-opted' activists selling out to capital or "the system". Rather, we issue a call for caution. In the attempt to leave the echo chambers and in the process of reaching beyond the circles of the likeminded, much is at stake. On one hand, important and long-ignored issues raised by progressive activists are in some regards leaving the enclaves. On the other hand, when faced with this increasingly corporate-led and mainstreamed political culture online, we need to raise questions of how the communicative spaces of radical web-based activism is changing its dynamics of political practice and urge caution as to the potential pitfalls and dangers this development may pose to the "free" spaces of radical voices in society.

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Breaking the spiral of silence: unpacking the "media debate" within global justice movements.
A case study of Dissent! and the 2005 Gleneagles G8 summit

Patrick McCurdy

Abstract

The so called 'media debate' within radical social movements is often perceived as a polarising subject that is best left to one side to avoid flaring an unsolvable debate. The 'media debate' within such movements is often a euphemism for a dichotomised view of media which embraces 'radical media' (Downing et al. 2001) such as Indymedia while dismissing 'mainstream media'. Drawing on over a year of participant observation and 30 activist interviews, this article takes as its focus 'the media debate' through a case study of the Dissent! network, and members within it, in the preparation for an enactment of contention at the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit. The article argues that while a binary view of 'the media debate' existed within Dissent! at a network level, such a perspective fails to capture some network activists' efforts to move beyond dualistic thinking towards a more nuanced, flexible and 'pragmatic' perspective which values both media. The article also considers the impact of the 'media debate' within Dissent! which, it is argued, created a 'spiral of silence' (Noelle-Neuman 1974) in the network. The conclusion reasserts the need for activist dialogue on the advantages and limitations of all forms in order to move beyond dualistic views of media.

Introduction

The 'media debate' within the Global Justice Movement is well known by activists and, at least within many autonomous movements, often viewed as a contentious and divisive topic but seemingly rarely discussed. At its core, the media debate is about differences (real and perceived) in the utility of interacting with the 'mainstream' or corporate media. While this topic is contentious, the use of 'radical' or social movement media in any form, though perhaps most notably as Indymedia, is often openly embraced. This has led to the evolution of a rather rudimentary dichotomy within some activist circles which valorises activist media as 'good' while demonising mainstream media as 'bad'. Consequently, the idea of 'the media debate' has also become a

euphemism for either the blanket interaction with, or rejection of, mainstream media. Often the rejection of mainstream is justified by the need to focus on a social movement's own media, thus creating a false choice of mainstream *or* movement media. However, the relationship that social movements have with media – radical and mainstream – is much more complex and nuanced than such rudimentary debates imply. Rucht (2004), for example, identifies a collection of four overlapping strategies social movements may deploy in the media arena. Yet dualistic thinking about media persists within the Global Justice Movement and is visibly manifest in the 'media debate'. To this end, the following article aims to open both an academic and activist dialogue on the media debate, and, in so doing, has two interrelated objectives.

First, this article seeks to extend academic understanding of the 'media debate' which has traditionally taken two forms. It was either simply recognised as a contentious issue but not analysed, or viewed in simplistic, dichotomous terms. Anderson (2003) has suggested that within grassroots 'leaderless' networks, issues of representation and how to interact with mainstream media have often caused 'serious rifts' between movement members. Starr (2000), in an interesting discussion on the construction of movement 'violence', does little more than acknowledge that a debate over media representation exists. Meanwhile, Snow (2003 p. 111) polemically and without irony argues that within the GJM it was 'cool' to hate the mainstream. Together, these articles highlight a gap in the literature which has failed to critically analyse the media debate. This omission is significant as the forms the debate has taken provide insight into how social movement actors understand mainstream media - their function, their position in society and their role in political contention – and how this understanding informs and shapes the 'mainstream' and 'radical' media practices of social movement actors.

The second objective of this paper is to articulate the rarely discussed foundations of the 'media debate' and suggest three ways in which it is understood from the perspective of activists. This is supplemented with an analysis of how the presence – and perceived severity – of the media debate influenced the media policy of the Dissent! network and the actions of some members within it. The hope is that the analysis here can contribute to a necessary dialogue within activist circles that takes an informed and critical perspective to *all* media practices.

This is achieved through a case study of the 'media debate' within the Dissent! network in the context of their mobilisation around the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit. The article begins by outlining the methodology underwriting this article. Next, the case study is contextualised with contention around the Gleneagles G8 Summit and specific background on Dissent!. Most of the article is dedicated to exploring the way in which 'the media debate' was articulated by Dissent! activists. Drawing on interview material, the media debate is initially presented in an anti-media/pro-media binary. It is then argued that while there is evidence that some within Dissent! take an 'anti-media' stance, evidence to

support the existence of a 'pro-media' position (as anti-media's antithesis) does not exist.

Breaking this binary, the article charts the emergence of a 'third-way' for dealing with media: a pragmatic media perspective. It is argued that a pragmatic orientation toward media is based on three main beliefs. First, media are viewed as sites of social struggle. Second, the 2005 G8 Summit as a media event provided a political opportunity. And, third, alternative media have a complimentary role to mainstream media in articulating protest. The last analytical section explores how 'the media debate' unfolded within the network. This section argues that the perceived fractious nature of the media debate within Dissent! brought about a 'spiral of silence' (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) on the topic of media interaction at a network-level, whereby the topic was assumed to be divisive and therefore not broached within Dissent!. Although the 'anti-media' stance within Dissent! is shown to be a very powerful regulator, it is argued that perspectives on the topic are not as divisive as some activists had believed. The implications of this are then considered in a brief conclusion.

Methods

This article is derived from a larger research project which followed Burawoy's (1998) "extended method" as its methodological approach. The 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit was selected as it was viewed as a part of an ongoing series of international mobilisations which have been on the mainstream media radar since 1999. The choices of research approach, technique and analysis have a significant impact on what is studied and found. This research is rooted in a qualitative approach, as such an orientation allows for the examination of the knowledge and practices of social actors, and is suitable when seeking to develop a detailed description of an event or process (Flick, 1998; Weiss, 1994).

This article is based on two types of empirical data gathered during fieldwork. First is the qualitative analysis of 30 semi-structured interviews conducted with 24 participants, all of whom were members of the Dissent! network (6 participants were interviewed twice – before and after the G8 Summit – accounting for 12 of the 30 interviews). Following Roseneil (1995), interviewee recruitment involved 'snowball sampling' based on a list of 'important variables' (age; gender; activist experience; degree of network involvement) which directed the strategic selection of informants. Interviews were conducted between March 2005 and August 2005. Wherever possible, interviews were conducted face-to-face though four interviews were conducted by telephone and one by email. On average, interviews lasted 45 minutes. Full transcripts were produced for all 30 interviews, totalling 444 single-spaced pages of text. Transcripts were analysed via 'thematic coding' (Flick, 1998) with the assistance of Atlas.ti to generate a theoretical framework based on theoretical areas of interest.

This study is also based on over a year of overt 'theory-driven participant observation' (Litcherman, 2002) with Dissent! prior to and at the 2005 G8 Summit. Fieldwork began in December 2003, consisting largely of electronic participant observation on relevant network listservs until October 2004. From October 2004 until August 2005, I regularly attended local and national Dissent! meetings and continued to participate actively on multiple Dissent! network listservs. The most intense period of fieldwork was the on-the-ground G8 mobilisation from June 29th, 2005 to July 9th, 2005 in Scotland. Throughout, fieldwork notes were taken, movement documents (paper and electronic) archived, and mainstream media articles logged. This data was largely used to compare with and consider themes emerging from interviews. One exception was Dissent!'s media strategy listserv, whereby the 533 emails posted to the list were thematically analysed to explore repertoire of media practices deployed by the network.

A closing comment on the generalisability of claims made in this article is necessary. While Dissent! may be similar to autonomous networks within the Global Justice Movement, social movements are contingent upon their social, political, economic and historical context (Tarrow, 1998, p. 3). Therefore, the below analysis of Dissent! is presented in an effort to understand the media debate within global justice movements.

Mobilising networks – Dissent! at the 2005 Gleneagles G8 summit

Unpacking the 'media debate' within Dissent!, and considering its implications, first require sufficient background information on the mobilisation around the Gleneagles G8 Summit and the Dissent! network itself. In total, three significant networks emerged to contest the Gleneagles Summit. First was the sympathetic Make Poverty History (MPH) campaign – the largest of the three networks. At its peak MPH consisted of a network of over 500 British and Irish NGOs, religious groups, and high-profile celebrities. The main event MPH organised – a rally in Edinburgh on July 2nd, 2005 – was attended by 225,000 people (BBC News, 2005). Second, *G8 Alternatives* (G8A), a network of approximately 30 mostly Scottish organisations, including trade unions, political parties, NGOs, and a handful of academics such as Noam Chomsky. G8A organised, among other actions and after much police interference, a marshalled march past the fence of the Gleneagles Hotel on July 6th, 2005, the first day of the G8 Summit, an event which was attended by an estimated 10,000 people (Vidal and Scott, 2005).

The third network was 'Dissent! – Network of Resistance Against the G8' (Dissent!), the focus of this article. The smallest of the three networks, Dissent! was an 'anti-capitalist' network with roots in the British environmental direct action movement. To understand Dissent!, it is worth briefly contextualising the network within a history of political contention within the United Kingdom, specifically the Environmental Direct Action movement (EDA). Plows (2002, p.

19) argues that the EDA can be situated on a "continuum" of social movement activity since the student movements of the late 1960s and 1970s, the anti-nuclear movement, and within the wider environmental movement of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The EDA may be differentiated from the wider environmental movement by its commitment to direct action (Plows, 2002). Within the UK, Doherty, Paterson and Seel (2000) argue that the birth of the EDA was characterised by a shift towards direct action:

> In the 1990s there was a dramatic rise in the amount of direct action...what distinguishes [this] new wave of direct action is an ethos characterised by an intention to affect social and ecological conditions directly, even while it also (sometimes) seeks indirect influence through the mass media, changed practises of politicians and political and economic institutions (Doherty et al., 2000, p. 1).

One of the most prominent organisations of the direct action movement of the 1990s was EarthFirst! (EF!). Wall (1999) offers a detailed and critical historical account of EF!'s rise and actions. The politics of the environmental movement and EF!, specifically with its legacy of anti-roads protests, played a crucial role shaping British environmental politics and specifically direct action politics.

While direct action activists were open to interacting with mainstream media, its their ethos was premised on the assertion that media coverage was not necessary for a protest to be worthwhile (Doherty, Plows and Wall 2003, p. 674). Moreover, a noticeable distrust of mainstream media developed within [the Direct Action movement due to negative experiences with journalists (Anderson, 1997; Doherty, Plows and Wall 2003). As Patterson (2003, p. 162) notes, the movement's critique of mainstream media was also [an ideological] premised on the belief that media interaction should not distract activists from the task at hand: direct action and its *direct* effect on the individual and the political system. This aversion to media coverage did not necessarily deter or deflect the media's interest in anti-roads or other EDA activists, but it did inculcate within the movement a critical orientation towards mainstream media; a legacy carried forward to Dissent!, as many individuals who were previously involved in EF!, or the EDA more generally, were also active in Dissent!.

Dissent! was envisioned as a non-hierarchical network comprised of organisations, autonomous collectives and individuals. Dissent!'s structure carried forward the organisational model of loose, purpose-oriented networks which have mobilised around international meetings since the late 1990s (Cammaerts, 2005, 2007; Fenton, 2008; Harvie, Milburn, Trott, & Watts, 2005; Juris, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Klein, 2000). Dissent! described itself as follows:

> ...the Network has no central office, no spokespeople, no membership list and no paid staff. It's a mechanism for communication and co-ordination between local groups and working groups involved in building resistance to the G8, and capitalism in general (Dissent!, 2004).

Dissent! was characterised by two types of groups: local and working groups. Briefly, local groups were autonomous, geographically-based nodes of Dissent!. They offered a reference point for individuals, affinity groups and various collectives to gather and plan protest on a local level while still connecting with the wider mobilisation. Working groups were 'groups of individuals working together on a specialised aspect of the organisational process' (Dissent!, 2006). They were established around various tasks such as catering, or actions such as blockades. In total, the network consisted of a collection of 16 local groups dispersed across the United Kingdom and approximately 20 network working groups.

Dissent!, Gleneagles and the Hori-Zone ecovillage

G8 Summits have evolved from the sequestered gatherings of the economic elite to full-scale political media events (McCurdy, 2008). Thus the G8 Summit in Scotland attracted much local, national and international media attention. While delegates where at the five-star Gleneagles Hotel for the G8, Dissent!ers established the Hori-Zone eco-village and 'convergence space' 30 kilometres away in Perthshire, Scotland. Hori-Zone provided space for 5,000 campers and served as a space to both plan and conduct resistance. with around 1,000 activists departing from the camp to take part in blockade-type actions on Dissent!'s July 6th 'Day of Action'. The camp was open to activists. but enacted a policy prohibiting mainstream media from entering. though it was unable to prevent undercover, predominantly tabloid, journalists from sneaking in.

Many journalists congregated out in front of the camp's guarded and fortified entrance. In anticipation of the media interest, an activist group within Dissent!, who came to be known as the CounterSpin Collective (CSC), formed to facilitate media interaction between activists and mainstream media. Their specific practices are discussed elsewhere (CounterSpin Collective, 2005; McCurdy, 2009). Important for the present argument is that an activist collective which emerged from within Dissent! took responsibility for interacting with media and did so at their 'media gazebo' which was positioned *outside* of the camp's entrance. The gazebo's positioning outside of the camp, as opposed to immediately in front of the gate or even inside the camp, demonstrates the oppositional network-level view taken toward media as an adversary to be defended against. From this perspective, the media gazebo was a space where journalists could gravitate (as opposed to the camp's entrance), and where members of the CSC could manage media.

While mainstream media were prohibited from entering Hori-Zone, an Independent Media Centre (IMC) was established *within* the camp's boundaries. The ethos of the IMC endorses a flattening of the traditional hierarchy of representation found in news production processes (Bell, 1991; Gans, 1979; Tumber, 1999) through opening the possibility of creating and publishing news to anyone with the skills and interest (Atton, 2002; Downing, 2002, 2003a, 2003b; Downing et al., 2001; Pickerill, 2003). Thus the IMC at

Hori-Zone provided computers and internet access, allowing anyone at the camp to use Indymedia as a platform to publish their news. The CounterSpin Collective, on the other hand, was premised on associating with mainstream media and, as a consequence, it was made very clear to CSC members by other activists within Dissent!, and some individuals affiliated with the IMC, *that IMC resources provided at Hori-Zone were in no way to be used to facilitate any kind of interaction with mainstream media*. As a result of this advice CSC members used the IMC's Internet access — *the only source of Internet access at Hori-Zone* — both sparingly and covertly.

The above anecdote of members of an activist collective who took it upon themselves to manage mainstream media resorting to the clandestine use of internet access offered by Indymedia — arguably *the* organisation that symbolises the Global Justice Movement — aptly illustrates the network-level culture within Dissent! that the mainstream media should be unquestionably rejected and radical media embraced. What is more, clear boundaries were drawn between mainstream media and radical media with mainstream media front stage, radical allowed backstage. There are understandable and defendable reasons for not permitting mainstream media in Hori-Zone. However, the failure to share resources between activists supposedly in solidarity within the same network leading to the clandestine use of said resources not only captures the dichotomised perspectives on media, but illustrates a need for dialogue on the role of *all* media within activism.

While this dichotomised thinking — radical media good, mainstream media bad — was evident in network-level practices, it was less visible in activist-level talk. Those interviewed for this research viewed Indymedia as a vital activist resource but, in the context of a media event protest such as the G8, also saw the benefit of interacting with mainstream media. This nuanced view, however, is not captured in the traditional binary view of the media debate.

'The media debate'? Understandings and perspectives

The existence of 'the media debate' in Dissent! was widely acknowledged amongst those network activists interviewed. Moreover, participants and interviewees had little difficulty articulating their perceived foundations of the media debate, particularly the anti-media side. When asked, all interviewees had heard of the 'media debate', with the exception of one interviewee whose lack of awareness can be attributed to a paucity of prior involvement in 'radical' politics and only a peripheral association with Dissent!. Despite the majority of interviewees being aware of the media debate, some felt the issue was not well understood by Dissent! or the Global Justice Movement more generally. Hamish, for example, described the media debate as '...heated, passionate, but not very coherent' (Interview with Hamish[1] 09/07/2005). The synthesis of the media debate offered by Hamish captures both the perceived controversial nature of the debate and the disjuncture in discussions.

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[1] All names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

Interviewees predominantly employed two related binaries to describe the media debate. The first dichotomy portrayed the debate as being between using movement media, specifically Indymedia, versus mainstream media. The argument being that in a movement with already limited resources, focussing energy on mainstream media diverts attention away from independent media. The second, more general understanding of the media debate is summed up neatly by Scott who described it as being about 'do we talk to the media or not?' (Interview with Scott, 31/03/2005). Positioning the debate in a 'do we or don't we?' manner alludes to the most common binary drawn upon to explain the media debate: 'anti media' versus 'pro-media'. However, as will be argued below, while the media debate is often viewed in dichotomous terms, the 'pro-media' stance is, in fact, an artificially constructed position that did not appear to be held by anyone within Dissent!.

In order to understand the foundations of the media debate, the ideologies and motivations which are perceived to be underwriting each perspective must be understood. Accordingly, interviewees' understanding of the anti-media position is first considered. It will then be argued that the pro-media stance is a position which does not exist and instead has been constructed by the anti-media position. This will be followed by the discussion of a 'third' position within the debate referred to as the 'pragmatic-media approach'.

Anti-Media (Binary)

The anti-media perspective was both practical and ideological. It was based on various readings and understandings of the political economics of media, as well as on a commitment to radical, Situationist and/or autonomist politics. Below is an overview of prominent themes and perspectives within the anti-media position within Dissent!.

One conviction that drove the anti-media perspective evident within Dissent! was the assertion that an anti-capitalist network such as Dissent! will never be represented fairly by 'capitalist media'; doing so goes against the media's business interests. This position was described by Sarah: '[the] media [are] owned by big corporations that represent the interests of big business, they are never going to report fairly on us so why even bother?' (Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005). This political-economic analysis of media, parallels academic research in the field such as the work of McChesney (2000) or Herman and Chomsky (1998). Taking the political-economic view to its extreme, the anti-media perspective, at its most acute, aggregates mainstream media into a unitary entity. Bluntly, 'It's all shit. You know, from the Sun to the Guardian, they all suck' (Interview with Darren, 07/08/2005)[2].

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[2] It is important to expand upon the context of this quote. The comment was made as Darren was describing how he perceived the 'anti-media' debate position. Darren later went on to position himself as holding a pragmatic-media viewpoint. Regardless, the feeling that the quote captures 'all media suck' still accurately reflects the blanket anti-media critique.

A second major perceived theoretical underpinning of the anti-media position was situationism (Debord, 2006). Drawing predominantly on Debord's concept of 'spectacle', media were seen to simply reproduce the spectacle of capitalist society. This Situationist-inspired perspective of media is evident in the Wombles analysis of the G8. In a posting on their webpage under the subsection 'Anti-Media(tion) '' ', the collective argued that:

> Revolt is something you experience not something you film ... 'collaborating' with mainstream media reinforces the false and 'unlived' experiences generated by the spectacle of the media and capitalist society. Instead, it is argued, efforts should be placed on *direct* experiences, struggles and relationships. From this perspective, the media is viewed as a 'consumer product', a commodity and therefore not a site of struggle, but a site of oppression and distraction. A struggle against the media and the 'spectacular relationships' it maintains requires an outright rejection of media'(Wombles, 2005).

In tandem with a rejection of mainstream media is a valorisation of movement-generated media and particularly Indymedia. From the anti-media perspective, self-produced radical media has the ability to open up discursive spaces that are otherwise constrained and controlled by mainstream media. Moreover, producing one's own media is empowering. It reduces a dependence on corporate and government bodies for representation and reinforces the do-it-yourself ethos of autonomous mobilisations.

Creating media also offers a level of control over representation not possible with mainstream media. Individuals, collectives and networks may present themselves on their own terms, using their own images and words. Michael described Indymedia as 'stories we write ourselves' (Interview with Michael, 17/05/2005). On the other hand, with mainstream media there is a lack of control. In fact, many interviewees, regardless of their position on the media debate, recognised that, unless an interview was live, the final edit and therefore control over representation rested with the media. Handing over representational control requires a level of trust in mainstream media. However the anti-media position was rooted in a *fundamental distrust* of mainstream media. Many individual Dissent! members, and the network itself, had directly experienced breaches of trust via media exposure, undercover journalists and quotes being taken out of context or even simply 'made up'. Ultimately, these cases of selective, hyper-dramatic and inflammatory reporting were used as evidence that the mainstream media should not be trusted.

Insight into the anti-media position may also be taken from Silverstone's discussion of complicity. Silverstone (2007) suggests that any interaction with media involves a level of 'complicity' between all parties. This is driven by the mutual understanding that any effort by media to 'claim a reality' is 'inadequate and compromised by its own contradictions'(p. 129). Therefore, those who willingly accept the limitations of media without questioning or challenging them are complicit. However, the anti-media position - the rejection of any involvement with mainstream media — is grounded in a view that media never

can or will represent the world accurately. In this sense, the media-debate is rooted in a rejection of complicity; an unwillingness to accept the inadequacies of mainstream media representation[3].

The anti-media position also has a historical legacy which includes, as outlined above, not only the experiences of activists involved in the Environmental Direct Action Movement, but also the ideological critique of media representation, particularly when it distracts or hinders engaging in direct activism (Anderson, 1997; Doherty, Plows and Wall 2003; Patterson 2003). The anti-media perspective has ideological roots in the autonomous politics of Dissent!. Katsiaficas, (2006, p. 21-24) argues that autonomists are critical towards media, which they see as a potential tool for police to identify and arrest activists. Katsiaficas (2006, p. 21-24) also highlights the potential of media representation to manufacture a network hierarchy and thereby potentially creating 'leaders'.[4] This is problematic on two fronts. First, it could potentially destabilise the dynamics within a movement whereby the power of media-selected 'leaders' becomes disproportionate, abused or both. This conundrum is avoided by not interacting with media (Katsiaficas, 2006, p. 22). Second, autonomous politics is premised on a rejection of leaders and a belief that individuals and collectives should be free to engage in politics and use tactics as they deem fit (Flesher Fominaya, 2007). This reading of autonomous politics is reflected in the view of Dissent! as a 'mechanism for communication and coordination' and the assertion that it has 'no spokespeople'(Dissent!, 2004). An anti-media position compliments this perspective with the view that it is not possible, nor desirable, for the media to collectively represent the network. This does not rule out, as will be argued later, autonomous collectives interacting with media if they chose to do so, but argues against such action on a network level.

Pro-Media (Binary)

A debate usually requires two contrasting viewpoints. The existence of a 'pro-media' stance within the media debate may therefore be assumed to occupy a contrapuntal position to its 'anti-media' counterpart. Therefore while anti-media proponents reject any level of 'complicity' with media, a pro-media perspective would be envisioned as openly, and without question, embracing mainstream media interaction. However, from observations of the Dissent! network, it would seem this all-accepting 'pro-media' position does not exist. None of the participants interviewed for this research expressed a belief in line with the 'pro-media' stance as articulated above. Moreover, such a conviction was not seen during fieldwork. This is particularly noteworthy considering that

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[3] Nonetheless, the argument for complicity could easily be extended to include alternative media. However, the self-determination allowed by alternative media, the ability to control the reality presented, is what drives the anti-media position.

[4] For an interesting account of how the media can create leaders in social movements and the consequences thereof, see Gitlin (1980).

the balance of interviewees for this research favoured individuals who were willing to work with media. This suggests that there is a disjuncture between the imagined and the actual positions of the media debate. It also lends further credence to the earlier suggestion by Hamish that the media debate is passionate but not coherent.

The 'pro-media' position then – as part of a media debate binary – should be seen as a straw man constructed by 'anti-media' discourse. Put differently, a natural or real antithesis to the anti-media stance *within* Dissent! did not exist, except perhaps in the minds of certain individuals with anti-media sentiments. Evidence of this may be found in Jeff's description of the 'pro' side as consisting of 'media tarts' and 'media suckers' that have an idealised view of media. Similarly, Michael described those in the 'pro' binary as running the gamut from 'optimistic to naïve' (Interview with Michael, 17/05/2005). While the 'pro' stance was not evident in Dissent!, outside of the network, this type of stance was evident in the phantasmagorical actions of *Make Poverty History* and *Live 8*. Moreover, language describing these networks as 'media tarts' was, in fact, not uncommon. Consequently, the 'pro' stance should not necessarily be seen as a something *within* the network, but something *around* the network; a strategy deployed by competing networks. Thus the constructed 'other' of the 'pro' stance could in fact be read as a reference to – and critique of – tactics deployed by *Live 8* and *Make Poverty History*[5].

This insight still leaves the unanswered question, 'If the 'pro-media' position is not the antithesis of the 'anti-media' position within Dissent!, what form did it take?' Answering this question requires breaking the anti/pro media binary. The next section outlines a third approach, referred to as the 'pragmatic-media perspective', which was the most common position taken by interviewees, and may be understood as a refined and informed alternative to either the anti or pro positions.

Beyond a binary: A 'pragmatic' media perspective

Taken at face value, the media debate implies the presence of ideological opposites. Yet, as shown above, the anti-media stance was vocally expressed by some in Dissent!, while the 'pro-media' position – as the antithesis of the anti-media position – was a movement myth. Nonetheless, there was support from some members within Dissent! for interacting with media. However, this position can not be considered particularly 'pro-media' in the sense described above. Instead, the stance is termed a pragmatic-media perspective. The pragmatic-media perspective is founded on three core arguments, each of which will be explored below. First, it recognises the media as a site of social struggle. Second, the G8 is viewed as a media event which provides an opportunity for

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[5] Many thanks to the Anonymous reviewer for suggesting that the constructed 'Other' may be a group *outside* of Dissent! such as Make Poverty History; I had not made the connection.

visibility in the media, and third, radical media is recognised as playing a crucial role in social struggle.

An Environmental Struggle

The pragmatic-media approach, unlike the anti-media stance, views mainstream media as a 'site of struggle' on par *and in tandem* with more traditional, material spaces of contention, such as city streets. Media are not separate fields of action, but overlapping fields which are intimately and inevitably intertwined with everyday life. In the context of 2005 G8 Summit specifically, and the spectacle of large scale summit mobilisations more generally, media are sites of struggle requiring appropriate activist practice. This perspective is captured in Darren's comment:

> For me, mainstream media is just like any other social field, a field of struggle. The Summit protest actually is one of the crucial fields of struggle. We don't just want to leave it to that, so to speak, because the police talk to the media, you know. Bob Geldof talks to the media, excessively so. If we don't, we lose a lot of the potential that is here in these global media spaces (Quote 1; Interview with Darren, 07/08/2005).

Darren was one of only two interviewees to explicitly refer to the media as a 'site of struggle'. However, the argument Darren employs to qualify his claim - one might as well try and influence the media or someone else will do it for you - was heard from other interviewees and during field work. Gregory, for example, commented, 'I just think it's kind of crazy not to engage with the mainstream media because they're going to say what they like about you and you should just at least try and have some kind of impact on it' (Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005). Similarly, Sarah stated, 'I think we will be absolutely shafted if we don't talk to the media' (Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005). The argument made by Darren, Gregory, Sarah and others is premised on the belief that a policy of non-interaction, such as that promoted by the anti-media stance, does not prevent media coverage. Instead, it simply allows others, particularly the police and political opponents, to represent the network and the protests.

Recognising the media as a legitimate field of social action necessitates a revisiting of 'complicity'(Silverstone, 2007). It was argued above that the anti-media position is rooted in a rejection of 'complicity' with mainstream media. But, while the concept of 'complicity' works well for the anti-media ideology, from a pragmatic media approach, it is problematic. To illustrate why this is, it is first helpful to review the concept. Silverstone argues that news production 'involves complicity in which all involved participate; a refusal to recognise that the process...is inadequate and compromised by its own contradictions.... Subjects are complicit... when they fail to recognise the impossibility, and partiality, of representation' (p. 129). The footnote associated with this quote then suggests 'complicity turns to collusion, when... media subjects seek, in their understanding of the process, to manipulate the setting in order to guarantee participation and visibility' (ibid, footnote 8, p. 196). Complicity is described

both as an intrinsic and requisite property of the media process as well as an (im)moral act on the part of those involved in the process. Media demands complicity and people act complicitly.

Silverstone offers little way out of the complicity bind; it is required by media. At the same time individuals, on all sides of the media process, must challenge the realities portrayed by media. Failure to confront the media's shortcomings results in complicity. Paradoxically, identifying media shortcomings — for example, recognising the media's need of a 'news hook' (Gans, 1979; Ryan, 1991) and adjusting one's actions appropriately - from Silverstone's perspective, moves beyond complicity into media 'collusion.'

Collusion implies a degree of criminality; parties inappropriately conspiring together. The pragmatic media position does not view itself as conspiring with media. Moreover, it does not take an unquestioning view of media. Instead, the inherent representational inadequacies of media are recognised. The media, in the words of one interviewee, is 'an enemy and a friend'(Interview with Tom, 08/07/2005). This seemingly paradoxical statement illustrates an ability to differentiate between media, unlike the anti-media position which views media as unitary entity. On a related point, the political economic critique expressed by ardent anti-media proponents is also folded into the pragmatic media view. However, instead of a fatalistic or ideological rejection of media on this premise, a pragmatic media perspective uses this information to endorse a *selective* and *strategic* approach to media. In this spirit, and as outlined elsewhere (CounterSpin Collective, 2005; McCurdy, 2009), various strategies were discussed and deployed by Dissent!'s CounterSpin Collective, such as the preferential treatment of 'friendly' journalists in an effort to influence media coverage.

Media Events as Political Opportunities

With the media recognised as a legitimate field of social struggle, the 2005 G8 Summit was seen as a significant event on the media landscape. In the words of one interviewee, the G8 is 'too big of an opportunity not to [protest]' (Interview with Scott, 31/03/2005). All interviewees, regardless of their orientation towards media, saw the G8 as an opportunity for an activist gathering. The comments of Sarah capture this view well:

> It's where we come together and we meet each other, and we network and we build things together. We try and create space-self managed spaces. We try and feed a thousand people. We try and manage things together, we try and do actions together, we try and create things together and I think that that is invaluable in building a...truly global movement (Quote 2; Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005)

However, for those of a pragmatic-media orientation, the media event status of the 2005 G8 Summit also provided its own 'political opportunity' (Tarrow, 1998). From Mary's perspective, an interviewee active in the CounterSpin Collective, the 2005 G8 Summit offered a 'window of opportunity to get a

message out to a much wider public'(Interview with Mary, 08/07/2005). Implicit in Mary's comment is recognition that the G8 Summit is a news event with a capped media lifespan. Sarah, also active in CounterSpin, felt that intense media interest in the 2005 G8 Summit made it easier for critiques of neo-liberalism to be discussed in the media:

> I think it moves us and our critique much closer to the surface than it was prior to that and we don't have to fight so much harder for media attention because the media attention is already there so I think there is a lot of benefits to doing a protest at the G8 Summit (Quote 3; Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005).

Taking the two comments together, the pragmatic-media perspective viewed the G8 Summit as a limited opportunity to register protest on the media horizon, characterised by an easing of the barriers to access the media arena. This supports Gamson and Meyer (1996) who argue that media access is an element of political opportunity. Part of the opportunity, from the pragmatic perspective, was the recognition of *difference between media outlets*. Neil, for example, noted, '…I think it's pretty clear that the BBC is different than the Sun and we should hold the BBC to a higher level of fairness than we would the Sun…'(Interview with Neil 06/04/2005). Meanwhile Scott remarked, 'You are not going to get… an intelligent analysis of the left position in the Daily Telegraph, are you?' (Interview with Scott, 31/03/2005). Thus while anti-media proponents would paint all media with the same brush, a pragmatic perspective seems to appreciate, and subsequently capitalise on sympathetic media and/or journalists covering the G8 Summit.

In discussing the G8 and the media as an 'opportunity', it is important to make one final observation. Tarrow (1998) has described political opportunities as external resources that an aggrieved group may 'take advantage' of, but that do not 'belong' to them (p. 20). Mainstream media easily fit this description. Of note, however, is that many people who exhibited a pragmatic-media perspective often felt activists should not compromise themselves for media. Guy commented that, 'We should not distort what we do in order that it will be more reported' (Interview with Guy, 21/04/2005). Chris qualified media interaction by commenting 'I don't think we should pander to the needs of the mainstream media'(Interview with Chris, 20/07/2005). Of course, what constitutes pandering to the media is subjective and may be problematised further in the context of a media event, such as the 2005 G8 Summit, yet doing so would require a different research focus than the one at present. The objective of this section has been to illustrate how activists viewed the G8 Summit as a political opportunity for media visibility.

Radical (Movement) Media

As outlined above, the anti-media stance views radical or movement produced media as an important resource for creating and opening up discursive space, facilitating resistance, and generating support, as well as contributing to identity

formation. These 'advantages' of alternative media do not go unnoticed by the pragmatic-media perspective. But instead of preferring one media at the expense of another, a pragmatic perspective prefers a 'complimentary' approach drawing on mainstream *and* alternative media. The following remarks by Edward reflect this perspective:

> Indymedia... is a form of direct action media work. Be the media! Be your own media! I think you should be the media but the way you are going to get to be the media is that you be both... the mainstream media and your own media, and you sort of play off and shift power from one to the other, you know? (Quote 4; Interview with Edward, 10/08/2005)

From the pragmatic-media viewpoint both forms of media - mainstream and alternative - are important. Both compliment each other and deserve movement attention. The following passage by Neil also reflects the complimentary approach:

> The biggest numbers that you reach with the least amount of control over your message is the mainstream media. And then lower numbers of people that you reach with total control is through your own independent media. So, there are two perspectives which personally, I find complementary and not counter to each other necessarily, are to use both the independent media--your own media--and mainstream media. I think how you can do this in a complementary way is to say your own messages as clearly as you can through independent media and continue to try and grow independent media but also at the same time to work more with mainstream media which reaches a large number, and not only try to get your message out but try to direct people towards your media.

(Quote 5; Interview with Neil, 06/04/2005).

The above quote was taken from Neil's discussion of the media debate and subtly presents mainstream and radical media as contrasting perspectives. However, instead of endorsing a preference for one type of media over another, the dual emphasis on radical and mainstream media endorsed by Neil reflects the pragmatic media perspective held and shared by many interviewees.

The passage is also of note as Neil illustrates an awareness of the strengths and limits of both media types. Similarly, many pragmatic-media proponents felt an emphasis on mainstream media is needed to compensate for the shortcomings of alternative media[6]. The critique offered by Andre is of particular relevance:

> Indymedia has become a very useful tool for activists, but it is made by activists about activists, for activists. It doesn't exist outside that. So, and I use the example of Indymedia but ... there are many other things

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[6] Of course, the inverse is also true. Alternative media provides numerous well documented advantages to mainstream media. However, in the context of this discussion what is at issue is the normative rejection of *all* mainstream media. Consequently, the aim of the argument is to highlight the value mainstream media is seen to bring to radical social movements.

> we could mention... that have failed to actually struggle with mainstream
> media for people's attention... for their hearts and minds. (Quote 6;
> Interview with Andre, 18/08/2005)

Andre suggests an interesting distinction between Indymedia as an activist tool
and medium of public information. While Indymedia is presented as valuable
resource for activist organising, Andre argues that it has limited utility as an
information medium outside of activist circles. Moreover, as Indymedia is
unable to match the audience pull of mainstream media, he believes activists'
efforts should also include mainstream media. This perspective echoes Gamson
who argues that 'only general-audience media provide a potentially shared
public discourse'(Gamson, 1995, p. 85)[7]. However, as Neil notes above, the
emphasis on mainstream comes with a loss of 'control' over one's message.
Conscious of this limitation, many pragmatic-media proponents apply various
practices in an attempt to control and influence media coverage. The control
lost through interactions with mainstream media can, in some sense, be
compensated for through the use of movement media.

In conclusion, the pragmatic media perspective sees both mainstream and
radical media as each having their strengths and limitations. Interaction with
mainstream media is not unquestionably endorsed but seen as a strategic
necessity in the context of a political opportunity afforded by a highly mediated
event. It is this 'pragmatic' position to the media debate that was expressed by
the majority of interviewees approached for this research and was a perspective
taken by the CounterSpin Collective who, as noted earlier in this paper, took it
open themselves to interact with mainstream media at the Hori-Zone ecovillage,
the final section of this article examines the creation of a 'spiral of silence'
(Noelle-Neumann, 1974) around the media debate within Dissent! which
prevented the 'pragmatic perspective' from being discussed, despite the
prominence of this view towards the media debate.

The biggest movement debate never had: the media debate and the spiral of silence

Despite the prevalence of the pragmatic-media perspective amongst
interviewees, this viewpoint was rarely, if at all, discussed at network meetings
of Dissent!. One reason for this is that there was a *lack of debate* about
mainstream media interaction within Dissent!. This lack of debate, it is argued,
created a 'spiral of silence' (Noelle-Neumann, 1974) on the topic. Noelle-
Neumann (1974) used the term 'spiral of silence' to define the process where
individuals assess and monitor their social environment, adjusting their
willingness to speak out based on their assessment of the climate of opinion.
The more someone feels that his opinion is in the minority, the less willing he is
to openly state it due to a fear of ridicule and/or rejection (p. 45).

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[7] While Gamson views mainstream media as an important forum for public discourse, he is very
sceptical of the ability of social movements to get 'positive' media coverage.

As argued above, interviewees were able to articulate the foundations of the media debate and also took a personal position on it. And while some collectives associated with Dissent! published their analysis of why one should work with the media (e.g. the CounterSpin Collective) or should not (e.g. the Wombles), discussion on a network level failed to materialise. The lack of dialogue led the issue of the 'media debate' to be characterised by one interviewee as one of the biggest movement debates that has never been had:

> It's one of those two or three really huge debates that actually never happened. People refer to it as if there actually were a debate about it. And it just doesn't happen... What you see is... people just holding on to their entrenched positions. And there isn't really much of an attempt to explore the disagreements and the difference in any depth....

(Quote 7; Interview with Andre, 18/08/2005).

In the above passage Andre recognises the issue of mainstream media as both legitimate and contentious, but challenges the suggestion that a 'debate' about media has ever taken place. For Andre, what is often described as a 'debate' is not about discussion, but about silence. From this perspective, the media debate is characterised by an absence of dialogue between conflicting ideologies. The lack of discussion was often attributed to a desire to avert conflict as the media debate was viewed as a potential deal breaker. Scott's description of the debate is relevant:

> I think it's a divisive argument.... I think people spend a lot of time who are very well-aligned on lots of other stuff and they disagree quite fiercely at times on media. I think it is one of the things that can drive a wedge between people or groups of people....

(Quote 8; Interview with Scott, 22/09/2005)

By avoiding a debate on the politics and ideological positions underwriting the media debate, Dissent! members were not required to test what many perceived as a fragile consensus within the network. Having said this, it is important to recognise that there may not have been a conscious effort to sidestep a detailed political discussion. This is because the most suitable venue for such a discussion would have been a Dissent! national gathering. However, the gatherings only had a finite amount of time, most of which focused on the logistics of the mobilisation. Consequently, the suggestion to dedicate time to a strategic rather than a tactical discussion of media might have been met with resistance. Moreover, and as suggested above, the media debate is often portrayed as an unbridgeable divide within the network and the movement at large. Therefore, not discussing the issue prevented the appearance of visible fissures or 'wedges' in the network's foundation. Despite a veil of consensus, a debate had not been held and the issue remained unresolved.

Within Dissent!, there is evidence of a spiral of silence developing around the issue of the media debate. The significance of this being the perceived dominant view on the media debate within the network was the 'anti-media' stance which had the effect of silencing other discourses. Support for this may

be found in the dialogue of members of the CounterSpin Collective interviewed for this research. The most telling example comes from Gregory who expressed feelings of trepidation when engaging in media related activities. When asked to describe how he felt about seeking out potential media interviewees for the CSC at the Hori-Zone camp, Gregory remarked:

> Generally quite kind of sheepish and you would always be a bit kind of apologetic. It's because I think we were really kind of paranoid about kind of, we already faced criticism within the network [for] working with mainstream media. So the whole time we were kind of going up to people, being quite apologetic saying, 'Look, I know it's mainstream media but would anyone fancy doing it?' (Quote 9; Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005).

Above, Gregory links his apprehension to approaching people with previous criticism fielded towards the CSC from within the network. The fact that Gregory described himself as feeling 'sheepish', 'apologetic' and 'paranoid', suggests that he believed the majority of people within Dissent! held an 'anti-media'(in the sense described above) stance. A similar belief was expressed by Sarah, also a member of the CSC, who suggested:

> I mean [in] this country... if you are an anarchist or I don't know what, a horizontal, or whatever you want to call it, you don't talk to the media, you know? We don't do it. It's not done *apparently.* (Quote 10; Interview with Sarah, 27/04/2005).

The prevalence of the 'anti media' position with radical 'horizontal' politics is articulated in the form of a taboo. To work with mainstream media is a violation of the socially accepted norms of Dissent! and the mobilisation in general. Interestingly, this position is at odds with Sarah's own views; she supports a 'pragmatic-media approach'.

Sarah was not the only interviewee to link the anti-media undercurrent in Dissent! network-level politics with a broader mobilisation. Darren, originally from Europe and active in the CSC, suggested that an anti-media orientation was part of the 'U.K. direct action habitus' (Interview with Darren, 07/08/2005). As such, Darren suggested that the rejection of working with mainstream media was a known and accepted movement-wide practice and, because of its familiarity, was not discussed:

> In terms of the real direct action scene, there is this savoir faire of 'You just don't talk to the media. That is just the way it is'... You don't have to discuss it anymore, because everybody already knows it... (Quote 11; Interview with Darren, 07/08/2005)

For Darren, an anti-media orientation is common knowledge and common practice for the radical direct action movement and, within that, Dissent!. This position was shared by at least five other interviewees, all of whom were involved in the CounterSpin Collective. The strongest criticism was given by Neil, a North American activist, who, reflecting on his experience at the 2005 G8 Summit, commented:

> I think that the U.K. radical left movement doesn't have a commitment to speaking to the media at all. In fact, there is much more strong resistance to speaking with mainstream media at all. So I think it is a cultural thing within the left scene in general around the world. There is a massive distrust with the mainstream media but especially it is really strong with the UK (Quote 12; Interview with Neil, 27/08/2005).

Of the participants interviewed for this research, Neil was the most ardent supporter of employing an active media strategy. Similarly, the majority, *though not all*, of the respondents who picked up on the anti-media current in Dissent! were involved with the CSC. Although an association with the CSC could account for some of the interviewees' heightened-awareness on the matter of media, the fieldwork supports the assertion that there was a high level of perceived animosity surrounding the media debate. Important at present is the *perception* that a rift was caused by the media debate and the impact this had on actors within the network. Therefore, even if the anti-media stance was not as prevalent 'in reality' as participants believed, of interest is how the perceived dominance of the anti-media position over the debate impacted the actions of activists.

Returning to the central claim, it is suggested that the anti-media stance of the network – as a product of the UK direct action scene – created a spiral of silence around the media debate. The quote from Gregory provided at the start of this section showed how his perception that the 'anti-media' stance was a widely held belief made him feel 'sheepish' about his own position and actions. The below passage from Hamish also acknowledges the existence of media boundaries within the network. Reflecting on the media strategy of the Hori-Zone camp he commented,

> I would have loved to have had some coverage from the inside of the [Hori-Zone] campsite... But at the same time, I don't think the potential cost of that would have been worth it. (Quote 13; Interview with Hamish 09/07/2005)

The 'potential cost' mentioned by Hamish can be interpreted as a reference to the creation of a wedge between network participants as well as the levelling of criticism towards CSC members. The decision to constrain media-related action is based on a perception of the climate of opinion within the network and the costs and chances of success (Noelle-Neumann, 1974).

A principal argument of Noelle-Neumann's spiral of silence is that people who feel their opinions are in the minority on an issue are less likely to speak out. As argued above, an undercurrent of 'anti-media' sentiment was believed to run through Dissent! and the radical action network in the United Kingdom at large. Its existence constrained the actions of some Dissent! members who, by choosing to interact with media, felt as if they were breaking a taboo. The perceived prevalence of the 'anti-media' sentiment also meant that, as a result of a spiral of silence, this position went unchallenged resulting in little, if any, strategic/political debate about the role of media in the mobilisation.

Despite the lack of political debate on the topic, Dissent! established a network-level media policy and a working group, the CounterSpin Collective, formed to field media requests. And although members of the CSC felt constrained by the perceived 'anti-media' thread in the network, they carried on with their action. Returning to the case of Gregory mentioned above, Gregory described himself as feeling anxious in the execution of his role as a CSC member; however, he was surprised by how people reacted to his request:

> No one was like particularly really abusive... Some people would be like, 'Oh no, I've got better things to do, don't bother me' but... generally, I was quite surprised, people's reactions were quite positive. (Quote 14; Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005)

He continued:

> There was more positivity from within the Dissent network that I encountered and that was a surprise for me because I thought we were going to be kind of hated and reviled for what we were doing. (Quote 15; Interview with Gregory, 26/07/2005)

The disjuncture between how Gregory expected people to act and the reception he received may be rooted, at least in part, to the spiral of silence and a fear of being reprimanded or isolated. The apprehension may be justified, given that there was one documented incident of a CSC member who was talking with a journalist when a fellow Dissent! member threw a half-full plastic bottle of water at them[8]. Despite this, and for the most part, members of the CSC received a warmer reception than anticipated.

Based on interviewee comments and fieldwork, I would argue that the disjuncture between expectations and experience indicates that Dissent! – and perhaps even the UK radical left – is not as divided on the media as assumed. This is not to overlook the vocal presence of 'anti-media' advocates, but it is to side with an assessment offered by interviewee Robyn:

> I think most people [were] quite happy for [people to interact with media]. I think there [was] a core... a smaller amount of people who were really, really, really adamant that there should be no speaking to corporate media (Quote 16, Interview with Robyn, 21/07/2005).

The salient point is that the dominant orientation of the network was not 'anti-media.' However, a lack of dialogue on the issue coupled with a vocal 'anti-media core' stifled any political-level discussion, bringing about a spiral of silence. Although factors such time constraints and an emphasis on the practical aspects of mobilising may have contributed to the lack of theoretical discussion on the media within Dissent! at the network-level, it does not account for the

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[8] I witnessed this incident in person and also spoke to the person this happened to. The incident exemplifies the extreme version 'anti-media' position which is passionate, reactionary but not very thought out. The incident received a online mention in the Scotsman noting, 'bottles were thrown at a journalist and photographer as they departed [the Hori-Zone camp]' (Chamberlain & Black, 2005).

'anti-media' sentiment sensed by many interviewees. But it does suggest that the media debate is a discussion which needs to take place.

Conclusion

This article set out to address and map a subject well known in activist circles but relatively unstudied by academics: the media debate. This was undertaken through using the Dissent! network and the 2005 Gleneagles G8 Summit as a case study to explore how activists understand the 'media debate' and how this perceived understanding influenced network activities. While the 'media debate' was rarely discussed within Dissent! at a network-level, activists interviewed for this research were shown to be able to articulate their understanding of the debate with ease. The media debate was described by activists through the use of two binaries. First, it was presented as debate over either interacting with mainstream media or using movement media and, most often, Indymedia. Second, it was articulated as an 'all or nothing' binary whereby mainstream media was either worked with or not.

While the analysis outlined the various reasons supporting the 'anti-media' perspective, it was argued that the 'pro-media' side of the debate did not exist within the network, though this could also be read as a veiled critique of Make Poverty History. Restated, none of the activists interviewed for this research endorsed an open and all embracing view of mass media interaction. Instead, the article charted the emergence of a 'pragmatic perspective' held by activists and evident in the actions of the CounterSpin Collective, whereby activists attempted to develop strategies - consistent with their reading of autonomous politics – that allowed them to navigate the contentious field of the media debate, yet still engage with mainstream media. The pragmatic perspective rested on three pillars. First, media was viewed as a field of social struggle on par with city streets, thus necessitating media interaction. Second, the media event status of the 2005 G8 Summit was recognised and viewed as a 'political opportunity' (Tarrow, 1998) for visibility. And, third, mainstream media and radical media were both valued. Whereas the polar view of radical versus mainstream media forces a choice between the two media, a pragmatic perspective views both media as necessary and complimentary; each has their own purpose, audiences, strengths and weaknesses.

The prevalence to which the pragmatic perspective was articulated amongst interviewees and observed within the Dissent! network suggests that there is a disjuncture between the imagined positions of the media debate as articulated in its polarised form, and the actual positions of the media debate as captured in the pragmatic perspective. In the final section of this paper, it was argued that one source of this disjuncture may be the 'spiral of silence' (Noelle-Neuman, 1974) created around the media debate. Because the topic of media interaction was perceived to be so divisive by activists, the topic was not broached. This has two implications. First, it illustrates the rhetorical power the 'anti-media' position held within Dissent! At the same time, the 'anti-media' position was

one which did not seem to be taken by many within the network.   To assert that the 'anti-media' position was not as prominent as many perceived it to be within Dissent! is not to negate the arguments the perspective rests upon. There are convincing arguments for abstaining from interacting with media (Katsiaficas, 2006, p. 21-24). And while it may not be possible to resolve ideological differences between the anti-media and the pragmatic approach, it is important to acknowledge the boundaries of each. Moreover, this article has argued that activists should revisit their positions on mainstream media interaction in light of the media eventisation of protest and the mobilization at media event protests such as the G8. Yet, the 'media debate' is often a topic that emerges in the heat of organising, and is thus a context which is often not conducive for drawn out ideological debate. Moreover, the perceived contentious nature of the debate has lead activists to a pragmatic 'pain avoidance', staying silent on a perceived divisive issue. However, it is crucial to any organising that activists not feel intimidated within their own network, and that an atmosphere for constructive dialog can be created. This is not to endorse any one perspective on the debate-- one's perspective must be commensurate with one's politics -- but it is to argue for the need to respect differing positions. A common thread with both positions is the need for dialogue, not just by academics but especially within activist communities, on the advantages and limitations of all forms of media: mainstream and radical. It is hoped the analysis presented in the article can contribute towards such a discussion.

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Towards a critique of social networking: practices of networking in grassroots communities from mail art to the case of Anna Adamolo

Tatiana Bazzichelli[1]

Abstract

This article follows my reflections on the topic of networking art in grassroots communities as a challenge for socio-political transformation. It analyses techniques of networking developed in collective networks in the last half of the twentieth century, which inspired the structure of Web 2.0 platforms and have been used as a model to expand the markets of business enterprises. I aim to advance upon earlier studies on networked art, rejecting the widely accepted idea that social networking is mainly technologically determined. The aim is to reconstruct the roots of collaborative art practices in which the artist becomes a networker, a creator of shared networks that expand virally through collective interventions.

The focus is collaborative networking projects such as the network of mail art and multiple identities projects such as the Luther Blissett Project (LBP), the Neoist network-web conspiracy and, referring to the contemporary scenario of social networking, the Italian case of Anna Adamolo (2008-2009). The Anna Adamolo case is presented as a clear example of how networking strategies, and viral communication techniques, might be used to generate political criticism both of the media (in this case of the social media) and society. This case study becomes even more relevant if framed by a long series of hacktivist practices realized in the Italian activist movement since the eighties, where collective and social interventions played a crucial role.

Introduction: the gift-exchange networking economy

Contemporary Internet-based social networking platforms have their roots in a series of experimental activities in the field of art and technology started in the last half of the twentieth century which have transformed the conception of art as object into an expanded network of relationships. Avant-garde art practices such as mail art, Neoism and the Luther Blissett Project (LBP) anticipated the structure of Web 2.0 platforms, which have today reached a huge mass of Internet users. These narrow practices have shown that networked art is not mainly technologically determined, but is based on the creation of sharing platforms and of contexts for exchanging between individuals and groups. This perspective makes it possible to define the concept of networking as a practice of creating nets of relations and as a cultural strategy aimed to generate sharing of knowledge, a map of connections in progress.

Networked culture, developed during the last half of the twentieth century, was often

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1 A shorter version of this article was presented as a paper at the Oekonux Conference, Manchester, March 27th-29th, 2009 - www.oekonux-conference.org - with the title "The Art of Networking. Networking Practices in Grassroots Communities" (abstract: www.oekonux-conference.org/program/events/36.en.html).

connected with the concept of the gift-exchange economy, where grassroots communities promoted alternative social configurations and a more sustainable economy based on the sharing of free goods (Welch, 1995; Baroni, 1997; Saper, 2001). This model of relationships allowed for the "exchange" of spontaneous gifts, a *potlatch* based on peer technologies and peer networks. Since the 80s, networking platforms such as the postal art communities but also the BBS (Bulletin Board System) networks, have been an important tool to share knowledge and experience, and to create works of hacktivism and collective art.

The concepts of Openness and Do It Yourself, today more and more relevant with the diffusion of social networks and Web 2.0, have been the starting point for the development of the sharing models of grassroots communities. *Openness* refers to a decision-making process managed by a collective of individuals organized in a community and not orchestrated by a centralized authority (a definition which is absolutely a paradox in the centralized Internet-based social networking platforms); *Do It Yourself* (or DIY) is an "attitude" to build up, to assemble, to make and to create independently, which could be compared with the "hands-on imperative" proper of the hackers (Steven Levy, 1984). DIY, as a real subculture, could be said to have begun with the punk movement of the 1970s. In those years copying machines were widespread and their use became increasingly more constant within the milieu of "dissent", giving birth to underground zines, art-zines, punkzines, etc. (as well described by Stephen Duncombe, 1997). Punk culture questioned the notion of *high art* in order to open up creative possibilities for everyone and opposed the business of large music labels as main channel to reach audiences. Anyone could play, as long as there was the desire to do it, and bands began to apply the DIY logic to produce music, manufacturing albums and merchandise, and organizing low-cost touring.

Consequently, the DIY network dynamic was affirmed on a mass level through the use of computers and the Internet, becoming a practical philosophy in the hacktivist underground scene. The "hacktivism" concept refers to an acknowledgment of the net as a political space, with the aim of creating decentralized, autonomous grassroots participation. Access for everybody, information as a free good and the conscious use of hardware and technology – the basic concepts of hacker ethics – turn into political objectives. In this frame, networking becomes the practice of creating nets of relations, by sharing experiences and ideas in order to communicate and experiment artistically. In the hacker communities of the 1990s networking platforms were perceived as open spaces in which the ideas of sharing, openness, decentralization, free access to computers and collaboration apply (Steven Levy, 1984).

But the concept of networking might be analysed as a practice of art, providing a critical perspective on political imagination. An example is given by the history of the the Italian hacktivism and net culture from the early 1980s until today – a path which began in mail art, in the neoist and Luther Blissett multiple identity projects (www.lutherblissett.net), but also in the BBS networks, and then moved on to the Italian hackmeetings (www.hackmeeting.org), to the Telestreet networks (www.telestreet.it) and to many other networking art projects managed by different Italian artists and activists (Bazzichelli, 2006, www.networkingart.eu/the-book/). In this scenario, networking art coincides with the practice of acting inside social interstices and cultural fractures, which apparently seem to be at the margin of daily life, but instead are an important territory for the re-invention and re-writing of symbolic and expressive codes, as for example the experience of the Telestreet networks might demonstrate. In the Italian underground culture, where hacker communities are very much connected with activism, the art of networking is based on the

figure of the artist as a creator of sharing platforms and of contexts for connecting and exchanging. Among the BBS culture, a networker is anyone who manages to generate areas of discussion and sharing without censorship (at least, apparently); in the mail art network, a networker is anyone who in turn creates occasions of exchanging creative postal artworks, but networkers are also those who accept the networking project invitation and create their own projects answering to the call. For this reason, the active subjects become the network operators, making art less elitist and more inclusive, trying to question the concept of art as such.

Collaborative art practices and multiple identities

In the aforementioned scenes, pre-dating the notion of social networking given by the Web 2.0 platforms, networking is a collective art practice not based on objects, nor solely on digital or analogical tools, but on the relationships in progress between individuals. Individuals who can in turn create other relationship contexts, or generate creative goods which are shared in the commons. The practice of networking might also be seen as a virus that grows from contact to contact and expands through actions of people who develop viral communication processes. As Derrick de Kerckhove points out, describing the evolution of networking phenomenon and recognizing the practice of mail art as one of its predecessors long before the Internet evolved "quoting the famous phrase by Marshall McLuhan 'the medium is the message' today one may say that *the network is the message of the medium Internet*" (Derrick de Kerckhove, 2006).

Assuming therefore that the network of relationships is the main message, an analysis of social networking today can not be done without shedding light on its historical roots, which date back more than thirty years ago and often took shape outside the Internet. The network of mail art, the Neoist network-web conspiracy and the Luther Blissett Project are clear examples of three different modalities of creating networking, which have in common the development of a grassroots networking structure, the redefinition of the concept of art through collective interventions, the critique of a rigid identity, the substitution of high art with irony and everyday life practices, the creation of a more open (and in the case of Luther Blissett anonymous) sharing philosophy which questions the institutional media and art system and often put them into crisis or shows their bugs and vulnerability.
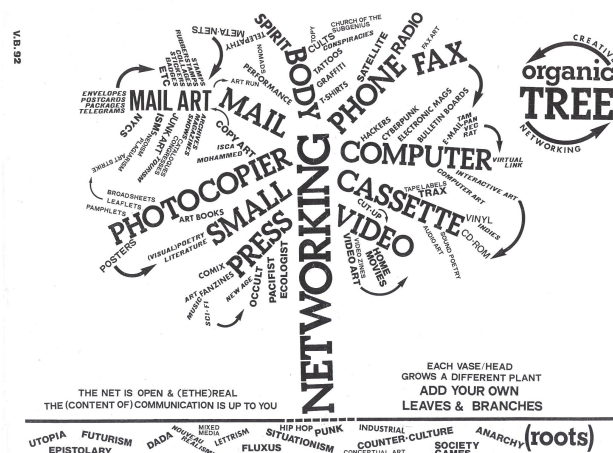
Vittore Baroni, "Organic Tree", 1992.

The practice of mail art developed through a network of small artworks mailed to everyone who enter in a collective postal circuit, giving life to friendly bi-directional relationships, which are lived out in the intimacy of one's own mailbox. Mail art is a form of art open to all (as often described by the Italian mail artist Vittore Baroni). The term that can best define it is *Eternal Network,* according to the French Fluxus artist and sociologist Robert Filliou (1926-1987): an eternal network which, starting from the 1950s, has involved hundreds of people, made up of decorated envelopes and rubber stamps, artistamps, illustrated letters and zines, and any other self-produced objects or pieces of paper turned into creative art sent by mail. It involved individuals linked by belonging to a non-formalized network, which consists of exchanging addresses and one-to-one and one-to-many mailings. The origin of mail art is connected to the figure of Ray Johnson (1927-1995) and to his New York Correspondence School, created in 1962, but the network already had roots in Dadaism, Futurism, Neo-Dada and Fluxus. Until the 1980s the mail art network was also used as a channel and propaganda for Neoism.

Drawing by Pete Horobin, "Neoist Altar". Eighth Apartment Festival of the Neoist Network, London, May 1984.

Neoism expressed itself through artistic practices and experimentation in media. It embraced a philosophy that presupposed the use of multiple identities, the collection of pseudonyms, the discussion of concepts like identity and originality and the realization of *pranks*, paradoxes, plagiarism and *fakes*, components that came up again later in

collective movements such as the Luther Blisset Project (LBP) and in the actions of different net.artists, including the Italian 0100101110101101.org (www.0100101110101101.org) and the Wu Ming collective of writers (www.wumingfoundation.com). Pranks and actions of culture jamming focus on *continual poetic renewal* (Vale and Juno, 1987), creating artistic, cultural and political new experiences, using the unexpected, and a deep level of irony and social criticism.

"What is an uh, uh, Apartment Festival", image from the Centre de Recherche Neoiste, publication, 1981.

Between 1980 and 1988 Neoism expressed itself through the Neoist Apartment Festival in North America, Europe and Australia and through different publications (i.e. the "Smile" zine). It was founded by the multiple identity Monty Cantsin, an *open pop star* who spread from Canada (Montreal) to USA (Baltimore) to Europe (the name was suggested by David Zack to Istvan Kantor and Maris Kundzins). Symbol-icons of Neoism were the flaming steam iron; the clothes hanger used as an antenna to create a telepathic flow between people; the improvisational haircut during the performances; the red cross; particular types of spicy food like *chili* and *chapatti.* Monty Cantsin was not only a multiple identity, but a real way of life for many people who embraced being a Neoist in daily life; opening experimental video stores, creating performances, publishing magazines, giving life to independent projects (see the collective definition of Neoism made on Wikipedia, which reflects very well the different accounts of Neoism and its history perpetuated by the

protagonists of the movement themselves: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neoism). It was the Neoists who talked about a "Web-network" in 1981, giving life to a discourse on libertarian networking based on the idea of the *Centre de Recherche Neoiste* (CRN). The Centre of Neoist Research originated in Montreal in 1980, as a consequence of the Neoist cultural conspiracy. They proposed "Open Situations", in which people who can catalyze their own energy give life to a series of collaborations between the members of the network. Between 1994 and 1999, another collective identity spread from Italy to the United Kingdom, the United States, Holland, Germany, Austria, Finland, and Hungary: Luther Blissett.

Andrea Alberti and Edi Bianco, "official" Luther Blissett portrait, achieved in 1994 by combining photos from the 1930s and 1940s of three of his great uncles and one of his great aunts; by Wu Ming 1.

Like a mental virus, the Luther Blissett Project (LBP) landed to give rise to deeply impacting media pranks, together with *happening*s, shows and performances in the subway, articles in publications, actions of overcoming art in favour of the everyday, becoming one of the most active projects of the period (see www.lutherblissett.net). Luther Blissett was the voice of a multitude of people who wanted to subvert the cultural industry, to expose the tricks of the media and to create an urban legend, a new folk hero. Luther Blissett was born because a mythological figure was missing in the underground scene of that time; there was a need for a media ghost through which everyone could speak and subvert the cultural scenario. The LBP was the example of a fertile networking strategy, the applied myth of a common cause. The entire LBP was a work of art, "an open reputation informally adopted and shared by hundreds of artists and social activists all over Europe" (Luther Blissett). Through pranks and fakes, such as the Neoist bus happening and collective adventure (1995); the legend of Harry Kipper in the "Chi l'ha visto?" TV show; the fake book to be published by the Italian publishing company Mondadori, called *net.gener@tion* (1996); Luther Blissett was able to create a common imaginary and become a popular phenomenon.

The Case of Anna Adamolo

The collective experience of Anna Adamolo (October 2008) represents a new impetus in the Italian scene of activism and, at the same time, converts radical impulses consolidated by decades of hacktivist practices in Italy into action. Anna Adamolo is an anagram of Onda Anomala, the Anomalous Wave, or the mobilization so named by the students, researchers, teachers and activists united against the "Gelmini reform", an Italian law – Law 133 – which cuts public funding of education (www.uniriot.org/downloads/anomalouswave.pdf). In Italy, a network involving students and young researchers, workers and teachers has taken action from 2008 to the present through many protests and demonstrations. Anna Adamolo becomes the alternative to the Minister for Education, Mariastella Gelmini, the new symbolic Minister listening to and supporting the movement. She is created as a collective fictional identity to give voice to this movement, becoming an icon for those who seek to re-write the cultural and political codes through the *détournement* of symbols. She is graphically represented by a woman face created combining different people faces and she could be used by whoever critically wants to change the status quo, both on the Internet and in real life. Anna Adamolo is the diverse voices of people who are fighting for a common goal. She is the face of the motto "*noi la crisi non la paghiamo*" (We Will Not Pay For This Crisis) and is the voice of an enlarged network.

The networking component is central to Anna Adamolo, and her network is based on collective identities, which represent all the demonstrators against the Law 133. She follows the path of Luther Blissett, but with different objectives. While representing a plurality of individuals, Luther Blissett was acting transversely to any political movement; Luther Blissett was like a virus attracted by the bugs in the media system; he was an urban legend. Anna Adamolo instead is developed as part of the Onda Anomala activist Italian movement, and she represents all the voices that could be directly rooted in this political and social battle. AA interprets Monty Cantsin and Luther Blissett playing with the language and the labyrinths of politics, transforming the bureaucracy of the state into open possibilities of intervention. She answers the Gelmini reform by creating an "intimate bureaucracy" (Craig J. Saper, 2001) between activists, students and young researchers, workers and teachers, creatively re-interpreting the structural elements of daily life, as the mail art and other Avant-garde practices did years ago. The symbols of the institution are reversed, from the official stamps and signatures of the Ministry of Education, University and Research to the Ministry's official website, and they become a common sharing. Signs and labels of a network of actors that wants to change the rules of action, to build its own education system and a better future.

As we read on the Anna Adamolo blog (http://annaadamolo.noblogs.org) the first action of AA was the hijacking and cloning of the website of the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research, on the occasion of the national students' and teachers' strike in Rome on November 14th 2008. When visiting the www.ministeroistruzione.net website, first very similar (if not identical) to the official one (www.miur.it), the visitor was redirected into another scenario: a video, which mixed images of a calm sea and street demonstrations, commented by the voice of Anna Adamolo (the "Wave Minister"), and all the students, mothers, teachers, workers, spoke through her (www.vimeo.com/2431622). The virtual journey landed in a website where AA presented herself as did all the people who had previously recorded their protest message by calling a telephone number

registered by the members of the Onda Anomala network. Some of these stories are published in January 2009 in the book: *Sono Anna Adamolo. Voci e Racconti dall'Onda Anomala*, NdA Editions, 2009 ("I am Anna Adamolo – Voices and Stories from the Wave").
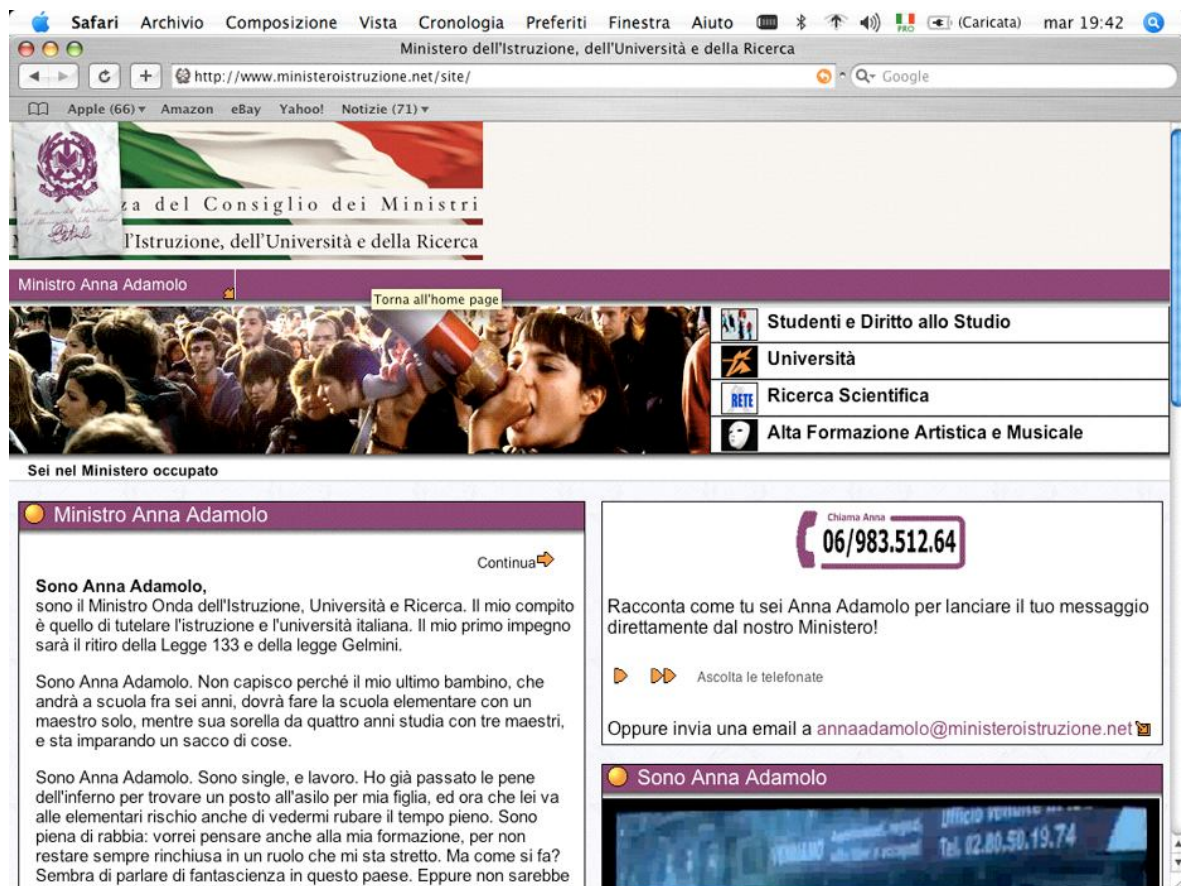
Screenshot of the Fake Ministry website

Another AA action took place on Facebook, where she initially created a profile as the Minister of Education, Mariastella Gelmini, easily reaching a number of 2,000 "friends": supporters and antagonists expressing themselves on her Facebook wall. After some days, in November 14th 2008, the profile of Mariastella Gelmini turned into that of Anna Adamolo, who in the meantime had become a symbol of the street demonstrations of many activists and members of the Onda Anomala network. This action generated a chain of support for the Onda Anomala protest and immediately after the virtual heroine became one of the most popular Facebook icons in the Italian activist network. After these interventions in the social media and on the Internet, Anna Adamolo becomes another symbol of a movement of precarious identities in Italy, which has also previously acted radically through visual messages, and which has transformed the heaviness of traditional politics in a spiral of ironic activism. In fact, in 2004 the precarious movement created San Precario, the patron saint of precarious workers (www.sanprecario.info) born inside the collective Chainworkers (chainworkers.org), and Serpica Naro (www.serpicanaro.com), the

designer of imagination created in 2005, whose name is an anagram of San Precario.

The fictional identities of San Precario and Serpica Naro, together with the previous experiences of Monty Cantsin and Luther Blissett, constitute a source of inspiration for the creators of Anna Adamolo. However, AA tried to reach a community of generalized actors, beyond the hacker movement, the precarious network and the activists of guerrilla marketing, seeking to reach those who decided to respond to the official politics by going out in the streets in a comprehensive network.

Conclusions

This article shows how it is possible to create successful critical and creative routes that involve networking practices, which aim to deconstruct hierarchical logics of communication and question the meaning of artistic creation. Connecting networked art such as mail art, the Neoist and LBP network, hacktivist projects in Italy and the social media intervention of Anna Adamolo, it demonstrates how it is possible to activate an open process of creation, producing new models of technological and cultural criticism, activated by a conscious use of technology and a deep understanding of how the media themselves work.

Reframing the notion of social media and social networking, and contextualising it through some underground and grassroots experiences of the past thirty years, it becomes necessary to investigate what the meaning of "social" is, and to critically redefine the notion of networking itself. While many of the contemporary social media are providing access for a large public and high quality technologies of sharing, they substantially differ from peer2peer technologies and from many of the experiences mentioned before. The rhetoric of openness and self-production is the same, but the aims are quite diverging: as described before, artists, hackers and activists were fighting to create open channels of communications, not centralized technologies and often non-monetary models of interactions; instead, many of the social media of today store data in proprietary servers and do not allow a flow of information and sharing beyond the limits decided by the companies which own the infrastructures. Moreover, they collect high revenues through the activity of sharing made by users, which are not equally redistributed among them. Furthermore, these platforms define as "social" something that often is not, because they do not normally include a bidirectional and face-to-face exchange, and the level of communication is often too fast and concise to create a deep conversational context.

Understanding and knowing different models of networking might constitute a tactical response and a challenge to the limits of the social media themselves — as the Anna Adamolo project demonstrated — opening up possibilities of interventions, where users become actors and networks become a tool for artistic creations and socio-political transformation.

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Upload dissident culture:
Public Netbase's interventions into digital and urban space

Clemens Apprich[1]

Introduction

The production of urban space is based on a variety of social practices, which in turn are fundamental to the reproduction of society.[2] Over the last decades, new technological regimes have been created in order to reorganize this urban space: cyberspace, virtual reality, and informational cities, are all terms which are associated with the dissolution of physical space. In this sense, a new digital space provides a venue for individual and social practices, for ways of living, cultural patterns, knowledge, power, and domination. But, as sociologist Manuel Castells emphasizes in this context, this is a complex process that has nothing to do with a technological determinism and its simple discourse about the disappearance of urban space:

> "While the prophets of technological determinism have forecast the general dissolution of cities and metropolitan areas in an undifferentiated territorial sprawl, [...] the actual processes at work are much more complex because technology is only an instrument, albeit a very powerful one, of the process of organizational restructuring dictated by economic, social, and institutional changes" (Castells 1991, p. 126).

Hence, new information and communication technologies do not dissolve the urban space, but re-order this space in a socio-technological way.

In order to understand these transformational processes, we need to analyze the specific social practices which produce regularities within the socially constructed space. In a digital environment, space and time consolidate to a new material basis on which the dominant factors of social practices are reorganized by information flows. The space of flows as "the material organization of time-sharing practices" (Castells 1996, p. 442) becomes increasingly important for the hegemonic idea of physical and virtual space, whose cultural grammar determines the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society. Yet, on the other hand, the same technology can be used to re-connect people with the local places they live in. This civic and participatory potential of new media technologies[3] transforms the digital as well as

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1 The present paper is based on a presentation given at the Conference "Culture, Media: Protest", 3-5 September 2009, Lucerne University, Switzerland.

2 The idea of physical space as socially produced space goes back to Henri Lefebvre. He presents a trialectic of social space consisting of spatial practices, representations of space, and representational spaces (c.f. Lefebvre 2000).

3 The term "new media" nowadays refers in most cases to information — and communication — technologies that are based on digital data, such as E-mail, DVD, MP3, etc. However the term itself is not as new as it seems, but rather appeared in the last decades every time new media technologies promised to revolutionize everyday culture (besides the radio, this was also the case with video). The notation therefore fosters the current business model, in order to advertise the particular product as the absolutely new and therefore indispensable. In particular, the Cyberhype of the late 1990s fetishized the term additionally, largely replacing the critical

the urban space into a highly contested social place, and therefore brings up the question of re-appropriation strategies. To answer this question, I would like to examine some of the interventionist practices that have been produced by Viennese media art platform Public Netbase, with the goal of rearticulating urban, thus public spaces. The understanding of these practices may help to find appropriate strategies in the struggle for the re-signification of public sphere in general.

Building a platform for critical media work

When the Institute for New Culture Technologies/t0, launched in 1994 by Konrad Becker and Francisco de Sousa Webber, went online with its own server on the mainframe of the Viennese general hospital (AKH),[4] the Internet was still in its infancy. The discovery of this medium, today inextricably linked to everyday experience, marked a moment in cultural history when artists and cultural producers began to explore new forms of engagement with information and communication technologies — and found a place to do so at the Institute for New Culture Technologies/t0. Initially, then, it was mainly the mediation work at the interface between art and technology that lead to a new understanding of cultural practice, allowing the establishment of an internationally networked media platform. Before long, the platform set up its dedicated culture server at the Vienna Messepalast (later to become MuseumsQuarter), where the committed cultural project t0 was institutionalized as Public Netbase. Apart from Internet service providing, Public Netbase offered a varied program of workshops and conferences on the promises and risks of a rapidly growing information society. In his inaugural speech on 17 March 1995, philosopher and essayist Peter Lamborn addressed the challenges emerging in an increasingly media-driven world, in which information becomes the raw material of modern society. Under his pseudonym Hakim Bey, Wilson became known mainly for his notion of "Temporary Autonomous Zones" (Bey 1990), referring to a situation in which the existing order is suspended within temporal and local limitations. A far cry from immaterial cyber utopias, Bey's theory insists on connecting the T.A.Z. to real space, as this is the only way of providing it with (social) meaning.

Instead of following the cyber utopian hype of the 1990s, Public Netbase tried to take a critical look at the nascent network society (c.f. Castells 1996). Apart from a gnostic Utopia, a new perspective for the art practice was offered, which tried to take up the fight for cultural hegemony. With the expansion of the democratic horizon and the radicalization of its principles, work in new media proves to be a discursive practice with a double strategy: on the one hand, the hegemonic common sense should be broken up by alternative channels of information; on the other hand, these strategies of disarticulation have to be accompanied by new forms of rearticulation using new communication networks. Thus, in a series of exhibitions, events, symposia, and workshops, Public Netbase tried to provide a broad understanding for the potential of new information and communication technologies, and offered a platform for the self-determined use of new media. Public Netbase was among the first platforms in Europe and in Austria to exploit digital space for critical media practice. Its efforts were focused on political awareness building vis-à-vis an increasingly networked

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discourse about the potentialities of digital media. Despite the valid critique, the term is used here, in order to take up the debate once again and to make the provenience of todays ubiquitious network technologies visible again.

4 Old website of Public Netbase: http://www.t0.or.at/autoretr.html (retrieved 15 October, 2010).

society, in which virtual and real space progressively converged. The conflicts resulting from this development had to be taken up and translated into negotiable positions in public debate,

> "particularly since contemporary art itself has now been normed, organized, channeled into the safe-havens of museums. The debate must be created, extended, deepened and resolved in public, where the issues themselves exist" (Holmes 2004).

Since digital technologies enabled a radical de-specialization of contemporary culture, a number of public spheres (artistic and educational systems, information and communication technologies, legal and political regimes) converged in a specific kind of Internet-euphoria. Thus, the expectations and hopes – which in the past have been repeatedly linked to various media (like radio, cinema, video, etc.) – were now coined by the idea of re-articulating public spaces: "[W]ith the increasing mediatization and hybrid virtualization of each of these spheres, the boundaries between public, private, commercial and government are in flux" (Dietz 2004). As is shown by US-American playwright Steve Dietz, many artists shift between these boundaries by means of new artistic instruments and practices, in order "to enlarge our understanding and practice of multiple public spheres" (Dietz 2004). With the rise of press, radio, television, and currently the Internet, the potential public sphere has expanded from physical into the virtual space of communication systems. The new public realm is both physical and virtual, and, in particular, has assumed a specific form in network discourses of the early 1990s. Hence, the emphasis on the civic and participatory potential of electronic media at that time has created new practices in art and media:

> "They [the new art practices] are based or even dependent on collaboration, media access and hands on technology. In short, all three evolve around connectedness, around being connected: connected to people, to media channels, to tools and/or knowledge" (Bosma 2004).

In this context, media theorist Josephine Bosma underlines the diversity of media art practices in the public domain "as a virtual, mediated space consisting of both material and immaterial matter" (Bosma 2004).

This hybrid form is an essential characteristic of contemporary art practices. As a consequence, those projects were most influential, which knew how to expand the notion of public sphere to the new communication systems: Mailing lists, bulletin boards, and participatory art servers formed the backbone of the early network communities. Public Netbase soon recognized the need for electronic networking, in order to establish a cultural Backbone in the Austrian and European media landscape. By bundling a variety of pioneer projects in Austria, the first regional nodes of net culture emerged, providing access to creative and self-determined work with new information and communication technologies for artists and cultural initiatives. For Josephine Bosma, this community building implies a structural extension of the traditional concept of (art) work:

> "These projects were definitely incorporated almost instantly, and their function quickly exceeded that of any other artwork. They not only offered Internet access and Web space, but also education and an active attitude towards the development of Net cultures" (Bosma 2004).

Given the gradual de-politicization of these net cultures in the last years, it is worth taking up the debate once again and questioning the potential of new media technologies for dissident practices. In particular, we see today the increasing privatization of the public sphere in favor of commercial profit interests, as well as increasing security paranoia by state agencies that

require new strategies of counter-power. The fact that self-contained discursive spaces cannot be opened without conflicts is a testament to the importance of initiatives like Public Netbase, whose 12-year-history was marked by a huge number of cultural and political clashes.[5]

Battlefield MuseumsQuarter Vienna

A first step towards securing an autonomous position within the cultural environment of Vienna was taken by promoting public access, and thereby providing low-cost internet access to approximately one thousand art and culture projects. Acting as an interface of technology, science, and art, Public Netbase began to build digital networks of cooperation at an early stage, which made it possible to bring leading theoreticians and artists of the new cyber culture to Vienna. The diversity of Public Netbase's program and the intense demand from local and international communities soon made it possible to relocate to larger facilities. The opening of the "Media~Space" in early 1997 underlined Public Netbase's potential as a fertilizer of innovative cultural policies at the outset of the 21st century. Before long, though, Public Netbase's understanding of an adequate space for action and production — a space that would reflect the latest artistic forms of expression, and offer appropriate exhibition and performance facilities — began to fall out of step with that of the management of the MuseumsQuarter in Vienna, which at that time was initiating a large-scale reconstruction scheme. It is surely not surprising that a project of this order of magnitude — a surface of 60,000 square meters right in the center of Vienna — would give rise to opposing views, turning the project into one of the fiercest cultural combat zones in Austria.

This cultural tug of war, which resulted in the conversion of a center for contemporary art into a mere additional asset in Vienna's bid as business location, reflected a line of conflict in Austria's cultural landscape that "reduces art to its decorative exhibition value instead of understanding it as a mode of thinking" (Rollig 1995). Hence, any art mediation targeted primarily at event marketing and consumption disregards the larger aesthetic developments at the turn of the 21st century. This is a time when new technology regimes and distribution channels enabled the art field to break its hermetic closure and open itself to new social realms. The interface of culture, technology, art, and society had been Public Netbase's most central field of activity, so that its efforts to gain an autonomous creative space now found themselves in direct opposition with restorative cultural policies. Thus, at the turn of the millennium, the authoritarian shift in Austrian politics, represented by the new governmental coalition between People's Party (ÖVP) and Freedom Party (FPÖ), led an alarming intensification of hostile maneuvers against critical art institutions. Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel suspected that a supposed "internet generation" was the mastermind of the fierce protests against his right-wing government. Since most of the projects critical of the government were hosted by Public Netbase, suspicions intensified and lead to a repressive policy in governmental art funding.

In addition, on 5 April 2000, Public Netbase was dismissed from its facilities at the MuseumsQuarter under the pretext of imminent building works at the Fischer-von-Erlach section, the section housing its offices. The date set was 30 April 2001, and no replacement

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5 Such as the Austrian Freedom Party's cultural war against the feminist intervention "sex.net" in 1998, the protests against the right-conservative government between 2000 and 2002, and the expulsion of Public Netbase from Viennese MuseumsQuartier in the beginning of 2002. For further information see: http://free.netbase.org (retrieved 15 October, 2010).

facilities or prospective date of re-entry were indicated. In spite of the "readiness for dialogue" recurrently claimed by Wolfgang Waldner, General Manager of the MuseumsQuarter's carrier company, there was an overwhelming impression that Public Netbase, by then a successful cultural institution, was supposed to be stripped off its vital assets. All of a sudden, the assurances given by Waldner's predecessor, according to which Public Netbase would not only remain a crucial and integral part of the new MuseumsQuarter, but that its presence would even be strengthened, no longer seemed to count. The structural plan for the future Quartier 21, produced by Markus Weiland and Vitus Weh, neither considered the space requirements of Public Netbase, nor reflected the standard phrase of "cultural diversity". Instead of a non-hierarchical platform of different cultural groups that would develop their programs autonomously, Quartier 21 turned out to be a centralized organization allowing Waldner to directly intervene into content development. After the governmental subsidy was first cut for political motives and then eliminated altogether, Public Netbase now had to fear for its location at the MuseumsQuarter. Since Waldner delayed the conclusion of an adequate rental agreement and instead made every effort to force all the institutions concerned into the rigid Quartier 21 scheme, the affected tenants (which included, apart from Public Netbase, Basis Wien, Depot, and springerin) informed Waldner on 11 June that they considered the dismissals as null and void.

As a consequence, Waldner canceled Public Netbase's participation in the inauguration festivities scheduled for late June 2001, whose motto "Baroque meets Cyberspace" seemed an appropriate headline for the existing conflict. Public Netbase's idea to involve the anonymous masses in the celebrations by "urban screening", projecting spontaneous text messages, graphics and animations onto the front of the historical MuseumsQuarter buildings, aroused fears of an art practice that could — at a time political protests against the right-wing government were taking place — not be calculated. However, since obviously censorship cannot censor itself, the ban provided the occasion for an art action pointing at the heart of the matter: An army tent circled by sand bags, tank traps and barbed wire was set up in MuseumsQuarter with the idea of highlighting the political maneuvering of "curator" Waldner. The statements screened by "remote viewing"[6] were intended to underline the continuing need, contrary to public declarations, to struggle for and defend cultural diversity. How serious Public Netbase was about this became manifest when in the night from 26 to 27 September, 2002, a tent installation was surprisingly set up in the central basin of MuseumsQuarter (and, later on, outside the area). The "BaseCamp"[7] acted as a literally shining example of participatory media culture by featuring a novel internet application that allowed a world-wide audience to participate in a real-time musical composition — a loud and clear signal in favor of Public Netbase's re-entry. An agreement proposed by Vienna's government seemed to facilitate a compromise solution, but failed as a consequence of Waldner's rigid position, leading to the final eviction of Public Netbase in early 2002.

Practices of digital resistance

Since the 1990s. artistic and political developments within the field of net cultures have been shaped by a consequently growing, although loosely connected. movement of online activists.

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6 For further information see: http://remote.t0.or.at/remote/english (retrieved 15 October, 2010).

7 For further information see: http://basecamp.netbase.org (retrieved 15 October, 2010).

So-called "hacktivism"[8] therefore indicates a computer-based form of action which has evolved from its technological context to a new strategy of political resistance. The declared aim is the temporary occupation and exploitation of (mainstream) media, in order to draw the attention to existing power and domination relations. In addition to this illuminating function, the use of the Internet can also trigger short-term irritations, which transform closed discourses into open situations. These tactical media practices take advantage of the increasing fusion between physical and virtual space, as the architectural form of the modern city is more and more overlaid by a variety of data streams. Besides mobile communication technologies (e.g. cell phones or laptops), this data sphere contains expanding surveillance systems (such as the omnipresent CCTV) and the advertising media which is becoming ubiquitous within the townscape. Given these developments, Brian Holmes calls for a critical examination of these new forms of practice: "One could ask about the specific kinds of game that we have begun to play in the age of the so-called new media" (Holmes 2004). This question, however, is not merely arbitrary, but takes into account the fact that the contemporary field of new media represents one of the decisive places of hegemonic struggle. And because of this, "it becomes important to produce counter-experiments, to up the stakes of the game, to deploy the primacy of resistance in the key arenas of our epoch" (Holmes 2004). Given the rapid penetration of new technologies into all areas of social life, the critical practice with electronic media has become increasingly important.

Nevertheless, the emancipatory potential of new media technologies should not be overestimated. Even the Utopian ideas of net cultures during the 1990s brought forward an organizational regime of inclusion and exclusion, in order to draw the line between the visible and the invisible, the speakable and the unspeakable, between order and chaos (c.f. Apprich 2009). In this sense, cyberspace[9] does not represent a new continent which provides an "unmarked space" beyond the electronic frontier, but rather, it functions as "a projection surface for our own phantasms" (Marchart 1997, p. 92).[10] Cyberspace is not an utopia, conceived as a genuinely exceptional place, but on the contrary, a highly contested social place that reflects the cultural forces contributing to its development. While in the past bourgeois values and urban space provided the framework for what was called a civic community, we have to redefine this community in virtual space. Because although the traditional public gathering places – such as the marketplace, the town hall, the park, the university or the cafeteria – still remain, they serve less and less as places of democratic debate and political organization. As a consequence, computer-mediated communication yielded hope for the restoration of a new "community spirit" based on the potential of computer networks as a "many-to-many" medium.[11] Instead of mourning for the traditional notion of public space,

8 Since the term "hacktivism" – in addition to political activism – includes the word hacking, it is often attributed to the technically adept computer scene. Nevertheless, the technical implementation of online-sabotage and digital forms of direct action is in most cases quite simple, and, due to the symbolic value of widest possible participation, explicitly desirable. Because of this, and the negative effect on the technical resources of the Internet, these electronic forms of civil disobedience (such as virtual sit-ins or denial of service attacks) stand in direct contrast with the rather elitist hacker principles.

9 The term cyberspace is composed of the English abbreviation for cybernetics (from the Greek kybernetike: the art of the helmsman) and space. Colloquially, cyberspace is used as a synonym for the Internet, whereas the Internet, technically speaking, only provides the technical infrastructure of cyberspace.

10 Translation by the author.

11 The specific characteristic of the Internet consists – in contrast to traditional mass media such as newspapers, radio or television – in its heterogeneity, which usually allows several channels of communication, and in its interactivity, by which people can both contribute and receive information.

theorists tried to exploit the potential of digital communication networks:

> "The magic of the Internet is that it is a technology that puts cultural acts, symbolization, in all forms, in the hands of all participants; it radically decentralizes the positions of speech, publishing, filmmaking, radio and television broadcasting, in short the apparatuses of cultural production" (Poster 1997, p. 222).

Thus the hope was that the interactivity of computer networks could promote the decentralization of political discourse and challenge the illusion of a hegemonic public sphere, in order to enable new forms of democratic communication and organization.

But with the increasing segregation of society by neoliberal relations of production, the old dream of "virtual communities" (c.f. Rheingold 1994) vanished. While the Internet has opened itself up to a broader public after the end of the cold war,[12] it created its own myth as a domination-free sphere, which should allow the possibility of self-organization beyond commercial or state interests. The exaggerated hopes, which were linked to the medium during the 1990s, refer to a long tradition of techno-utopianism:

> "It was rather like the early 1970s, when cable networks and video were seen as ways of democratizing the mass media, [...] the Internet was now seen as a means of democratization" (Arns 2004).

What the "digital revolution" promised was nothing less than a technical revolution of social conditions and, as a consequence, the self-regulation of society by means of electronic networks. But while the self-proclaimed avant-garde of cyberspace sought to exploit the anarchic structure of the Internet for their libertarian dreams and desires,[13] state and economic interests – partially in cooperation with the libertarians – created procedures and regulations in order to subject the electronic space to their particular interests. In particular, the massive concentration of private capital interests in the realm of technological development, as well as a new quality of security policy by state actors, soon led to a gradual displacement of public interests in the design and use of new media technologies. Instead of a broad discussion on the possibilities of democratic participation within a nascent network society, digital space was appropriated more and more [for/by] private interests.

After the Internet was liberated from its military context – certainly without ever having left it – and subsequently created a broad base in the scientific and academic community, a restructuring of electronic space under commercial preconditions has taken place with the implementation of the WorldWideWeb in the mid-1990s. As a consequence, economic interests could realize a lucrative trading area within digital space, which is based primarily on the production and distribution of immaterial commodities. In order to prevent the free flow of information and knowledge in form of cultural goods, (media) industry attempts to privatize the informational basics of today's society. Under the slogan of "intellectual property" (IP), the access to socially relevant knowledge becomes subsequently restricted,

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12 The Advanced Research Projects Agency Network (ARPAnet) was developed by a small group of researchers led by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the United States Department of Defense during the cold war and is the predecessor of today's Internet.

13 The so called "Californian ideology" evolved from the fusion of the cultural Bohemia of San Francisco and the high-tech industries of Silicon Valley during the 1990s. Supported by magazines, books. television programs, web sites and newsgroups, the Californian ideology connected the spirit of the hippies with the entrepreneurial drive of the yuppies. This fusion of extremes was made possible by a profound belief in the emancipatory potential of new information and communication technologies (c.f. Barbrook/Cameron 1995).

rather than enabling a pluralistic and democratic use of new media technologies in favor of an open culture. In this sense, the former director of Public Netbase, Konrad Becker, states that "the sources of cultural expressions in the knowledge society cannot be reserved to the digital divide of single segments of society or global elites and the free exchange and vibrant renewal of knowledge and culture has to be secured under maximal participation" (Becker 2004, p. 33).[14] Access to the resources of the information society beyond existing corporate interests, therefore, is a democratic and political necessity.

Reclaiming Viennese Karlsplatz

Following its eviction from the MuseumsQuarter, Public Netbase now focused more and more on re-appropriation strategies as a place of media staging and of symbolic dominance. The specific occasion was provided by a debate that had been going on for years, and that concerned the rebuilding of the Viennese Karlsplatz-square. In the public mind, this centrally located square is a busy, traffic-ridden nightmare, whose underground stations provide shelter to Vienna's drug addicts. Following decades of enlargements and reconstruction, Karlsplatz was now supposed to be converted into an "art space" that would generate more attention for the adjacent cultural institutions (Secession, Technical Museum, Musikverein, Künstlerhaus, Historical Museum, Kunsthalle). The reconstruction of the Viennese underground did, in fact, provide an opportunity to transform the traffic hub Karlsplatz into an attractive urban environment, and to turn its sub-surface space into a thriving cultural location. A "Free Media Camp"[15] set up by Public Netbase, Radio Orange 94.0, and PUBLIC VOICE Lab on 27 June, 2003, in cooperation with MALMOE magazine and cultural lobbying group IG Kultur Wien, left no doubt that there was no lack of concrete initiatives towards a cultural renovation of Karlsplatz. The Media Camp, whose presence at Karlsplatz throughout the summer carried a strong symbolic value, offered more than one hundred events dealing with the precarious survival of free media in Austria, and demanded strong foundations for a participatory public in a future network democracy.

In order to step up political pressure in the Karlsplatz-campaign, Public Netbase staged the project "nikeground – rethinking space"[16] in cooperation with the Italian artists' collective 0100101110101101.org in autumn 2003. During four weeks, a high-tech glass pavilion suggested the upcoming renaming of the historical square to Nikeplatz. In addition to this symbolic act, a website announced the establishment of a 36-metre-high monument in the form of the company's logo, and provoked harsh reactions in politics, media and the public.[17] However, the action was not directed against Nike per se; it was meant to illustrate the symbolic dominance of global business in public space. Hence, the world-wide interest generated by the installation may also be explained by the fact that the "hardly believable nikeplatz trick" underlined the important function of contemporary artistic practices that employ the real means of production of a society increasingly determined by the media and technology. The artistic reflection of symbols of everyday culture provides an example of a

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14 Translation by the author.

15 For further information see: http://mediencamp.t0.or.at/mc/english (retrieved 15 October, 2010).

16 Archived Website of "nikeground – rethinking space":
http://www.0100101110101101.org/home/nikeground/website/index.html (retrieved 15 October, 2010).

17 For further information see: http://www.t0.or.at/nikeground (retrieved 15 October, 2010).

new form of intervention in public space: "We see it as our task to initiate a debate on the conflict between public interests and the commercialization of all realms of life, and to expand the scope of action by directly intervening in urban and media space" (Becker 2003). The action was meant to spark off new ideas for the future "art space" by showing how a combination of net art, politics, and theory delivers alternatives to a culture of representation.[18]

In the end, Nike International sued Public Netbase for 78,000 Euros for the violation of their trademark! That raises another important question with respect to the cultural construction of dissent: Do artists and activists have the right to use symbols of everyday culture - like Nike sees its "Swoosh" as part of this culture — or should companies be able to forbid the use of their signs under reference to the copyright? Actually, what "nikeground" merely proposed here, has in fact become reality in other places: for some years now Nike has been occupying public space by temporarily putting up "experience zones" and thereby transforming open urban space into semi-public areas. This process of privatization, also manifest at railway stations, sport facilities, and shopping centers, leads to the exclusion of large segments of the public, in particular of groups already at the margins. With regard to urban space, the increasing semiotization of public space raises the crucial question of how far the city has to project a positive image for tourists, gentrifiers, and investors, or, on the other hand, whether it should maintain its role as a contested place of social, cultural and political interests. Thus the choice of the place was not arbitrary: the artistic intervention wanted to give a concrete impulse to the decision making processes at Karlsplatz. But the attempt to open the "area"[19] in front of Karlskirche for contemporary art failed in the end. Instead of an "art space" providing a solid base for critical culture and media discourse, Vienna witnessed the establishment of Austria's first "protection zone" symbolizing police order and zero tolerance vis-à-vis the local drug scene.

The security aspect was at the center of yet another Public Netbase intervention at Vienna's Karlsplatz: together with Slovene artist Marko Peljhan, the fictive "System-77CCR"[20] was presented under the slogan "Eyes in the skies for democracy in the streets" to the Viennese public in May 2004. In reflection on the political unrest in the years 2000/2001, a civil counter reconnaissance system operating with unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) was supposed to provide civil society with the required information advantage, in order to observe police forces during mass demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience. The idea of a civil counter reconnaissance device generated a certain amount of anxiety, as the response from the Interior Ministry indicated: former minister Ernst Strasser made it clear that the expansion of surveillance systems as promoted by the Government did not represent a "charter for so-called counter-surveillance". Sure enough, the sneaking privatization of public space — as can be seen at stations, central squares and shopping malls — is itself a result of the

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18 In this context, semiotics looks at culture as a form of communication which broadcasts its messages on the basis of socially accepted codes. And these are codes that represent a certain system of symbols, whose definition establishes the cultural hegemony over our everyday life. Hence, new forms of intervention into urban space enable political reflection on symbols of everyday culture and symbolic representations of the city. This reflection can, as has been mentioned by some critiques, remain on a purely symbolical level, particularly if the action is not linked to a physical, that is, materialized struggle. On the contrary, the action is political when it is able to create critical consciousness in those struggles, thereby transforming the situation into an antagonistic process.

19 The German term "Gegend" has already been used by Austrian architect Otto Wagner in the end of the 1890s in order to characterize Viennese Karlsplatz.

20 For further information see: http://s-77ccr.org/index_en.php (retrieved 15 October, 2010).

outsourcing of public security to private contractors. "Lawful" surveillance by third parties thereby undercuts the distinction between the public and private spheres, and fosters the acceptance of control technologies in all areas of life. The progressive disappropriation of public space, and the consequent weakening of civic rights, therefore requires concrete strategies of re-appropriation. By reclaiming public spaces and symbolic cultures, protest media may help to intervene in the existing hegemony, in order to re-articulate democratic struggles. That is because "the regulation of this integrated and post-public sphere indicates an imbalance wherein all critical communication is subject to political normalization", as art theorist Timothy Druckrey puts it. And these normative policies "serve to sustain authorized — perhaps legalized is better — discourse with little or no regard for disagreement, opposition or a re-legitimation of the public sphere as a zone of contestation, difference, otherness and dissension" (Druckrey 2003).

Critique as counter-hegemonic intervention

Embedded in an international network of arts, media, and sciences, Public Netbase had to create resistant places within the urban space, in order to anchor the approach of participatory net culture within local structures. It was this dissident positioning which ultimately led to the financial end of Public Netbase: As a consequence of the ongoing struggle about adequate spaces for autonomous art and media production, the City of Vienna decided in the beginning of 2006 to eliminate any subsidy for the group's basic activities. Given the numerous awards (Prix Ars Electronica 1995, Award of the City of Vienna 2000, etc.) and the international reputation of Public Netbase, the local and international net culture thereby lost an important platform for a self-determined use of new media.[21] All the more so as resistive places within digital and urban space become even more indispensable, as these spaces are increasingly determined by new network technologies. Thus the question of the possible use of new media technologies remains a very crucial one, that cannot simply be approached from an technologically optimistic, nor a pessimistic standpoint. Instead we have to deal with this subject in a political sense, and acknowledge the necessity of conflicting interests and values for a democratic society. This "agonistic pluralism" refuses the idea of society as an organic body, and lays emphasis on the role of dissent and divergent opinions in the creation of new "chains of equivalence" within a multiplicity of heterogeneous, and often conflicting, demands. In this context, the question about the democratizing potential of network technologies was taken up by Chantal Mouffe at *Public Netbase*'s "Dark Market" conference in October 2003 in Vienna:

> "This is precisely how a project of radical and plural democracy should be envisaged. And it is within such a framework that the role and the possibilities of the new media should be examined in order to visualize, for instance, in which manner they could be developed so as to facilitate the creation of this chain of equivalence" (Mouffe 2008a, p.52).

New media, therefore, has to articulate democratic conflicts in order to open up the public space and foster a pluralistic media landscape as an essential precondition of (radical) democracy. Critique as counter-hegemonic intervention, therefore, is always a critique as hegemonic engagement with public space. In this sense, the increasingly closed spaces have to be *re*-opened:

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21 For further Information on *Public Netbase* see: http://netbase.org/t0/intro (retrieved October 15, 2010).

> "To make public in this context means two things: one to expose, disturb and thwart the neo-liberal strategy of permanent expropriation, the other the *creation* of public sphere specifically in places that are in danger of expropriation" (Raunig 2003).

For Gerald Raunig, this requires resistive places as places of counterattack like *Public Netbase*. Thus, it continues to be an exemplary of the possible intervention into hegemonic concepts, for digging trenches into the cultural landscape. However, one can not stop at the level of intervention, because every disarticulation of the existing order entails the necessity to construct a different one:

> "What is needed is therefore a strategy whose objective is, through a set of counter-hegemonic interventions, to disarticulate the existing hegemony and to establish a more progressive one thanks to a process of re-articulation of new and old elements into different configuration of power" (Mouffe 2008b).

As has been shown, interventionist practices using new media technologies may allow a critical reflection on the symbolical representation of everyday culture, in order to reveal existing relations of submission as relations of oppression, and therefore to transform them into places of antagonism. Because it is precisely this strategy of visualizing unrepresented views and experiences that enables the re-articulation of existing discourses and practices by which the current hegemony is established and reproduced. Due to the ability of networks to eliminate non-compatible nodes as well as to integrate dissent into their own functionality, the range of articulation is always at risk of being limited. That is why the same technologies, which awakened the hope for a redemocratization of society in the mid-1990s, may undermine the condition of possibility for an articulatory practice – that is, democracy itself.

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Real-time networked media activism in the 2008 Chotbul protest[1]

Dongwon Jo

Abstract

This article focuses on people's media activism in the 2008 Chotbul protest in South Korea which proliferated against a background of the failure of representative system of politics and media. In particular, I analyze how real-time on/off-line interaction through the internet and the mobile phone led to participants' online actions such as 'pilgrimage' or hacktivism, macro coordination, and tele-presence or tele-interaction. Accordingly, I argue that in the process of real-time networked protest between protest sites and online sites, a) grassroots media practices were not limited to 'street journalism,' b) its participants have used the internet as broadcast and network media at the same time, and c) the internet itself became not only a space for direct speech but also a site for direct action, while the protest itself became an alternative medium.

Introduction

On May 2 2008, more than 20,000 people gathered at Cheonggye plaza in Seoul and held a Chotbul[2] cultural festival to protest against the negotiation of U.S. beef imports tainted by mad cow disease and even call for the impeachment of President Lee Myung-bak, less than 3 months after he took office. T the Chotbul protest against U.S. beef imports began with Netizens' self-mobilizing and voluntary participation. But it gradually extended to movements opposing the liberalization of public education, the cross-country canal project, the privatization of the public sectors (water, health care, public enterprises, public broadcasting, etc.), and conservative media (*Chosun Ilbo*, *JoongAng Ilbo*, *DongA Ilbo*, hereafter *ChoJoongDong*).

Since there was no political change, the Chotbul cultural festival and the rallies at Cheonggye plaza from May 2 on, turned into a march through the streets after May 24, which met with violent suppression from the police who wielded shields, batons, fire extinguishers, and water cannon. The overnight protest held on May 31 and June 1 saw an aggravated confrontation between the protesters and the police. June 10 was the 21th anniversary of the pro-democracy June Struggle in 1987 and almost 1 million people participated nationwide. The protests became severely violent again in the end of June, which also saw the participation of religious organizations. The Chotbul protests continued

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2 Chotbul means candlelight in Korean, but it has been used as a metonym for a candlelight protest, so I use the Chotbul as a proper noun both literally and metonymically.

almost every day up until the 100th day on August 15, with different agendas and in different sites. However, the government finally moved to resume U.S. beef imports despite the president's two apologies. Subsequently the four months-long protests calmed down, although they still continue visibly and invisibly.

In this article, I focus on people's media activism among many other things during the 2008 Chobul protest. The protest was marked by people's creative use of ICTs and media. Since mid 1990s, ICTs and media have enabled people to create and develop enormous activist networks based on common causes more directly and rapidly than in any previous period. And ways of organizing, mobilizing and implementing the protest by using ICTs and media have ranged "from face-to-face to faceless tactics"(Lim et al. 2007). Recent protests in particular have been usually implemented with on/off-line connections. This was already observed in the first massive and large-scale Chotbul protest in 2002.[3] It is said that there are quite similar social composition between two Chotbul protests, including people's on/off-line media usage. But particularly prominent in the 2008 Chotbul protest were real-time connections and interactions between online and protest sites mediated by debate bulletin boards, chatting rooms, sms messages, and especially live streamings.

In the followings, I will examine the overall aspects of people's media activism in the 2008 Chotbul protest, and examine how the real-time on/off-line interactions through the internet and the mobile phone led to online actions such as 'pilgrimage' or hacktivism, macro coordination, and telepresence or what I call tele-interaction. Finally I will argue some implications of these media tactics for how networked protest could take shape differently.

1. Chotbul media activism

1.1. Beyond the representative system of politics and media

South Korea is no exception to the worldwide political changes - globalization, market pressures toward deregulation, and a crisis of political legitimacy(Castells 2007: 239-40). Free Trade Agreement negotiations with the U.S. since 2006, including the rough-and-ready beef imports negotiation, revealed a crisis of the nation-state's representative system. That is, it couldn't managed to deal with the neoliberal globalisation and deregulation directly affecting our daily lives. Additionally there were failures of the exchange rate policy, skyrocketing prices, even a higher unemployment rate continuing right after Lee's inauguration, as opposed to rosy promises of economic growth resulting in the election of presidential candidate Lee Myung-bak in December 2007.

Furthermore his choices for the cabinet, the agreement of a cross-country canal project behind closed doors, the English-immersion education policy, humiliating diplomacy with the U.S. and Japan, the unnecessary confrontation with North Korea, Lee's derogatory remarks on women and the disabled, and the corruption of public officials and politicians

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3 Two middle-school girls were hit and killed by the U.S. military vehicle on June in 2002. This incident had been very little covered by the dominant media at that moment during the World Cup games, but in the end of November one of netizens proposed an gathering with the candlelight so as to mourn for the two girls' victimized death. People reflexively and widely answered online, and within a few weeks it resulted in tens of thousands people's gathering off-line every night at the very center of Seoul, which pushed the Bush administration in U.S. to make an apology.

among others never stopped hurting the people's pride in being Korean. People's dissatisfaction with and anger at all of these quickly built up. Particularly the young generation, armed with high-tech networked communication skills, was sensitive to and angry with all of these disappointing actions of the new national leader.[4]

Finally the U.S. beef imports negotiation in mid-April 2008 triggered massive protests, which the government and conservative media nevertheless ignored, distorting, and suppressing people's voices.[5] The violent suppression of street protests by the authorities among others was the direct cause of public rage, leading to the involvement of even greater number of participants in the protest. The public's distrust of government policies and the representative system of politics in general was similar to its distrust of the mainstream media. When the media failed as a representative institution to reflect the public's opinion but ignored and distorted the demands of those out on the streets, the people tended to pursue and configure alternatives to them. At this moment, people even went beyond the internet media such as Ohmynews - based on the one-to-many communication model though still accepted as alternative media - and instead sought out and actively made use of blogs, internet cafes, internet debate boards, etc. to set their own agendas and directly express their political opinions. The people didn't need a centralized approach from hierarchical movement organizations to organize and perform the protests as well. The People's Countermeasure Council Against Mad Cow Disease, an alliance of some 1,700 civic groups, was formed on May 6, but it has generally played a role to support the protests, not to lead it.[6] The lack of leadership was one of the conditions that made ICTs and media even more important features for this networked protests.

To sum up, the 2008 Chotbul, as a leaderless networked protest in the context of the failure of representative system of politics and media, as well as in the confrontation with the police clampdown on the protest, was a 'social laboratory' where grassroots media activism emerged explosively.

1.2. The diversity of people's media activism
People's media activism in the Chotbul protests can be largely divided into three: a) a voluntary protest-organizing process followed by the formation of public opinions and resistance communities mainly through the internet, b) counter media activities to reform the conservative media, c) alternative media practices for the production and distribution of counter-information, and tactical actions online as well as on the street.

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4 For the initial protest-organizing and mobilizing process, especially by teenagers and women in their 20s, see the documentary I co-made called 'Shall we protest?' available at http://shallweprotest.net. In this documentary, partly resulting from our ethnographic research on 2008 Chotbul protest, we tried to investigate and show why and how girls and young women took part massively in the uprising.

5 The politicians from the Hanara party (GNP) and conservative media labelled protesters or the Chotbul as "the homeless," "Satan's lot," "democracy of the humble," "playing with candlelight,", while surveilling the leadership and even looking for militarization which could make it possible to define protestors as a "mob." (K. Lee 2008: 175). Law enforcement authorities such as the prosecutor's office and the police mobilized their forces and conducted their own campaign against the Chotbul protests, including control of the internet.

6 This was the case even for established media activism. There have been strong movements for human rights and media democracy for more than three decades in South Korea. Jinbo.net (Korean progressive network) and its precursors in particular has been an opinio- leading organization of internet media activists and netizens. When it came to the 2008 Chotbul protest, professional media activist movements however supported it but were not well articulated with the people's media activism.

Formation of public opinions and resistance communities

While Daum Agora as one of the largest internet debate bulletin boards in South Korea quickly emerged as the major hub for public opinion,[7] online communities in internet cafes[8] based on interests or hobbies such as fashion, cooking, shopping, cosmetic surgery, sports, photos, digital devices, alumni became medium-scale hubs. A number of different internet cafes' members conducted online fund-raising for newspaper ads against state policy, and made massive protest calls to the advertisers for the *ChoJoongDong* newspapers, and even made a community flag to take part as a group in the protests. In addition, many blogs (the "long tail") formed critical public opinion through individual networks and large portals' blog services or meta-blog sites.

Existing online communities and blogs were re-formed as resistance communities, when they got angry at government policies and organized, supported, and participated in the Chobul. There were also Chotbul communities newly created by the participants who met in the middle of internet debates or street protests and were grouped in accordance with political perspectives, age, occupation, place of residence, and self-chosen assignment for protests. An anti-Lee Myung-bak internet café, for example, was created on the very next day (December 20, 2007) after he won the presidential election, and has performed a small scale Chotbul protest every week since then. In the middle of the protests, Chotbul communities organized activities such as a ramblers' group, a reservists' group, vehicle support group, citizen journalist collective, live streaming teams, human rights observers, medical support group, legal support group, arrestees' meeting, and an 815 peace action collective among others.

Counter media activities

Mid-May a netizen posted a suggestion at Daum Agora to strike a blow at *ChoJoongDong* by targetting the advertisers which have put ads in these papers, after noticing the main source of their revenue was advertising rather than subscription fees. A lot of netizens and community members who loved the idea, including the "People's Campaign to Cease Publication of *ChoJoongDong*", as one of the new Chotbul communities, joined together to identify and share the list of the advertisers, and kept making a huge volume of posts and calls every day. As a result of this advertising boycott campaign, about 50 companies and institutions either publicly promised to pull their ads from the three papers or posted an apology on their websites. *ChoJoongDong's* advertising revenues significantly decreased at the height of the Chotbul protests.

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7 Daum Agora is operated by Daum Communications which is the second most important commercial portal sites, and has hundreds of thousands of daily visitors. It consists of debate rooms (divided into 11 topics such as politics, economy, society, etc.), a petition room, a personal story room, and a photo- and cartoon-sharing room. In the petition room, early April 2008, less than two months after Lee's inauguration, there were several requests to demand the impeachment of the President. As one of them, a netizen called 'Andante' posted "I request the National Assembly to impeach President Lee" in the subject of a petition, which was even covered by mainstream media with the fact of rapid increase of the signatures. This has become the unofficial indicator for the falling approval ratings of the Lee administration.

8 Internet café (i.e. Daum cafe) is the name of one of the portal services for online communities.

By contrast, the people have raised more than a million or even 10 million Korean won by voluntary donations to place ads in *Hankyoreh* and *Kyonghang*, which were accepted as relatively truthful newspapers. This meant not only a protest against the government's ads placed in *ChoJoongDong* reading "U.S. Beef was safe," but a support for two financially poor but truthful newspapers. Anti-U.S. Beef imports and pro-Chotbul campaign ads to these two papers by families, alumni, and online communities during 3 months have been up to 284 and 214 respectively. If supporting two newspapers by putting ads was temporary, "the bulk purchase of truthful media with voluntary donations and free distribution campaign" by the so-called "Speak the Truth" network continued on an ongoing basis. Another Chotbul protests for the public broadcasters were separately performed in front of the KBS and the YTN, as the Lee government's attempt to seize the public media progressed step by step.

Alternative media practices

In the process of formation of anti-government public opinion which oscillated through Daum Agora via online communities to blogs, there was a mass of political information commons, in which people's informations - produced with in-depth analysis, rapidly distributed, and visibly and collectively accepted with instant feedback - actually surpassed the existing media. Counter-information and critical comments on government policies and *ChoJoongDong's* distortions came pouring out, finally leading to online direct actions as well as street protests.

Since it was mobilized on a leaderless voluntary basis, all protesters could be actively involved in choosing tactics and coordinations rather than just participating in pre-organized rallies so that protests were performed in improvised but dynamic ways. Hence the protesters made maximum use of various media; the tools or means for grassroots media activism were not limited to digital camera, phone camera, camcorder, mobile phone, laptop with the wireless mobile access to the internet, live streaming, etc. A great variety of directly expressive media were used, such as graffiti, hand-made pickets, placards, Chotbul girl t-shirts, Samulnori (Korean traditional percussion quartets), street musical bands, struggle songs or popular songs, dances, performances of "V for Vendetta" or "Yu Gwan-sun" (independence activist in 1920s), and face-painting or large-scale collective painting among many. Particularly people's media production like spoof or political remixes using familiar commercial films or ads simply and clearly expressed antagonism and rage against Lee and the Lee government.[9] The politicization of popular cultures based on an open source approach and people's aesthetics have created different moods and modes of protests comparing to the past ones, and encouraged more people to feel free to take part in the protests.

2. Real-time inter-actions

1.2   Appropriated or reappropriated technologies

Internet live streaming is not new, but it has been used a lot for the demonstrations and

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9 For example, 'The Bone Ultimatum' was very popular as a spoof of the Hollywood movie "The Bourne Ultimatum" (2007), remixed with the MBC's program "100 minutes debate" about the mad cow disease issue and dubbed in Korean.

meetings. However, there emerged two new aspects of it at this juncture. One is that internet live streaming was transformed from a fixed place-based style into a mobile one equipped with the Wibro (device for wireless broadband access to the internet) since the rally changed to street marches on May 24. The other one is that its performers were not limited to media activists or internet media journalists but expanded to the common netizens either as a group or even as individuals. About 100 live performers created their own channel at 'afreeca.com' which is a commercial personal broadcasting portal site, and went out to the streets to perform real-time broadcasting.[10] Equipped with laptop, video camera, Wibro, or headset, anyone could transmit live video about the situation on the protests while moving around. On the viewers' side, they usually opened up several live broadcasting windows to check here and there, and simultaneously exchanged follow-up information through the multi-channels such as chatting rooms on the same live broadcasting window, Daum Agora, instant messenger, and sms. And some active bloggers made live postings about on-going changes of street situations by the minute.

When it comes to the mobile phone, sms messages were used for disseminating urgent information, and photos or videos taken with it were either transmitted to friends' mobile phone or uploaded later on to the internet with some notes about what happened. Such immediate message exchanges or sharing also occurred between protesters at each site so as to manage to shake off the police. For the purposes of instant message exchanges and discussion, people also used the internet debate boards as if they were in the chatting rooms as a real-time interaction. As a result, Daum Agora, where thousands of posts were posted every day, surpassed any other existing news media in terms of speedy and vivid information. So even those who previously hadn't used it tried to regularly visit Daum Agora to check out how things were each day, when and where the next protest was planned with what tactics, and even how things were going right now. As such, the Chotbul was one of typical networked protest with speed, connectivity, and mobility. Now let's examine what type of protest tactics were brought up by the real-time on/off-line interactions through them.

2.2. 'Pilgrimage' or hacktivism

First, actions for disobedience and solidarity were taken a lot. For example, as soon as it was announced that the police were investigating "Andante" who posted a request to impeach President Lee at Daum Agora petition room and later was known to be a high school student, a great number of netizens simultaneously went to visit the free board of the Nation Police Agency website to make duplicate posts like "I'm Andante," which made the website temporarily inaccessible. Similarly, once the prosecution issued a subpoena those who led the *ChoJoongDong* ads boycott campaign, a whole bunch of posts such as "I made a protest call" or "arrest me" were bombarded onto the website of the Prosecutors' Office. When "Gwontaeroun Chang" (boring window), known as one of the leading debaters at Daum Agora, was accused of masterminding the Chotbul, every Agora user used the same ID as him to post at Agora boards. On August 12, the Korean Communication Commission made the decision to compel MBC "PD Suchop" (PD notebook) which aired in-depth report about the mad cow disease issue on April 28, to apologize for deliberately distorting facts and exaggerating the threat of U.S. beef. Many

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10 From the first day of street march on May 24 till the most massive protest on June 10, the cumulative number of viewers at afreeca.com was 7.75 million, the cumulative number of channels was 17,222, and BJs(broadcasting jockeys) were 425(Seoul Shinmoon, July 31, 2008).

Netizens were dumbfounded at this and posted "Don't apologize, no need to do so" at the free board of "PD Suchop."

As exemplified above, these actions for disobedience and solidarity were taken in the form of so called "pilgrimage," collective protests commenting or protest calling at specifically problematic targets. One high schooler watched police repression with water cannon through live streaming and later went out to the street with a water gun, and then got arrested. Right after this was reported at Daum Agora, a lot of protest calls were bombarded onto that police station. "Pilgrimage" was not limited to online action. The police kept arresting the Chotbul protesters who began to march down the streets late May, then one of the users at Daum Agora just suggested "dakjangcha tour"(chicken cage car tour; a parody of the Seoul tourist bus tour with the police bus) as a way to ridicule the police by voluntarily riding on the police bus and taking and uploading photos of themselves on it.

At the dawn of June 1 there were violent clashes, with the brutal repression by more than 10,000 riot police and water cannon. A video clip of a college female student getting her head trampled by riot police was released on the internet and rapidly disseminated, and even covered by the mainstream media. The protesters became even angrier. After watching the live streaming or video clip later on, a number of netizens agreed to use 'democracy is dead' as a search term and to collectively visit the portal sites to search for it at the same time. It then became the no. 1 favorite search word. Additionally, the websites of the Hanara Party as well as the riot police were derisively defaced by hacking. Many netizens went around on a 'pilgrimage' to those websites while commenting like "Myung-bak is sleeping." What was more interesting case of such massive hackings was that the servers of Cheongwadae (the Blue House; the Korean presidential residence) crashed due to a flood of people connecting at the same time on June 10 when almost a million gathered to protest nationwide. Around 8:30 p.m., the MC of the protest festival requested netizens who participated in the protest through live streaming to simultaneously visit Cheongwadae website to make our voice heard. In just a few minutes Cheongwadae began to suffer from the hours-long crash. Although the website seemed to be restored at 10 p.m., netizens found it just an image file of home page, then spread the image file widely with a satirical saying "disguised homepage of Cheongwadae (similar to Lee's previous convictions)" which were accompanied by another flood of visits causing another crash.

Because of the censorship deleting the politically sensitive posts and the prosecutor's search and seizure of private e-mails under investigation after the end of June, netizens have slowly moved their e-mail accounts, blogs, and other online activities to foreign websites like google.com, which were believed to guarantee privacy. This was known as "cyber-exile" or "exodus in cyberspace", which can be also another case of online disobedience.

3.2 "The whole world is watching" right now, macro coordination, and tele-inter-action

While "pilgrimage" and hacktivism were happening online, in the streets were media tactics especially directed against the police's violent repression. The "Citizen Journalist Collective" was formed out of discussion at a bulletin board of an SLR photo club. Its priority was the act of taking photos rather than photo journalism. In other words, they firstly tried to keep the police from violently suppressing or arresting protesters by taking photos with direct flashlights at that moment, and secondly to document those violent

scenes including the process of struggles hardly covered by the mainstream media.

Once live streaming was mobile, an additional function was real-time monitoring of the police's violence by groups like like Citizen Journalist Collective. We have often heard warning chants shouted like "The whole world is watching", mainly from anti-war protests at the moment the police tried to violently suppress such protests. In this occasion at the Chotbul protest, it's not a warning, but the activity made real. Some netizens tried to figure out the name tags of the riot police to identify who was abusing their power by analyzing photos or videos captured from a live streaming. If the result was posted at Daum Agora, many netizens immediately went down to the websites relating to those policemen to criticize their abuse and demand the immediate release of the arrestees. The real-time exposure of police abuse of public power through mobile live streaming, however, made police commanders issue an order to the policemen "don't be filmed while you're beating people" rather than "don't beat people.'

On the other hand, the mixed use of mobile phone and live streaming made possible a real-time macro coordination between on/off-line, internet debate boards and street media. Macro coordination via the mobile phone in the context of massive protests was famously observed in the Philippine's 'TXTPower' in 2002 (de Souza e Silva 2006: 116). In the case of the Chotbul protest, it has evolved from text messages to multimedia contents, and from protest mobilizing to the real-time coordination of protest tactics. Online participants tried to figure out and collect the information about what was going on at that point from various sources including live streaming, and then send urgent information to their friends or acquaintances on the streets via the mobile phone, which means that online participants guided the next actions the street protesters would take. More often, the live streaming viewers either gave information or requested a coverage of live streaming performers. Jin Joong-kwon (Jin 2008: 174) argued "viewers not just received the transmitted reproduced image, but felt like changing the image and the reality as its origin," by quoting the concept "telepresence" from Manovich (Manovich 2001: 164-7). In other words, internet live streaming provided the viewers not only with the experiences of feeling as if they were present at a specific place while staying far away, but also with the opportunity to intervene in the situation at that place by means of real-time feedback via the mobile phone or comments in the chatroom, asking the live streaming performers to do something as a remote coordination. But I think "telepresence" went further into "tele-interaction", since the viewings of live streaming have been accompanied by possible online actions by viewers such as discussion or debate, donation, forwarding or re-transmission, "pilgrimage" like protest calls or commenting, and hacktivism. Thus today, the real-time tele-interactions between on/off-line via live streaming and the mobile phone made possible protest actions to change reality online as well as on the street.

4.2. Possible changes of networked protest

Beyond "street journalism" or "single person media"

As for people's use of on/off-line media, most academics as well as mainstream journalists called it a new type of "street journalism" with some celebration, whereas they pointed out its limitation in that it had biased perspectives, emotional issue-seeking etc. just because it was conducted by non-professional journalists (Seoul Shinmoon 2008). I think such arguments, however, have some problems arising from their journalism-oriented

perspective. What was called "street journalism" such as mobile phone users, Citizen Journalist Collective, and live streaming performers not only produced news stories, but played critical roles, as described above, to monitor or control the police's violence, to open up live discussion or to mediate each other's actions, and to work for tele-interactions like a computer game. Another frequently-used term, "single person media", implying one individual's ability to produce and/or transmit information is not relevant either, because most of those who got involved in it usually either self-organized as a collective for the more powerful and effective performances or actively interacted with the audiences so that it created a kind of new way of information-producing, sharing, and even acting collectively. Therefore grassroots media practices in the Chotbul protest could be well described as media activism rather than citizen journalism since it mediated the real-time interactive common actions to intervene in and change the reality.

"Mass self-communication"

Protesters in previous protests have tried to seek direct changes with direct action and at the same time depended on mainstream media coverage to make it broadcast publicly (Rucht 2004). The Chotbul protesters tried to create their own media, while not relying on but challenging the mainstream media. "Now people not only speak, but make the voice heard in their own way" (S. Lee 2008: 59), and furthermore they tried to take and coordinate direct actions collectively through their media. This is because they have made great use of media in a way combined between the broadcast media which have a massive impact and the network media which enable two-way communication and interaction, or as Castells put it, in a form of "mass self-communication" (Castells 2007: 248).

Internet as an arena, protest as a medium

Internet spaces such as Daum Agora and internet cafes became a springboard of explosive public opinion which could not be ignored and at the same time were themselves an arena for online direct actions (hacktivism). Above all, online protest actions interconnected with street protests had as much impact as protests on the street did. When Jordan analyzed every type of "mass virtual direct action," he saw a limitation in that "those participating virtually do not take on the risk of the crowd or feel its solidarity" (2002: 132). It was the continuous on/off-line interconnection through which hacking actions during the Chotbul protests seemed to overcome such a limitation. As the internet became the arena of protests, protest in the street became an alternative medium itself. Street politics and media coverage/representation have been separate entities (Rucht 2004). Those two have been converged and the protest itself gradually becomes a medium as networked protest increased since the late 1990s. In this case, because any specific place of protest was not isolated but interconnected with an online context which then had some immediate impact, the combination of the concrete place of protest and the abstract space of online gave birth to hybrid spaces and tele-interactions. Baudrillard (1998: 200) argued that the street lost its revolutionary vitality when it was institutionalized by reproduction and reduced to a spectacle through the media. While live streaming seemed to weaken the directness of the street in that sense, it nevertheless created other "street[s]" for vivid struggles by way of these various connections and ways of actions beyond spatial limitations.

Conclusion

When social problems arise which the government or political parties can't afford to deal with, and newspapers or broadcasting media are hardly trusted,, the people pursue their own ways to solve these problems by taking direct speech and/or action to respond to the representative system, and by practicing grassroots media against the mainstream media. The networked protest for direct speech and direct action could be organized and performed through grassroots media for/as direct democracy. A diversity of grassroots media activism for spontaneous speech and participation, discussion and dissemination, tactics for confrontation in the Chotbul protest transformed both street protest and online action into a counter- and alternative medium.

People's media activism also includes a democracy of information production. Whereas it was professional activists or journalists who produced and disseminated the information in previous protests and movements, there was now a number of people who voluntarily got involved in doing it, so that there is not much separation between the subject participating in it and the subject who was representing it or accepting the representation. Furthermore, the majority of people who were formerly isolated information-consumers were diving into contesting facts, meanings, and values with the dominant media. One may say that the "we write, you read" dogma modern journalism has had (Russell et al. 2007) or "what we write is the public opinion", which *ChoJoongDong* still has, was radically and effectively challenged.

"Repression 2.0" followed, of course. In addition to severe repression of the protests, the internet has been seriously controlled by means of a real name system, the reinforcement of copyright law, consideration of creating a "cyber insult" crime, the search and seizure of private e-mails, eavesdropping and so on. This can be described as the intensive enclosure of political information commons. Particularly in the face of severe government repression, people's media revealed certain forms of weakness simple because they were not well prepared and organized. This was clearly demonstrated by the cyber-exiles, however disobedient they were, into google.com rather than the independent alternatives such as jinbo.net or nodong.net (Korean labor network). Generally speaking, its development was limited and it could not advance through the political organizing process in part because established media activists failed to actively articulate with the new, horizontally-structured people's media.

Nevertheless Chotbul has been continuously highlighted wherever and whenever problems with this government and representative systems have emerged - such as the GNP's attempt to pass their media law, the Yongsan eviction and tragedy, the 1 year anniversary of Chotbul, the former President Roh's suicide and so on. So were live streamings with online protests. Whether on-going Chotbul protests and grassroots media activism could be "social laboratories, generating new cultural practices and political imaginaries" (Juris 2005: 206) depends not only on the protests on/off-line, but on what kind of media system the people try to establish and how they are interlinked with pre-existing media and ICT movements, while politically re-constituting themselves.

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Medien der Neuen Frauenbewegung im Archiv

Brigitte Geiger und Margit Hauser

Zusammenfassung

Als Mitarbeiterinnen von STICHWORT. Archiv der Frauen- und Lesbenbewegung in Wien, das eine umfangreiche Sammlung feministischer Zeitschriften betreut, wollen wir einen Überblick über feministische Bewegungsmedien in Österreich geben und auf die Bedeutung feministischer Archive innerhalb der Wissens- und Geschichtsbildungsprozesse feministischer Bewegungen eingehen, insbesondere auf ihre Rolle im Sichtbarmachen und Bewahren feministischer Medien.

Feministische Medien, besonders Zeitschriften, sind ein wichtiger Bestandteil feministischer Archive und Bibliotheken. Aus der Sicht von Frauenarchiven sind feministische Medien eine reichhaltige und lebendige Quelle zu aktuellen Themen, politischen Praxen und theoretischen Diskussionen. Sie spiegeln die Ausdifferenzierungen und Entwicklungen feministischer Bewegungen, Strategien und Konzepte wie die verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen, politischen und kulturellen Rahmenbedingungen wider. Wir werden Strukturen und Entwicklungen innerhalb der feministischen Medienlandschaft in Österreich von den Anfängen in den 1970er Jahren bis heute analysieren und einen Einblick in Diskussionen und thematische Entwicklungen in den ersten zwei Jahrzehnten der Neuen Frauenbewegung in Österreich geben. Wir legen außerdem einen speziellen Fokus auf lesbische Medien. Da in Österreich im Laufe der Jahre nur wenige explizit lesbische Zeitschriften erschienen sind, beziehen wir hier auch lesbische Zeitschriften aus anderen deutschsprachigen Ländern mit ein.

Feministische Archive und Prozesse der Wissens- und Geschichtsbildung

Feministische Archive haben eine wichtige Aufgabe in der Vermittlung von Frauengeschichte, besonders im Dokumentieren und Sichtbarmachen von Frauenbewegung sowie Lesbengeschichte und -politik. Feministische Archive entstanden in der Neuen Frauenbewegung und Lesbenbewegung aus der Erkenntnis heraus, dass die Dokumentation der eigenen Aktivitäten notwendig ist, wenn die Bewegungen nicht ebenso in Vergessenheit geraten sollen, wie es die

Historischen Frauenbewegungen Ende der 1960er, Anfang der 1970er Jahre waren. Die Ignoranz und Abwertung, die die herrschenden Institutionen ebenso wie die linken Bewegungen gegenüber der Frauenbewegung und ihren Themen zeigten, ließ darauf schließen, dass feministische Aktivitäten und besonders auch lesbisch-separatistischer Aktivismus nur dann an jüngere Frauen überliefert werden würden und eine authentische und möglichst umfassende Dokumentation gewährleistet wäre, wenn sie innerhalb der feministischen und feministisch-lesbischen Bewegungen stattfindet. So entstanden ab den 1970er und forciert ab den 1980ern feministische Archive.

Für den deutschsprachigen Raum, auf den in diesem Beitrag näher Bezug genommen wird, ist dabei die regionale Vielfalt mit teilweisen inhaltlichen Spezialisierungen ebenso typisch wie die strukturelle Verbindung von Archiv, Bibliothek, Forschungs- und Bildungseinrichtung. Fast keine Einrichtung ist nur Archiv oder nur Bibliothek im herkömmlichen Sinne. Kennzeichnend ist weiters ein alternativer, Frauen ermächtigender Bildungsanspruch. Die feministischen Archive waren von Anfang an sowohl als aktuelle Informationszentren innerhalb der Frauenbewegung als auch als Infrastruktur für die ab den frühen Achtzigern universitär Fuß fassende feministische Forschung konzipiert. Sie unterscheiden sich in ihrem umfassenderen Ansatz in Struktur, Beständen, Politik, Selbstverständnis der Mitarbeiterinnen, Zielgruppe und Service grundlegend von jenen ausschließlich als Bibliotheken angelegten Einrichtungen, die in universitären Räumen an einigen Geschlechterforschungs-Zentren entstanden sind. Im weiteren wird es um diese im Kontext der autonomen Frauenbewegung entstandenen feministische Archive gehen, da vor allem diese unter dem Aspekt der feministischen Bewegungsmedien relevant sind. Derzeit sind ca. 40 feministische Archiv- und Bibliothekseinrichtungen in Österreich, Deutschland, der Schweiz, Luxemburg und Norditalien aktiv.[1] Ihre Dokumentations- und Bildungsarbeit wirkt dem Verschweigen und Verzerren der Frauen(bewegungs)geschichte entgegen und trägt durch eine positive Identifikation von Frauen mit den vielfältigen Emanzipationsbestrebungen zu einem erstarkten Frauenbild bei.

Um eine sonst weitgehend nicht öffentlich diskutierte Geschichte authentisch überliefern zu können, wird der Beitrag jeder in diesen Bewegungen engagierten Frau sowie jedes einzelne Dokument für wichtig erachtet. Gesammelt werden in feministischen Archiven alle schriftlichen und Ton-Bild-Dokumente, die frauenlesbenbewegte Aktivitäten dokumentieren, dazu zählen für (Teil-)Öffentlichkeiten bestimmte Dokumente wie Flugschriften, Programme, Pressemeldungen, Plakate, Zeitschriften und Infoblätter, Broschüren und Videos

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[1] Einen Überblick über diese feministischen Archive und Bibliotheken, ihre Spezialsammlungen und Serviceangebote gibt die Website des Dachverbandes der Frauen/Lesbenarchive, -bibliotheken und -dokumentationsstellen i.d.a. <www.ida-dachverband.de>.

ebenso wie interne Dokumente, hier vor allem Protokolle, Konzepte und Korrespondenzen. Die Dokumentation erfolgt dabei primär entlang von Gruppen und Initiativen, von Ereignissen – Veranstaltungen, Aktionen, Kongresse – und in Ansätzen auch personenbezogen. Aufgebaut wurden und werden die Bestände erstens über laufende Sammeltätigkeit, wobei die Archive entweder von den produzierenden Gruppen oder einzelnen Adressatinnen ihrer Zusendungen Belegexemplare erhalten, und zweitens über Konvolute gesammelten Schriftguts, in den letzten Jahren auch in Form umfangreicher personen- oder gruppenbezogener Nachlässe.

Prägend für die Arbeitsweise feministischer Archive im Gegensatz zu z.B. Verwaltungsarchiven ist der Umstand, dass sie ihren Gegenstand erst selbst abgrenzen und definieren müssen. Die Neue Frauenbewegung ist vor allem im deutschsprachigen Raum dezentral organisiert, die Definition, was eine „feministische" Gruppe, Zeitschrift, Publikation oder wer eine Feministin ist – und folglich dokumentiert werden soll –, stellt sich laufend neu und wird möglicherweise auch in späterem Rückblick anders bewertet. Die wesentlichsten Kriterien sind immer wieder Autonomie – als Unabhängigkeit von politischen Parteien und männlich dominierten Institutionen ein zentrales Motiv für die Entstehung und Identität der Neuen Frauenbewegung und einer ihrer Hauptkonfliktpunkte – sowie politische Intention, also ein im weitesten Sinne gesellschaftsverändernder Anspruch. Beides sind oft schwierig zu beurteilende Kriterien, die auch kreative Entscheidungen erfordern und im Zweifelsfall eher inklusiv erfolgen. Hilfreich für die Definitionsarbeit ist der – seit 1983 kontinuierliche – Austausch zwischen den Einrichtungen im deutschsprachigen Raum.

Die feministischen Archive haben im Lauf der Jahrzehnte Veränderungen in der Nutzung und damit in den an sie gestellten Ansprüchen erlebt: Waren die Bestände in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren vor allem als Informationsquelle für laufende frauenbewegte Aktivitäten genutzt worden, suchen seit den Neunzigern, vor allem im Kontext universitärer Lehrveranstaltungen, jüngere Frauen hier Informationen für eine historische Auseinandersetzung mit der Neuen Frauenbewegung, ihren Politiken, Diskussionen und theoretischen Konzepten. Zusätzlich ist in den letzten Jahren von JournalistInnen, AusstellungskuratorInnen und WissenschaftlerInnen verstärkt Interesse an – meist illustrativem – (Bild)Material zur Neuen Frauenbewegung zu verzeichnen. Hier haben frauenpolitisch bewusste Frauen heute in entscheidungstragenden Positionen immer wieder die Möglichkeit, die Neue Frauenbewegung als neue soziale Bewegung in ihren Konzepten in selbstverständlicher Weise mit zu berücksichtigen. Auf diese Weise wurden in den letzten Jahren Bestände aus Frauenarchiven in renommierten Museen, diversen Ausstellungen, in Fernsehdokumentationen, auf Online-Portalen und in unterschiedlichster Fachliteratur einer breiteren Öffentlichkeit präsentiert. Der Zeitpunkt der ernsthaften Wahrnehmung und seriösen Präsentation von

ausgewählten Aspekten der Neuen Frauenbewegung trifft dabei auffällig mit dem von Medien erklärten Ende der politischen Bewegung zusammen.

Die Veränderungen und Professionalisierungsschritte in der Arbeitsweise von Frauenarchiven können anhand des Beispiels von STICHWORT gezeigt werden. *STICHWORT. Archiv der Frauen- und Lesbenbewegung* in Wien begann seine Arbeit 1983 und entwickelte sich im Kontext der österreichischen Frauen- und Lesbenbewegung und im Rahmen einer breiten Infrastruktur von Frauen- und Lesbenarchiven im deutschsprachigen Raum. STICHWORT entstand in den Räumen eines Kommunikationszentrums für Studentinnen *(Uni-Frauenzentrum)* und als eine der Sektionen des Vereins *Frauenforschung und weiblicher Lebenszusammenhang,* einer der ersten Vernetzungen feministischer Wissenschaftlerinnen in Österreich. Entwicklung und Professionalisierung zeichnen sich beim Erwerb von Dokumenten, den technischen Mitteln der Erfassung, der Darstellung des Archivs in der Öffentlichkeit und der Organisationsstruktur ab.

Konzept war von Anfang an, die Dokumente zur österreichischen und, soweit akquierierbar, der internationalen Frauenbewegung zu sammeln. Ein gewisser Schwerpunkt auf Wien ergab sich zum einen aus den hier geballten Aktivitäten der österreichischen Frauenbewegung, zum anderen aus der leichteren Zugänglichkeit des Materials. Mit der Gründung feministischer Archive in Graz und Innsbruck (1993) werden zwei weitere Zentren der österreichischen autonomen Frauenbewegung auch durch lokale Dokumentationen erfasst. Beginnend mit einem ad-hoc-Sammeln von Unterlagen aktueller lokaler Bewegungsaktivitäten konnte durch gezielte Öffentlichkeitsarbeit die Sichtbarkeit und Wahrnehmung als Archiv in der Frauenbewegung so gestärkt werden, dass Dokumente direkt von Fraueninitiativen und Einzelpersonen übermittelt werden, in Form laufender Zusendungen oder durch Überlassung von gesammelten Dokumenten. Wichtig dafür ist die Involvierung der einzelnen Archivmitarbeiterinnen in die verschiedenen Zusammenhänge der lokalen Bewegung. Ihre persönlichen Kontakte tragen ebenso wie die deklarierte Offenheit für alle Ausdrucksformen unabhängiger feministischer Politik wesentlich zur Herstellung jener Vertrauensbasis bei, die für die Akquierierung der Dokumente unabdingbar ist. Der Internetauftritt und ein eigener Newsletter trugen seit Mitte der Neunziger zu einer verbesserten Kommunikation nicht nur mit Nutzerinnen und potentiellen Überlasserinnen bei.

Gleichzeitig hat sich die Vielfalt der Dokumentarten vergrößert. Ab den Neunzigern kamen auch audiovisuelle Medien (Videos und Audiocassetten, später auch CDs) dazu sowie elektronische Medien (CD-ROMs, DVD). Gerade bei diesen Medien sowie bei der Archivierung von Online-Medien in elektronischer Form stellt eine nachhaltige Konservierung besondere Herausforderungen, die mit dem derzeitigen finanziellen Background kaum effizient zu lösen sind und in größeren Zusammenhängen diskutiert und bearbeitet werden müssen.

Von Anfang an verfügte STICHWORT über eine komplette Erfassung und weitgehende Inhaltserschließung in Zettelkatalogen und Inventarlisten. Seit 1990 wurde die Elektronisierung der Datenerfassung für Archiv und Bibliothek vorangetrieben. Die aufgebaute Datenbank ermöglicht heute die detaillierte inhaltliche und auch verknüpfte Recherche in allen Bestandsgruppen, großteils auch online unter <www.stichwort.or.at>.

Feministische Bewegungsmedien in den Sammlungen der Frauen- und Lesbenarchive

Feministische Medien, besonders Zeitschriften, sind ein wichtiger Bestandteil feministischer Archive und Bibliotheken. Aus der Sicht von Frauenarchiven sind feministische Medien eine reichhaltige und lebendige Quelle zu aktuellen Themen, politischen Praxen und theoretischen Diskussionen. Sie spiegeln die Ausdifferenzierungen und Entwicklungen feministischer Bewegungen, Strategien und Konzepte wie die verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen, politischen und kulturellen Rahmenbedingungen wider. Sie sind damit nicht nur wichtig für die aktuelle Informationsvermittlung durch Frauenarchive, sondern auch wertvolle historische Quellen für die Frauenbewegungsforschung. Ihre Bewahrung und Zugänglichmachung ist daher eine zentrale Aufgabe für feministische Archive. (Vgl. Geiger/Hauser 2008)

Mit der seit Beginn der Neuen Frauenbewegungen entstandenen weltweiten Fülle an feministischen Zeitschriften und Informationsblättern schufen sich die feministischen Bewegungen von Beginn an Orte und Strukturen einer (Gegen-)Öffentlichkeit. Eigene Kommunikations- und Handlungsräume bieten Raum zur Entfaltung feministischer Diskurse und für die Vermittlung der Kollektivität, bilden weiters Rahmen und Basis für die Auseinandersetzung unter Frauen, für Erfahrungsverarbeitung und Theorieproduktion, für kollektive Lernprozesse und eine selbstbestimmte Entwicklung feministischer Strategien und Handlungsperspektiven, somit auch für eine Neubestimmung weiblicher Identität(en).[2] Feministische Medien fungieren dabei sowohl als bewegungsinterne Informations-, Kommunikations- und Diskussionsmittel als auch als relativ selbstbestimmte Artikulationsmittel nach ‚außen'.[3]

Die Vielfalt, Unterschiedlichkeit und global weite Verbreitung feministischer Printmedien machen eine eindeutige Definition des Genres „feministische Zeitschrift" schwierig. Das Spektrum der feministischen Zeitschriften reicht von

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[2] Vgl. u. a. Gruppe feministischer Öffentlichkeit 1992, Klaus 1994, Geiger 2002a.

[3] Vgl. zu Funktionen feministischer Zeitschriften u. a. Geiger 2001, 2002b, Susemichel u. a. 2008.

kleinen Gruppenmedien einzelner Projekte und Initiativen für eine begrenzte Zielgruppe bis zu feministischen „Massenblättern" mit relativ hoher Auflage und einer stärkeren kommerziellen Orientierung (z. B. *Emma* in Deutschland oder *Ms.* in den USA), von einfach gemachten Informationsblättern über anspruchsvolle Magazine bis zu umfangreichen wissenschaftlichen Periodika, von kurzlebigen Versuchen mit oft nur wenigen Ausgaben bis zu traditionsreichen Zeitschriften mit über zwanzigjähriger Geschichte. Es umfasst die lokale Frauenzeitung ebenso wie den internationalen Newsletter, thematisch breit gestreute sowie Fachzeitschriften und eine vielfältige Lesbenpresse. Dazu kommen seit Ende der Neunziger – ausschließlich online oder parallel zu einer Printversion – über eMail verteilte elektronische Newsletter bzw. im Internet publizierte eZines.

Ihre Zugänglichkeit und Bewahrung ist für ein Nachvollziehen feministischer Diskurse und Entwicklungen, der Geschichte der Bewegungen von zentraler Bedeutung, gleichzeitig stellt die Dokumentation feministischer Zeitungen aufgrund ihrer Vielfältigkeit, Dezentralität, hohen Fluktuation und meist selbst organisierten Produktionsweise hohe Anforderungen.

In Österreich sind nur die größeren feministischen Medien – *AUF, An.schläge, [sic!]* – an den großen nationalen Bibliotheken nachgewiesen, während kleinere, regionale Blätter – trotz Ablieferungspflicht – oft fehlen. Ausländische feministische Zeitschriften, auch „große" wie *Emma, Courage oder Ms.*, sind überhaupt nur sporadisch nachgewiesen.[4] In Deutschland scheint die Situation ein wenig anders zu sein. Hier finden sich zumindest teilweise auch in Universitätsbibliotheken kleinere lokale Medien der autonomen Frauenbewegung. Feministische Archive und Bibliotheken hingegen bilden in ihren Beständen das gesamte Spektrum frauen/lesbenbewegter Zeitschriftenproduktion im deutschsprachigen Raum ab und führen darüber hinaus die wichtigsten Titel aus anderen Ländern.

Die umfangreichste Sammlung autonomer Frauen- und Lesbenzeitschriften in Österreich wird von STICHWORT. Archiv der Frauen- und Lesbenbewegung betreut und umfasst derzeit insgesamt 700 Titel und über 60 laufende Abonnements. Ziel der Sammlung ist die möglichst lückenlose Dokumentation der autonomen feministischen Zeitschriftenproduktion Österreichs von den Anfängen in den siebziger Jahren bis heute, welche auch kleine Informationsblätter und nur in einzelnen Ausgaben erschienene Periodika umfasst. Derzeit weist der Katalog 192 österreichische Titel, darunter 47 aktuelle, auf. Der internationale Bestand (knapp 500 Titel aus 44 Ländern, davon etwa 200 Titel aus dem deutschsprachigen Raum) bietet trotz seines notwendigerweise kursorischen Charakters einen Einblick in die Vielfalt der feministischen und lesbischen Zeitschriftenproduktion

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[4] Anders ist die Situation bei den wissenschaftlichen Periodika, hier hat die universitäre Etablierung der Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung auch Niederschlag in der Anschaffungspolitik der wissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken gefunden.

weltweit. Durch regen Tausch zwischen den feministischen Archiven, aber auch durch private Schenkungen werden laufend Bestandslücken geschlossen. Eine der Besonderheiten der Sammlung von STICHWORT, wie von autonomen feministischen Archiven allgemein, liegt im Stellenwert, der „kleinen" Medien eingeräumt wird. Im Hinblick auf eine möglichst vollständige Bewegungsdokumentation werden auch jene spontan und mit einfachen Mitteln hergestellten Zeitschriften dokumentiert, die, herausgegeben von kurzlebigen, in einem begrenzten Feld agierenden Frauengruppen, vielleicht nur ein- oder zweimal erschienen sind. *Bedeutsamkeit* definiert sich hier durch den Fokus auf Bewegungsdokumentation aufgrund anderer Kriterien als für staatliche Einrichtungen.

Weitere Sammlungsorte für feministische Zeitschriften in Österreich sind die Archive der AUF-Zeitung (mit knapp 50 Titeln, etwa die Hälfte deutschsprachig, viele ältere Bestände), des *ArchFem* in Innsbruck und von *FEMAIL* in Feldkirch, jeweils auf österreichische und deutschsprachige Titel beschränkt. Kleinere Sammlungen betreuen weiters die *AEP-Bibliothek* in Innsbruck und des *DOKU Graz*. Die *Frauensolidarität* sammelt und dokumentiert als *Bibliothek und Dokumentationsstelle Frauen und „Dritte Welt"* im Wesentlichen seit 1993/94 vor allem Zeitschriften und Informationsblätter aus Ländern des Südens, wobei in Asien und Lateinamerika mehr Titel produziert werden als in Afrika, aber auch Publikationen aus dem „Norden", die sich schwerpunktmäßig mit Frauen des Südens bzw. internationalen Frauenfragen beschäftigen. Sie sind in der Online-Datenbank (unter <www.eza.at/literatur>) sowie teilweise im Gesamtkatalog des Österreichischen Bibliotheksverbundes nachgewiesen.

Die größeren österreichischen feministischen Zeitschriften wie *AUF, an.schläge, [sic!], Frauensolidarität* oder *fiber* sind auch außerhalb des Landes in feministischen Archiven auffindbar.

Die größten Sammlungen feministischer Zeitschriften in Deutschland[5] befinden sich im *Frauenforschungs-, bildungs- und -informationszentrum FFBIZ* in Berlin (mit 866 Titeln), im *Archiv der deutschen Frauenbewegung* in Kassel (1.037), im *FrauenMediaTurm* Köln (927), im feministischen Archiv *ausZeiten* in Bochum (816) und, auf Lesbenzeitschriften fokussiert, im *Spinnboden* in Berlin (über 1.600). Für die Schweiz ist die *schema f*-Bibliothek in Zürich als relevante Sammlung ansprechbar. Das *Cid-femmes* in Luxemburg verfügt über sämtliche landesspezifische und regionale Titel.

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[5] Links zu den genannten Einrichtungen unter <www.ida-dachverband.de> bzw. direkt <www.ffbiz.de>, <www.addf-kassel.de>, <www.FrauenMediaTurm.de>, <www.auszeiten-frauenarchiv.de>, <www.spinnboden.de> sowie <www.schema-f.fembit.ch> und <www.cid-femmes.lu>.

Um die Zeitschriftenbestände der Lesben/Frauenarchive und -bibliotheken im deutschsprachigen Raum sichtbar zu machen und auch in herkömmlichen Katalogen nachzuweisen, werden die Daten in einem gemeinsamen Projekt des *i.d.a.*-Dachverbandes schrittweise in die ZDB, die weltweit größte Zeitschriftendatenbank an der Staatsbibliothek Berlin, eingearbeitet.[6] Viele Titel werden damit erstmals einer breiten Öffentlichkeit bekannt; gleichzeitig wird auf die feministischen Archive und Bibliotheken als Sammlungsorte aufmerksam gemacht. Mit Oktober 2009 schienen in der ZDB 2.000 verschiedene feministische Titel aus der Historischen sowie der Neuen Frauen- und Lesbenbewegung auf, Bewegungsmedien ebenso wie wissenschaftliche Zeitschriften. Rund 1.000 Titel davon wurden an diesem Ort erstmals genannt. Derzeit ist gut die Hälfte der Zeitschriftenbestände aus den 20 bisher am Projekt beteiligten Einrichtungen in der ZDB nachgewiesen. Für die weitere Zukunft ist die gemeinsame Präsentation aller in den *i.d.a.*-Einrichtungen vorhandenen Zeitschriftentitel auf der Website des Dachverbandes geplant.

Feministische Bewegungsmedien in Österreich: Strukturen und Entwicklungen

Die umfangreiche Zeitschriften-Datenbank von STICHWORT erlaubt einen detailreichen Einblick in Strukturen und Entwicklungen der feministischen Zeitschriftenlandschaft Österreichs. In der Datenbank sind 186 österreichische Zeitschriftentitel erfaßt, die nach 1970, dem Beginn der Neuen Frauenbewegungen in Österreich, gegründet wurden und damit Basis der folgenden Analyse sind.[7] Entstanden als Printmedien-Sammlung umfasst die Datenbank heute auch elektronische Newsletter. Erfasst sind neben den Bestandsdaten Gründungs- und gegebenenfalls Einstellungsdaten, Herausgeberinnen, frühere Namen, Publikationsort, Erscheinungsweise, thematische Schwerpunkte und Zeitschriftentyp. Allerdings sind nicht für alle Zeitschriftentitel alle Angaben vorhanden, so ist z.B. die exakte Publikationsdauer nur bei 82 Titeln bekannt. Dies ist im Folgenden zu berücksichtigen.

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[6] <www.zdb-opac.de>. Die Bestände sind nach einzelnen Archiven in der ZDB unter der Leihverkehrsregion „ida" abfragbar.

[7] Sechs ältere, hier nicht einbezogene Titel umfassen zum einen traditionsreiche Zeitschriften von partei- bzw. kirchennahen Frauenorganisationen wie *neue frau*, vormals *Die Frau* des SPÖ-Bundesfrauenkommitees (1924–1987), *Stimme der Frau* des Bundes demokratischer Frauen (1945–1993), *Welt der Frau* der Katholischen Frauenbewegung (1964–) und *frau aktuell* der Österreichischen Frauenbewegung (ÖVP-nahe) (1959–) sowie die Zeitschriften der Lagergemeinschaft Ravensbrück und des Österreichischen Akademikerinnenbundes.

Die ersten autonomen feministischen Zeitschriften entstehen in den 1970er Jahren als Organe der ersten Emanzipationsarbeitskreise und autonomen Frauenorganisationen Österreichs. Hervorzuheben sind hier die beiden 1974 gegründeten und damit ältesten noch bestehenden feministischen Zeitschriften im deutschsprachigen Raum: die *AUF — Eine Frauenzeitschrift* in Wien und die *AEP Informationen* in Innsbruck, Tirol. Insgesamt sind diese Anfänge feministischer Medienproduktion in Österreich noch sehr bescheiden mit im Schnitt 5 parallel erscheinenden Titeln und 1—2 Neugründungen pro Jahr, von denen aber der Großteil nur jeweils ein bis zwei Jahre besteht.

Erst in den 1980er Jahren beginnt mit der Verbreiterung und Diffundierung der feministischen Bewegung und der Gründung der ersten Frauenprojekte der kontinuierliche, bis zur Jahrtausendwende anhaltende Ausbau einer feministischen (Print-)Medienlandschaft in Österreich. Die Zahl der jährlichen Neugründungen steigt von 5 in den 1980ern auf mehr als 8 in den 1990ern; die Anzahl der bestehenden Titel steigt von durchschnittlich 17 in der ersten Hälfte der 1980er Jahre auf durchschnittlich 67 Titel in der 2. Hälfte der 1990er Jahre. Der Höchstwert wird 1997 mit 71 erfassten Zeitschriftentiteln erreicht. (Grafik 1a und 1b). Ab 2000 geht dann sowohl die Gesamtanzahl als auch die Anzahl der jährlichen Neugründungen wieder zurück und stabilisiert sich bei etwa 50 Titeln und 3 bis 4 Neugründungen im Jahr. Mit Ende 2008 weist die STICHWORT-Zeitschriftensammlung 47 aktuelle Titel aus; ob dieser neuerliche leichte Rückgang auf weitere Reduktionen der feministischen Medienlandschaft hinweist oder nur zeitliche Verzögerungen in der Bestandsvervollständigung abbildet, wird erst die Zukunft zeigen. Eine exakte Bestimmung der jeweils aktuellen Anzahl ist ohnehin aufgrund der schnellen Veränderungen und nicht immer eindeutiger Abgrenzungen schwierig.[8] Pessimistisch stimmt allerdings die Tatsache, dass in den letzten Jahren der Saldo von Neugründungen und Einstellungen meist negativ war, während in den 1980er und 90er Jahren noch im Schnitt zwei Titel mehr neu entstanden sind, als Bestehende eingestellt wurden.

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[8] So ist unter den aktuellen Zeitschriften hier noch die *Koryphäe* ausgewiesen, weil sie erst mit 2009 ihr Erscheinen (vorläufig) einstellte, nicht enthalten sind hingegen *LesbenFrauenNachrichten* und *[sic!]. Forum für feministische Gangarten*, welche beide noch keine offizielle Einstellung der Zeitschrift bekanntgegeben haben, aber zuletzt 2007 erschienen sind. Erfasst sind in der Datenbank aus archivierungstechnischen Gründen zwar elektronische Newsletter (11 aktuelle Titel), nicht hingegen Online-Zeitungsportale wie *ceiberweiber.at* (seit 1999) oder *die.Standard.at* (seit 2000). Zum Vergleich: Mit einer sehr engen Definition autonomer feministischer Zeitschriften kommt Horak (2003) auf nur 18 aktuelleTitel, Well (2007) listet in ihrer Arbeit mit einer weiten, auch Online-Medien und institutionell eingebundene bzw. parteinahe Titel umfassenden Definition 44 Medien auf.

Grafik 1a: Titelentwicklung 1970 bis 2008
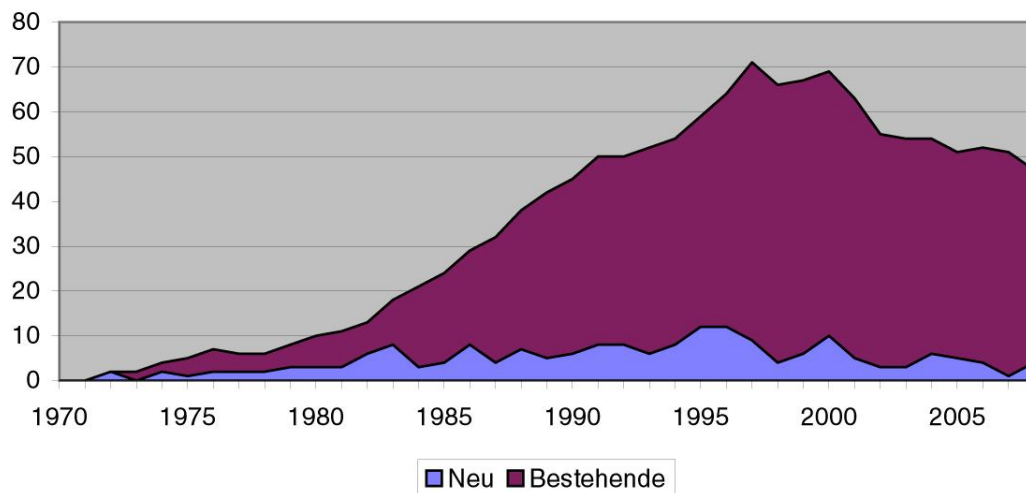
Grafik 1b: Titelentwicklung
(Durchschnittliche Anzahl und Neugründungen)
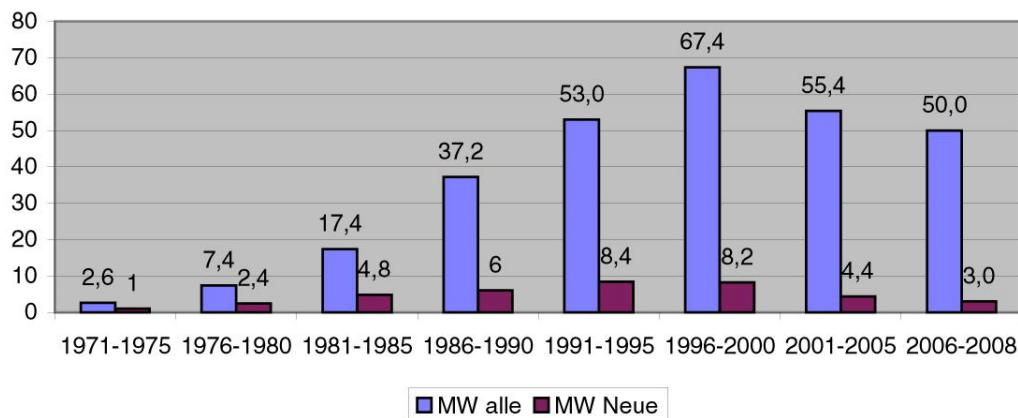
Mit dem Ausbau ging auch eine innere Differenzierung der Zeitschriftenlandschaft einher, wie Grafik 2 veranschaulicht, in der die Titelentwicklung nach Zeitungstypen aufgeschlüsselt ist. Relativ stabil ist die Titelentwicklung bei den allgemein-feministischen Zeitschriften, die sich thematisch breit an „alle" feministisch/lesbisch Interessierten richten und eine wichtige Rolle für eine gruppen- und themenübergreifende feministische Diskussion spielen. Nach den ersten noch bescheidenen Anfängen in den 1970ern schwankt ihre Zahl zwischen 6

und 10 Titeln. Der generelle Titelzuwachs verdankt sich vor allem der steigenden Anzahl an Informationsblättern, welche seit den 1980er Jahren den Aufbau einer breiten Infrastruktur spezialisierter Frauenprojekte sowie von Einrichtungen und Zusammenschlüssen der Frauen- und Geschlechterforschung begleiten, seit den 2000er Jahren zunehmend in einer elektronischen Variante. Die Anzahl der Infos steigt von durchschnittlich 7 in den 1980ern über 28 in den 1990ern auf durchschnittlich 34 in den 2000er Jahren, wobei dieser weitere Anstieg vor allem von elektronischen Newslettern getragen wird, wohingegeben die Anzahl der gedruckten Infos leicht sinkt, zuletzt auf etwas über 20 Titel.

Grafik 2: Titelentwicklung nach Zeitungstyp
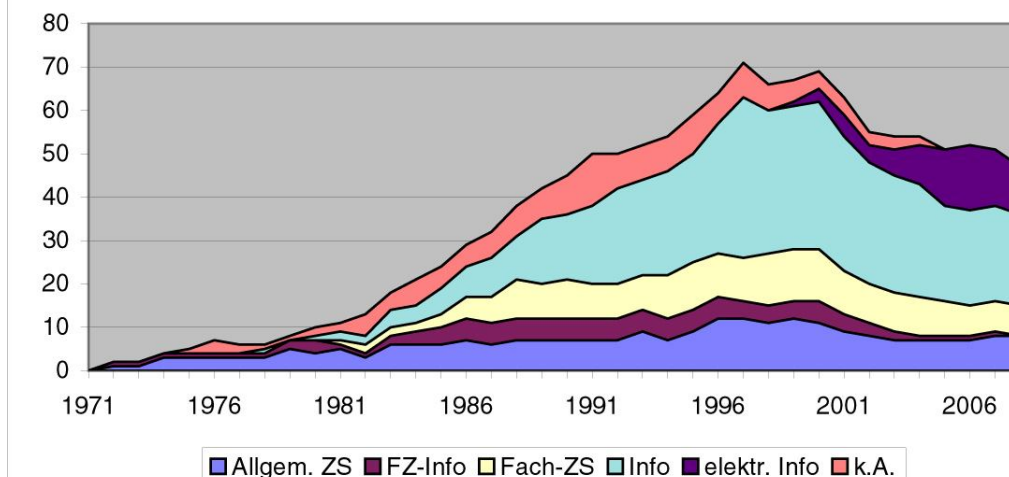
Verbunden mit der thematischen Spezialisierung und Differenzierung frauenbewegter Aktivitäten ist auch die Entstehung erster feministischer Fachzeitschriften in den 1980er Jahren, dieser Zeitschriftentyp ist seit den 1990er Jahren mit durchschnittlich 9 Titeln vertreten – zu nennen wären hier etwa die Kunstzeitschrift *Eva & Co* (Graz, 1981—1992), die bis heute bestehende, auch im deutschsprachigen Ausland breit rezipierte, entwicklungspolitische Zeitschrift *Frauensolidarität* (Wien, 1982–), der Rundbrief des Österreichischen Frauenforums Feministische Theologie *Der Apfel* (Wien, 1986–), die *Koryphäe. Medium für feministische Naturwissenschaften und Technik* (Wien, 1986—2008), die literaturwissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für den Alpen-Adria-Raum *Script* (Klagenfurt, 1992—2001) oder die bestens fachlich-universitär etablierte *Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft, L'Homme* (Wien, 1990–).

Für die feministische Informationsvermittlung auf regionaler Ebene waren insbesondere in den 1980er und 90er Jahren die sog. Frauenzentrums-Infos von großer Bedeutung. Herausgegeben von den Frauenkultur- und Kommunikationszentren und changierend zwischen Informationsblatt und allgemein-feministischer Zeitschrift trugen Blätter wie *Zyklotron* in Innsbruck (1983—2003), *Infam* in Linz (1984—2000), *Zahra Iustra* in Salzburg (1985—2001) und *Belladonna* in Klagenfurt (1986—1996) zu einer gewissen Dezentralisierung der Medienlandschaft bei. Insgesamt ist die feministische Zeitschriftenproduktion aber sehr stark auf Wien konzentriert: Rund zwei Drittel der Titel insgesamt wie auch der aktuell erscheinenden sind in Wien lokalisiert, weitere „Zentren" sind die Landeshauptstädte, hier vor allem Graz und Innsbruck mit mehr als 10 Titeln, nur knapp 5% alle erfassten Titel erscheinen außerhalb dieser städtischen Zentren. Eine relativ dezentralisierte und wachsende Zeitungslandschaft mit zahlreichen Infoblättern lokaler Frauenberatungen und -treffs weist Oberösterreich auf.

Betrachtet man die feministische Zeitschriftenproduktion in Bezug auf Bestandsdauer und Erscheinungsweise, so zeigt sich einerseits ein hohes Maß an Fluktuation, wenn knapp ein Viertel der Titel nur für 1—2 Jahre besteht, weitere 15% zwischen 3 und 5 Jahren und überdies knapp 30% der Titel unregelmäßig oder gar nur einmalig erscheinen. Diese Struktur ist zum einen sicher auch ein Resultat der aufgrund beschränkter Ressourcen schwierigen Produktionsbedingungen autonom-feministischer Medien, die große Fluktuationsrate ist aber auch Ausdruck der Dynamik und Lebendigkeit einer basisnahen, selbstorganisierten Medienproduktion. Trotz schwieriger Bedingungen (nur wenige feministische Zeitschriftenredaktionen sind ausreichend finanziert oder verfügen gar über bezahlte Arbeitsplätze, vgl. Geiger 1996, Horak 2003, Well 2007) schaffen viele der Medienprojekte dennoch eine beeindruckende Kontinuität: Über ein Fünftel der aktuellen Zeitschriften existiert seit mehr als 20 Jahren, weitere 37% zwischen 10 und 20 Jahren; d.h., knapp 60% der aktuellen Zeitschriften und immerhin 43% der insgesamt erfassten Titel erschienen für mindestens 10 Jahre.

Beschränkungen sind allerdings in der Erscheinungshäufigkeit und damit Aktualität der Informationsvermittlung gegeben: Nur 15% der Titel erscheinen öfter als 6mal im Jahr. Aktuell sind dies die Infoblätter *Laufschritte* (Graz, 1986—) und *Insel Zeitung* (Scharnstein 1992—) sowie die elektronischen Infoblätter *Fiftitu%-Newsletter, AEP-Newsletter* und *Lebenszeichen*; als einzige Zeitschrift erscheint das feministische Magazin *an.schläge* (Wien, 1983—) seit 1994 monatlich (mit zwei Doppelnummern), davor erschien sie wie das Gros der feministischen Medien vierteljährlich. Insgesamt weist ein Drittel der erfassten feministischen Titel eine Erscheinungshäufigkeit von 3—6x/Jahr auf, von den allgemein-feministischen Zeitschriften ist es sogar die Hälfte. Die bevorzugte Erscheinungsform der Fachzeitschriften ist 1—3x/Jahr, wohingegen die Infoblätter sehr oft unregelmäßig erscheinen. (Grafik 3a und 3b)

Grafik 3a: Erscheinungsweise (N = 132)
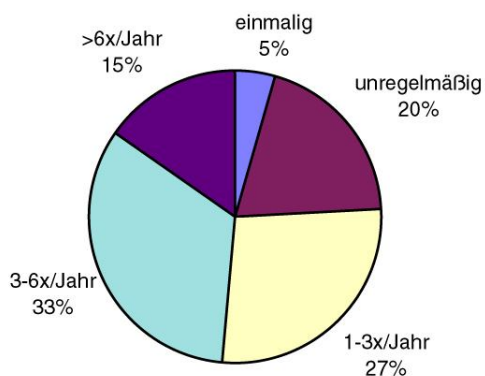
Grafik 3b: Erscheinungsweise nach Zeitungstyp
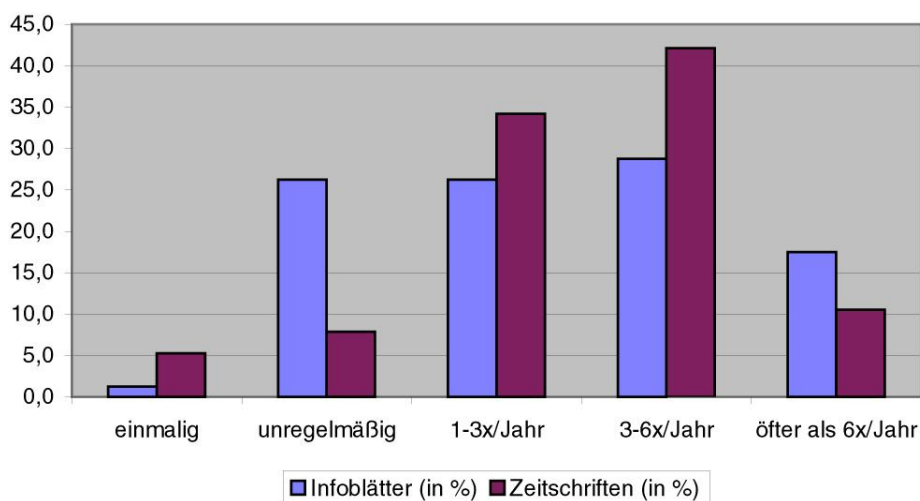
Einen Überblick über die thematische Ausrichtung der Zeitungen gibt Grafik 4. In einer weitgehend differenzierten und auch thematisch spezialisierten frauenbewegten Infrastruktur lassen sich immerhin drei Viertel der erfassten Titel (über 80% der aktuellen Zeitungen) einem oder zwei Themen bzw. Tätigkeitsbereichen zuordnen. Ein Schwerpunkt liegt eindeutig im universitären und wissenschaftlichen Bereich, dem knapp ein Fünftel der aktuellen Medien zuzuordnen ist. Unter Universität/Frauenforschung sind v.a. die studentischen Medien und Informationen der Koordinationstellen bzw. Projektzentren der

Frauen- und Genderforschung an den österreichen Universitäten[9] erfasst, neben allgemein-geschlechtertheoretischen Titeln sind die Fachrichtungen Geschichte, Naturwissenschaften/Technik, Philosophie und Recht vertreten.[10] Die stark vertretene Gruppe unter Parteien/Bewegungen repräsentiert v.a. die Informationstätigkeiten der institutionellen Frauen- und Gleichstellungspolitik und einige parteinahe Titel (wie *Brot & Rosen* der Wiener Grünen). Ein sehr medien-aktiver Bereich vor allem mit Print- oder elektronischen Informationsblättern, nur vereinzelt mit Fachzeitschriften, sind die Frauenberatungsstellen und spezialisierten Beratungsprojekte im Bereich Gesundheit, Bildung, Arbeit oder Gewalt. Auffallend ist dabei, dass die migrantischen (Beratungs-)Projekte kaum vertreten sind. Das Thema Entwicklungspolitik wird fast ausschließlich von der Zeitschrift *Frauensolidarität* abgedeckt. Prominenter vertreten sind dann noch die Themenbereiche Kunst und Literatur – neben der schon erwähnten Kunstzeitschrift *Eva & Co* und der Literaturzeitung *Entladungen* (Wien, 1985–) ist hier vor allem auf die popkulturellen Zeitungsprojekte der letzten Jahre *female sequences* (Wien, 1999—2002), *nylon* (Wien, 2000—2001) und *fiber* (Wien, 2002–) zu verweisen. Einen Anteil von etwa 10% haben außerdem lesbische bzw. lesbisch-schwule Zeitungen.

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[9] Der deutliche Rückgang bei den aktuellen Zeitungen dürfte darauf zurückzuführen sein, dass die hier mitgezählten Reader zu den frauen/genderspezifischen Lehrveranstaltungen aus den Bundesländern nur sporadisch nachgewiesen sind.
[10] Vgl. zu Theorie- und Wissenschaftszeitschriften im deutschsprachigen Raum, Hauser/Geiger 2008.

Grafik 4: Thematische Orientierungen/Tätigkeitsfelder
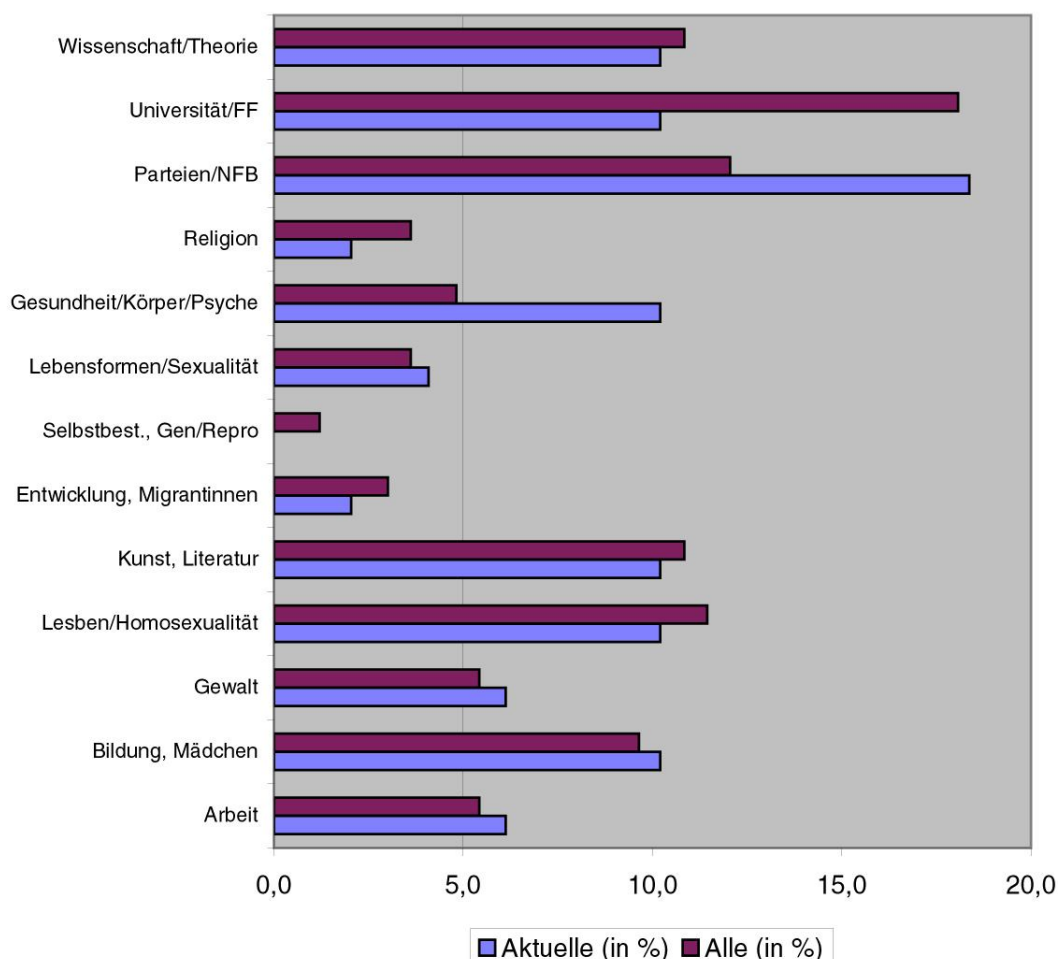
Kleiner Rückblick: Feministische Diskussionen und Themenentwicklungen in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren

Im Rahmen des Forschungsprojekts *Die neue Frauenbewegung im Spiegel ihrer Medien* (1990, vgl. Geiger et al. 1992) wurden die ersten beiden Jahrzehnte feministischer Medienproduktion (Zeitungen, Flugblätter und Plakate) in Österreich anhand der Archivbestände im STICHWORT analysiert. Dies ermöglicht einen detaillierten Blick auf Entwicklungen der Themenstruktur feministischer Zeitungen und medialer Diskussionen der Neuen Frauenbewegung

in Österreich im Zeitraum 1972—1990, da dabei die einzelnen Artikel in einer Datenbank erfasst und nach der STICHWORT-Systematik beschlagwortet wurden.[11]

Vergleicht man Themenstruktur und -entwicklung der autonomen Frauen- und Lesbenzeitungen Österreichs dieser Zeit mit den aktuellen thematischen Orientierungen der Zeitungstitel zeigen sich Ähnlichkeiten, aber auch Verschiebungen. Im Vordergrund standen in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren die Themen Frauenbewegungsberichterstattung im engeren Sinn, Literatur und Sprache, Kunst, Arbeit sowie Gewalt gegen Frauen, gefolgt von den Themengebieten Parteien/politische Bewegungen, Lesben/Lesbenbewegung, Reproduktion und Bevölkerungspolitik/Abtreibung. Die Themen Körper, Umwelt, Religion, Sexualität und Theorie liegen am unteren Ende der Skala.

Bewegungsinterne Kommunikation (Frauenbewegungsberichterstattung im engeren Sinn) ist für die Frauen- und Lesbenbewegung als dezentrale, nicht-institutionell und nicht-hierarchisch organisierte Bewegung von zentraler Bedeutung. Bewegungsmedien haben somit die Aufgabe, eine eigenbestimmte (Selbst-)Darstellung und einen kontinuierlichen Informations- und Erfahrungsaustausch zu garantieren und eine überregionale Auseinandersetzung über Organisation, Struktur und Strategie der Bewegung zu vermitteln. Umgekehrt werden Bewegungsmedien rezipiert, um Neuigkeiten über Gruppen, Aktivitäten und Diskussionen, aber auch Klatsch und Tratsch zu erfahren. (Geiger 1987, 380 ff, 351 ff.) Inhaltlich geht es um Veranstaltungen, Kongresse, Aktionen, Demonstrationen und andere Aktivitäten. Selbstkritik und bewegungsinterne Konflikte erreichten Ende der Siebziger einen ersten Höhepunkt und wurden auch Ende der 1980er Jahre immer wieder virulent. Weniger häufig und vor allem Ende der Achtziger finden sich Diskussionen politischer Strategien und Programme, äußerst selten sind gar utopische Entwürfe und Visionen. Dominierend in der Bewegungsberichterstattung sind jedoch Selbstdarstellungen einzelner Gruppen und Projekte. Diese Berichterstattung über Gruppenaktivitäten und Veranstaltungen bleibt bis heute wichtig und wird vor allem von der wachsenden Anzahl an Infoblättern einzelner Fraueneinrichtungen getragen.

Bezogen auf die thematischen Inhalte der Zeitungen verschieben sich die Schwerpunkte von den siebzigern auf die achtziger Jahre sehr deutlich: Stehen anfangs die Abtreibungsproblematik und der Komplex Gewalt gegen Frauen im Vordergrund, liegen Ende der 1980er Jahre kulturelle Themen an der Spitze. Wie in anderen Ländern spielt auch in Österreich am Beginn der Neuen Frauenbewegung der Kampf gegen das Abtreibungsverbot eine große Rolle. Nach

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[11] Der Datenpool umfasst 4.800 Artikel und ist über die STICHWORT-Homepage online recherchierbar. Leider fehlten bisher die Ressourcen für die Fortführung dieser bibliografischen und systematischen Erschließung.

der Einführung der Fristenregelung 1975 verliert das Thema rasch an Bedeutung, wiederholte Angriffe der Abtreibungsgegner und der Kampf um die faktische Durchsetzung der Fristenregelung zwingen zwar immer wieder zur Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema, finden aber weiters keinen Niederschlag in eigenen Medien. Anders die Gewaltproblematik: Ausgelöst u. a. durch ein internationales Tribunal gegen Gewalt an Frauen (1976 in Brüssel) und nicht zuletzt durch den Kampf um die ersten Frauenhäuser rückt die Betroffenheit von sexueller Gewalt und Gewalt in Ehe und Familie ab Mitte der 1970er Jahre ins Zentrum. Das Thema bleibt aktuell, verliert aber relativ an Bedeutung, zum Teil verlagert sich die Diskussion ab Mitte der 1990er Jahre dann in spezialisierte Medien/Informationsblätter der Gewaltschutzeinrichtungen (*Gewaltlos*, Infoblatt der österrischen Frauenhäuser, seit 1995, oder *Zeitung der Plattform gegen die Gewalt in der Familie*, seit 1998).[12]

Nur Ende der siebziger Jahre hat die insgesamt in österreichischen feministischen Medien erstaunlich geringe Auseinandersetzung mit dem Thema Sexualität einen kleinen Höhepunkt. Besonders gynäkologische Selbsthilfe als Mittel zur Wiederaneignung des eigenen Körpers war Thema von Gruppen und Arbeitskreisen. Auch andere traditionell weibliche Themen wie Gesundheit oder Religion sind im Zeitraum bis 1990 kaum ein Thema. Interessanterweise schlagen sich auch der „Psychoboom" und die Hinwendung zu Spiritualität in den Achzigern nur bei einzelnen Zeitungen sichtbar nieder. Allerdings ist der Bereich Gesundheit/Körper/Psyche von wachsender Bedeutung in der aktuellen Medienproduktion (rund 10% der aktuellen Zeitungen widmen sich dem Thema). Auch der Reproduktionsbereich, also heterosexuelle Beziehungen und Ehe, Familie und Kinder – klassisches Thema von herkömmlichen Frauenzeitschriften – hat in feministischen Zeitungen der ersten zwei Jahrzehnte wenig Platz; was die Mütter unter in den 1980er Jahren befragten Leserinnen durchaus als Defizit empfanden (vgl. Geiger 1987). In der zweiten Hälfte der 90er Jahre versuchte eine Initiative mit der Zeitung *Mutter.mund* (Wien, 1996—1999) die Sache selbst in die Hand zu nehmen.

Schwerpunkt der Auseinandersetzung mit Frauen-Parteipolitik zu Beginn der achtziger Jahre ist das ambivalente Verhältnis der autonomen Frauenbewegung zum neuen Staatsekretariat für allgemeine Frauenfragen.[13] Gleichzeitig rückt durch die Wirtschaftskrise und steigende Arbeitslosigkeit das Thema Arbeit in den Vordergrund, Sparmaßnahmen und Sozialabbau ab Mitte der achtziger Jahre

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[12] Vgl. zur Gewaltdebatte in den Medien allgemein auch Geiger 2008.

[13] 1979 geschaffen. Staatssekräterin Johanna Dohnal wird 1990 zur Frauenministerin aufgewertet. Seither hat Österreich mit Unterbrechungen eine Frauenministerin, allerdings kein eigenes Frauenministerium.

befördern die mediale Auseinandersetzung mit Sozial- und Arbeitsmarktpolitik und der wachsenden Verarmung der Frauen.

Die Entfaltung der Frauenforschung inner- und außerhalb der Universitäten sowie die sich besonders in Wien ausdifferenzierende Frauenkultur- und Kunstszene brachten neue Themen an die Spitze: So sind ab Mitte der Achtziger starke Zuwächse bei Buchrezensionen und den Themen Literatur und Sprache, Kunst, Bildung, Geschichte, feministische Forschung und Wissenschaftskritik zu verzeichnen. Diese neue Schwerpunktsetzung schlägt sich bis heute auch in einer Vielzahl eigener Titel aus dem Bereich nieder.

Ab Mitte der achziger Jahre werden auch Lesben thematisch stärker präsent, wobei diese Präsenz zu einem Drittel vom *Lesbenrundbrief* (1983—1993) getragen wird. Für die westösterreichischen Zeitschriften *Orgon* und *AEP-Informationen* scheint das Thema nicht existent, Wiener Titel liegen bei den Nennungen im Mittelfeld, überdurchschnittliche Werte finden sich, dank starker lesbischer Präsenz vor Ort, in einigen Frauenzentrums-Infos.

Lesbenzeitschriften

Unter den Begriff Lesbenzeitschriften sind sowohl Zeitschriften, die sich dezidiert an eine lesbische Leserinnenschaft wenden, als auch solche zu verstehen, die ihre Zielgruppe als „schwul-lesbisch" oder als feministisch mit Hervorhebung der Lesben[14] definieren. Schließlich gehören auch mit „queer" benannte Titel zu dieser Gruppe. Für Österreich weist STICHWORT 21 Titel, darunter fünf akuelle, nach. Da dies eine relativ geringe Zahl ist und für österreichische Leserinnen auch deutsche und Schweizer Lesbenzeitschriften von großer Bedeutung waren und sind, beziehen wir diese in diesem Abschnitt mit ein.

Wieviele Lesbenzeitschriften es im deutschen Sprachraum gibt, läßt sich — zumindest derzeit — nicht definitiv feststellen. Für einen deutschsprachigen Überblick können die Bestände der i.d.a.-Einrichtungen, recherchierbar über die ZDB, herangezogen werden.[15] Hier fehlen zurzeit allerdings noch Daten aus

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[14] Ab Mitte der 1980er Jahre wurde im deutschsprachigen Raum im Zuge der Diskussion um die Wahrnehmung von Lesben innerhalb feministischer Zusammenhänge Bezeichnungen wie FrauenLesben, auch mit Konjunktion oder Schrägstrich und vielen anderen teils provokant-humorvollen, in jedem Fall stark diskutierten Ausdrucksformen, z.B. „Frauen und andere Lesben", üblich. In Österreich gab es um 1990 auch Umbenennungen von Gruppen und Periodika. Ein Beispiel für Österreich ist die Zeitschrift Frauen-Nachrichten des Frauenzentrums Wien, die ab 13/1993 Lesben/Frauen-Nachrichten hieß.

[15] Zeitschriften, in deren Titel Lesben nicht benannt werden, wurden für die Übersicht, soweit hier vorhanden, aus den STICHWORT-Daten ergänzt.

Archiven mit großen Beständen, u. a. dem Berliner Lesbenarchiv *Spinnboden*, sodass maximal eine Tendenz festgestellt werden kann. Weiters sind in der ZDB Zeitschriftendaten, die bisher nur von institutionellen Bibliotheken gemeldet wurden, oft nicht mit ihrer exakten Publikationsdauer aufgeführt, da sie dort oft unvollständig nachgewiesen sind. Hier wird sich die Datenlage der 151 als Lesbenzeitschriften zu bezeichnenden Titel durch die weiteren Ergänzungen aus feministischen Archiven und Bibliotheken in den nächsten Jahren sicher verbessern. Problematisch ist zudem, dass elektronische Medien – die meisten dürften unregelmäßige e-mail-Newsletter sein – nur in äußerst geringem Umfang in der ZDB aufscheinen, da sie in kaum einer Einrichtung archiviert werden.

Aufgrund der vorhandenen Daten lässt sich derzeit Folgendes ablesen: Die meisten Titel wurden im Zeitraum zwischen 1986 und 2000 gegründet, wobei sich die Ausrichtung in Summe von „lesbisch" nach „schwul-lesbisch" verschiebt. Circa dreiviertel der Lesbenzeitschriften sind regional orientiert (für Österreich: 62 %), unter den überregional rezipierten liegen die definitiven Lesbenzeitschriften und die schwul-lesbischen gleichauf. Unter erstere rechnen wir Titel wie *Lesbenpresse*, *Lesbenfront/Frau ohne Herz/Die.Lesbenzeitschrift*, *Lesbenstich*, *Ihrsinn*, *Unsere kleine Zeitung (UKZ),* den österreichischen *Lesbenrundbrief, Infoblatt des Deutschen Lesbenring e.V.* u. a.

Die ersten Lesbenzeitschriften nach Beginn der Neuen Frauenbewegung erscheinen 1975 – *Lesbenfront* (Zürich), *Lesbenpresse*, *Partnerin* und *Unsere kleine Zeitung* (alle Berlin). Bis Ende der 1970er Jahre sind derzeit acht weitere Neugründungen definitiver Lesbenzeitschriften nachgewiesen; daneben findet sich mit der *Rosa Revue*, Hamburg, ein schwul-lesbischer Titel.[16] Die meisten definitiven Lesbenzeitschriften entstanden in der zweiten Hälfte der Neunziger Jahre (10), insgesamt konnten 47 auf Lesben fokussierende Titel aufgefunden werden. Für Österreich gibt es nur vier Titel: den *Lesbenrundbrief*, der von 1983 bis 1993 von wechselnden Gruppen herausgegeben wurde, die *Lila Schriften* (1995—1999), den 1996 bis 1998 nachgewiesenen Titel *Sappho* der Lesbengruppe der ÖH Uni Graz und den e-mail-Newsletter *Lebenszeichen* (2001—).

Ab ca. 1984 taucht die Bezeichnung „Frauen/Lesben" auf, sowohl im Titel der Zeitschriften als auch in den Namen der herausgebenden Gruppe. In dieser Form der Namensgebung spiegelt sich das Bemühen um die Integrierung lesbischer Sichtweisen und Inhalte in die feministische Diskussion wider. Diese Politik wird anhand der vorhandenen Daten bei Zeitungsgründungen bis ca. 2000 sichtbar; danach sind derzeit keine neuen Titel mit solchen Benennungen auffindbar. Für die Zeit danach ist davon auszugehen, dass lesbische Inhalte sehr wohl in redaktionelle Konzepte integriert, aber nicht mehr so oft benannt werden. Als Beispiel können

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[16] Die 1979 gegründeten *Lambda-Nachrichten* der *Homosexuellen Initiative* Wien können streng genommen hier noch nicht eingerechnet werden, da erst 1981 mit Gründung der Lesbengruppe der Fokus von schwul auf schwul-lesbisch erweitert wurde.

die österreichischen Zeitschriften *[sic!]*. *Forum für feministische Gangarten* und *an.schläge* genannt werden.

Ab der ersten Hälfte der 1980er Jahre finden sich verstärkt Zeitschriften mit namentlich „schwul-lesbisch" definierter Zielgruppe; von 5 in den frühen 80ern steigert sich die Zahl bis zu 21 Neugründungen in der ersten Hälfte der neunziger Jahre, insgesamt ist die Zahl der schwul-lesbischen Titel mit 71 etwa so groß wie die Kategorien Lesben und Frauen/Lesben zusammen. In Österreich sind dies u. a. die *Lambda-Nachrichten* der HOSI Wien, *Pride* der HOSI Linz, die Grazer *RosaLila Buschtrommel* und das Szeneblatt *Bussi*. Wieweit es in diesen Zeitschriften ein ausgewogenes Verhältnis schwuler und lesbischer Themen gibt, wieweit also Anspruch und lesbisches Sich-angesprochen-Fühlen auseinanderklaffen, wäre jedoch gesondert zu untersuchen.

Als ein Beispiel für die Veränderung in der politischen Ausrichtung und der ästhetischen Gestaltung und damit auch als Illustration von drei Jahrzehnten lesbischen Feminismus kann das Beispiel der Zürcher Lesbenzeitschrift dienen: 1975 als *Lesbenfront* gegründet, typografiert und mit Zeichnungen und teilweise Fotos illustriert, brachte sie die für selbstorganisierte Zeitschriften typischen Inhalte wie Berichte von Veranstaltungen und Aktionen, Abdrucke von Flugschriften, offenen Briefen und anderen politischen Texten, Erfahrungsberichte, Interviews mit Autorinnen und Aktivistinnen, Rezensionen. Ab dem Heft 4/1977 wurde sie auch in Deutschland über den Frauenbuchvertrieb in Berlin vertrieben. 1985 erfolgte die Umbenennung auf *Frau ohne Herz. Zeitschrift für Frauen und andere Lesben*. Im Laufe ihres zehnjährigen Bestehens wurde sie gestalterisch zunehmend „professioneller", z. B. hinsichtlich Satztechnik und durchgehender Verwendung von Fotos sowie Papierqualität und zuletzt färbigen Covers. Ein völliger Relaunch 1996 ging mit der Umbenennung in *die. Lesbenzeitschrift* einher. „Die Frau ohne Herz-Ära ist vorbei", wurde die neue Linie vorgestellt.[17] Inhaltlich gewann Literarisches an Bedeutung. 2004 wurde sie von *Skipper* abgelöst, das als *Magazin für lesbische Lebensfreude* und namentlicher Assoziation zu Freizeit, Sport und Spiel und feministisch inkriminiertem Frauenbild — ‚Skipper' ist schließlich Barbies kleine Schwester — die queer generation bediente. Mit ihr sollten dezidiert ‚die jungen Lesben' erreicht werden, Berichte von schwul-lesbischen Veranstaltungen, Organisationen und Anliegen (z. B. Verpartnerung) standen in den Rubriken Lifestyle und Szene im Vordergrund, die einzelnen Beiträge übersteigen eine Doppelseite nicht und sind stark illustriert. *Skipper* wurde nach nur drei Nummern wieder eingestellt.

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[17] die. lesbenzeitschrift 1/1996, Editorial, S. 5

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Archiving feminist grassroots media

Brigitte Geiger and Margit Hauser

Abstract

As staff members of STICHWORT, Archives of Women's and Lesbians' Movements *in Vienna, which manages an extensive collection of "independent" feminist media, we will provide an overview of feminist grassroots media in Austria and refer to the importance of feminist archives within the movement's processes of creating knowledge and history, focusing especially on the accessibility and preservation of feminist media.*

Feminist media, especially magazines, are an important part of the collections of feminist archives and libraries. From the perspective of women's archives, feminist media are a substantial and dynamic source of current issues, political practices and theoretical discussions. They reflect the differentiation and developments of feminist movements, strategies and concepts as well as their different societal, political and cultural parameters. We will analyze structures and developments within feminist media production in Austria from the beginnings in the 1970s up to now and give an insight into thematic developments in the first two decades of the women's movement. We will also set a special focus on lesbian media. As in Austria only a few distinctly lesbian magazines have been published over the years, we will consider a wider range of lesbian media from German-language countries.

Feminist archives and the processes of creating knowledge and history

Feminist archives have an important task in passing on women's history, particularly in documenting and increasing visibility of the women's movement and lesbian history and politics. Feminist archives in the second-wave women's movement and lesbian movement emerged from the realization that documenting the movements' activities is necessary to prevent them from sinking into oblivion like the historical women's movements at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s. The ignorance and dismissal with which both dominant institutions and leftist movements regarded the women's movement and its issues suggested that feminist activities and particularly lesbian separatist activism would only be conveyed to younger women and documented in an authentic and comprehensive manner if it took place within the feminist and lesbian feminist movements. Thus feminist archives were set up in the 1970s and developed in the 1980s.

In German speaking countries, which this article focuses on, typical characteristics are regional diversity with partial specialisation by content, as well as a structural connection between archives, libraries, and research and

educational facilities. Almost no facilities are solely archives or libraries in the traditional sense. A further characteristic is the objective of providing alternative, empowering education for women. From the very beginning feminist archives were designed to be both centers for up-to-date information within the women's movement as well as an infrastructure to support academic feminist research, which was gaining a foothold in the early 80s. These archives fundamentally differ from facilities set up exclusively as libraries which have been created in academic spaces of several gender research centers, in their more comprehensive approach to structure, holdings, politics, employee self-image, target groups, and services.

This article deals with the archives that emerged in the context of the independent women's movement, as these are the most relevant to grassroots media. There are currently about 40 active feminist archives and library facilities in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and northern Italy[1]. Their documentation and educational work counteracts the silencing and distortion of women's (movement) history and contributes to an empowering image of women through their positive identification with women's liberation.

In order to be able to authentically convey history that is otherwise not widely discussed in the public sphere, the contribution of each woman involved in these movements and every single document is considered important. All written and audio-visual material documenting activities of the women's and lesbian movements is collected in feminist archives. Among these are documents intended for the (movement's) public, such as leaflets, programs, press releases, posters, magazines and newsletters, brochures and videos, as well as internal documents, primarily minutes, plans, and correspondence. Documentation is organized according to groups and initiatives, events, such as activities, operations, and conferences, as well as on an individual level. The holdings were and continue to be compiled, firstly through continuous collection work, where the archives either receive submissions as copies from the groups that produced them or from individual addressees, and secondly as sets of collected documents in the form of extensive donations from individuals and groups.

The fact that feminist archives have to define their subject matter themselves, as opposed to administrative archives, for example, has shaped their working method. The second-wave women's movement in German speaking countries is primarily organized in a decentralized manner. What a "feminist" group, magazine, or publication is or who a feminist is – and consequently what should be documented – is continuously redefined and may be assessed differently in the future. The significant criteria appearing again and again are autonomy – as independence from political parties and male dominated institutions is a central theme for the emergence and identity of the second-wave women's movement

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[1] The umbrella organization of women's/lesbian archives, libraries, and documentation centers, i.d.a <www.ida-dachverband.de>, provides an overview of these feminist archives and libraries, their special collections, and services.

and one of its main points of conflict – as well as political intention, or, in the broadest sense, a call for societal change. Both criteria are often difficult to judge, requiring creative decisions; in case of doubt, inclusion is preferred. The interaction between facilities in German speaking countries, which has been going on continuously since 1983, is helpful in working out definitions.

In the course of the last decades, feminist archives have experienced changes in usage and therefore what is requested of them. In the 70s and 80s, holdings were mainly used as sources of information for ongoing activities in the women's movement. Since the 90s, younger women have been looking for information for a historical analysis of the second-wave women's movement, its politics, discussions, and theories mainly in the context of university courses.

Furthermore, in recent years there has been increased interest from journalists, exhibition curators, and scholars in mainly illustrative (visual) material on the second-wave women's movement. Thus, women with an awareness of women's politics who are in decision-making positions today can factor the second-wave women's movement into their work as a new social movement. In this manner, holdings from women's archives have been presented to a broader audience in renowned museums, diverse exhibitions, television documentaries, online portals, and in various specialist literature in recent years. The time of serious awareness and professional presentation of selected aspects of the second-wave women's movement strikingly intersects with what the media describes as the end of the political movement.

The changes and steps toward professionalizing working methods of women's archives can be illustrated using STICHWORT as an example. STICHWORT, Archives of the Women's and Lesbian Movement in Vienna, was started in 1983 and developed within the context of the feminist/lesbian movement in Austria and within the wide range of feminist/lesbian archives in German speaking countries. STICHWORT evolved in a women's student center *(Uni-Frauenzentrum)* and as part of the organization, *Frauenforschung und weiblicher Lebenszusammenhang*, which was one of the first networks of feminist scholars in Austria. Development and professionalization are revealed in the acquisition of documents, the technical means of recording, the presentation of the archive to the public, and the structure of the organization.

From the very beginning the concept was to collect documents on the Austrian and, as far as possible, the international women's movement. A particular focus on Vienna resulted from both the concentration of the Austrian women's movement's activities and easier access to material. With the founding of the feminist archives in Graz and Innsbruck (1993), two further centers of the Austrian independent women's movement are recorded through local documentation. Starting with the ad hoc collection of papers on current local movements' activities, the visibility and perception of the archive was strengthened so much through targeted publicity work that documents are sent directly from women's initiatives and individuals on an ongoing basis or as collected sets of documents. A key element of this is the involvement of individual archive staff members in the local movement in different contexts.

Their personal contacts and the declared openness to all forms of expression of independent feminist politics significantly contribute to the building of trust, which is essential for the acquisition of documents. Since the mid-90s, an Internet presence and a newsletter have improved communication with users and potential donors.

At the same time, the diversity of types of documents has increased. In the 90s audio-visual media (videos and audio cassettes, later CDs) were added as well as electronic media (CD-ROMs, DVD). Sustainable preservation of these media and the archiving of online media in electronic form present great challenges, which are difficult to resolve with the current financial situation and must be discussed and dealt with in a larger context.

STICHWORT has possessed a complete record and extensive index of contents in a card catalogue and inventory list since the beginning. The computerization of the archive and library data collection has been pushed since 1990. Today the database enables detailed content-based and interrelated research in all holdings groups, the majority of which is also online at <www.stichwort.or.at>.

Feminist grassroots media in women's and lesbian archive collections

Feminist media, magazines in particular, are an important part of the collections of feminist archives and libraries. From the perspective of women's archives, feminist media are a substantial and dynamic source of information on current issues, political practices, and theoretical discussions. They reflect the differentiation and developments of feminist movements, strategies and concepts as well as the different societal, political, and cultural contexts. Because of this, feminist media are important for providing up-to-date information through women's archives on one hand, and on the other hand, as valuable historical resources for research on the Women's Movement. Thus, their preservation and accessibility is a crucial task for feminist archives (Geiger and Hauser 2008)

With the international abundance of feminist magazines and newsletters since the beginning of the second-wave women's movements, feminist movements have been forming spaces and structures of (counter) public spheres. Places for communication and action offer space for the unfolding of feminist discourses and expressing collectivity. They build frameworks and a foundation for discussions between women, for processing experiences and developing theories, for collective learning processes and self-directed development of feminist strategies and perspectives for action, and thereby a new definition of female identity(ies) [2]. Feminist media serve as both a means to information,

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[2] See: Gruppe feministischer Öffentlichkeit 1992, Klaus 1994, Geiger 2002a.

communication, and discussion within the movement, as well as a means to self-determined expression to the "outside." [3]

The diversity, difference, and international circulation of feminist print media make it difficult to establish a clear definition of the genre "feminist magazine." The spectrum of feminist magazines reaches from the small group media of individual projects and initiatives for a limited target group to feminist "mass media" with a relatively high circulation and a stronger commercial orientation (such as *Emma* in Germany or *Ms.* in the USA), from basic informational pamphlets to sophisticated magazines and extensive scholarly periodicals, from short-lived attempts with only a few issues to well-established magazines with over twenty years of history. It includes both the local women's newspaper and the international newsletter, thematically broad and specialist magazines with a narrow focus, and a wide array of lesbian media. In addition to that, newsletters distributed via e-mail – published solely online or parallel to a print version – and online ezines have been included since the end of the nineties.

Their accessibility and preservation is essential to retrace feminist discourses and developments in the movements' history. At the same time, documenting feminist newspapers is highly demanding due to the magazines' diversity, decentralized organization, high fluctuation, and often independently organized production methods.

Only the larger feminist media – *AUF, An.schläge, [sic!]* – are archived at the national libraries, while smaller, regional pamphlets are often missing in spite of the principal of legal deposit. Foreign feminist magazines, including "large" ones like *Emma, Courage, or Ms.*, are only sporadically present[4]. In Germany the situation appears to be slightly different. Smaller local media from the autonomous women's movement are at least partially included in German university libraries. Feminist archives and libraries, however, map the entire spectrum of women's and lesbian movement magazine production in German speaking countries in their holdings and also maintain the most important titles from other countries.

STICHWORT maintains the most extensive collection of autonomous women's and lesbian magazines in Austria. The archive of the women's and lesbian movement currently manages and includes a total of 700 titles and over 60 current subscriptions. The goal of the collection is to maintain the most complete documentation possible of autonomous feminist magazine production in Austria from the beginning of the seventies to today. This also includes small informational pamphlets and periodicals of which only one issue was published. Presently the index holds 192 Austrian titles, 47 of which are current. The international collection (almost 500 titles from 44 countries, 200 of which are from German speaking countries) provides insight into the diversity of feminist and lesbian magazine production worldwide, in spite of its necessarily cursory

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[3] On the functions of feminist magazines see Geiger 2001, 2002b, Susemichel et al. 2008.

[4] The situation of scholarly periodicals is different; here the university establishment of women's and gender research has also been reflected in the acquisition policy of academic libraries.

character. Gaps in the collection are constantly being filled through active exchange between feminist archives and private donations. One of the special characteristics of the STICHWORT collection, as well as autonomous feminist archives in general, lies in the value attributed to "small" media. In view of maintaining the most complete movement documentation possible, spontaneous publications and those produced with simple means are also documented. As many of them were published by short-lived women's groups active in a small field, they may have only come out once or twice. *Significance* is defined here through the focus on movement documentation according to criteria different from that of state facilities.

Other feminist publication collectors in Austria are the *AUF* magazine archives (with almost 50 titles, about half of which are in German, many older collections), the *ArchFem* archives in Innsbruck, and the *FEMAIL* archives in Feldkirch, all of which are limited to Austrian and German language titles. The *AEP* library in Innsbruck and *DOKU Graz* maintain smaller collections. *Frauensolidarität* has been collecting and documenting magazines and newsletters as a library and documentation center for women and the "third world" since 1993/94. It primarily focuses on countries in the south, with more publications being produced in Asia and Latin America than in Africa, but also material from the "north" that deals with issues relating to women from the south and international women's issues. They are recorded in the online database (<www.eza.at/literatur>) and also partially in the complete catalogue of the Österreichische Bibliotheksverbund, a network of Austrian libraries.

The larger Austrian feminist magazines, such as *AUF, an.schläge, [sic!], Frauensolidarität* or *fiber* are also found in feminist archives outside the country.

The largest collections of feminist publications in Germany[5] are at the *Women's Research, Education, and Information Center – FFBIZ* in Berlin (with 866 titles), in the *Archiv der deutschen Frauenbewegung* in Kassel (1,037), in the *FrauenMediaTurm* in Cologne (927), in the feminist archive *ausZeiten* in Bochum (816), and in the *Spinnboden* in Berlin (over 1,600), which is focused on lesbian publications. In Switzerland the *schema f* library in Zurich holds the most significant collection. *Cid-femmes* in Luxembourg possesses all of the country specific and regional titles.

In order to make magazine collections of the lesbian/women's archives and libraries in German speaking countries visible and also to document them in traditional catalogues, the data are being gradually entered into the ZDB, the world's largest magazine database located at the Berlin State Library, through a collaborative project from i.d.a. *Dachverband*[6]. Many titles are being introduced

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[5] Links to the aforementioned facilities can be found at: <www.ida-dachverband.de> or directly: <www.ffbiz.de>, <www.addf-kassel.de>, <www.FrauenMediaTurm.de>, <www.auszeiten-frauenarchiv.de/>, <www.spinnboden.de> as well as <www.schema-f.fembit.ch> and <www.cid-femmes.lu>.

[6] <www.zdb-opac.de>. The holdings can be searched by individual archive in the ZDB under interlibrary loan region "ida".

to a broader public for the first time through this. At the same time, attention is being drawn to feminist archives and libraries as collection centers. In October 2009 2,000 different feminist titles from the first-wave and the second-wave women's movement were recorded in the ZDB, including both grassroots and scholarly publications. About 1,000 of these titles were mentioned there for the first time. Currently over half of the magazine collections from the 20 facilities participating in the project are documented in the ZDB. The plan for the future is that all magazine titles in the i.d.a. facilities shall be presented together on the organization's website.

Feminist grassroots media in Austria: structures and developments

STICHWORT'S extensive publication database allows a detailed look at structures and developments in Austria's feminist magazine landscape. The database includes 186 Austrian magazine titles that were founded after 1970, the beginning of the second-wave women's movements in Austria, and are thereby the foundation of the following analysis[7]. Originally a collection of print media, today the database also comprises electronic newsletters. In addition to collection data, founding and in some cases discontinuation data, publishers, former names, publishing location, frequency of publication, thematic focus, and type of magazine are also included. However, not all details are available for all titles, for example, the exact duration of publication is only known for 82 titles. This should be considered below.

The first autonomous feminist magazines begin in the 1970s as organs of the first working groups on women's liberation and autonomous women's organizations in Austria. The two oldest feminist magazines in German speaking countries that still exist, both founded in 1974, should be highlighted here: *AUF – Eine Frauenzeitschrift* in Vienna and *AEP Informationen* in Innsbruck, Tyrol. All together these beginnings of feminist media production in Austria are still very modest with an average of 5 titles published parallel per year and 1-2 new publications annually, most of which only existed for one to two years.

It is only in the 1980s, as the women's movement spread and the first women's projects were founded, that the continuous development of a feminist (print-) media landscape in Austria began, lasting until the turn of the century. The number of new projects grew annually from 5 in the 1980s to more than 8 in the

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[7] Six older titles not included here are magazines with a long history published by political or church related women's organizations like *neue frau*, formerly *Die Frau* from the Socialist Party's national women's committee (1924-1987), *Stimme der Frau* from the Association of Democratic Women (1945-1993), *Welt der Frau* from the Catholic Women's Movement (1964-) and *frau aktuell* from the Austrian Women's Movement (associated with Austrian People's Party – ÖVP) (1959-) as well as magazines from the Ravensbrück Association of Concentration Camp Survivors and the Austrian Association of Women Academics.

1990s; the number of existing titles increased from an average of 17 in the first half of the 1980s to an average of 67 in the second half of the 1990s. The high-point was reached in 1997 with 71 documented magazine titles (figure 1a and 1b). As of 2000 the total number and the annual number of new projects receded again, leveling out at around 50 titles and 3 to 4 new projects per year. At the end of 2008 the STICHWORT magazine collection documents 47 current titles. Whether this slight recent decline indicates further reductions in the feminist media landscape or just illustrates delays in the completion process of the holdings will become clear in due course. In any case, an exact determination of the current number is difficult due to the rapid changes and occasionally unclear classifications[8]. It is worrying that in recent years the balance between new projects and discontinuations was mostly negative, while in the 80s and 90s an average of two new titles emerged for each existing titles that was discontinued.

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[8] Thus *Koryphäe* is still documented among the current magazines, because it only discontinued its publication (temporarily) in 2009, whereas *LesbenFrauenNachrichten* and *[sic!] Forum für feministische Gangarten* are not covered. Neither of these has announced that it is officially discontinuing publication, but their most recent issues appeared in 2007; in the meanwhile there has been published one more issue of *[sic!]*. For technical archiving reasons, electronic newsletters (11 current titles) are included in the database, but online news portals like *ceiberweiber.at* (since 1999) or *die.Standard.at* (since 2000) are not. For comparison, using a very narrow definition of autonomous feminist magazines, Horak (2003) arrives at 18 current titles; Well (2007) lists 44 media in her work, applying a broad definition including online media and titles associated with institutions and political parties.

Figure 1a: Numbers of titles, 1970 - 2009

Grafik 1a: Titelentwicklung 1970 bis 2008
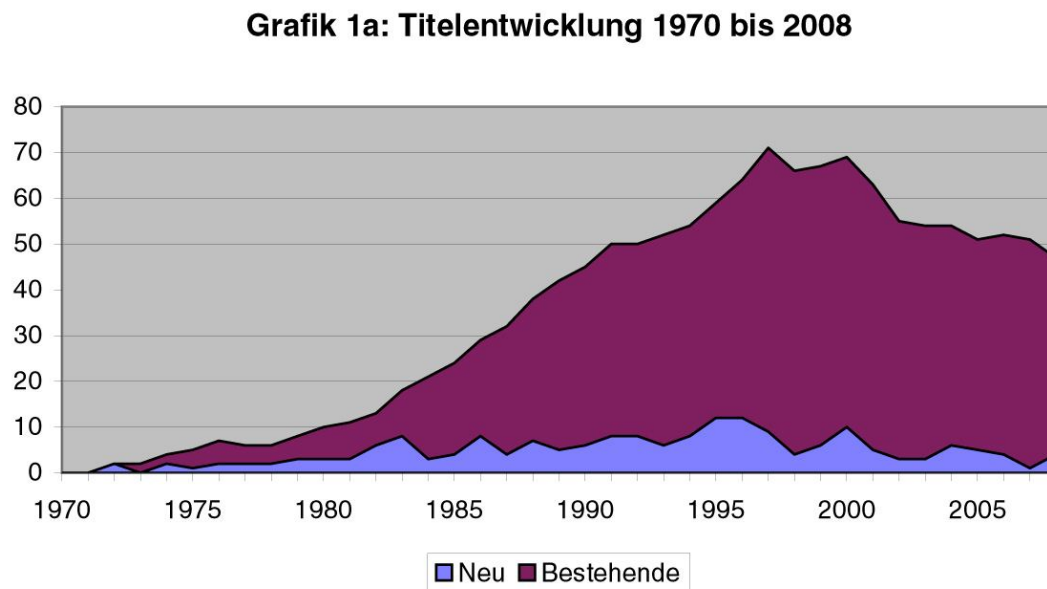
[New titles in light blue, existing titles in purple]

Figure 1b: Numbers of titles (average numbers and new publications)

**Grafik 1b: Titelentwicklung
(Durchschnittliche Anzahl und Neugründungen)**

	1971-1975	1976-1980	1981-1985	1986-1990	1991-1995	1996-2000	2001-2005	2006-2008
MW alle	2,6	7,4	17,4	37,2	53,0	67,4	55,4	50,0
MW Neue	1	2,4	4,8	6	8,4	8,2	4,4	3,0

☐ MW alle   ☐ MW Neue
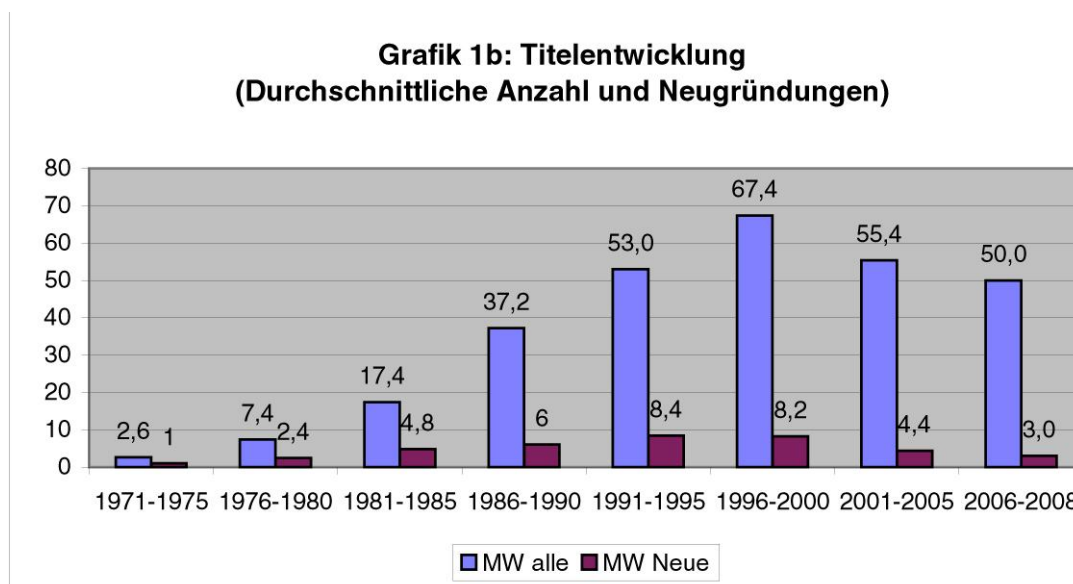
[Total in light blue, new titles in purple]

The expansion was accompanied by an internal differentiation of the magazine landscape, as demonstrated by figure 2, in which title development is broken down according to the type of publication. The development of titles is relatively stable for general feminist magazines directed toward "all" feminist/lesbian readers with broad subject matter; these play an important role in cross-group multidisciplinary feminist discussion. After the modest start in the 1970s, their number fluctuates between 6 and 10 titles. The general growth in titles is mainly due to the increasing number of newsletters, which have accompanied the expansion of a broad infrastructure of specialized women's projects as well as facilities and mergers of women's and gender research since the 1980s. Since 2000 these have been increasingly in electronic form. The number of newsletters escalates from an average of 7 in the 1980s to over 28 in the 90s and an average of 34 in the 2000s. The latter rise is mainly due to electronic newsletters, whereas the number of printed newsletters sinks slightly, most recently to just over 20 titles.

Figure 2: Numbers of titles by type

Grafik 2: Titelentwicklung nach Zeitungstyp

[Legend: Allgem. ZS, FZ-Info, Fach-ZS, Info, elektr. Info, k.A.]
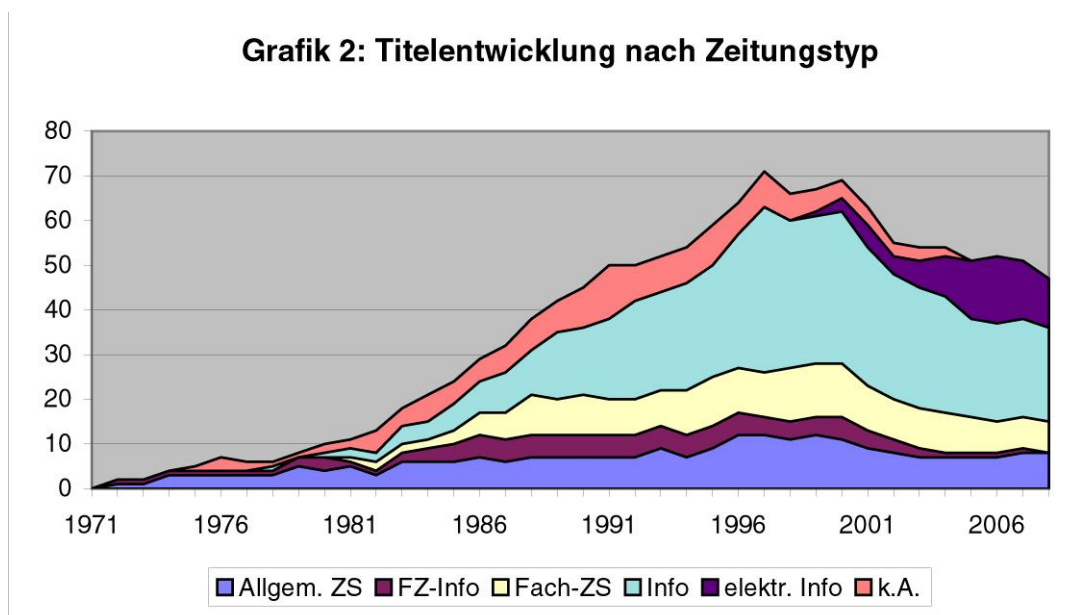
[General periodicals in blue, women's newspapers /information sheets in indigo, professional periodicals in yellow, information bulletins in light blue, electronic info sheets in purple, no information in pink]

The emergence of the first specialist journals in the 1980s was connected to the thematic specialization and differentiation of activities in the women's movement. This type of magazine has been represented by an average of 9 titles since the 1990s, for example the art magazine *Eva & Co* (Graz, 1981-1992), the development policy magazine, *Frauensolidarität*, (Vienna, 1982-) which still exists today and is also widely received in German speaking countries abroad, the newsletter of the Austrian Women's Forum for Feminist Theology, *Der Apfel* (Vienna, 1986-), *Koryphäe. Medium für feministische Naturwissenschaften und Technik* (Vienna, 1986-2008), the literary science magazine for the Alps-Adriatic region, *Script*, (Klagenfurt, 1992-2001), or the most well established academic magazine, *Zeitschrift für feministische Geschichtswissenschaft, L'Homme*, (Vienna, 1990-).

The "Frauenzentrums-Infos" were of great importance to the feminist information exchange, particularly during the 1980s and 90s. Published by the women's culture and communication centers and ranging from informational pamphlets to general feminist magazines, publications like *Zyklotron* in Innsbruck (1983-2003), *Infam* in Linz (1984-2000), *Zahra lustra* in Salzburg (1985-2001) and *Belladonna* in Klagenfurt (1986-1996) contributed to the decentralization of the media landscape. All in all the feminist magazine production is heavily concentrated in Vienna. About two thirds of the total titles and the currently published titles are based in Vienna. State capitals are other

"centers," especially Graz and Innsbruck with more than 10 titles. Less than 5% of all documented titles are published outside of these urban centers. Upper Austria exhibits a relatively decentralized and growing publication landscape with numerous newsletters from local women's counseling centers and meeting places.

When looking at feminist magazine production in terms of length of existence and frequency of publication, a high level of fluctuation can be seen. Almost a quarter of the titles exist for only 1-2 years, a further 15% last between 3 and 5 years, and almost 30% of the titles are published irregularly or only once. On one hand, this structure is surely a result of the difficult production circumstances of autonomous feminist media due to limited resources. However, the large rate of fluctuation also expresses how dynamic and lively a grassroots, self-organized media production is. Despite difficult conditions (only a few of the feminist magazine editorial departments are adequately financed or even have paid positions, see Geiger 1996, Horak 2003, Well 2007) many of the media projects nevertheless manage impressive continuity. Over a fifth of the current magazines have been in existence for more than 20 years, 37% between 10 and 20 years. In other words, 60% of the current magazines and 43% of the total documented titles have been published for at least 10 years.

However, limitations appear in the issue frequency and therefore the up-to-dateness of information. Only 15% of the titles are published more than 6 times a year. Currently these publications are *Laufschritte* (Graz, 1986-) and *Insel Zeitung* (Scharnstein 1992-) as well as the electronic publications *Fiftitu%-Newsletter, AEP-Newsletter* and *Lebenszeichen. an.schläge* (Vienna, 1983-) is the only magazine that has been published monthly since 1994 (with two double issues). Before that it appeared quarterly, like the bulk of feminist media. In total, one third of the documented feminist titles and half of the general feminist magazines are published 3-6 times per year. The preferred publication schedule for specialist journals is 1-3 times per year, whereas newsletters often appear irregularly (figure 3a and 3b).

Figure 3a: Frequency (N=132)

Grafik 3a: Erscheinungsweise (N = 132)
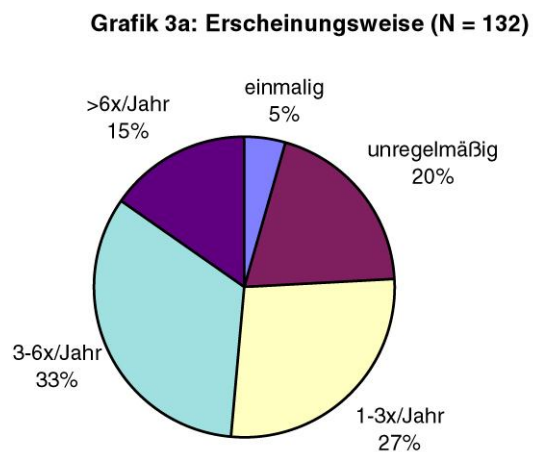
[3-6 times yearly in turquoise (33%), more than 6 times yearly in purple (15%), one-off in light blue (5%), irregular in indigo (20%), 1-3 times yearly in yellow (27%)]

Figure 3b: Frequency by type of publication

Grafik 3b: Erscheinungsweise nach Zeitungstyp
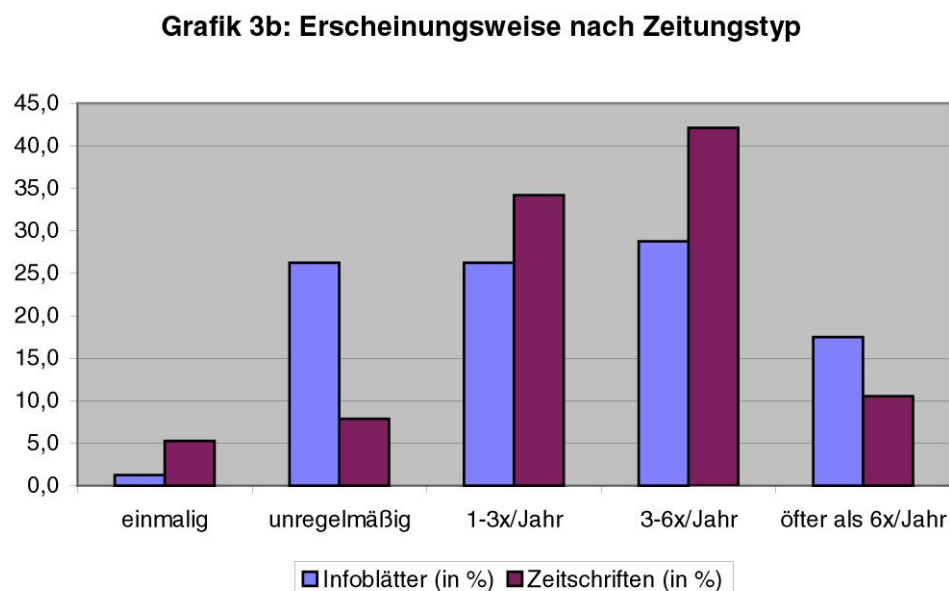
[Info sheets in % light blue, periodicals in % purple]

Figure 4 provides an overview of the thematic orientation of the publications. In such a largely sophisticated and thematically specialized infrastructure as the women's movement, three quarters of the recorded titles (over 80% of current publications) fall into one or two subject areas or fields of activity. One focus is clearly academic and scientific, which make up almost one fifth of the current publications. Included under university/women's research are mainly student media and information from coordination centers and project centers for women's and gender research at Austrian universities[9]. In addition to general gender theory titles, the fields of history, natural science/technology, philosophy, and law are represented[10]. The groups represented heavily among political parties/movements are activities of institutionalized gender equality policy and several titles associated with political parties (such as *Brot & Rosen* from Vienna's Green Party). Women's counseling centers and counseling centers specializing in health, education, work, or violence are very active in media, especially with printed or electronic newsletters and occasionally professional journals. It is striking that migrant (counseling) projects are hardly present. The topic of development policy is almost exclusively covered by the

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[9] The noticeable decline in current publications may be due to the fact that material from women/gender specific courses in the Austrian states included here is only sporadically accounted for.

[10] For scholarly periodicals in German speaking countries, see Hauser and Geiger, 2008.

magazine *Frauensolidarität*. The subject areas of art and literature are significantly represented. In addition to the previously mentioned art magazine *Eva & Co* and the literary magazine *Entladungen* (Vienna, 1985-), the pop culture magazine projects from recent years such as *female sequences* (Vienna, 1999-2002), *nylon* (Vienna, 2000-2001), and *fiber* (Vienna, 2002-) particularly stand out. Lesbian or gay and lesbian publications make up a portion of 10%.

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Figure 4: Orientation by theme or activity

Grafik 4: Thematische Orientierungen/Tätigkeitsfelder
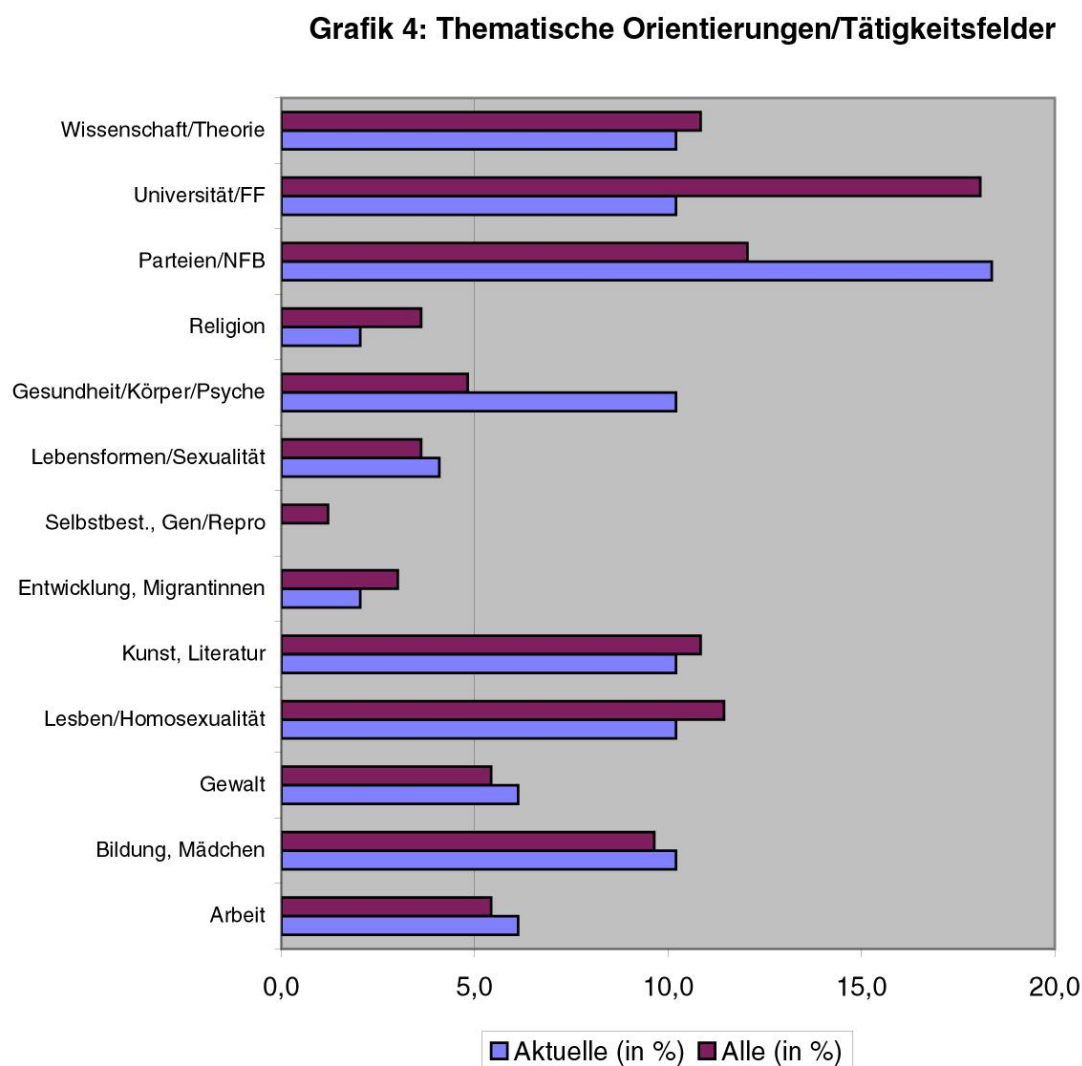
[Topics from the top: scientific / theoretical; university / women's studies; political parties / women's movement; religion; health / body / spirit; lifestyle / sexuality; self-determination, genetics /reproduction; development / migrants; art / literature; lesbian / homosexuality; violence; education / girls; work.

Current titles in % light blue; all titles in % purple]

Looking back: feminist discussions and development of issues in the 1970s and 1980s

As part of the research project *Die neue Frauenbewegung im Spiegel ihrer Medien* (1990, Geiger et al. 1992), the first two decades of feminist media

production (newspapers, flyers, and posters) in Austria were analyzed by means of the STICHWORT archive holdings. This allows a detailed look at developments in thematic structure of feminist publications and medial discussions of the second-wave women's movement in Austria from 1972 to 1990, because the individual articles were entered into a database and indexed according to the STICHWORT system[11].

A comparison of the structure and development of issues of the autonomous women's and lesbian publications in Austria during that period with current thematic orientations of publications reveals both similarities and shifts. In the 1970s and 1980s the key issues were coverage of the women's movement, literature and language, art, work, and violence against women, followed by the subject areas of political parties/movements, lesbians/lesbian movement, reproduction and population policy/abortion. The issues of bodies, environment, religion, sexuality, and theory were at the lower end of the scale.

Communication within the movement, (coverage of the women's movement in a narrow sense) being decentralized, non-institutionally and non-hierarchically organized, is key to the women's and lesbian movement. Therefore, it is the task of movement media to guarantee a self-determined (self-) portrayal and a constant exchange of information and experience and to convey a cross-regional discussion on the movement's organization, structure, and strategy. Conversely, movement media are received in order to find out news about groups, activities, and discussions, as well as the latest gossip. (Geiger 1987, 380 ff., 351 ff.) Content covers events, conferences, operations, demonstrations, and other activities. Self-criticism and conflicts within the movement reached an initial peak at the end of the seventies and flared up again and again at the end of the eighties. Discussions on political strategies and programs took place at the end of the 80s. In general they are less frequent; utopian plans and visions are extremely rare. Image cultivation of individual groups and projects dominate coverage of the movement. Reporting on group activities and events is still important today and mainly occurs through the growing number of newsletters from individual women's organizations.

The thematic focus of the publications shifted noticeably from the seventies to the eighties. In the beginning, abortion issues and violence against women were in the forefront; by the end of the 80s cultural issues took the lead. As in other countries, the fight to legalize abortion played an important role in Austria at the beginning of the second-wave women's movement. After the introduction of the abortion time limit in 1975 the issue quickly lost importance. Repeated attacks by abortion opponents and the fight over practical enforcement of the abortion time limit led to frequent debates on the topic, but this is not reflected in the movement's publications. The issue of violence was dealt with differently. Triggered by an international tribunal on violence against women (1976 in Brussels) as well as the fight for the first women's shelters, concern over sexual

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[11] The data pool comprises 4,800 articles and is accessible online through the STICHWORT website. Unfortunately, a lack of resources has impeded the continuation of this bibliographical and systematic indexing.

assault and domestic violence moved into the spotlight in the middle of the seventies. The issue remains relevant but became less important subsequently. In the mid 90s the discussion partially moves to specialized media/newsletters from the facilities providing protection against violence (*Gewaltlos*, a leaflet from the Austrian women's shelters since 1995, or *Zeitung der Plattform gegen die Gewalt in der Familie*, since 1998) [12].

It was only at the end of the 70s that the surprisingly minimal debate on sexuality in Austrian feminist media reaches a small peak. Gynecological self-help as a means to re-appropriation of one's own body was a key issue for groups and workgroups. Traditional women's issues like health or religion are also hardly raised in the period before 1990. Interestingly enough, the psychology boom and the turn toward spirituality in the 80s are only visible in a few select publications. However, the field of health/body/mind is of growing importance in the current media (about 10% of current publications are dedicated to the subject). The field of reproduction, i.e. heterosexual relationships and marriage, family and children, which are classic issues for conventional women's magazines, occupy little space in feminist magazines during the first two decades. Readers who were mothers, surveyed during the 80s, definitely considered this a deficit (Geiger 1987). In the second half of the 90s one initiative attempted to take the matter into their own hands with the publication *Mutter.mund* (Vienna, 1996-1999).

The focus of the debate on party politics regarding women's issues in the beginning of the 80s was the ambivalent relationship of the independent women's movement to the new State Secretariat for Women's Issues[13]. At the same time, the failing economy and rising unemployment led to a focus on the subject of work. Budget cuts and slashed social services beginning in the mid 80s pushed the debate on social and labor market policy and the growing poverty among women.

The development of women's research within and outside of universities and the differentiated women's culture and art scene in Vienna, in particular, pushed new issues into the forefront. In the mid 80s a significant growth in book reviews and the subjects of literature and language, art, education, history, feminist research, and critique of science becomes visible. This new focus is still seen today in numerous publications from the field.

In the mid 80s lesbian issues also become more present; one third of this presence is borne by *Lesbenrundbrief* (1983-1993). The subject appears to be non-existent for the western Austrian publications *Orgon* and *AEP-Informationen*; Viennese titles are in the middle of the scale. Above average numbers appear in some women's center publications, thanks to a strong local lesbian presence.

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[12] See: violence debate in the media, Geiger 2008.

[13] Established in 1979. State Secretary Johanna Dohnal was promoted to Minister of Women in 1990. Austria has had a Minister of Women since then, with interruptions; however, it does not have an actual Ministry of Women.

Lesbian publications

The term "lesbian publications" includes magazines that are clearly directed toward a lesbian readership and those that define their target group as "gay-lesbian" or feminist with a lesbian slant[14]. "Queer" titles also belong to this group. STICHWORT verifies 21 titles for Austria, five of which are current. Because this is a relatively low number and German and Swiss lesbian magazines were and continue to be of great importance to Austrian readers, we include them in this section.

It is not possible to determine the total number of lesbian magazines in German speaking countries – at least at this point. The holdings of the i.d.a. facilities, searchable through ZDB, can be consulted for an overview of the German speaking countries[15]. At present, data from archives with large holdings, for example the lesbian archive in Berlin, *Spinnboden*, are missing. Thus only a tendency can be established. Furthermore, there is magazine data in the ZDB that has only been submitted by institutional libraries so far, which often lacks the magazines' exact publishing duration due to incomplete records. The availability of data on the 151 lesbian magazine titles will surely improve through further additions from feminist archives and libraries in the future. An additional problem is that only an extremely limited amount of electronic media, most of which are irregular e-mail newsletters, appears in the ZDB, because they are hardly archived in any facility.

The following can be deduced from the available data: Most of the magazines were started between 1986 and 2000, when the direction shifted from "lesbian" to "gay and lesbian". Approximately three quarters of the lesbian magazines have a regional focus (62% for Austria); lesbian magazines and gay and lesbian magazines are equally represented among the cross-regional publications. Of the former, we include titles such as *Lesbenpresse, Lesbenfront/Frau ohne Herz/Die.Lesbenzeitschrift, Lesbenstich, Ihrsinn, Unsere kleine Zeitung (UKZ)*, the Austrian *Lesbenrundbrief, Infoblatt des Deutschen Lesbenring e.V.* and others.

The first lesbian magazines after the beginning of the second-wave women's movement appeared in 1975 – *Lesbenfront* (Zurich), *Lesbenpresse, Partnerin* and *Unsere kleine Zeitung* (all in Berlin). By the end of the 70s, eight more

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[14] Beginning in the mid 80s, terms like "FrauenLesben" (WomenLesbians) were common in the course of the discussion on the perception of lesbians in feminist contexts. This was also expressed with a conjunction or slash and in many other provocative and humorous heavily debated forms, for example, "women and other lesbians". Around 1990 groups and periodicals went through some name changes in Austria. One example for Austria is the magazine *Frauen-Nachrichten des Frauenzentrums Wien*, which was called *Lesben/Frauen-Nachrichten* as of the issue 13/1993.

[15] Magazines that do not include lesbians in their titles were added from STICHWORT data as much as possible to provide a better overview.

distinctly lesbian magazines are started; these are joined by a gay and lesbian title, *Rosa Revue*, from Hamburg[16]. Most of the distinctly lesbian magazines emerged in the second half of the nineties (10); a total of 47 lesbian-focused titles were located. In Austria there are only four: the *Lesbenrundbrief*, which was published from 1983 to 1993 by different groups, the *Lila Schriften* (1995-1999), the magazine from the lesbian student organization at the University of Graz, *Sappho*, which has been documented from 1996 to 1998, and the e-mail newsletter *Lebenszeichen* (2001-).

In 1984 the term "Women/Lesbians" appeared, both in the magazine title and the name of the publishing group. Efforts toward the integration of lesbian perspectives and content in the feminist debate are reflected in this name choice. These politics are visible in available data on new publications until around the year 2000; after that, no new titles with such names are found. It is assumed that after that point lesbian-focused material was integrated into the editorial concepts, but no longer named as such. The Austrian magazines *[sic!]*. *Forum für feministische Gangarten* and *an.schläge* are examples of this.

In the first half of the 80s an increased number of magazines defining their target group as "gay and lesbian" are found. The number of newly founded publications jumped from 5 in the early 80s to 21 in the first half of the 90s. With a total of 71, the number of gay and lesbian titles is approximately as high as the categories lesbian and women/lesbians combined. In Austria these include *Lambda-Nachrichten* from HOSI Vienna, *Pride* from HOSI Linz, RosaLila *Buschtrommel* from Graz and the gay and lesbian scene publication, *Bussi*. The balance between the representation of gay and lesbian issues present in these magazines and the degree of divergence between the premise and lesbians feeling addressed could be the subject of further research.

The Zurich lesbian magazine serves as an example of change in the political orientation and aesthetic design, and thereby also as an illustration of three decades of lesbian feminism. Founded in 1975 as *Lesbenfront*, typeset and illustrated with drawings and some photos, it provided typical content for self-organized magazines, such as reports on events and political activities, copies of leaflets, open letters and other political texts, field reports, interviews with authors and activists, and reviews. From the 4/1977 issue it was also distributed in Germany by the Frauenbuchvertrieb in Berlin. In 1985 the name was changed to *Frau ohne Herz. Zeitschrift für Frauen und andere Lesben* (Women without a heart. Magazine for women and other lesbians). Over the course of its ten-year existence, it became increasingly "professional" in its design, for example, regarding typesetting and continuous use of photos as well as paper quality and, lastly, color covers. A complete relaunch took place in 1996 when its name was changed to *die. Lesbenzeitschrift*. The new version was introduced with the line, "The era of the woman without a heart is over."[17] The literary content became

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[16] Strictly speaking, the *Lambda-Nachrichten*, founded in 1979 by the *Homosexuellen Initiative* in Vienna cannot be included here, because the enlargement of the focus from gay to gay and lesbian only took place in 1981 when the lesbian group was founded.

[17] *die. lesbenzeitschrift* 1/1996, Editorial, p. 5

more important. In 2004 it was replaced by *Skipper*, which, as a *magazine for lesbian vitality*, served the queer generation with its association to recreation, sports, and games and a seriously questionable image of women – after all, "Skipper" is Barbie's little sister. This was clearly meant to reach the "young lesbians"; reports on gay and lesbian events, organizations, and other matters (e.g. partnerships) were in the forefront of the lifestyle and gossip sections. The individual articles did not extend beyond a double-page spread and were heavily illustrated. *Skipper* was discontinued after only three issues.

Translation: Emily Lemon

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Class and voice: challenges for grassroots community activists using media in 21st century Ireland

Margaret Gillan

Abstract

This paper considers the purpose and functions of community media operating in Ireland today and the challenges posed by the neo-liberal environment. Community media organisations proclaim the fight against exclusion as a primary goal and promote our processes as the means to facilitate inclusion. As the community is dismantled by the current government, we now face an acid test: can we hold together in solidarity, and will our structures and processes support the real needs of working class people? What knowledge has been developed that enables community production, affording access to broadcast media and a voice to the excluded? Will it support the effort to deal with the ruling class attempt to pass the burden of the economic collapse onto workers with all the social destruction this will mean? Whose voice and whose needs are being heard in the media we produce and by whom?

We don't have all the answers to these questions yet, but in trying to address them we have been forced to keep in mind the effort it takes for working class communities to develop and maintain the knowledge they need to both survive and to achieve. In this article I firstly revisit the emancipatory aspects of community media in its community development context; secondly review the historical context of the emergence of community broadcasting in Ireland; then present issues emerging from my research done within the Community Media Network (CMN) and with community groups using media; and finally map the process of the CMN's strategy development to deal with the issues.

1.   Introduction

Communication in all its forms is basic to human development. Tools and means that enhance our capacity to communicate effectively around our needs and interests are also fundamental to wealth production in contemporary society. A capitalist system allows those who have money to buy what they need — and also to control access to powerful communication tools. Those without wealth and power therefore have a *need* to gain a voice so they may influence decisions that impact on their lives; those without wealth and power are also excluded from access to mainstream media, be that so-called 'public service' or

'independent' media that control the airwaves[1]. How do the excluded get heard in a media saturated 21st century?

This article draws on my experience of working with grassroots community development workers in Ireland who have engaged with media in their effort to have their community's needs recognised and to influence policy so that these needs would be met. Their engagement has taken place on a variety of fronts: with mainstream media; with commercial production groups brought in to support productions; by producing their own media themselves or by working with community media organisations, including broadcast media. They have also engaged with Community Media Network (CMN, whose activities I have co-ordinated since 1996) in an effort to identify and address the many difficulties and challenges they find in using dealing with media to address their need for voice. I refer to conversations with community development workers recorded over a five year period.

Robbie Byrne works in participatory forms of community-based drama using what is known as legislative drama and the forum theatre techniques of Augusto Boal. The participants are people from the community who are living with the effects of drug use – either as users, family, or friends, and their involvement is voluntary. The purpose is to address issues that are difficult for the community to deal with in an open manner due to stigma, prejudice or hostility, ultimately meaning they cannot speak. He explains the approach thus:

> the way that we have incorporated the arts is not so much for people to have an experience of arts as if that was something very profound, it's to use story-telling and creativity that reflects the social situation that people are living in. It's using drama and that creative process more and more as a community development tool, and more and more as something that really gets to the heart of the story that people want to tell, rather than it being analysed in terms of research or any methodology. It stands alone and is unedited. I think the more work that's done like that at the local level the better; this way people seem to get a great sense of empowerment and ownership of their own work. (Interview 3, 2004)

The groupwork develops support networks and critiques of mainstream interventions on the drugs issue. It aims to bring the voice of those experiencing the issue to the policy makers in order to initiate changes that will bring real benefits to those most in need and who are most affected. Using media can amplify and extend the reach of work such as Robbie's; the question is how to use media in ways that keep the essential nature of the activity. Kate Harris (2010) describes the problem thus:

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[1]   The existence of the access channels in the US is an example of what can happen when channels exist – but the access channels franchise is continuously under attack and their become occupied with ongoing battles and campaigns to protect their right to broadcast and the resources that allow them do so. This situation is also a clear indication of the determination of the mainstream and commercial carriers to be rid of access channels.

> community based drama . . . often does not have access to the resources
> needed for professional production values. What it does have is the ability
> to speak directly to the experiences of people in a particular community, by
> locating the performance in the bodies of people who live there. This is
> especially powerful when the physical bodies performing are those that are
> often seen as part of the city's landscape with no individuality or agency
> (p.1)

The need to work in this way to enable voice has important implications for how
media may be used; the condition of being unable to speak with which such
work engages is also a central issue that community broadcast media must
address.

Groups such as those Robbie Byrne works with have a range of issues in dealing
with broadcast media, but see promise in community television in a number of
ways:

> But I think community television would be extremely useful because it's
> directly into someone's living room; people are living in isolation and fear
> in relation to support so it's a very good way to get information across to
> them. It's also very good in terms of the parents participating in the
> creation of a programme which would make it easier for people to access
> support; or for people to see people like themselves accessing support -
> and hopefully that will make it easier for them (Interview 3 2004).

This kind of value has been verified by community organisations in Chicago
working with Community Access Network channel (CAN TV), who report that a
high percentage of people who contact them have found their contact details on
the channel whilst channel hopping alone late at night (Popovic, 2006).

The approach taken by groups using Boal's methodology is described by Kate
Harris as

> giving the public the skills to become the artists. This approach located the
> performance in the bodies of people in the community, performing for the
> community. The objective . . . was not the performance itself but could
> only be accomplished through performance.[2] (Harris, 2010, p.5)

The difference between community drama and taking the step into broadcast
media lies in moving out from the particular and the local, and involves
engaging with another set of issues. A range of benefits are perceived in the use
of community television: e.g. documenting the drama, bringing it to a wider
audience, avoiding the expense of touring a drama production, engaging people
in media production skills, and establishing a base in which the transfer of these

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[2]   "Beyond the Aesthetic: Applications for Community-Based Drama". This paper, written
by Kate Harris, was presented at a seminar as part of the Irish Society for Theatre Research
(ISTR) conference, held in Trinity College Dublin, on April 23rd, 2010.

skills can take place. But how all this may be achieved demands a closer look at the context in which community activity takes place.

Historical context

Community development — the context in Ireland

After the social movements of the 1960s failed to deliver changes in working-class communities a large community organising sector developed in Ireland, catalysed by anti-poverty activity in the 1970s and 1980s. While this sector has been recognised as a social movement in its own right (Geoghegan, 2000; Powell and Geoghegan, 2004; Varley, 1991; Curtin, 1995), acute problems have evolved from its relationship with the state.

The framework of Social Partnership launched by the Irish Government in 1987 was widely accepted to be due to a crisis within the political elites (Allen, 2007; Larragy, 2006). This involved the Trade Unions, Employers, and Farmers, and while this was seen to be unusual, it became even more so when community organisations were invited to join this process as the Community Platform in 1996 (Larragy, 2006). However over a decade of this kind of community representation culminated in little more than the Community Platform leaving the Partnership process in 2003, returning again in 2006, and now in 2010 facing the dismantlement of the sector's infrastructure by a neo-liberal government in crisis that is determined to quell all opposition.

While the Celtic Tiger boom 'rising tide' was lauded by the right as 'raising all boats', the subsequent bust has marooned workers who face losing their homes with their mortgages in negative equity, and spiralling job losses. However all throughout the boom period another aspect of this reality was being impressed on those who worked to address the gap between rich and poor: far from being reduced, it was in fact widened:

> Even though we're in the middle of the Celtic Tiger era we haven't always been in that position. Some people haven't experienced the Celtic Tiger anyway, and they are really second or third generation from a series of disadvantages, and people internalise that. So we'd still be working with the internalised oppression of people even though there may be more material things about, people have more access to material things, but there is that sense of exclusion which is intergenerational poverty and lack of education. Because some people are searching for these stories as if they're not present, that they couldn't be at this point in Irish history with the level of economic success. But it is there and people are struggling with it on a daily basis. (Interview with working class community activist, 2005)

The community development movement sought to gain negotiating power in the structures established by a neo-liberal Government who claimed their de-

regulation and free-market agenda would ensure that 'all boats would rise'. The reality of Irish society in the boom years was the swift widening of the gap between those who had and those who didn't; the emergence of even more critically excluded groups; growth in trafficking of all kinds from drugs to people; and a swift rise in social tensions and racism with the arrival of new communities. Community development projects were stretched immeasurably by the problems they were meeting at their doorsteps.

Developments in community broadcast media since the 1970s

The need for voice was never stronger, but the engagement of community development projects with community broadcast media was weak. The new community television channels of the new millenium, whilst having verbal approval from the sector[3] found it difficult to maintain active community involvement in the building of the organisations, and this was complicated by the kinds of funding that became available.

The production of small scale media has been a regular activity within community development projects over the past twenty years. These products — and the process of their production - have served important functions in meeting the groups' objectives on a range of levels and support their social networking and information dissemination. This was made visible in Ireland through a range of publications and fora including: Community Radio Forum website — now CRAOL; CMN's website; Node — the journal of the Community Workers Coop (CWC); and in more general and international fora such as AMARC, Videazimut, and CRIS. There is now also a range of literature coming from the field and from academic interest in addressing this kind of production. The growth of what has become known as 'community media' in Ireland is marked by difficulties and tensions that demonstrate similar problems to those that have emerged within the community development movement. Much of this is instigated and exacerbated by the conditions imposed by state funding such as corporatism, managerialism, etc, the danger being that these trends lead to a separation of the technical organisation from their base[4].

Community Broadcasting

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[3]   See Feasibility Study and Needs assessments for CTVs Gibbons, 2006; O'Siochru and Mulcahy, 2007

[4]   The extent of the problem these issues pose for the process of knowledge production in working class struggle is more than clear within the Trade Union movement in Ireland where Leadership is facing strongly voiced criticism from membership that has surfaced through public media —"the leadership has been in craven collaboration with the Government" (TU conference delegate broadcast on SixOne News). The TUs have suffered membership disaffection over the years of the Celtic Tiger when workers faced ongoing restrictions through partnership while the wealthy shipped money out of the country.

In the broadcast media environment initiatives aiming to create access and voice for those on the margins of society emerged in media specific formations and involved coalitions that included various ideological positions (Day, 2003; Horgan, 2001). Community broadcast media place activists in close engagement with the state - negotiating licences, operating under contract with the Broadcasting Regulator, and subject to state monitoring. However the community television channels have had little or no funding to support core operations. The funding streams that exist are constructed to support the independent production sector and while those involved in community television channels have accessed this, little if any has filtered through to enable production based in the community where a transfer of skills can take place.

Activists now struggle to establish and maintain the new community television channels in a context that becomes increasingly difficult amidst economic crisis. Transmission has been launched at a moment when the neo-liberal property bubble has burst and therefore operates in a field of conflicting forces; the internecine conflicts that arise as organisations face closure due to lack of funds also form a part of the instability.

Irish activists have campaigned for access to all broadcast media including television since the early 1970s[5]. Their movement bases included: civil rights activists developing local voice, influenced by the Civil Rights movements in the US and in the North of Ireland; the Irish language rights movement which was absorbed by the state ultimately producing Radio na Gaeltachta and TnG (Hourigan, 2001); and those for whom media diversity was a primary aim – which included commercial interests. Community television was first legislated for by the 2001 Broadcasting Act; the first CTV licences were issued in 2006 and now three channels are transmitting on cable[6].

The community television channels came into being under the neo-liberal regime that emerged in Ireland in the 1990s and at the height of the Celtic Tiger boom: the 2001 Act was designed to introduce digital broadcasting, reform the State Broadcaster and essentially privatise the broadcasting sector. Whatever the intentions of the state, this provided an opportunity activists had been seeking for a long time. Slipping in between the lines in one way or another is nothing new - community radio stations have broadcast since 1995 via a

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[5]   Despite only recently being afforded legal recognition in the 2009 Act, Irish community radio stations are seen as providing good practice models amongst EU community radio broadcasters and have been broadcasting successfully under relatively favourable regulatory conditions.

[6]   Dublin - DCTV http://www.dctv.ie; Navan -P5TV http://www.p5tv.com; Cork - CCTv http://www.cctv.ie

loophole in the 1988 legislation that legislated for commercial (so-called 'independent') radio[7].

The 2001 Act made no provision for funding mechanisms, so channels received little support in the process of developing organisational structures from institutional bodies[8]. The 2003 Broadcasting Funding Act spawned what was probably the deadliest blow to community media – the Sound and Vision Scheme, which demanded art-house independent production industry conditions and criteria from community production; conditions which oppose the kind of processes proven useful and effective in challenging exclusion in the community sector. The impact of this has yet to be acknowledged, but a community radio sector which was run and controlled by volunteers has seen an influx of independent producers, i.e. for-profit or art-house media makers, since the scheme started, and this has affected production standards and values.

Those who most need a voice- those excluded from society - have no resources, in either their material conditions or their skills, to help them access the channels. The challenges posed by both these opportunities and constraints are not debated widely - whilst being the focus of activists' efforts little research is available, with a few exceptions emerging from community radio[9] .

Theoretical issues

Community development principles and processes emphasise the involvement of those affected by the problem in finding the solution; CDP practice draws on the theoretical and field work of Paulo Freire (1996) and his participatory methodologies[10]. This is also where the theoretical underpinnings of Robbie's work are situated.

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[7]   The 1988 Act was followed by a period made infamous by the swift growth of media empires, the Flood Tribunal, and the corrupt activity of Ray Burke, then Minister for Communications and Justice.

[8]   Initial support was in the form of BCI (Regulator) funding for Needs Assessment; this has been used to form the basis for the Regulator's agreement to award a contract, and outlines the applicant groups, the constituency and the facilities available – or not available.

[9]   See Rosemary Day, 2003; Niamh Farren's 2007 MA Thesis addressing the issue of quality *An Inquiry into Values: Towards a Definition of Quality in Community Radio*, available at: http://www.craol.ie/cms/refdocs/niamh_farren_quality_thesis.pdf

[10]   Also as developed by practitioners such as Hope and Trimmel (1995) in South Africa. The principles of this approach are given expression in declarations such as the Community Workers Co-op (CWC) statement of principles (Appendix 1), many similar statements can be found around the world.

However there are weaknesses in community development theory that promote participatory methodologies as desirable in their own right but separated from material and class struggle (Facundo, 1984)[11], uncritical usage of terminology such as 'participation' and 'empowerment' for example. These serve to fudge the meaning and drop the emancipatory intent of the work. Those who seek to resist the challenge that these processes put to existing power structures have also used the terminology of community development to place the responsibility for their situation back on the shoulders of the oppressed (Mayo P., 1999; Mayo M., 1974). This is nothing new, but it is surprising that as a tactic it still has currency.

A recent comment in 2009 by the new Irish Minister for Community, Equality, and Gaeltacht Affairs exposes another difficulty in how community development is understood:

> I don't see why community development has to always be linked to disadvantage; community development is necessary across all areas of society[12]

Now, the statement that community development is necessary across all areas of society does not pose a problem per se, but that it should have no relation to disadvantage certainly does. The principles professed by organisations such as the CWC are to change the nature of society from one that produces disadvantage to one that provides not simply static and intermittent opportunities to some excluded people but one that builds structures to support all of society's members. This means the processes of community development must challenge existing power structures and expose the underlying dynamics that cause exclusion. This is part of the conscientisation process which demands what Freire called 'naming the world' and reflective action as emancipatory process for the dispossessed. However there are considerable problems that people must deal with if they are to engage with their realities in this way.

Issues of voice and re-presentation

Those struggling to live their lives under conditions of extreme deprivation and oppression and who are vulnerable to exploitation are often unable to voice their needs, let alone influence the decisions that impact on their lives. Freire named this the 'culture of silence' that perpetuates people's domination; Gayatri Spivak (1988) holds that this also means that the issue of representation remains a problem. How the working class can produce their own organic

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[11]   Blanco Facundo's impassioned critique highlighted ways that Freirean methodology ignores social contexts and fails to assess the possibilities within their social contexts for the participants of Freirean programmes; the fact that Freire's achievements were rooted in a revolutionary context is key to the success of his methodologies.

[12]   Pat Carey – in Dail session quoted in the Irish Times; also noted in Dailbrief 2010; Dailbrief itself was also disbanded along with the Combat Poverty Agency.

intellectuals, as Gramsci (1998) insisted was necessary to counter the hegemonic control of traditional intellectuals and enable them to speak in their own right, is a core problem for emancipation.

How representation is achieved and what dynamics operate in the 'empowering' process employed determines whether poor people continue to be exploited in the interest of those in control of the process (and their conditions therefore remain the same), or whether poor people gain by acquiring social capital that changes their subaltern situation - thereby achieving material changes in their circumstances and assuming the power to re-present their own needs.

Similarly to Freire and other proponents of participatory methodologies[13], Spivak works on parallel programmes of literacy and postgraduate teaching, maintaining that one is not enough without the other and that those who teach must enter into a relationship dynamic where they understand that they are learners and teachers and that these roles are interchangeable.

This premise recognises the problem for those who have left the subaltern state and have therefore undergone transformation – how do these people now re-present the needs of those who cannot yet speak? So Spivak understands there to be a need for a dynamic of engagement where the conditions of the excluded are kept present. Robbie Byrne describes an approach that facilitates learning; sees the 'learner' as the centre of the activity; and places editorial control in the hands of those whose story is being told:

> **Margaret:** We talk a lot about training, and about skills, and training 'the people': do you think training goes both ways?

> **Robbie:** I think so - what we say quite a lot is that we create learning events. We have skills – practically for myself working as a drama facilitator, I'm working on a piece on hepatitis. Basically I ran a series of workshops but the people have the story, you know. I showed them some skills about how you might go about presenting the story. We recorded what they said, what people were saying in the improvisation, so I don't have any special position in it, even though I have skills (I have gathered a lot of skills over the years)- that group of people are creating something together.

> I haven't got some skills that they have, but we create something together, it's a collective creation, it doesn't have the individual stamp of a director or an author or anything, I facilitate it. That's what I say I do: sometimes when scenes are particularly difficult I will write something for it, but I'll give it to the people whose story it is and say 'what do you think of that? you try it out and change it in whatever way' There is a learning in that, yeah. There's a thing about you know keeping it simple in a way, Inside Out would have said, and I'd agree, that we're involved in telling stories that otherwise wouldn't be told. That was it. You enter into that situation

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[13]   Including for instance Illich, Foote-Whyte, Greenwood.

as openly as possible and to produce something collectively to the highest standards that you can. And the standards have been very high. (Interview 3, 2004)

Maintaining the primacy of the excluded experience poses a difficulty when we want to negotiate with the powerful, since the powerful demand that we speak a language that has no words for the experience of the excluded and whatever words do refer to it denigrate that experience. The constructed modes of communication that allow access to those who have the power to change things (if they want to) are also controlled and moderated by various gateways. There are also tensions between strategies developed to address different needs – for example those about 'telling truth to power' and those that are about working class people acquiring their own sense of self and ultimately creating situations which are not dependent on the goodwill of the powerful.

Media has been used by movements in a range of ways and probably the most comprehensive strategic use is that developed by the Zapatistas (Halkin 2008). This employed two approaches – "talking with" which was use of video for communication amongst themselves; and "talking to", when they faced the world's media and conducted an event that they themselves controlled. This clear approach to media use has been developed in the context of a popular emancipatory movement (similarly to Freire's methodologies). Finding ways to use media to support a popular movement is part of an emancipatory process that needs to be informed by a critique of media practice.

To get simple about it: what the Zapatistas and many others have demonstrated, and what we all know is that media production is not rocket science and if we need the benefits it can bring then people must be enabled to engage with it. A lot of people drive cars, operate machines, learn to use computers – the technology of media cameras, microphones, editing, and transmission software, comprise another technology. But it is more than just technology: being able to use media is a powerful way of communicating, and whoever controls it determines what it can do. Robbie Byrne saw possibilities in people's involvement in production, but particularly in relation to understanding how that power is constructed:

> **Margaret:** So the power is in being able to tell the stories in the first place, then record then, then distribute them?
>
> **Robbie:** Yes, I think that if people are engaged in addressing the power imbalance between who have control over the media and the technology, if people gain a sense of strength or solidarity through firstly the expression of it and the recording of it and the performance of their story - but then they're involved in seeing how that story might look on screen, how it's edited, and deciding an approach to editing, you know, and an opportunity to say if they want to use community television how would they use it.

That understanding then provides opportunity to critique what that power can do:

I know that locally people would say that Prime Time[14] can come in and do a programme on poverty and they come and go and they have they have their airspace filled with the stories of the people they leave behind, and in the wake of it they leave literally pain and hurt and embarrassment and shame that people have to deal with and it can be a terrible knock to the community and to the development work as well when that happens and they don't have any way of addressing it. . . . and where does it go to? And people would like to have the opportunity to respond to that and if they had access to community television, I think people would be screaming to have a programme and to bring people back from Prime Time and ask them why and how and who do they think they are . . .

Margaret: This is to respond to be able to use it [community television] as a response . . .?

Robbie: Very much so, and with newspaper coverage as well. Because the level of internalised oppression is quite extraordinary, and I think we all have it in one way or another, but when your area is constantly branded by the media, when all the young people in your area are constantly branded, as having no value.... 'they're areas to be frightened of, they're people to be frightened of', when that's continually thrown up in your face, day after day throughout your life . . . it has a deep, deep, rooted effect which is very bad. And I suppose to use the community TV, it's almost like a form of celebration, of a social analysis of people's lives and by their ability to claim that by telling their stories, it's to share it. (Interview 3, 2004)

The problem with media and control of the mode of intellectual production

It is often said that communications and media are controlled by those in power; and those in power can change. However such a statement needs to be elaborated – left as it is, it creates an illusion that media is an inert entity that may support any given power structure and will unproblematically switch with whatever revolution. The problem however is that the organisation of any of the media is ideologically driven in relation to its structures, divisions of labour, access routes, and content.

The capacity to use media tools for voice is also classed, within a media industry built by capitalist society that creates hierarchies of privileged workers who work to their bosses specifications. These workers' interest is to further their skill within a particular mode of production. This means that the exclusion of those who cannot speak is copper-fastened by a cultural hegemony that determines values and standards across labour and product. Chomsky and

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[14]   Current affairs programme on state broadcaster RTE One.

Herman's (1994), amongst many others[15], analysis of the political economy of the mass media depicts no less than a fortress containing carefully constructed corridors of power and effective threads of control.

An effective thread of control is the media worker's self understanding as 'objective', 'unbiased', and therefore as having some authority – similar to Gramsci's traditional intellectuals. The 'objective' status is the criteria for the right to speak and denotes the removal of the worker from the subaltern state; yet it also sets controls on what 'voice' they actually have; furthermore it seems to remove any capacity to understand the impact they really have as Robbie Byrne pointed out; and they *move on* to the next piece of 'news'.

A wide range of media workers who operate at various levels across the hierarchical labour force structures may control representations. Near the top, the self-assuredness of the 'objective adjudicator' allows media 'anchor people' to bypass questions about what and whose interests they represent, and so ignore issues of how they create representations when they engage in constructing programmes (and therefore controlling meanings). High profile anchors now have a platform that places them in a similar position to priests and professionals - Gramsci's traditional intellectuals who control how we understand our situations and the world we inhabit.

The reporter who interviews another reporter when 'the Summit' is in session - or the politician unavailable, or when the scandal blows – is all too familiar; and it's more impressive when it's by satellite or video link since piling technology on top of technology creates more holy of holies; more demonstration of how much it is owned; more spectacle; more inaccessible holders of 'sacred' or 'insider knowledge' that is drip-fed through the radio speaker or the box in our living room. The media can be everywhere; they are inaccessible; buttressed by a technology industry that draws demarcations between domestic and professional 'markets' – the consumers and the producers.

Some have argued that media are collectively the main site of 'the public sphere' – i.e. a site where ideologies can be contested and discourses gain dominance and so are 'heard'. However the criteria required for access to any site where such contestations can happen are in themselves highly exclusive and clearly inaccessible to those already excluded from society. Sites where contestations are possible are very often accessible only by having particular attributes including education, wealth, and social standing (and not necessarily in that order). These sites are therefore enclosures and criteria for access to them are the accessories, the club cards, of elites.

The fact of the matter is that achieving voice is a difficult task. When people sit down to discuss how they can go about changing the conditions in which they live they have lots of good ideas – the most frequently voiced idea is to get the issue debated in the mass media, preferably on 'the news'. Yet getting exposure

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[15]   Badigian; McChesney, McNichols

proves problematic: talk shows put them in conflict positions with the opposition and they don't get a chance to state their case, so the situation is worse than when they set out; they have half a page of the newspaper in one week and then nothing for the next ten years[16]; "the most important part of the word newspaper is 'new'",[17] so the same old story of oppression and exploitation is obviously excluded; they don't get to have editorial control on the content they provide; in order to extract 'human interest' content, interviewers break agreements and focus on the individual and emotive content rather than the issue as soon as they go on air — and so it goes on leaving the kind of destruction Robbie Byrne spoke of in its wake.

The recourse of the excluded who do get organised is often to orchestrate photo-opportunities or media events as the Zapatistas did - this is display, much like rattling spears and shields from the hillside; launch occasional forays to raid the enclosures and retreat; or invade with intent to occupy and take over. Examples of the latter include UK anti clause 28 lesbians absailing in the House of Commons or their taking over the BBC news room in the 1980s, and the kind of event we have also seen recently in Greece. While some impact may be achieved by these tactics, it is often short-term and generally results in retreating again to the 'neighbourhoods' to get on with the survival plan. This is where the Zapatista strategy worked well, since they continued with their 'talking with' media strategy to support the development of communication amongst their own people.

Turning to seek help from those with the skills to make media revealed more problems for community groups. The hope is that when they pay independent producers they will get a successful product that is useful and will hold its own alongside other media products — i.e. within the media environment in order to be good enough to be noticed by that elusive 'mass audience'.

Whilst acknowledging that many independent producers are well-intentioned, even committed to fighting inequality, community organisations in Ireland have reported to CMN a range of problems they experienced when working in this way. These problems include issues around copyright and ownership of material and programmes; a mode of production that does not fit with community development processes; timeframes for production which are geared to commercial and fast turn-around production schedules; emphasis on the quality of media production rather than producing media in a community development framework.

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[16]   A disability action group showed me their newspaper files: most were examples of prejudice, ignorance, and dismissal of issues, the space given to positive coverage in their terms was miniscule. They were very proud of the half page they got in a national newspaper, but this had to be weighed against the dominance of negative coverage.

[17]   Journalist interviewed in Kerry, 2005.

The kinds of funding schemes that are available such as the Sound and Vision Scheme[18] in Ireland are equally unsuitable, demanding production ready scripts; art-house criteria for production values; team/crew with media production experience (cameraman, sound engineer, etc). All of this ignores the volunteer nature of community production, the community development processes that are necessary, and which also relate to media use in this environment.

Media are means to tell or re-present experience; in a capitalist mode of production these media products are owned by the producers, who are not necessarily those who have the experience. The need to control the use of one's own story forces people to become producers of their own media, and therefore the owners of their media product. Very often this can beat a track back into the realms of capitalist production and away from the initial emancipatory purpose; and so there is no impact on the original conditions - they persist, if they don't get worse. To add to the problem – consider all the time and effort that has gone into it and still that elusive 'mass audience' either blinked or went out for a cup of tea when the programme was screened - once.

It is hardly surprising then that those struggling against oppressive conditions avoid engaging with media and want to leave it to others. But the underlying problem of how voice is constructed persists, and the need to establish means to amplify the voice that speaks the experience of the excluded must drive the effort to establish community broadcasting.

Striving to establish such a voice means maintaining critical awareness of the impact the kind of practice employed has on the conditions we wish to address. What is needed is a reflexive activity in which media is used to serve a purpose. What is needed is for 'media' to be subject to, and formed by, voice, rather than the other way around. Essentially we need to include media in our movement praxis.

When we ask how we do this with community television, the issues that arise very quickly after the technology barrier are around the processes and relationships that come into play:

> **Margaret:** How do you see the problems you will face if you want to engage with community television, what are the key issues there?

> **Robbie:** On a very practical level it's about the technical stuff, having access to people who have technical skills, that's one thing. But also the other kind of thing is trying to develop some kind of partnership or understanding with people who have enough sensitivity or humanity to work with groups of people that are under them. I just have terrible fears, constant fears about people, about some sort of an abuse of power in terms of people having information and not having information, having skills and not having skills. So it's trying to develop that kind of partnership with

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[18]   See http://www.bai.ie/funding_sound_vision.html

people that can work. And whether this is idealistic or not, those people have to trust one another in a different sort of way than they would do working in other areas. A lot of the time, the people we're working with are quite vulnerable and have a hard time of it, to say the least. They might be at a point in their lives where they're claiming something back, so somebody entering into that has to have an understanding or humanity about that sort of situation. (Interview 3, 2004)

Community media researchers tend to focus on producing work that places community media within a media framework as a counter-balance to global media monopolies, emphasising that it has different purposes and values from mainstream media (O'Siochrú, 2004; O'Siochrú, Girard and Mahon, 2002.). Peter Lewis (2004) has stressed the importance of research to raising the profile of community media, releasing information on community media from its locale into the wider community, into schools, and into general consciousness. Some of this work re-affirms the kind of relationship that Robbie feels is necessary: for example, Farren's (2007) study of quality in community radio projects also included values such as "honesty, sincerity, collective action, trust, personal development" (p.69).

Yet whenever we agree to contextualising community use of media within the context of the mainstream, we deny the very issue that is at its core: the voice that is needed from the experience of exclusion. It is not the voice of those on the margins of mainstream media.

The context of 'voice'

Where and how is community media made?

Defining either 'community media' and 'community development' is a difficult task the problem is reflected in the diversity of the kinds of groups, activities, and allegiances they encompass, the fluidity and difficulties in mapping a community and voluntary 'sector' where groups grow and disintegrate at immeasurable rates.

However it is the capacity of both terms to encompass diversity that many activists understand as a strength; demanding from them an ability to deal with difference which makes them tolerant and flexible. Very often the difficulty in defining the term fades when the opportunities it provides are understood. Some sociologists (Geoghegan 2000; Varley, 1991) have proposed that a more useful understanding of community development is as an activity rather than as a constituency. Similarly, understanding community media as an activity where people use communication tools with an objective in mind makes much more sense of the kind of practice we are talking about.

This discussion is not new; the problem for those who want to address the inequities of our society is whether the term community media describes an

activity which is in opposition to oppressive forces in society – and some community/ community media activities may not be that. Just as calls for the recognition of the 'incivil' and 'uncivil' aspects of society (Jai Sen, 2005) highlight the artificiality of affording legitimacy to any sphere of social activity rather than questioning the legitimacy of what is done through it, so the problems with defining community and community media force us to ask more key and fundamental questions about how we do what we do. Specifically 'how do we make media in community?' And therefore, what dynamics and learning/learner opportunities and relationships exist that allow community media to accomplish its objective of providing a voice for those who don't have it?

How to move on?

Activists do not choose the ground to fight on; opportunities are taken when they present themselves and may not happen again for many years; a wide range of alliances are formed and may disband as quickly. In CMN, underlying differences and competing interests that emerged over the years have caused splits in the organisation but a core group has always re-emerged to carry on the CMN agenda of supporting and promoting community media activity.

However what is significant is that each time a split occurs, the focus or aim of the group is re-aligned with slightly different emphases as the core group refines its understanding of how it can achieve the CMN aims. The table in Appendix 2 roughly describes the kind of focus and emphases as they evolved over a ten year period in relation to the changing profile of the Steering Group. The trajectory shows a mixture of community activists and organisations, NGOs, and independent producers at the founding moment. The independent for-profit media producers and NGOs dominated when funding levels were high; this presence drops and community organisations re-appear when the funding disappears.

The focus on community television adopted by CMN in 2000 produced its own dynamic. CMN devoted all its resources to developing community television and in particular to building a community television channel –DCTV- in the capital city, Dublin. In 2008/9, after DCTV had established its own organisational structures, CMN reviewed its aims and began to develop a new strategy. The initial 2008 review identified a gap in support mechanisms for community organisations to engage with community television. We developed a proposal we felt the CMN project could undertake within the resources available and we put this to a number of community groups working in those areas we felt should be engaging with the new community channels. As we engaged in discussions with groups about approaching the work, our review developed into a process of engagement that now directs the project. The emphasis in the proposal shifted from making television programmes to documenting the groups' own processes,

working to identify the learning opportunities we can create together, and through these to support their community develop the skills to make programmes.

One activist put their community's needs in relation to community television this way:

> the thing that needs to be fulfilled in that [meeting requirements for community television] is the training process. Identifying what the training needs are, what the skills deficits are, what the people need. . . . . And you're hoping that there's one central group if you like through which that's available . . . and it would be channelled through local community groups. So I suppose what I'm talking about is not so much the pyramid but certainly the spider's web, that you have Community Media Network in the centre and then that would be spread out to likeminded community groups that would then link to the more local community groups, and to the voluntary groups too, like the local women's group. The community media network becomes something that is *in* the community. (Working-class community activist, interviewed 2005)

CMN's role is here understood to be animating community media activity, supporting the transfer and development of skills; once the organisation has attained a self-sufficient level CMN's purpose there is complete. We have two people working on the CMN project with technical skills; we have been able to up-grade our equipment this year; the groups have provided us with a small room as a workshop base. We have located other supports when needed from other community media organisations through our network and we have managed to co-ordinate media supports when asked. Our funding could be cut this year, and if that is so the project will then become totally voluntary. We are experimenting because we don't know the outcome, but we are thinking long-term and deepening solidarity is a primary requisite.

Developing community broadcast channels is a long-term project that demands engagement with those who need a voice. It must be based on their needs and operate with their trust – that means on their terms and in their base.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - CWC understanding of Community Development

Community development is based on certain principles:

- It enables people to work together to influence change and exert control over the social, political and economic issues that affect their lives.
  It is about a collective focus rather than a response to individual crisis.

- It challenges inequitable power relationships within society and promotes the redistribution of wealth and resources in a more just and equitable fashion.

- It is based on participative processes and structures which include and empower marginalised and excluded groups within society.

- It is based on solidarity with the interests of those experiencing social exclusion.

- It presents alternative ways of working, seeks to be dynamic, innovative and creative in approach.

- It challenges the nature of the relationship between the users and providers of services.

- It is open and responsive to innovation from other countries and seeks to build alliances with organisations challenging marginalisation in their own countries and globally.

- It involves strategies which confront prejudice and discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, class, religion, socio-economic status, age, sexuality, skin colour or disability.

Appendix 2 — Community Media Network: Activities, Focus, and composition of core group

Phase	CMN activities	Emphasis	Nature of core (steering) groups
1994-1996	Established C.E. Project; ran "Alternative Video Festival"; produced first issue of "Tracking" magazine; starts survey of community media groups in Ireland	Promotional activity; research; networking; Lobbying and Advocacy; internal prohibition on CMN to engage in production or training since this was the work of the member groups.	A number of NGOs; community video makers – individuals and organisations; community development groups.
1996-2000	Co-ordination of EU funded projects – training in production; Further issues of "Tracking" produced; 3 per year; Development of the website takes the place of the survey; small but active community media resource established.	Building the organisation and network through co-ordination of EU funded community media projects; Supporting the network of CMN member groups to do the training and support community production on the projects; Visibility for community media; lobbying and advocacy for resources;	Community video makers, community media organisations including community radio, one NGO, some individual community video makers/independent film-makers
2000-2003	EU Funds end in 2000. CMN engages with Dublin Community Forum and City Development Board; Founding of Dublin Community Media Forum in 2001; Lobby for and development of Community Television and in particular DCTV; Dedication of resources and provision of Secretariat to DCTV; Merger with Open Channel in 2001 Maintained small media resource centre dedicated to provide subsidised resources and training for community organisations; " Tracking" goes on line in	Focus on community television - lobby and advocacy on local and national levels; Building structures and platforms for community media in Dublin; Networking in Dublin to develop DCTV – organisational development; workshops; Move from a total emphasis on advocacy, visibility and networking to include provision of resources and training to build community media within the community sector. Merger with Open Channel in 2001 marks the beginning of production	After funding ends core groups shrink. CMN SC now consists of five groups most being community video, one NGO.

	2000, no issues produced after 2002 Co-ordinator begins research process to parallel and map the development of community television after the 2001 Act	activity within CMN	
2003-2007	CMN premises and C.E. closes in 2003 due to high rents and lack of funds. Temporary premises used for Independent Media centre in 2004 shortly before closing. Secretariat continues to support development of Dublin Community Television until its' first broadcast 2007; CMN resources now also dedicated to supporting community organisations developing their capacity to produce and equipment and technical worker deployed and housed by community organisations– "Production in the community" project is unfunded.	Supporting activity for community television and resources dedicated to DCTV; Supporting capacity building within community organisations means ongoing engagement with production; Research focussing on community organisations' needs. Research and development of materials to support community television activity; CMN struggles with homelessness, but this means that its activities are embedded in its participant groups.	CMN almost, but not quite, subsumed into DCTV: % of Technical support worker time dedicated to DCTV becomes 100%in 2007; CMN Co-ordinator is DCTV Secretary; CMN Chairperson is also DCTV Chairperson CMN co-ordinator resigns as DCTV Secretary in 2007 as DCTV goes on air;
2007-2009	Production in the Community project ends first phase with production of "Men At Work" in 2007/8. Work expands to provide documentation and programme production support to community organisations. CMN networks with community television groups to form a training Network (2006-2007) and subsequently a national representative organisation the CTA (Community Television Association) incorporated as a not-for-profit company in 2008.	CMN technical support to DCTV finishes in December 2008; new worker employed in early 2009; CMN finds new base for workshop activities in Clonsilla. National networking continues through CTA	CMN Chairperson (also DCTV Chair) resigns from CMN in 2008; Two community development projects join the two community media organisations and one independent film-maker on the CMN SC in 2008. CMN core group is stable since.

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About the author

As Coordinator of the Community Media Network (CMN) in Ireland **Margaret Gillan** has co-ordinated all-island training projects to build media capacity in the community and voluntary sector and to gain visibility for community media in general. She served as a community representative on the Dublin City Development Board; was a founder member of the Dublin Community Media Forum; founder member and Secretary of the Dublin Community Television Co-op (DCTV); and has been chairperson of the Community Television Association (Ireland) since its inception in 2007.

Margaret has recently completed research for a PhD in NUI Maynooth charting the development of community television in Ireland. A joint project of CMN, the Participatory Action Research (PAR) programme in Maynooth, and the Royal Irish Academy's Third Sector Research Programme, this project used a PAR approach to focus on the involvement of community organisations in the development of community television. Her ongoing

work in CMN aims to reinforce sustainable knowledge sharing networks within communities.

Patient-centered strategies to counter stigma, oppression and forced incarceration in the C/S/X and medical cannabis movements

Philippe Lucas

Abstract

Under the guise of protecting personal health and public safety, federal and regional governments have created policies and associated enforcement mechanisms to prohibit illicit substance use and control the behaviours of citizens affected by mental illness. These mechanisms can lead to significant deprivations of personal rights and freedoms, including forced treatment and incarceration. The c/s/x (consumer/survisor/ex-patient) and medical cannabis movement are two 'new social movements' (Young, 1990) that have emerged as areas of resistance to this state-sanctioned oppression, stigma and moral regulation (Hunt, 1999; Erickson, 1998). Although seemingly engaged in unrelated struggles, both of these social movements are defending the same important principles: cognitive liberty and the right to make fundamental decisions about one's health without the fear of incarceration.

This research suggests that both the anti-psychiatry and medical cannabis patient movements have created successful strategies that increase patient control over their health conditions and personal lives, resulting in better outcomes for individuals suffering from chronic physical or mental health challenges. I conclude that these disparate groups might benefit from sharing successful strategies to defend cognitive liberty and to address the ongoing oppression, bio-medical dominance, and social stigma affecting mental health and medical cannabis patients.

"Everyone loses something precious when we sacrifice an artificially defined group of people's freedom in an ill-conceived quest to maintain the illusion of control, predictability, and safety." (Bassman 2001, 34)

Introduction

Mental illness and drug addiction are two of the most stigmatized health issues in modern society (Bassman 2001). Under the guise of protecting personal health and public safety, federal and provincial governments in Canada have created policies and associated mechanisms to prohibit illicit substance use and control the behaviours of citizens affected by mental illness. These mechanisms can lead to significant deprivations of personal rights and freedoms, including forced treatment and incarceration. The c/s/x (consumer/survivor/ex-patient) and medical cannabis movement are two 'new social movements' (Buechler 1995; Young 1990) that have emerged as areas of resistance to this state-sanctioned oppression, stigma and moral regulation (Hunt 1999; Erickson 1998). While the c/s/x movement has focused much its efforts on an individual's right to refuse treatment and forced incarceration, the medical cannabis movement continues to fight for the right patients to access treatment — in this case medical cannabis — without being stigmatized or criminalized. Although seemingly engaged in contrary struggles, both of these social movements are defending the same important principles: cognitive liberty and the right to make fundamental decisions about one's health without the fear of incarceration.

Starting with an examination of Western society's long-standing fear of altered states of mind, I examine how loss of freedom and the threat of incarceration can lead to either 'reactance' or 'helplessness' (Monahan et al 1995). I then apply the lens of 'new social movements' (Buechler 1995; Young 1990) to contrast and compare the strategies developed by these patient groups to address and resist social stigma, loss of freedom and incarceration, and explore the concept of cognitive liberty and the right for individuals to experience altered states. The paper concludes that both the anti-psychiatry and medical cannabis movements have succeeded in increasing patient control over their health conditions and personal lives, and that this empowerment has resulted in better health outcomes for individuals suffering from chronic physical or mental health challenges. I suggest that these disparate groups might benefit from a mutual awareness of each other's struggles and successes, and from sharing strategies to defend the fundamental personal right to cognitive liberty, and address the ongoing oppression, bio-medical dominance, and social stigma affecting mental health and medical cannabis patients.

A fear of altered states: mental illness and medical cannabis use as sources of social stigma, oppression, and loss of freedom

Altered states of mind, be they the result of mental illness or substance use, are inherent to human existence; however, Western society's understanding and acceptance of altered states is severely limited by the bio-medical tendency to pathologize thoughts and actions that stray too far from normative expectations. In

reference to his own experiences with mental illness, psychologist Ronald Bassman (2001, p.17) states that "each person's journey into and out of their altered states is unique and charged with heroic possibilities", adding that "our understanding of these quintessential human conditions is severely limited by a Western societal penchant for accepting too facile generalizations and labels that do more to obscure than to describe". Bassman's suggestion that there may be "heroic" outcomes from experiencing altered states is relevant because this term is commonly associated with the use of psychedelic substances like LSD and psilocybin, both of which are currently being studied as a potential therapy end-of-life anxiety (Multidisciplinary Association of Psychedelic Studies 2009). Interestingly, modern medical texts often refer to this class of drugs as 'psychomimetics', meaning that they produce "effects (as hallucinations or paranoid delusions) that resemble or are identical with psychotic symptoms" (Merriam-Webster 2009). The linguistic and taxonomic association between altered states of mind resulting from mental illness and those stemming from substance use reveals a worrisome institutional ignorance and prejudice within modern medicine of both the subjective (potentially therapeutic) effects of psychotropic substances and the individual experience of psychosis and mental illness as a whole. This bio-medical over-simplification and denigration of altered states of mind has resulted in significant social stigma against mental illness and substance use. Research suggests that Western society's deeply entrenched fear of altered states stems largely from a public perception that mental illness necessarily predicates unpredictable behaviour and random violence. In her study of madness on the streets of Montreal, Knowles (2000, p. 136-37) states:

> The association between madness and dangerousness is, perhaps, best set in the broader context of urban mythology in which madness is one of many forms of social danger in the urban popular imaginary. Fear of random attack, stranger danger, the association of certain parts of the urban landscape with unprovoked violence bear no relationship with actual incidents or their frequency.

Although this passage focuses on the social construction of the link between madness and dangerousness, Knowles (2000, p.143) doesn't deny that madness and violence at times co-exist on our streets; however, she quantifies the real dangerousness of the mad, stating that "what looks dangerous is not so necessarily", adding that "...the American Psychiatric Association historically denied the association between mental disorder and violence. The Canadian Mental Health Association also denies links between madness and dangerousness..." (Knowles 2000, p.136). Despite the evidence that mental illness is not necessarily associated with violence, a fear of altered states has led to the development of policies and practices that grant a tremendous amount of power to mental health professionals, including the "right and responsibility to detain patients and to force them to take powerful drugs or undergo electroconvulsive therapy" (Bracken & Thomas 2001, p.725).

Drug prohibition is similarly dependent on the deliberate exaggeration of the dangers of psychoactive substance use in the public mind. In the seminal essay *The Ethics of Addiction*, Szasz (1971, p.542) states that "since most of the propaganda against drug abuse seeks to justify certain repressive policies by appeals to the alleged dangerousness of various drugs, the propagandist often must, in order to enlist significant support, falsify facts about the true pharmacological properties of the drugs they seek to prohibit". The exaggerated potential harms to the self and others underlie the justification to forcibly incarcerate individuals who use psychoactive substances, even for therapeutic purposes. In their examination of substance use in other cultures, Coomber & South (2004, p.15) further elucidate the extent of these fears in Western society, citing criminal prohibition as a massive and unjustified societal over-reaction to the altered states associated with psychoactive substances:

> Huge populations, often otherwise law-abiding citizens, have been criminalised for using one or another of an ever-widening range of substances, sometimes to a punative extreme that has few parallels. Prohibition in its varying manifestations is fundamentally based upon the fear of drugs, the fear of intoxicated states, the fear of the individual transformed into something less moral."

The passage identifies both the complex human relationship with altered realities, as well the resulting social stigma, oppression, and moral regulation that result from our current prohibition-based drug policies. Bassman (2001, p.27) suggests that the stigma and prejudice faced by those affected by mental health issues is only trumped by the addition of other undesirable human conditions, such as transmissible disease and problematic substance use:

> People with a "mental illness" label reside at the very bottom rung of our culture's pecking order. Beneath them are only "mental illness" combined with other discriminated-against subsets further defined by age, gender, minority race or ethnicity, outsider sexuality, addiction, and frightening communicable diseases (such as AIDS).

This is of direct relevance to better understanding the significant social stigma faced by both medical cannabis and mental health patients, particularly where the two overlap. Since some research has attempted to link cannabis use – including therapeutic use – with psychosis and schizophrenia (Frischer et al 2009; Zammit et al 2008), social fears of mental illness can further contribute to the stigma already affecting patients who chose to use medical cannabis. Conversely, patients affected by mental health conditions that may benefit from the use of cannabis, such as depression, bi-polar disorder and even schizophrenia (Schwarcz et al 2009) are even further stigmatized for chosing this medicine because of deeply ingrained social prejudices against both psychoactive substance use and addiction (Lucas 2009; Belle-Isle & Hathaway 2007).

The threat of incarceration and the rise of the C/S/X and medical cannabis movements

Mental illness and madness affect every segment of society, and those affected may have little in common other than their shared symptoms or conditions, and the threat of forced treatment and/or incarceration should their behaviour stray too far from normative expectations. This threatened loss of freedom has become a rallying point for the c/s/x movement. Bassman (2001, p.20) states that "for the psychiatric survivor as well as the consumer, the need for quality alternatives to forced treatment was a priority. No issue was more powerfully charged than *forced treatment*". Similarly, medical cannabis patients come from many different social demographics and have little in common other than their use of cannabis as a medicine. Yet in response to the federal government's prohibitionist drug policies and an ineffective federal programme that protects less than 5000 of the estimated one million Canadians currently using cannabis for medical purposes from arrest and prosecution (Lucas 2008; Belle-Isle & Hathaway 2007), medical cannabis patients have emerged as an effective and well-organized social group fighting for the right to use this medicine without the fear of stigma, arrest and incarceration. Young (1990, p.44) suggests that social groups often form without the benefit of common backgrounds or conscious intention, but rather as a result of ongoing structural oppression and a need to reclaim a sense of personal identity:

> A social group is defined not primarily by a set of shared attributes, but by a sense of identity....Sometimes a group comes to exist only because one group excludes and labels a category of persons, and those labelled come to understand themselves as group members only slowly, on the basis of their shared oppression...

In other words, the social stigma and prejudice that isolates and marginalizes certain individuals in our society is also the primary foundation for the creation of movements of resistance for those directly affected by this oppression. Good examples of this phenomenon from the 20th century include the feminist movement, the civil rights movement, and the gay rights movement, all of which can be defined as 'new social movements'. New social movement theory marks a deliberate departure from 20th century Marxist analyses of social movements based largely on economic class structures and the subsequent struggle to control resources and methods of production, focusing instead on other socio-cultural dynamics of collective action. As Buechler (1995, p. 442) notes, "new social movement theorists...have looked to other logics of action based in politics, ideology, and culture as the root of much collective action, and they have looked to

other sources of identity such as ethnicity, gender and sexuality as the definers of collective identity".

One of the most striking examples of marginalized groups organizing to assert their rights in direct response to oppressive social policies from recent times is the 2005 publication of "Nothing About Us Without Us; Greater Meaningful Involvement of People Who Use Illegal Drugs: A Public Health, Ethical and Human Rights Imperative" (Jurgens 2005), by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. As the title suggests, this document asserts the rights of marginalized individuals to be included in policy discussions that directly affect them:

> As an ethical principle, all people should have the right to be involved in decisions affecting their lives. This fundamental requirement for meaningful involvement is consistent with the commitment made by the Government of Canada in 2001 when it endorsed the UN General Assembly's *Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS*, which calls for the greater involvement of people living with HIV and of people from marginalized communities. Such a commitment is consistent with the United Nations "*International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS and Human Rights*", which urge states to involve representatives of vulnerable groups, such as people who use drugs, in consultations and in the planning and delivery of services. (Jurgens 2005, p.iii).

A direct response to decades of policy-making that excluded or ignored the views and opinions of those affected by problematic substance use and HIV/AIDS, this document served as a wake-up call to policy-makers, public health organizations and police agencies, and has been a great source of empowerment and inspiration for other oppressed or persecuted groups and individuals as well, including medical cannabis and mental health patients. Similarly, it is through shared stigma, oppression, and the omnipresent threat of incarceration that patient-centered organizations such as the anti-psychiatry Hearing Voices Network, the anorexia support group Pro-Ana, and community-based medical cannabis dispensaries like the Vancouver Island Compassion Society (or VICS) have emerged to challenge the judicial and bio-medical dominance of mental health and medical cannabis patients (Lucas 2009; Lucas 2008; Blackman 2007; Fox et al 2005). In fact, "Nothing About Us Without Us" informed a subsequent federally-funded report by the Canadian AIDS Society titled "Our Rights Our Choice; Cannabis as Therapy for People Living With HIV/AIDS" (Belle-Isle, 2006) that examined the difficulties that HIV/AIDS patients in Canada were experiencing in accessing medical cannabis. As Buechler (1995, p.443) states in reference to Castells's work on new social movements, "the emphasis on cultural identity, the recognition of nonclass-based constituencies, the theme of autonomous self-management, and the image of resistance to a systemic logic of commodification and bureaucratization all serve to illustrate dominant strains in new social movement theories", and it is clear that these same characteristics are at the core of activism in support of a greater voice

for both drug users and those suffering from HIV/AIDS. Thus, new social movements and associated counter-strategies to government and bio-medical oppression have emerged as a result of the unfortunate stigmatization of both drug users and people living with HIV/AIDS, and they continue to inform and to be informed by the movements seeking to increase the rights of medical cannabis patients and those affected by mental illness.

Reactance, helplessness, and Young's theory of 'new social movements'

Although there are some important similarities between the legal, social and political struggles of both the medical cannabis and c/s/x movements, there are also some notable differences in both the form of societal oppression directed at these disparate patient groups, as well as in the associated patient response to loss of freedom (please see Chart 1 below). In examining the impact of coerced treatment and forced incarceration, Monahan et al (1995, p.258) identify two psychological reactions to the loss of choice or freedom, the active and engaged state of "reactance", and the more passive and submissive state "helplessness". Characteristics of 'reactance' include "(1) anger toward the source of the restriction of freedom; (2) efforts to restore the threatened freedom; and (3) an increase in the attractiveness of the foreclosed option". Helplessness, on the other hand, "engenders not anger and attempts to restore lost freedoms, but depression, anxiety, and the cessation of any personal efforts to alleviate an aversive situation". These different reactions to oppression are reflected in the evolution of both the medical cannabis and mental health patient movements.

While the right to use medical cannabis in Canada is constitutionally protected, overly-restrictive federal guidelines have significantly limited the number of federally authorized patients (Lucas 2008). As a result, the overwhelming majority of medical cannabis patients in Canada are not protected from arrest and prosecution (Lucas 2008; Belle-Isle & Hathaway 2007). Although the threat of legal persecution is omnipresent, the large number of medical cannabis patients and limited police resources would suggest that most will not be arrested for using cannabis as a medicine, and are therefore unlikely to be incarcerated or forced into court-ordered drug treatment programs. Despite the low risk of legal prosecution (or perhaps because of it), patient-activists have successfully rallied public support for medical cannabis. Starting from an initial position of 'reactance', this patient-centered response to oppression and the legal threat of imprisonment has organized large-scale protests demanding changes to the federal government's medical cannabis policies and practice, initiated and funded successful constitutional challenges against current legislation, and founded alternative service delivery organizations such as community-based compassion clubs. First established in Vancouver in 1997, compassion clubs are the primary alternative to

the black-market for Canadian cannabis patients, supplying over 15,000 individuals with a safe source of cannabis, and becoming the main producers of peer-reviewed medical cannabis research in the nation, all at no cost to Canadian taxpayers (Lucas 2009; Lucas 2008; Belle-Isle & Hathaway 2007). I myself have been arrested and charged with three counts of trafficking in 2000 for my work as the founder and Executive Director of the Vancouver Island Compassion Society, a non-profit medical cannabis research, advocacy and supply organization. However, after nearly two years in court Provincial Judge Higinbotham granted me an absolute discharge, stating that

> Mr. Lucas has frankly acknowledged his legal culpability;
>
> He committed the offence not for profit, but in order to help other people in his situation or worse;
>
> He committed the offence with the knowledge, and tacit approval, of the police;
>
> He did not operate in competition with the Ministry of Health of the Government of Canada, but operated to fill a void created by the legal framework that existed prior to 2001 and the regulatory framework that has proved difficult to traverse;
>
> His actions were life enhancing, in that he helped to ameliorate the pain and suffering of many people who had no other viable therapy;
>
> He has been a helpful and conscientious contributor to the knowledge base surrounding the medical use of marijuana, and has been acknowledge as such by the former Minister of Health of the Government of Canada; He chose to commit the offence in a manner that provided accountability. (R. v. Philippe Lucas, 2002)

While this case fell short of actually legalizing community-based dispensaries, subsequent court challenges have further recognized the good work done by many of these compassion clubs and have forced Health Canada to alter particularly onerous or unjustifiable restrictions and bureaucratic obstacles (Lucas 2009; Lucas 2008; Belle-Isle and Hathaway 2007). In spite of active opposition from the federal government and occasional arrests by police, these social enterprises continue to offer medical cannabis patients help and support in an environment that's conducive to healing and self-empowerment throughout many Canadian cities, including Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, and Victoria.

Conversely, due to the longevity of many mental health conditions and the lack of effective community-based resources to address these issues, a large percentage of people affected by conditions like schizophrenia or bi-polar disorder are likely to lose their freedom through involuntary admission to psychiatric treatment facilities (Monahan et al 1995). While 'reactance' might seem like a natural patient response to forced treatment and/or incarceration, psychiatry often labels patients

exhibiting resistance to their diagnosis or course of treatment as "non-compliant", at times resulting in increased use of psychiatric drugs or tools such as insulin comas, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and extended hospitalizations. Wortman and Brehm (cited in Monahan et al 1995, p.258) suggest that "small amounts of experience with lack of control in the past (and therefore high expectations for being in control in the present) may produce reactance, whereas large amounts of experience with lack of control in the past (which may characterize repetitively hospitalized patients) lead to helplessness". In the following passage describing his initial introduction to psychiatric hospitalization, Bassman (2001, p.13) details this unconscious shift from the initial 'reactance' of a novel, noncompliant patient, to a submissive state of 'helplessness' in response to the sudden and total loss of choice and control stemming from forced treatment and incarceration:

> Foolishly, I continued to demand rights I believed I had, only to discover that I would pay dearly for my ignorance at playing the hospital game. My angry demand, "You can't do this to me," was met with increases of my medication and extended stays in the seclusion room. My anger, my resistance, my noncompliance were serious concerns to the staff. I was not responding quickly enough to my psychiatric cocktail mixes make up of large doses of Thorazine, Stelazine, and intimidation.

Bassman (2001, p.14) then describes how after many months of resistance and 'reactance', he "shuffled into the office, physically demonstrating the hospital's successful transformation of anger, fear, and defiance into apathetic compliance". It was only once he began to comply with the hospital routine that Bassman was deemed to be getting better by the psychiatric workers tending to his care, eventually leading to his release. As such, mental health patients often develop a strategy of 'helplessness' as a coping mechanism for psychiatric treatment settings, be they institutional or community-based. Monahan et al (1995, p.258) suggest that "when helplessness results from unsuccessful attempts to change a stressful environment, it can lead to "learned helplessness", by which experiences with one uncontrollable environment generalize to new environments in which control is actually possible". Therefore the challenge for mental health patients who experience multiple instances of forced treatment or incarceration is learning how to overcome and transcend this state of 'helplessness' so that it doesn't become a more fixed and permanent state of 'learned helplessness'. Bassman (2001, p.23) describes how previously disempowered patients have come together to develop the many strategies and services of the c/s/x movement:

> Within the c/s/x movement, the once frightened and beaten down, the voice hearers, the traumatized, the victims of tardive dyskenesia have banded together with their peers to advocate and lobby for rights, create self-help alternatives, share successful coping strategies, and inspire and instill hope through the personal examples of their lived lives. C/s/x activist speak of empowerment and liberation.

This suggests that the c/s/x movement arose as a counter-measure to the common state of 'helplessness' resulting from psychiatric treatment, particularly forced treatment and incarceration. By creating tools, strategies, and supportive spaces for their members, c/s/x organizations like the HVN and Pro-Ana empower individuals to resist the social stigma, institutional oppression, and forced incarceration. By reclaiming control over their mental health conditions and personal identity, patients can effectively move from a position of 'helplessness' into the more active and productive position of 'reactance', creating a viable and far more desirable alternative than an eventual devolution from 'helplessness' into the more permanent state of 'learned helplessness'.

Young's (1990, p.83) description of 'new social movements' makes an interesting and rather fitting lens from which to examine the overall goals and strategies of both c/s/x and medical cannabis organizations:

> Most focus on issues of oppression and domination; they usually seek democratization of institutions and practices, to bring them under more direct popular control. These insurgent campaigns and movements may be divided into three major categories: 1) those that challenged decision-making structures and the right of the powerful to exert their will; 2) those organizing autonomous services; and 3) movements of cultural identity.

C/s/x groups like the Hearing Voices Network (HVN) and Pro-Ana challenge the current bio-psycho-social explanation of mental illness as well as the efficacy of many of the associated bio-medical treatments (Blackman 2007; Fox et al 2005; Bassman 2001). Additionally, these two organizations provide peer-support for their respective patient groups, and serve as a safe space for people who self-identify as "voice-hearers" or anorectics to discuss their successes and challenges. Blackman's (2007, p.10) article on the HVN indicates that in contrast to a bio-medical approach that would encourage voice-hearers to dismiss, ignore or rid themselves of their "voices" through the use of psychiatric drugs or other techniques, "the HVN encourage the voice-hearer to accept and focus on the voices. This may include writing them down, recounting them within the context of the self-help group, repeating them aloud and so forth". The HVN's rejection of bio-medical orthodoxy, and the development of alternative interpretations, treatment modalities, and social services to address their condition mark this as an effective 'new social movement' for voice-hearers, and a good example of how *frame transformation* can benefit the members of traditionally stigmatized groups. Tarrow (1992; p. 188) suggests that for frame transformation to take place, "new values may have to be planted and nurtured, old meanings and understandings jettisoned, and erroneous beliefs or 'misframings' reframed". This has certainly been the active goal (and occasional outcome) for HVN, as well as for novel c/s/x organizations like Pro-Ana, an internet-based community of people suffering from anorexia who believe and explain how this condition can be safely continued *ad infinitum* through severe dietary restrictions, discipline, and careful self-

monitoring. In an article on Pro-Ana, Fox et al (2005, p.967) conclude that while this group is not focused on a cure for anorexia from a bio-medical standpoint, it appears to be helping many anorectics to cope with their condition within a supportive environment free of social stigma. They state that:

> From an ethnographic exploration, we have disclosed an internally-coherent model of causation, process and management of the condition, and shown how this emerges from the experiences of pro ana. What from the outside appears a bizarre and pernicious sect, can be understood as a reasoned world-view. Pro-anorexia is not a diet, nor is it a lifestyle choice. It is a way of coping and a damage limitation that rejects recovery as a simplistic solution to a symptom that leaves the underlying pain and hurt unresolved.

Although the Fox et al (2005) concede that Pro-Ana is considered a radical social movement by many health professionals, the use of the internet and online technologies makes this is a very good example of a modern 'new social movement'. By creating a safe public (online) space for anorectics to meet and share their experiences, health and safety tips, and coping mechanisms, Pro-Ana has been successful in reducing the potential harms of anorexia without forcing bio-medical interpretations or treatments upon those experiencing this challenging condition. Compassion clubs also fit into all three of Young's categories for 'new social movements': they challenged the decision-making structure of the federal government in regards to the production and distribution of medical cannabis, and promote individual and community-based empowerment; they are an "autonomous" alternative means of medical cannabis access based on principles of harm reduction and "benefit maximization" (Lucas 2009; Tupper 2007); and they have allowed medical cannabis users to regain a cultural identity free of social stigma and the resulting self-imposed isolation. However, I suggest that the focus on patient-centered research characteristic to both c/s/x organizations and the medical cannabis movement reflects a need to introduce a fourth category to Young's definition of 'new social movements': the creation and adoption of new knowledge. One of the primary strategies of the c/s/x movement is to challenge what Becker (1967) calls the "hierarchy of credibility", a theory that identifies society's penchant to grant a higher level of credibility to professionalized individuals than 'laymen'. In regards to both the c/s/x and medical cannabis movements, this theory suggests that the opinions of physicians are often granted greater credibility than that of patients. In an article examining the ethics of drug prohibition, Thomas Szasz (1971, p. 542) states:

> As formerly the Church regulated man's relations to God, so Medicine now regulates his relations to his body. Deviations from the rules set forth by the Church was then considered heresy and was punished by appropriate theological sanctions...deviation from the rules set forth by Medicine is now considered drug abuse (or some sort of "mental illness") and is punished by the appropriate medical sanctions, called treatment.

Szasz recognizes the overlap between mental illness and addiction in Western medicine, and the bio-medical dominance that forms society's understanding and associated policy responses to both of these conditions. The c/s/x movement has faced significant challenges in legitimizing patient voices and experiences as a result of the entrenched bio-medical discourse within professional psychiatry and the social stigma associated with mental health issues. Wilson and Beresford (2002, p.144-145) note that:

> the attempt of psychiatric system survivors and our organizations to articulate our own understandings of our experiences comes up against the overarching dominance of medicalized definitions and explanations of 'mental illness', or the analyses and interpretations of non-survivor 'experts' and academics".

The authors conclude that "the challenge we now face as mental health service user/survivors is to make it possible for our own critiques and discussions to develop and counter the dominance of existing medicalized and ritualized individual discourses" (2002, p. 156). Despite this struggle for relevance and legitimacy, c/s/x organizations such as the Hearing Voices Network and Pro-Ana have had a significant impact on how both medical professionals and those affected by these mental health problems understand their conditions. This has been accomplished in part by engaging affected patients in the creation of new knowledge and interpretations about their condition, resulting in the development of novel adaptive strategies or treatment approaches (Blackman 2007; Fox et al 2005; Bassman 2001).

The ability to create knowledge, strategies and services to increase autonomy and self-management in both of these movements is referred by Touraine as "historicity", which Buechler (1995, p. 444) describes as "the growing capacity of social actors to construct both a system of knowledge and the technical tools that allow them to intervene in their own functioning." Touraine's analysis of new social movements co-opts the language of contemporary capitalist bureaucracies to modernize Marxist interpretations of social struggle, identifying culture rather than resources and/or methods of production as the source of power, dominance, and oppression:

> In postindustrial society, the major social classes consist of consumer/clients in the role of the popular class and managers/technocrats in the role of the dominant class. The principle filed of conflict for these classes is culture, and the central contest involves who will control society's growing capacity for self-management. (Buechler 1995, p.444)

Holland (2007, p.906) identifies this trend within the c/s/x movement, suggesting that "the service user/survivor movement is particularly concerned with the ownership of knowledge and the link between knowledge and social action". Although much of the this work and research has been outside of the traditional peer-reviewed scientific model, mental health patient/professionals such as Ron

Bassman, Anne Wilson, Peter Beresford and Rachel E. Perkins have had success in challenging the bio-medical status quo from within. However, due to the social stigma associated with altered states and the illegal nature of most medical cannabis use, there has been a greater reluctance for healthcare professionals to "out" themselves as medical cannabis patients than there has been for the same to self-identify as recipients of psychiatric services. This may be one explanation for the rapid and widespread evolution of significant patient-centered strategies and services to counter the legal restrictions on medical cannabis use, perhaps best exemplified by community-based compassion clubs.

Cognitive liberty and the right to access or refuse treatment

Both of these patient-centered movements have empowered individuals to assume certain control over their condition and treatment options, and have successfully defended the right of patients to make fundamental decisions about their health in courts of law (Lucas 2008; Wildman 2006). Additionally, they have had some limited success in addressing social stigma by reframing medical cannabis use and mental illness away from exaggerated but omnipresent public fears over the loss of control over thoughts and behaviour associated with altered states of consciousness, and towards arguments focused on personal rights and freedoms. Using arguments informed by the modern Western philosophical concept of individual liberalism, which Harrist & Richardson (2006; p.9) define as counterbalancing "self-interest with an ethical view of human agents as having inherent value, dignity, and rights", some social scientists and civil libertarian groups have focused their arguments on cognitive liberty and freedom of thought to defend both the right to refuse treatment by those suffering from mental illness, and the right to access treatment without fear of arrest by medical cannabis patients. Cognitive liberty is described by the U.S.-based Center for Cognitive Liberty and Ethics (CCLE) as "the right of each individual to think independently and autonomously, to use the full spectrum of his or her mind, and to engage in multiple modes of thought" (CCLE 2009). It is relevant to note that the CCLE has focused much of its legal defence work writing arguments supporting the cognitive liberty and freedom of thought of mental health and medical cannabis patients. Interestingly, while both liberal individualism and cognitive liberty recognize, defend and celebrate individual uniqueness and personal autonomy, these concepts have been co-opted and adapted by medical cannabis and mental health advocacy groups to successfully defend the collective right of their members to make fundamental decisions about their individual health and well-being.

In her article examining the rights and ability of mental health sufferers to make decisions about their treatment options (including refusal), Wildeman (2006, p.237) cites the *MacArthur Treatment Competence Study* which concluded that

"most patients hospitalized with serious mental illness have abilities similar to persons without mental illness for making treatment decisions", adding that "the justification for a blanket denial of the right to consent to or refuse treatment for persona hospitalized because of mental illness cannot be based on the assumption that they uniformly lack decision-making capacity". These findings contradict the popular notion that those suffering from mental illness have no capacity to make decisions for themselves, and form a viable legal and ethical defence for patients to refuse treatment as long as they are not endangering themselves or others. In an amicus brief submitted on behalf of the CCLE in the case of Dr. Sell v. United States of America, Boire (n.d., p.12.) argues specifically for the right to refuse forced treatment with mind-altering pharmaceuticals. The brief states that "...given that alteration of thinking is both the design and effect of antipsychotic drugs, permitting the government to *force* a citizen to take such drugs ... cannot be squared with the supremely fundamental nature of the right to freedom of thought...", later adding that "...the right of a person to liberty, autonomy and privacy over his or her own thought processes is situated at the core of what it means to be a free person. It is essential to the most elementary concepts of human freedom, dignity, and self expression..." (Boire n.d., p.30). As such, it has been successfully argued in a number of Canadian and U.S. courts that forced incarceration and/or coerced psychiatric treatment are fundamental violations of both personal freedom and cognitive liberty (Wildman, 2006).

The CCLE have made similar legal/ethical arguments in favour of legalizing access to medical cannabis. In a legislative report by the CCLE specific to medical cannabis and cognitive liberty, Richard Glen Boire (2003, p.5) argues that:

> the government clearly has an interest in regulating the *behavior* of a person who presents a clear and present danger to others. But, the government has no legitimate interest, and no authority to limit the *range and types of consciousness* that a citizen is permitted to experience within his or her own mind".

These sound philosophical and legal arguments underpin the fundamental right to experience altered states of mind by reframing freedom of thought as a personal rights issue informed by liberal individualism.

It is notable that laws and policies that overly restrict or prohibit access to cannabis and/or criminalize patients have been repeatedly overturned in both Canada and U.S. courts for violating the right of individuals to make fundamental decisions about their health (Lucas 2008). This suggests that cognitive liberty and freedom of thought are core principles around which mental health and medical cannabis patients might strategize and potentially cooperate in order to achieve emancipation from bio-medical dominance and state-sanctioned oppression.

Conclusion

Mental health and medical cannabis new social movements help identify ineffective or abusive health policies and treatment strategies, and increase our understanding of chronic physical and mental health conditions. Additionally, by maintaining a safe space for their members to share personal experiences, create new knowledge, and organize counter-strategies to challenge their perceived oppression by the government and by medical and scientific authorities, these patient-centered movements and associated organizations inevitably catalyze a significant frame transformation around these important social and personal health issues, which may in turn reduce stigma, increase public awareness and acceptance, and thus lead to better overall personal and public health outcomes.

These new social movements are both political and cultural in nature. They are political in that they directly challenge government laws and social policies that threaten the well-being and ultimately the physical freedom of their members, and they are cultural in that they view knowledge creation as a an integral component of de-stigmatization, self-empowerment and increased autonomy. Evidence suggests that by regaining a sense of control over their conditions and treatment options, patients are much more likely to successfully adapt to the physical, mental, and social challenges they face, including social stigma and resistance from the medical community. Taylor et al (cited in Monahan et al 1995, p.256) found that "with few exceptions, the literature identifies self-generated feelings of personal control as adaptive." Monahan et al (1995, p.256) add that "cardiac, cancer, and AIDS patients who believe that they have some control over aspects of their illnesses, such as symptoms, course, and treatment, adjust to those illnesses better than patients who believe that they are helpless". Evidence suggests that c/s/x organizations like HVN, Pro-Ana empower individuals to regain control over their mental health challenges and associated treatment options, moving patients from a passive state of 'helplessness' towards a more active place of 'reactance'. Similarly, community-based medical cannabis dispensaries like the VICS allow patients much greater autonomy over their critical or chronic illnesses.

However, research also suggests that there still remains much work to be done to further address the public misconceptions associated with both mental illness and the use of psychoactive substances, even for medical purposes. Perhaps by working together to identify similar challenges, share successful strategies, and jointly promote the principles of cognitive liberty and liberal individualism, the mental health and medical cannabis new social movements will experience greater success in reducing the stigma and oppression associated with altered states of mind, and in defending freedom of thought, which ultimately is the most basic, common and fundamental individual right of humankind.

Chart 1: The following chart identifies additional differences in regards to incarceration of mental health and medical cannabis patients.

Psychiatric Hospitalization	Incarceration in Prison
Hospital-based setting	Prison-based setting
Incarceration is sometimes voluntary	Incarceration is never voluntary
Incarceration can lead to stabilization and increased treatment (for better or worse)	Incarceration inevitably leads to deprivation of medical cannabis treatment
Has been cited as having positive outcomes for some (Monahan et al 1995)	Is always negative, leading to poor personal health outcomes.
Quite frequent for some individuals	Very rare

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Crisis, movements, counter-hegemony:

in search of the new[1]

William K Carroll

Abstract

This article argues that humanity's prospects in the 21st century hinge on the creation of a counter-hegemonic historical bloc within which practices and social visions capable of fashioning a post-capitalist economic democracy begin to flourish. The organic crisis of neoliberal capitalism creates openings for such a breakthrough; the deepening ecological crisis renders such a breakthrough an urgent necessity. The analytical challenge pursued here is to discern, in the contemporary conjuncture, elements of practice that might weld the present to an alternative future. How can new movement practices and sensibilities can be pulled into a historical bloc — an ensemble of social relations and human agency for democratic socialism; how might that bloc move on the terrain of civil society, and vis-à-vis states, opening spaces for practices that prefigure a post-capitalist world? These questions are too big for a single paper; the objective here is to show how a Gramscian problematic furnishes us with an analytical and strategic lens that can illuminate practical answers.

Introduction

Since the global financial meltdown of 2008 and the failure of the 2009 Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change (COP15) to reach a meaningful accord, it has become increasingly clear that a profound economic and ecological crisis is facing humanity. Crisis, as the ancient Chinese proverb says, presents a combination of threat and opportunity. It is a time of danger yet also of new possibilities, as received wisdoms and unreflective practices become open to challenge. The question for activists is how to mitigate the danger while seizing

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[1] This article has benefited enormously from critical comments by Laurence Cox and Peter Waterman, who bear no responsibility for any remaining weaknesses.

upon the openings. This is a matter both of ends – of articulating an alternative in which human beings and ecosystems might thrive – and of identifying practical means to those ends. Amid the crisis, we hope to find, within the present, elements of a more hopeful future, and to forge alliances that can leverage neoliberal capitalism's failure into a different kind of world.

This paper brings a Gramscian problematic to these efforts. It draws upon recent activist and academic insights regarding crisis, movements and counter-hegemony, in order to discern criteria for making choices in current struggles – choices capable of effectively challenging power relations and bringing about not simply a different, but a better future.

At the outset, a word of clarification is needed. I will be employing 'counter-hegemony' in the neo-Gramscian sense, referring to broad transformative strategies and practices for replacing the rule of capital with a democratic socialist way of life. This project is distinct from two rival approaches on the left, namely social-democratic electoralism and anarchistic anti-hegemony. Viewed from a Gramscian vantage point, the former relies too heavily on the liberal democratic state as an instrument of change, and underplays the importance of struggles within civil society and vis-à-vis the means of production (Pontusson 1980). The latter (as in Day 2006, 2007) retreats from creative engagement with state-centred politics altogether, substituting a lifestyle politics of 'living differently' (Carroll 2006; McKay 2009). The objective here is not to debate these different visions and strategies for the left, but to demonstrate the value of neo-Gramscian thinking for activists and movements in the early 21st century.

In search of the new

In the most general terms and at the highest level of abstraction, the question of counter-hegemony evokes the dialectic of bringing the new into existence, against the sedimented practices and relations that, as Marx (1852) wrote, weigh 'like a nightmare on the brains of the living.' Yet it is from existing practices and relations that the new is fabricated, which is to say that the future is already contained as potential within the present. 'Fermenting in the process of the real itself' is what Ernst Bloch called 'the concrete forward dream: anticipating elements are a component of reality itself' (1986:197).

Counter-hegemony, as distinct from defensive forms of subaltern resistance, strives to shape those 'anticipating elements', so that they may become lasting features of social life. For counter-hegemony, the challenge is to seek out in the present the preconditions for a post-capitalist future and to develop political strategy based on

an analysis of those immanent possibilities (Ollman 2003). Gramsci captured this dialectic with the metaphor of welding the present to the future:

> How can the present be welded to the future, so that while satisfying the urgent necessities of the one we may work effectively to create and 'anticipate' the other (1977: 65)?

The new is no mere 'fashion', the latter being a preferred trope of modernity (Blumer 1969), closely integrated with consumer-capitalist accumulation strategies, and thus with reproducing the status quo. Often the new reworks the old, with radical effects. Viewed dialectically, the new preserves yet transforms extant reality, as in the incorporation of indigenous ways as alternatives to neoliberal practices that have grown decidedly old (cf. Bahn 2009).

This dialectic between what already exists and what might be constructed out of that is integral to any project of purposeful socio-political change. Movements, as Melucci (1989) has emphasized, are laboratories for social invention. They are carriers of the 'new means and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships' that Williams (1977: 123) identified with cultural emergence; 'emergent publics' that create possibilities for a more democratic way of life (Angus 2001). Movements succeed in creating change when political and cultural opportunity structures open up (Tarrow 1998). But which movements, which practices and which alignments of movements and practices, in short which 'new combinations' (Dyer-Witheford 2001) might already carry the new — and under what contemporary conditions might they have efficacy? These are more concrete questions of counter-hegemony. Theorists of agency and structure note that, although social structures are sustained solely through the practices that reproduce them, such practices, precisely because they are structurally reproductive, do not produce much that is new; only transformative practices have that capacity (Bhaskar 1989; Fraser 1995). Indeed, a well-established hegemonic structure naturalizes social cleavages and contradictions, securing the active, agentic consent of subalterns to their subordination (De Leon, Desai and Tuğal 2009: 216; Joseph 2002).

Organic crisis

Gramsci, following Marx and anticipating Bourdieu, recognized crisis as a necessary condition for undoing the doxa that is perhaps the most salient feature of well-entrenched hegemony. In Gramsci's formulation, *organic crisis* is a crucial element in creating the new. In this kind of crisis, the structures and practices that constitute and reproduce a hegemonic order fall into chronic and visible disrepair,

creating a new terrain of political and cultural contention, and the possibility (but only the possibility) of social transformation. Such a situation entails a crisis of authority:

> If the ruling class has lost its consensus, i.e., is no longer 'leading' but only 'dominant', exercising coercive force alone, this means precisely that the great masses have become detached from their traditional ideologies.... The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear (1971: 275-6).

Gramsci asks whether the interregnum will 'be resolved in favour of a restoration of the old' (276), as in an elite-engineered passive revolution that reconstitutes social relations within new forms of a continuing capitalist order (Morton 2007: 150-1). For him, the key instance was the *Risorgimento* that brought to Italy a deeply problematic political unification, over the heads of the masses. In our time, neoliberalism played a similar role in the crisis of Fordism and the welfare state which by the late 1970s registered in falling rates of profit and rising state deficits. What was 'new' in neoliberalism – a vision reaching back to the late 18th century liberal utopia of perfect competition overseen by a night watchman state – was, historically speaking, archaic. The market-centred practices of neoliberalism did not create the rational, self-equilibrating social order celebrated by neoclassical economics. Capitalism's tendencies toward uneven development – temporally, sectorally, spatially – and toward polarized incomes were exacerbated by deregulation. In the 1980s, neoliberal austerity succeeded in boosting rates of profit, but by the mid-1990s it was only through financialization and other forms of accumulation by dispossession that high profits demanded by shareholder capitalism could be sustained. Yet these very measures set the table for global crisis.

Parameters of hegemony

This article is mainly about movements from below and counter-hegemony, but these are internally related to movements from above, and hegemony. To view structure as the contingent sedimentation of past practice implies that movements move not in relation to some permanent fixture, as in a reified conception of the state, but in relation to each other (Magnusson 1997). 'Social movements emanate from and are grounded in the collective skilled activity of both dominant and subaltern groups' (Nilsen 2009: 115). A movement from above strives to maintain or modify a dominant structure in ways that reproduce and/or extend the power of dominant groups and their hegemonic position within the social formation (ibid

115), and in this sense, neoliberalism has been as much movement as policy paradigm. Across three and a half decades, the neoliberal movement has been expertly assembled and led by organic intellectuals that include in their ranks politicians, academics, journalists and business leaders, through densely networked movement organizations both global (e.g., the Mont Pelerin Society, the World Economic Forum) and local (e.g., the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies; cf Carroll and Shaw 2001; Carroll 2007; Carroll and Sapinski 2010). This is what Stephen Gill (1995) means when he refers to neoliberalism's transnational historical bloc.

Elsewhere (Carroll 2006), I have specified some parameters of hegemony that are central to early 21st century capitalism. At a deep level of the social formation, and most saliently in the global North, these include

- *postmodern fragmentation*: the commodification of everyday life fragments collective identities and inculcates a de-politicizing fascination with style and spectacle;

- *the neoliberalization of political-economic relations*: deregulation of markets insulates a protected economic realm from popular will while accumulation by dispossession privatizes the public interest and promotes possessive individualism;

- *capitalist globalization*: the densification of transnational economic relations augments the structural power of capital (Gill and Law 1989) and promotes a project of global governance within a neoliberal framework.

John Agnew has identified a parameter of hegemony in this era that includes elements of the first and last of these, namely *the globalization of Americanism* as a way of life. In Agnew's formulation (which is inspired by Gramsci's essay on Americanism and Fordism), the hegemony of marketplace society, achieved within the United States in the first two thirds of the 20th century, has been projected into the world at large setting the political basis for a globalization that has had two salient aspects (2005: 100).

> On the one hand, US-based institutions have had the power to enact globally a dominant vision of 'the good society.' On the other hand, this vision has been one of ever-increasing mass consumption. The hegemony of marketplace society is therefore what lies at the center of contemporary world society (2005: 8).

As a parameter of hegemony, globalization of Americanism is distinct from notions of American hegemony that centre upon the imperial American state. It is the American way of life, not the fading lustre of American state power, that gained global hegemony in the late 20th century.

The current crisis

Although these economic, political and cultural forms have provided a basis for an emergent, transnational hegemony in the post-Cold War era, the hegemony on offer has been a troubled one -- fragile and tentative, thin on the ground as it were, in great part because the neoliberal historical bloc is far less inclusive than its Fordist-Keynesian predecessor (Cox 1987). We can understand the current organic crisis as a cumulative decline in the capacity of hegemonic forms to promote accumulation and secure popular consent. In the case of American hegemony, ever-increasing mass consumption on a global scale requires Americanism's epicentre to borrow funds and import vast quantities of goods to fuel domestic spending, in a pattern of asymmetrical accumulation that is probably unsustainable (Agnew 2005: 192-218). In economic terms, as David McNally (2009) has shown, neoliberalism's crisis was already evident in the Asian financial meltdown of 1997. The ensuing decade inflated a bubble economy that burst in the autumn of 2008, putting deregulatory logic into question and also questioning basic premises of Americanism, as endlessly expanding, credit-driven consumption came unstuck in global capitalism's heartland. But this organic crisis has involved more than economic failings and associated crisis management strategies such as the corporate bail-outs and stimulus spending packages of 2008-2010. Integral to it have been the challenges from below, from the Zapatistas' declaration of war against neoliberalism in 1994 through the 1999 Battle of Seattle and the various incarnations of Social Forums to recent general strikes in southern Europe in resistance to the new wave of austerity – in each instance, a critical, collective response to the privations and indignities that are neoliberalism's legacy. Such campaigns and 'wars of position' challenge the hegemony of neoliberal globalization, but they also work against the ideological effects of the commodification of everyday life, gesturing however incompletely to another possible world.

Crucially, the economic crisis of neoliberal globalization has been accompanied and amplified by a deepening ecological crisis. In the 20th century, capitalism 'scaled up' from a network of local economies centred in a few regions of the global north (articulated via colonialism with precapitalist modes of production on the periphery) to a system of transnational production and consumption in which most of the world's burgeoning population is ensnared. So did the ecological externalities of accumulation, so that by the late 20th century capitalism's footprint, evident in species extinction, the thinning of the ozone layer, and global warming, was outgrowing the biosphere. What James O'Connor (1990) has called the second contradiction of capitalism sharpened, as capitalist appropriation of nature cumulatively eroded capital's own conditions for expanded reproduction (cf Kovel

2006). The economic and ecological moments of crisis are interconnected, but they do not follow a unitary logic. As John Foster (2010) reminds us, in contrast to ecological crisis, economic crises are of their nature cyclical. Short of an exit from capitalism, economic crises eventually resolve themselves, on the backs of workers and other subordinates, as conditions for robust accumulation are re-established or invented; a case in point being neoliberalism's own success in disassembling many of the impediments to accumulation that Fordist regulation and the Keynesian welfare state eventually presented. The deepening ecological crisis, on the other hand, has no bottom, in the sense of an anticipated 'recovery'. Without timely and radical intervention, ecological overshoot portends only a downward spiral, giving new meaning to the choice Rosa Luxemburg posed between humanity's exit from capitalism and its likely descent into barbarism (Angus 2010). The global character of ecological crisis, and the growing consciousness of that global character, add a new element to the organic crisis, and to the project of counter-hegemony.

Indeed, the organic crisis of our time needs to be understood as an assemblage of economic, ecological, and socio-political moments. It has both a political-economic face and a political-ecological one. But it is the ecological race against time that makes this crisis unprecedented in its challenges and in the morbidity of its symptoms.

Counter-hegemony in theory

Against this backdrop of organic crisis, I want to consider the *political challenge for counter-hegemony,* first in a rather formulaic manner, then more concretely. Let us begin with Gramsci's own formulation of how power works, which recognizes that within advanced capitalism the combination of force and persuasion that comprises hegemonic rule entails a panoply of relations both within the state and throughout civil society that serve to organize subaltern consent. Consent is never total or seamless. Subalternity typically involves episodic, fragmented resistance and a contradictory consciousness whose common sense includes elements of 'good sense', and of the new. However, the lack of coherence among various oppressed and subordinated groups enables bourgeois ideology to dominate (Ives 2004: 24). From this general diagnosis of subalternity, which I believe is fully relevant today, Gramsci envisages the constitution of a collective will encompassing a wide range of identities and democratic aspirations, posing an alternative social vision, a socialist way of life – what we now call counter-hegemony. A cultural-material formation of this sort is comprised of several facets:

- The coming-into-being of a collective will requires a process of *catharsis* in which 'structure ceases to be an external force which crushes man, assimilates him to itself and makes him passive; and is transformed into a

means of freedom, an instrument to create a new ethico-political form and a source of new initiatives' (Gramsci 1971: 367). This remarkable passage describes the transition from an economic-corporate phase in which subordinates define their interests narrowly and in immediately instrumental terms, to an ethico-political project that can bring formerly disparate identities onto common ground. As Ives (2004: 107) and Sousa Santos (2006) have argued, this involves the work of translation across various cultural domains and contexts, involving organic intellectuals — activists, organizers, 'permanent persuaders' (Gramsci 1971: 10) whose practice is rooted in subordinate experiences and resistances.[2]

- Importantly, a counter-hegemonic formation includes both *class forces* directly articulated with the process of accumulation and *popular-democratic currents* -- movements and identities that arise through practices centred in civil society (Urry 1981).[3] Without the former, and in particular, broad elements of the working class, a radical challenge to capitalism is strategically unsustainable; without the latter, the collective will fails to encompass the diversity of needs and aspirations that partially constitute Bloch's 'concrete forward dream'. The welding together of disparate class and popular-democratic interests is not a mechanical assemblage of convenience; rather, 'the process of coming together to form a specifically *hegemonic* force involves each group being partly transformed', as it takes on elements of the identity and agenda of other groups and comes to adopt the interest of others as its own (Purcell 2009: 296-7). The famous slogan from Seattle 1999, 'Teamsters and turtles, united at last!' exemplifies this reciprocal process in forming a counter-hegemonic collective will.

- *war of position/war of manoeuvre*: in capitalist societies, civil society comprises a strategically important 'arena in which capitalist hegemony is secured but also where subaltern classes forge alliances and articulate alternative hegemonic projects' (Munck 2006: 330). Through a war of position, which does not exclude struggles directed at the state (Simon

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[2] To construct a general will, to raise consciousness and transform ideas into a material force, 'movements must continuously form new organic intellectuals' (Karriem 2009: 318); hence the process of translation is not top-down but an active and reciprocal 'educative relationship' (Gramsci 1971: 350).

[3] Here I am using 'civil society' in the contemporary sense of that which is neither state nor economy. Gramsci's use of the term is complex, in some contexts contrasting state with a civil society that includes economic relations; in other contexts contrasting capitalist economic relations with an 'integral state' ('State = political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion' (Gramsci 1971: 263)). See Anderson's (1976) classic discussion, for a critical take.

1982: 75), the balance of power in civil society can be shifted and space won for radical alternatives, unifying dissenting groups into a system of alliances capable of contesting bourgeois hegemony. This prepares subordinate groups for self-governance by creating post-capitalist sensibilities and values, practical democratic capacities, and a belief in the possibility of a radically transformed future (Carroll and Ratner 2010). As Staggenborg and Lecomte (2009) found recently, within particular social movements wars of position and of manoeuvre can be mutually reinforcing processes: in the Montreal women's movement community, winning space for an alternative community has created capacity for successful collective campaigns, and vice versa.

- The *national and the inter/transnational.* For Gramsci (1971: 240), writing in the 1930s, 'the line of development is towards internationalism, but the point of departure is "national".' Since mid-20th century, capitalist globalization has created more extensive bases for both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic movements to contend within a global civil society that is itself constantly constructed as contested terrain by diverse social groupings (Munck 2006: 330; Carroll 2007). Nevertheless, one should not impute a 'singularly transnational logic' to contemporary struggles for hegemony; national, regional and local dynamics continue to shape the conduct of these struggles (Morton 2007: 199).

- Welding the present to the future. *Prefiguration* was central to Gramsci's conception of counter-hegemonic politics.[4] For Gramsci, inspired by the factory councils' movement to democratize workplaces, prefiguration 'meant that politics would be integrated into the everyday social existence of people struggling to change the world, so that the elitism, authoritarianism, and impersonal style typical of bureaucracy could be more effectively combated' (Boggs, 1976: 100). Indeed, a war of position includes a process of moral and intellectual reform that not only renovates common sense into good sense, but incrementally erodes the distinctions between leaders and led, creating the basis for participatory democracy in a widening sphere of activities (Simon 1982).

- Catharsis, prefiguration, and the articulation of class and popular-democratic forces, of the national and the international, and of wars of position and manoeuvre, add up to the construction of a *historical bloc*, around a counter-hegemonic project. Such a bloc combines leadership in

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[4] Basing himself on Marx's 6th Thesis on Feuerbach, that human 'essence' is the *ensemble* of human relations, he identified political activity with the dialectical production of new relations and new subjects: 'to transform the external world, the general system of relations, is to potentiate oneself and to develop oneself' (1971: 360).

civil society with 'leadership in the sphere of production' (Simon, 1982: 86). Its development expresses movement from subalternity to a counter-hegemonic collective will.

This schematic account gives us a normative-strategic template for considering emergent themes and practices in movement politics and their implication for counter-hegemony today. How might contemporary developments in counter-hegemony yield insights on welding present to future in our times? In the space at hand, I will telegraph seven interrelated themes that stand out in recent work by movement theorists, intellectual historicans and social researchers. In reflecting on these themes we can gain perspective on how new sensibilities and practices — often reworked from old sensibilities and practices — provide *resources of hope* (Williams 1989) for counter-hegemonic politics, and 21st century socialism.

Counter-hegemony in practice: what's new?

Increased transnationality

Just as hegemony has been increasingly organized on a transnational basis — through the globalization of Americanism, the construction of global governance institutions, the emergence of a transnational capitalist class and so on (Soederberg 2006; Carroll 2010) — counter-hegemony has also taken on transnational features that go beyond the classic organization of left parties into internationals. What Sousa Santos (2006) terms the rise of a global left is evident in specific movement-based campaigns, such as the successful international effort in 1998 to defeat the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI); in initiatives such as the World Social Forum, to contest the terrain of global civil society; and in the growth of transnational movement organizations and of a 'democratic globalization network', counterpoised to neoliberalism's transnational historical bloc, that address issues of North-South solidarity and coordination (Smith 2008:24).

As I have suggested elsewhere (Carroll 2007), an incipient war of position is at work here — a bloc of oppositional forces to neoliberal globalization encompassing a wide range of movements and identities and that is 'global in nature, transcending traditional national boundaries' (Butko 2006: 101). These moments of resistance and transborder activism do not yet combine to form a coherent historical bloc around a counter-hegemonic project. Rather, as Marie-Josée Massicotte suggests, 'we are witnessing the emergence and re-making of political imaginaries..., which often lead to valuable localized actions as well as greater transborder solidarity' (2009: 424). Indeed, Gramsci's adage that while the line of development is international, the origin point is national, still has currency. Much of the energy of anti-capitalist politics is centred within what Raymond Williams

(1989) called militant particularisms – localized struggles that, 'left to themselves ... are easily dominated by the power of capital to coordinate accumulation across universal but fragmented space' (Harvey 1996: 32).   Catharsis, in this context, takes on a spatial character. The scaling up of militant particularisms requires 'alliances across interrelated scales to unite a diverse range of social groupings and thereby spatialize a Gramscian war of position to the global scale' (Karriem 2009: 324).

Such alliances, however, must be grounded in local conditions and aspirations. Eli Friedman's (2009) case study of two affiliated movement organizations in Hong Kong and mainland China, respectively, illustrates the limits of transnational activism that radiates from advanced capitalism to exert external pressure on behalf of subalterns in the global South. Friedman recounts how a campaign by the Hong Kong-based group of Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior to empower Chinese mainland workers producing goods for Hong Kong Disneyland failed due to the lack of local mobilization by workers themselves. Yet the same group, through its support for its ally, the mainland-based migrant workers' association, has helped facilitate self-organization on the shop floor. In the former case, well-intentioned practices of solidarity reproduced a paternalism that failed to inspire local collective action; in the latter, workers taking direct action on their own behalf, with external support, led to 'psychological empowerment' and movement mobilization (Friedman 2009: 212). As a rule, 'the more such solidarity work involves grassroots initiatives and participation, the greater is the likelihood that workers from different countries will learn from each other', enabling transnational counter-hegemony to gain a foothold (Rahmon and Langford 2010: 63).

The political ecology of counter-hegemony

In a context of biospheric crisis, the recent turn to Gramsci in political ecology has great pertinence to our analysis (Mann 2009; Kebede 2005). As a 'new front' in the analysis of hegemony and counter-hegemony, Gramscian political ecology understands the production of nature as a co-evolution of humans and their environments pointing to 'the conditions of possibility for radical change that might emerge through interactions with nature' (Ekers et al 2009: 288). From this perspective, bourgeois hegemony is achieved though the reification of particular spaces and natures (Wainwright 2005), as in the common sense of a consumerism founded upon industrialized agriculture, automobility and suburban sprawl, and north-south relations that displace ecological costs onto the periphery (Rice 2007). The turn to Gramsci enables us to see the environment as 'a socio-natural entity ... a particular terrain over which hegemony is consolidated and contested' (Ekers et al 2009: 289). In an era of deepening ecological crisis and of rising consciousness

of that crisis, social groups aspiring to hegemony must demonstrate their ability 'to pose solutions to a variety of issues related to nature and the environment' (Ekers et al 2009: 289).

This insight reconfigures the meaning of counter-hegemony around a vision of eco-socialism. To forge an alternative hegemony, counter-hegemonic movements must go beyond resisting the capitalist growth machine, *into prefiguration*: 'they have to develop alternative forms of production and reproduction or alternative conceptions of nature-society relations' (Karriem 2009: 318). Abdurazack Karriem's study of the Brazilian landless movement (MST) gives us a case in point. The war of position that MST has waged through a combination of land occupations and popular education has not only moved from local sites to transnational arenas; it has had a strong prefigurative thrust. Besides the ethico-political claim that food and food sovereignty are human rights, the MST has promoted ecological alternatives to corporate agriculture, in alliance with the environmental and indigenous movements — all aspects of 'a long, slow process of practical and ideological struggle for an alternative hegemony' (2009: 324) that refuses the regime of 'sustainable degradation' on offer from transnational neoliberalism (Luke 2006).

Reclaiming the Commons

MST exemplifies a third theme in contemporary counter-hegemonic politics. In response to neoliberalism's dynamic of accumulation by dispossession, multifarious movements and campaigns have arisen to protect and reclaim the commons from privatization and commodification (Harvey 2005b 166-172). Initially reactive and protective, harkening back to much earlier resistances to enclosure (Linebaugh 2008), indigenous struggles for land, agrarian struggles for seeds, crops and biodiversity, political campaigns against privatization and the like open a "political dynamic of social action across the whole spectrum of civil society" (Harvey, 2005b: 166, 168, 172) that often (as with MST) combines struggles for self-determination with ecological sustainability (Klein 2001: 88). In providing a communal way of regulating activity without the state or market, 'the commons' presents a rich counter-hegemonic template (Wall 2005), but raises challenges as to how it will articulate with 'whatever states also claim authority over the resource or territory in question' (McCarthy 2005: 24).

Notwithstanding such issues, the vision of a global commons 'defended by a multiplicity of state and non-state actors in the name of human survival' (Watts 2010:22) — visible beyond the cabal of hegemonic state, inter-state and NGO actors that dominated formal negotiations at the 2009 Copenhagen Conference on Climate Change (COP15) — offers a radical imaginary for emerging counter-hegemonic sensibilities worldwide. This strong image can be applied not only to

political-economic matters, but to ideological struggles against enclosure of the moral field within economistic and legal-bureaucratic frameworks (Smith 1997). On matters ranging from biopiracy and intellectual property rights to the idea of a global commons, '"the commons" can work as a unifying signifier — of resistance, community, collective action and common values' (Holder and Flessas 2008:299). Indeed, as Bakker (2007) shows in her study of struggles against water privatization in the global south, whereas human rights discourse frames issues individualistically and in ways compatible with commodification, the 'commons', in championing a collective property right creates space for radical strategies of ecological democracy to decommodify public services, resource management, etc. A contemporary reworking of a very old theme, anti-enclosure offers, in response to the 'dictatorship of no alternative' (Unger 2009), the germ of a left response to neoliberalism beyond 'narrow (and conservative) social democracy' (Watts 2010:24). The key is to find, or create, the 'organic link' between reclaiming the commons and opposing capital's domination of labour (Harvey 2005a:203), thereby connecting the struggle to decommodify land, intellectual property, public utilities and the like with the struggle to decommodify labour.

Mediatization and the struggle to democratize communication

Many of the issues at stake in the politics surrounding the form and content of communications media comprise a special instance of the struggle to reclaim the commons. The world of the early 21st century is densely networked by virtue of an unprecedented apparatus of communications, which has opened new possibilities both for bourgeois hegemony and for oppositional politics. Media now comprise a vast field of cultural struggle. In a media-saturated world, capitalist organization of communication creates a multifaceted *democratic deficit*, evident for instance in the failure of mainstream media to create a democratic public sphere, the centralization of power in media corporations, inequality in media access, homogenization of media content, the undermining of communities through commodification, and the corporate enclosure of knowledge. 'Media activism' can be read as a critical response that takes different forms depending on location in the media field. Media democrats struggle to limit corporate power and commercial logic, to democratize media workplaces and labour processes, to develop alternative media, and to foster more literate and critical readers of media texts. When we look at media activism 'on the ground' we find many of the rudiments of counter-hegemonic politics. Activists see the struggle to democratize communication as a multi-frontal war of position that needs to be waged in conjunction with other movements. Communicative democracy comprises a social vision in which the voices of citizens and communities carry into a vibrant and diverse public sphere. In pursuing this social vision on several fronts including those of state, corporate media and lifeworld, media democrats build a new nexus

among movements, a place where strategies might converge across issue areas and movement identities (Hackett and Carroll, 2006; Downing 2001).

As a political emergent, media activism underlines the importance to counter-hegemony of reclaiming or creating the means and forms of communication necessary for subaltern groups to find their voices and to organize, both locally and translocally. The formation of organic intellectuals is substantially caught up in this struggle to break the dominant class's monopoly within the intellectual field (Thomas 2009: 418-19). Here, the new includes a mediatized politics of everyday life, as in proliferation of alternative media (often via the internet; Atton 2009) and the diffusion of culture jamming and other practices of media literacy, yet also a politics, focused upon state and capital, that presses for limits upon corporate power and for an opening of access to the means of communication (Hackett and Carroll 2006). The politics of media democratization is necessarily multi-frontal and intersectional. All progressive-democratic movements have an stake in these struggles; the extent to which movements take up democratic communication as a general interest is a measure their catharsis from fractured subalternities (with their characteristic foci upon single issues and narrow constituencies) to an ethico-political collective will.

The question of autonomy

Autonomy from old-left parties and unions, and from overweening regulatory states, was cited by NSM theorists of the 1970s and 1980s as a criterial attribute of the emergent movements of late modernity. In Jean Cohen's (1985) classic, and rather Americanized treatment, these movements were viewed as practitioners of a 'self-limiting' identity politics that rejected large-scale projects. This stylization was never unproblematic as an empirical account, and several decades later, in the wake of neoliberalism's global triumph and in the midst of its global crisis, the appeal of self-limiting politics is embarrassingly limited. Yet autonomy remains a lasting legacy of the so-called NSMs.

Autonomy informs aspects of contemporary counter-hegemonic politics at the level of everyday life, as shown in Gwyn Williams's (2008) ethnography of alterglobalization activism in the Larzac plateau of southern France. Famous since their dismantling of a McDonald's restaurant in 1999 and for the slogan, 'the world is not a commodity,' these activists resist the hegemony of global market society 'by cultivating themselves as "autonomous" political subjects and organizing a movement considered to be an "autonomous" counter-power' (G. William 2008: 63). This has meant not only maintaining independence from political parties and functioning in a 'bottom-up' or 'horizontal' manner but cultivating in themselves and others an autonomy that partly frees them from neoliberal ideology and the power of consumer society. Here, prefiguration is grounded in a moral imperative

to 'become aware' and to act 'coherently' (2008:72) by living the ideals to which one aspires.[5]

Becoming aware is both an ongoing aspect of autonomous self-development and a movement-building praxis instantiated in a range of pedagogical activities — forums, information evenings and media actions — designed to provoke public debate and to persuade people join the cause (G. Williams 2008:72-3). Although activists can never be fully autonomous from the forms of power to which they are subject, the struggle for autonomy is a crucial element in challenging hegemony and in bringing into existence what Gramsci (1971: 327) called a 'new conception of the world ... which manifests itself in action.'[6]

As a sensibility that holds both visionary and strategic implications, autonomy has roots not only in NSM theory, but in historical materialism. Harry Cleaver, who introduced the notion of autonomist Marxism into English-language academia in the 1970s (Cleaver 2001; Wright 2008:113), predicated it on an agency-centred analysis of the working class, defining autonomy as

> the ability of workers to define their own interests and to struggle for
> them — to go beyond mere reaction to exploitation, or to self defined
> 'leadership' and to take the offensive in ways that shape the class
> struggle and define the future (Cleaver 1993).

The key question is how autonomy and other emergent features of activism might figure in a counter-hegemonic historical bloc. Mark Purcell, drawing on Laclau and Mouffe (1985), suggests that relations between elements of such a formation be conceptualized in terms of *equivalence*, 'a concept that evokes relations of simultaneous interdependence and autonomy, obligation and freedom, unity and

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[5] Since domination dwells within one's own person, since each person's actions reproduce forms of domination, changing the world implies an ongoing process of 'work on oneself' that cultivates autonomy (G. Williams 2008:75). That activists are thoroughly embedded in the extended relations of global capitalism problematizes the achievement of coherence, yet by living relatively simply, in full respect of the environment and their fellow human beings, the activists of the Larzac 'distance themselves from the power of capitalism, consumer society and neoliberalism, they banish it from their lives and thereby partially fulfil their vocation as activists. To banish power is to create an autonomous space in which to live your life, itself an act of resistance. This is something that requires effort, and ongoing attention to the way you act in the world that is a part of the developmental process of becoming aware' (G. Williams 2008: 77).

[6] Gramsci's own commitment to autonomous human development was deeply seated in his conception of counter-hegemony. 'Is it better to take part in a conception of the world mechanically imposed by the external environment; i.e. by one of the many social groups in which one is automatically involved from the moment of his entry into the conscious world...? Or, on the other hand, is it better to work out consciously and critically one's own conception of the world and thus, in connection with the labours of one's own brain, choose one's sphere of activity, take an active part in the creation of the history of the world, be one's own guide, refusing to accept passively and supinely from outside the moulding of one's personality?' (1971:323-4).

multiplicity, sameness and difference' (2009: 301). The movements and interests that comprise the bloc do not dissolve completely into it, but they move together and lean into one another.

Intersectionality

In sorting out the nuances of counter-hegemonic unity-in-diversity, what stands out as the complement to autonomy as a cultural emergent is the concern for intersectionality. Arriving in the 1990s as a way of rescuing feminism from the *cul-de-sac* of identity politics, intersectionality transformed feminist praxis itself. Beginning with the critique in the 1980s, by lesbian feminists and women of colour, of the exclusionary practices in bourgeois, white, heteronormative feminism, intersectional praxis has unfolded, roughly speaking, in stages. First, a group-centred framework recognized that a more inclusive politics must give voice to the qualitatively distinct experiences of subalternity arising from intersections of class, gender, sexuality, race and other social positionings (Choo and Ferree 2010). A process-centred approach then moved from positional categories to 'dynamic forces' – racialization, economic exploitation, gendering – and highlighted the distinctive operations of power across institutional fields (Choo and Ferree 2010: 134), as 'multiple relations and structures of power interact in context-specific ways' (Eschle 2004: 119; Walby 2009). In this formulation, intersectionality becomes an operating principle for building a historical bloc and conducting a multi-frontal war of position, guided by an understanding of intersecting relations of domination and subalternity and of the need for dialogical efforts to mediate a multiplicity of identities, communities, and contexts (Rice 2010).

Spike Peterson has recently brought post-structural insights to an intersectional perspective that recognizes gender as a governing code which, as it privileges *masculinity* – not necessarily men – also naturalizes the power relations that constitute multiple forms of exploitation and subordination (Peterson 2009). As a hegemonic code, gender interlinks and reifies diverse hierarchies by feminizing those who are subordinated – devaluing 'not only women but also sexually, racially, culturally, and economically marginalized men (e.g., "lazy migrants," "primitive natives," "effeminate gays")' (2009:35). The binary code is self-validating in practice, as 'common sense becomes a two-sided justification of hierarchy: not only are the subordinated devalorized by feminization but the qualities they lack are typically just what the dominating (masculinized) group has to offer' (ibid:36). Peterson's decisive break from identity politics, deepens our understanding of how hegemony works through a confluence of discourse and material relations. By implication, she clarifies an aspect of the cathartic passage from the economic-corporate to the ethico-political:

> ...we are not simply talking about male-female relations or promoting
> the status of 'women.' We are first addressing the exploitation of *all*
> whose identities, labor, and livelihoods are devalued by being
> feminized and, second, advancing the critical project of theorizing
> *intersections* of devalorization that link hierarchies of race/ethnicity,
> class, gender/sexuality, and nation (2009:38).

Intersectional analysis is a resource in the struggle for dignity that has been
highlighted in Zapatismo and other autonomous struggles. Yet it presses toward a
unity-in-diversity that challenges both postmodern fragmentation and the single-
issue sectionalism prevalent in many social movements, including mainstream
environmentalism. Recognizing the deep connections between environmental
sustainability and social reproduction, intersectionality is a tool for political
ecology. It asks how the 'intersection of specific economic, social, and
environmental conditions' might disable an individual's or community's ability to
survive (Di Chiro 2008:286) — a question that motivates the search for alternatives
within which individuals, communities and ecosystems may thrive.

New organizational forms

A final theme in recent thinking calls attention to new organizational forms within
which a historical bloc for a just and sustainable alternative to the current world
order might take shape. Different projects 'imply different forms of organisation,
which thus require different types of organic intellectuals, whose role it is to
elaborate such organisation in both ideological and practical terms' (Thomas 2009:
416). The activists of the Larzac, struggling for autonomy both in everyday life and
in publicly oriented actions, exemplify this relation between activism and
organization. The same might be said of the Zapatistas, whose campaigns in
Mexico and in cyberspace activated national and global civil society while
constructing new forms of local autonomous governance that validate indigenous
tradition and identity within a contemporary context (Morton 2007: 191; Bahn
2009: 551). Yet such autonomism, if pursued singularly, undercuts the possibilities
for creating a counter-hegemonic unity in diversity. The Zapatista slogan 'one no,
many yeses' creates a unity around a shared rejection of transnational neoliberal
capitalism that resists

> any fixed meaning of the collective subject that undertakes activism.
> The central dilemma for activist life becomes whether the "many yeses"
> arising in its wake can exert counter-hegemonic power in a long-term
> war of position (Gibson 2008: 256).

Beyond autonomy, beyond pluralism, but not in opposition to them, is the cathartic
transition from the many, the sectional, to a 'political unity across cultural

differences' (Sanbonmatsu, 2004:130). The question is how to construct 'forms of political agency that allow for the necessary diversity of a global counter-hegemony while allowing for the necessary commonality of a global counter-hegemony' (Stephen 2009: 494).

Gramsci characterized the historical bloc that might issue from such formative efforts in terms of the 'modern prince' — 'the fusion of a new type of political party and oppositional culture that would gather together intellectuals (organisers) and the masses in a new political and intellectual practice, "organising the organisers"' (Thomas 2009: 437). In considering prospects for what Gill (2000) and Sanbonmatsu (2004) have termed a 'postmodern prince', adequate to the political task of exiting from today's globalized and crisis-ridden capitalism, the World Social Forum has been said to represent 'in organizational terms, the most consistent manifestation of counter-hegemonic globalization' (Sousa Santos 2008: 249). The WSF contests the claim that capitalism is here to stay while it provincializes conventional, northern-based left thinking through practices of intercultural dialogue. Convened first in 2001 and proliferating subsequently into regional and national social forums, the Forum has created an 'open space' for discussion and a transnational site for organizing concrete collective practices.

In its scale and breadth, the WSF is, indeed, new. Moreover, it has spurred a process of intellectual and moral reform that begins to provide a cultural infrastructure for global counter-hegemony. Within WSF discussions it has become clear that 'the global left is intercultural' (Sousa Santos 2008: 261); hence the importance of mutual translation, an emergent practice that preserves autonomy while creating common ground. A related contribution that the WSF has made to the global left is its horizontal, network politics, which enables the work of translation and is further elaborated through that work (ibid).

Yet the shape of the network is worth pondering, and on this question of form, the WSF's counter-hegemonic capacities to wage a war of position are doubtful (Gibson 2008; Stephen 2009; Worth and Buckley 2009).[7] Gramsci's modern prince anticipated a relatively centralized network encompassing a dialectical relation between masses and leaders — rather distinct from the rhizomic networks, celebrated by the postmodern left (Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Hardt and Negri 2004), which lack any central basis for coordination. Organizationally, a certain degree of centrality is needed to ensure that 'the movement will be able to *move* when the time is right' (Purcell 2009: 304). Alternatively, it is difficult to know how a rhizomic movement 'will be able to move at all, much less take coordinated and strategic action that shifting political opportunities demand' (ibid 305). On this

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[7] On this issue, Worth and Buckley are especially caustic. The WSF 'has suffered from being a directionless series of events, whereby the working formula of "open space" has led to the creation of nothing more than a "talking shop", rather than any valid construction of counter-hegemony' (2009: 650).

point, Peter Evans is correct to claim that 'the eventual construction of counter-hegemonic globalization will almost certainly combine 'rhizomic' networks with traditional 'trees'" (2008: 291), the latter branching out authoritatively from well defined centres of decision-making.

Although the WSF's rhizomic structure has limited its capacity to serve as much more than an open space for building cultural infrastructure and launching episodic campaigns, an even more formidable constraint resides in the neoliberal organization of global governance, in which a Westphalian state system coexists with international apparatuses like the World Trade Organization (WTO), in a context of globalizing capitalism. The debacle that was COP15 (December 2009) illustrates the toxicity of this combination, wherein the old system of state sovereignty is dying but a new global political order cannot yet be born. The Westphalian 'partitioning of political space along territorial lines insulates extra- and non-territorial powers from the reach of justice,' (Fraser 2005:81) offering increased scope to transnational capital.[8] Progressive politics framed at the 'global' level are circumscribed by the lack of a global state that might be democratically transformed; hence they take the form of a cultural war of position within global civil society (eg, the WSF) punctuated by occasional defensive wars of maneuver against such threats as the MAI (defeated 1998), WTO (stalled in 1999) and Free Trade Area of the Americas (defeated in 2005). Instructively, defensive campaigns of this sort are successful only to the extent that the collective action of movements meshes with actions taken by progressive state actors. The WSF's open space and the defensive campaigns that have significantly sapped neoliberalism's momentum cannot in themselves create a global post-capitalist formation; they only gesture in that direction. Resplendent in its slogan that another world is possible, the WSF instantiates the not-yet, the concrete forward dream of a global left — a counter-hegemonic collective will — not yet the reality. For now, it is at the national level that system change is feasible (though inherently dependent on transnational alignments of movements and progressive state actors) -- confirming the continuing validity of Gramsci's adage that the 'point of departure' for radical, transformative politics is national.

The hotbed of such politics is contemporary Latin America, where Jerry Harris (2007: 1) has discerned a developing 'democratic dialectic' of state and civil society. Flowing strongly but not exclusively from the labouring classes, the new movements of the 21st century seek 'a novel relation to the formal political realm by

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[8] This problem is exacerbated by the highly uneven distribution of powers among intergovernmental institutions. Although the international agencies like the WTO that enforce the rule of global capital are invested with some degree of state power, other international bodies and sites — such as the Copenhagen conference, the ILO, and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples lack state authority and exist only by the good graces of the states that selectively participate. See Clarkson (2010).

fundamentally reworking relations of power' (Stahler-Sholk et al 2007: 6). Across much of Latin America, the project is 'to reappropriate democracy from a restricted and statist form by means of an expanded and participatory model' (Harris 2007: 14). Many of these movements maintain autonomy from parties and governments, acting as a *counterbalance* that pressures the state to withstand the demands of global capitalism (ibid 15). Where the left has formed the government, particularly in Venezuela and Bolivia, radical forces within the state have united with social movements, giving the state-civil society dialectic 'a revolutionary character and expanded potential that is lacking in countries where autonomist power remains isolated from the government' (Harris 2007: 19).

This dialectic animates Marta Harnecker's (2010) recent analysis of Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution. Noting the transition within the left from workerism to an understanding that 'the new political instrument must respect the plurality of the new subject and take on the defense of all discriminated social sectors' (2010:5), she emphasizes that at the heart of the revolution, inscribed in Venezuela's constitution, is a conception of *protagonist democracy* – a commitment to popular participation in public affairs that brings with it individual and collective development (2010:37). Conjoined to protagonism in this counter-hegemonic project is a 'socialist conception of decentralization' that reworks Marx's (1871) comments on the Paris Commune – a decentralization 'imbued with a spirit of solidarity', which strengthens communities, deepens democracy, and collaborates with the central state as it coordinates society-wide plans (2010:51). These elements of autonomism and of the commons take concrete shape in Venezuela's co-operatives, now a key economic form for state decentralization and mass participation, and in Community Councils that enact democratic planning for human needs at the local level (Magdoff and Foster 2010; Spronk and Webber 2010). Here we find the 'organic link' mentioned earlier, between the emancipation of labour and reclaiming the commons: between building worker control in production and building communal control within places. In the historical bloc prefigured by these forms, activists become *producers* rather than protesters demanding more services, and their alternative economic activity produces new social relations that concretize a social vision of sustainable human development (Harris 2007: 22). Under these nationally-specific conditions, facilitated greatly by emergent intergovernmental alliances such as ALBA (Kellogg 2007), the prospects for 21st century socialism – though circumscribed by legacies of political cronyism and corruption, of charismatic populism as a form of leadership that may reinforce subalternity, and of ecologically problematic 'extractivism' as a means of generating wealth (Gudynas 2010) – are real.

The exemplars, however, are not restricted to Latin America. In her ethnographic account of building participatory democracy in Kerala, India, Michelle Williams observes many strikingly similar socio-political inventions. There, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) has developed a 'counter-hegemonic generative

politics that attempts to establish new institutions and practices that extend the role of civil society over the state and the economy' (2008:9). Operating both arborescently and rhizomically, partly through a succession of coalition governments but especially through organic ties to Kerala's vibrant popular sector, the CPI(M) has coordinated innovative initiatives in participatory democracy and decentralized, self-reliant development. The provisional result of this decades-long war of position is an empowered civil society that enjoys one of the highest levels of human development and quality of life in the majority world. As in Latin America, participatory democracy in Kerala confirms the viability of counter-hegemonic generative politics, but it also suggests that such politics requires 'a new type of political party, one that is not afraid to empower civil society' (M. Williams 2008:156).

It is these fragile prospects that have propelled the recent effort to create a 'Fifth Socialist International' — a space where 'socialist-oriented parties, movements and trends of thought' will be able to propose a common strategy for the struggle against imperialism, for transitioning from capitalism to socialism and for international economic integration within a framework of solidarity.[9] Proposed in November 2009 by Hugo Chavez at a meeting of more than 50 parties and movement organizations from 31 countries, the Fifth International may yet grow to complement the World Social Forum, but as a tree-like, arborescent formation, whose project is more action-oriented and whose roots in organized parties and left governments enable coordinated action in a global field, something the WSF seems incapable of delivering. Significantly, and in contrast to the template for party-based internationals, Chavez's proposal emphasized the inclusion of both movement organizations and parties, and noted that a new international would have to function "without impositions" and would have to respect diversity (Janicke 2009). Subsequent elaboration of the idea (Albert 2010) and debate about its assumptions and entailments (Waterman 2010) help clarify the possibilities for such a new left formation, based in autonomist and intersectional practice and a thoroughgoing provincialization of Europe. Whether these possibilities will be actualized is at the time of writing entirely undecided.

Conclusions

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[9] 'Commitment of Caracas'. http://www.psuv.org.ve/files/tcdocumentos/commitment.caracas.pdf, accessed 7 March 2010. See also 'The Venezuelan Call for A New International Organization of the Left,' *The Bullet,* No. 312, Feb 15, 2010, http://www.socialistproject.ca/bullet/312.php.

Our point of departure was a meditation on the new, and the problem of welding present to future. Counter-hegemony, however, requires more than a cataloguing of what is new; welding the present to the future has an indelibly *programmatic* aspect, registered in such notions as war of position and historical bloc. As an instrument of transformative politics, the 'programmatic imagination' marks a direction and defines the next steps in taking up that trajectory (Unger 2009:xxi). Marking a direction sketches the contours of a counter-hegemonic project – a possible alternative – but it is the choice of next steps that enables motion. In this respect, 'the possible that counts is not the fanciful horizon of possibilities but the *adjacent possible*: what is accessible with the materials at hand, deployed in the pursuit of movement in the desired direction' (Unger 2009:xxi; emphasis added). The emergent themes and practices discussed above help mark a direction: toward a post-capitalist way of life that is broadly eco-socialist, that subordinates the state to an empowered civil society structured around practices of participatory democracy, dialogical communicative relations, and autonomous governance of the commons, both physical and informational; that combines, within an ethico-political framework, the autonomy of individuals with an abiding appreciation of the intersecting relations that implicate us in each other's lives. This direction implies a process of democratic globalization that reaches beyond the Westphalian division of humanity into (potentially) warring factions – and well beyond the current state of the world.

The elements of the new I have sketched also illuminate the next steps, toward the adjacent possible. Transnational networks and campaigns, new media and new communicative struggles, initiatives to reclaim the commons, and quotidian practices of becoming aware and acting coherently all mark a cathartic shift from protest to *generative politics*, to *production* of sustainable agriculture, of communications and culture, of collective property, of new social relations and subjectivities. For such generative politics to take root 'a synergistic relation between political parties and civil society must be forged in order to ensure that the necessary institutional spaces are created and the capacity for civil society participation is developed' (M. Williams 2008:156). As for the national and transnational, what seems adjacently possible is an 'institutionalization of multilevel contestation', combining rhizomic networks and 'traditional' trees, reaching from the local to the global, and including as allies progressive state actors, in 'virtuous circles' that strengthen both movements and initiatives by state leaders at the global level (Evans 2008). These politics must be substantially rooted in local and national contexts: local self-empowerment is a requirement of democratic mobilization, and winning state power is indispensable to transformation at a global level. Counter-hegemonic globalization is sustained by the transnational cultural infrastructures and activist networks that shape global civil society, but also by arborescent formations such as new democratic left parties in Europe (Rao 2009 Solty 2008), the intergovernmental organizations developing within the Bolivarian process and what may be an emerging Fifth International inclusive of

parties and movements. The movement of movements will walk on both legs, creating new relations, practices and subjectivities both on the cultural terrain of civil society and within/against the state, globally and in national and local contexts – or else it will stumble.

These developments portend a global left, a counter-hegemonic historical bloc organized around a project of sustainable human development and participatory democracy, whose constituents recognize in the intersections of power and oppression an emancipatory collective interest. This project faces great challenges, when placed in the context of the ecological race against time and the continuing hegemony of consumer capitalism. Indeed, in North America, where the marketplace society and postmodern fragmentation discussed earlier are most entrenched – where the left's marginality contributes to a doxic condition of 'dreamlessness', as Bloch put it[10] – it is unlikely that transformative politics will gain traction until consumerism as a way of life that contains its own self-reproducing end values is rejected by (or becomes unviable for) great numbers of people. In practising sustainable consumption in the North, the autonomist politics of the Larzac plateau is exemplary. [11] To break from the hegemony of marketplace society is to endeavour 'in the here and now to create in the interstices of the system a new social metabolism rooted in egalitarianism, community, and a sustainable relation to the earth' (Magdoff and Foster 2010).

Globally, pressure for change may arise most urgently from a growing "environmental proletariat" (Foster 2010: 15) in areas of failing habitability, and leadership in counter-hegemonic globalization can be expected to emanate from the South. Yet achieving the global *contraction* in greenhouse gas emissions and *convergence* in emissions per capita necessary to avert the worst ecological scenarios will require a strong ethico-political solidarity of North with South – quite the reverse of what was on display at COP15 in Copenhagen in December 2009, and presently a distant possibility.

It is, nevertheless, steps taken in that direction that, cumulatively, might open an exit hatch from capitalism. Such a global transition would require that ecological

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[10] In contrast to the concrete forward dream that informs prefigurative practice, dreamlessness 'which is associated with standing still or with a realism which only appears to be such, even in a state of resignation, is actually the ruling state of mind of many thinking though unperceptive people in a society without perspectives (and with an abundance of inaccuracy)' (Bloch 1971: 31).

[11] As Magdoff and Foster (2010) point out, a post-capitalist future generalizable to humanity in its entirety implies a radical shift from the unsustainable consumerism that middle-income North Americans take for granted. 'An economic system that is democratic, reasonably egalitarian, and able to set limits on consumption will undoubtedly mean that people will live at a significantly lower level of consumption than what is sometimes referred to in the wealthy countries as a "middle class" lifestyle (which has never been universalized even in these societies). A simpler way of life, though "poorer" in gadgets and ultra-large luxury homes, can be richer culturally and in reconnecting with other people and nature, with people working the shorter hours needed to provide life's essentials.'

and social revolutions in the South 'be accompanied by, or inspire, universal revolts against imperialism, the destruction of the planet, and the treadmill of accumulation' (Foster 2010: 15). What is particularly *new* in this organic crisis is the entwinement of human survival with democratic socialist construction, the twin exigencies of our time.

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About the author

Bill Carroll became concerned about issues of global justice in the 1970s, and was active in the Marxist Institute, a Toronto-based left-wing educational collective from 1977 to 1981, when he moved to Victoria, British Columbia. In the 1980s he was involved in the Solidarity Coalition, a movements-unions alliance, and in the Committee on Alternatives for British Columbia, a group of academics that published two books critiquing neo-liberal policy and advocating democratic alternatives. More recently, he has been active in VIDEA (http://www.videa.ca) and has created a series of political music-videos, at http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=wcarroll52#p/u/0/4Ii0MzzRXMU.

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Towards a critique of anti-German 'communism'[1]

Raphael Schlembach

Abstract

The spectre of anti-Germans has easily become the Feindbild *for activists of the Anglophone Left; yet rarely does this translate into fundamental or informed criticism of the anti-German premise. This article, then, offers an introductory description and a critical analysis of pro-Israeli, anti-German communism in its context within the post-war German Left and as a contemporary protest movement that sits oddly on the fringes of radical politics. Its origins and politics are examined to depict the radicalisation of a broad anti-nationalist campaign against German re-unification, and its evolution into a small but coherent anti-German movement, controversial for its pro-Israel polemics and provocations. Current debates within the anti-fascist German Left are reviewed to explore anti-German positions on the Holocaust, Israel, Islam, anti-imperialism and Germany's foreign policy. Theoretical works that have heavily influenced anti-German communism are discussed to comprehend the movement's intellectual inspirations. The purpose of the article is to introduce one of Germany's most controversial protest movements to an English-speaking audience and to hint at the formulation of a critique that is more than a knee-jerk reaction to pro-Israeli agitation.*

Introduction

Anti-German communism is a political tendency that grew from within the German radical Left, and that has adopted a pro-Western/pro-Israel discourse and critiques of post-Nazi Germany and Islamic antisemitism as its defining ideological characteristics. Despite being intellectually inspired by the writings of Karl Marx and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, the subsequent reinterpretation and political contortion of these texts by the 'anti-Germans' has fuelled an antagonistic relationship with large parts of the German (and global) Left. The common left-

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[1] A much earlier version of this paper was presented to the *Popular Protest and Alternative Futures* 11 conference at Manchester Metropolitan University, April 2006. All translations from literature in German are mine, unless noted otherwise.

wing premises of anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism are regarded by the anti-Germans as expressions of a continuation of the 'logic of Auschwitz' that reflects totalitarian, fascistic thought in the national mindsets of most Germans, Europeans and beyond.

Talking about the anti-Germans is a bit anachronistic, of course. Anti-German communism as a movement, in the sense of informing the practical and strategic politics of German anti-fascism, is connected to the decade or so immediately after German re-unification. In its more narrow sense, as a theoretically distinct but practically irrelevant contrarian position, anti-German communism has also seen its heyday. Anti-German ideas still persist nonetheless, in a number of periodicals and communist organisations, and continue to have some influence on the German anti-fascist movement and some unorthodox Marxist circles. It is also rather unhelpful to speak of 'the anti-Germans' as if they represented a homogenous movement. This is even more so as the ideas and positions of anti-German authors, activists and groups have tended to undergo rapid development in an effort to gain 'avant-garde' status in the radical Left. A first categorisation is often used in German-language debates to distinguish between various 'hardcore' and 'softcore' trends. Hardcore anti-Germans, around the journal *Bahamas* and the Freiburg *Initiative Sozialistisches Forum*, have now mostly taken leave from left-wing political movements; yet it is they who often remain the object of controversy. *Bahamas* and their supporters in particular have made a point of declaring both left-wing and Islamist anti-imperialism as their enemy, often descending into vitriolic attacks against Muslims and Arabs in Europe – to such an extent that the tendency might now be best described as an 'anti-Islam materialism'. The various softcore anti-German projects continue to exert some theoretical influence especially on anti-fascist politics. The journal *Phase 2* for example has emerged from the German 'Antifa' movement and now combines anti-German thought with elements from critical theory and post-structuralism to form a political perspective that is sometimes described as 'post-Antifa'. Now defunct is the journal *17 Grad*, which was based on Foucaultian theory and discourse analysis. The longstanding magazine *Konkret* has evolved from a more orthodox Marxist analysis but has also supported and developed anti-German positions in the past. The widely-read weekly newspaper *Jungle World* regularly publishes anti-German authors, but actually prints articles from a variety of radical political perspectives.

However, it has been years since anti-German publications regularly sparked controversy and sometimes violent conflict amongst the German Left. Now, many writers, publishers and activists who had spearheaded the anti-German movement have retreated from left-wing circles and discussion. Nonetheless, in the English-speaking Left in particular, the anti-Germans are still subject to polemical controversy and outrage, often resulting from a fascination with the waving of American, British and Israeli national flags by German anti-fascists. There are very few substantial English-language texts available however (Grigat 2005; Radke

2004 are amongst the more illuminating introductions), although whenever the topic is raised on left-wing online forums, blogs or in face-to-face conversation it is sure to generate long discussions. To date, there is only one academic publication about the anti-Germans in English language. The article in the *Jewish Political Studies Review* (Erlanger 2009) is largely descriptive and focuses on the pro-Israel stance of the movement. Keeping in mind the somewhat sketchy information so far available to the English-language reader, what I offer here is primarily a historical overview of the origins and political formation of the anti-Germans and, secondly, a pointer towards a more fundamental critique of their politics.

Events in the recent history of the extra-parliamentary Left in Germany are crucial to understanding why anti-German currents play a prominent role in it. I trace the development of anti-German communist thought in four steps. First, I look at some of the influences that can be found in the work of pre-unification writers, such as Jean Améry or Eike Geisel. Second, the movement against German political re-unification will be discussed as the immediate 'trigger' or springboard for the emergence of anti-German communism as protest movement. Third, the anti-German response to events such as the Kosovo war and 9/11 illustrate how parts of the movement have severed their ties with the politics of the Left. In a final section, I indicate how the anti-German ideology remains firmly stuck in nationalist and identity politics.

Post-Holocaust origins

The anti-German self-understanding is one that combines criticism of German nationalism and political Islam with a more general critique of nation and state. It explicitly sees itself in contrast to the anti-imperialist and autonomous Left of the 1970s and 80s with its strong support for national liberation movements and vocal opposition to American and Israeli militarism. Put very simply, for the anti-Germans, anti-fascism in a world divided into states is synonymous with solidarity with Israel. The Israeli state is seen as the necessary reaction to the fascist barbarism of the Third Reich and that continues to rear its head in the *Bundesrepublik.* This inversion of the anti-imperialist premise is certainly at odds with left-wing politics in Anglo-Saxon countries and elsewhere outside this context. However, calls for solidarity with Israel and distrust of anti-Zionism are more commonplace in the German radical Left. Some of the most fervent critics of the anti-Germans would go to length to defend Zionism as the basis of the Israeli state (for example Robert Kurz 2003). Also many anti-fascist groups that do not belong to the anti-German spectrum practice and demonstrate solidarity with Israel and focus strongly on the continuing antisemitism in neo-Nazi movements.

The specificity of its National Socialist history has always been a central point of reference for the (West-)German Left. Concerned with 'explaining the unexplainable', the Left subscribed to a politics of remembrance. The 'lessons' drawn from the terror of National Socialism and the Holocaust thereby remain fundamental to a radical theory and practice. Concepts and ideologies that had been paramount to the Third Reich, such as 'the German people', 'nation' or antisemitism are thus important points of reference. Radical left-wing criticism of anti-Zionism in Germany also emerged long before one could speak of an anti-German movement. Even texts from an armed anti-militarist group (Revolutionäre Zellen 1991) and an autonomist group (Autonome LUPUS-Gruppe 2001) criticised some aspects of anti-Zionism and anti-imperialism. The question of antisemitism had thus taken a prominent place in the internal discussion of the German *Autonome* movement already in the 1970s and 1980s. Critical voices were often the result of the failures of national liberation movements. A striking example was a failed attempt to liberate a number of Palestinian prisoners and members of the Red Army Faction, including Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof. In 1976, a commando group of Palestinians and members of the *Revolutionäre Zellen* had hijacked a plane leaving Israel, demanding the release of political prisoners. The hijackers eventually let non-Jewish and non-Israeli hostages disembark from the grounded aircraft, while Israeli Jews were kept hostage until their liberation by anti-terror units. Nevertheless, accusations that anti-imperialist politics had slipped into overt antisemitism were voiced by only a few in the radical Left (see Hanloser 2004b).

The Austrian author Jean Améry was one of the earliest voices to warn of a dangerous turn away from remembering Germany's antisemitic past and present. A participant in the Resistance and concentration camp survivor, Améry has become known for his autobiographical essays about Auschwitz and his life after the Holocaust. It is easy to see how his writings have had a major influence on the anti-German spectrum. Both his life and his texts speak of an absolute irreconcilability with Germany and a deep-rooted fear of an antisemitic resurgence. Born as Hans Maier in Vienna, in 1938 he emigrated from Austria to Belgium. On the arrival of the German troops he was imprisoned in France but escaped. Back in Belgium, he joined the Resistance but in 1943 was arrested again and deported to Auschwitz, then moved to Buchenwald and later to Bergen-Belsen. He left Germany after the war and despite continuing to write in German, now under the name Jean Améry, he initially refused to publish his texts in the Federal Republic. Instead, he worked and published as a journalist for numerous newspapers in Switzerland. His name change to Améry, an anagram of his given name, has become symbolic of his acceptance of a new secular Francophone identity and his reluctance to forgive the atrocities committed by the Germans. Améry committed suicide in 1978 in Salzburg.

In 1966 Améry published his only book on Auschwitz and the Holocaust, which was to become his most important work. It was translated and published in English as *At the Mind's Limits* in 1980 (Améry 1980). Here he reflects about the state of mind of the victim in Auschwitz, torture, exile, his resentments against the Germans and his reluctant identification as a Jew. *At the Mind's Limits* was in many ways Améry's entrance into German literary circles and made him a widely read author over night. However, he remained sceptical about his sudden fame:

> I have the suspicion that I merely struck a chord that began to vibrate just at a time when it was still fashionable to occupy oneself with the fate of the Nazi victims, and that [by the late seventies], when my friends on the Left are representing Israel as a universal plague and everyone's sympathies are focused on the Palestinian resistance fighters, I couldn't tempt a soul with this book (quoted in Myers 2002).

The concern with a revitalisation of antisemitism amongst his "friends on the Left" is also the subject of Améry's influential essay *Der ehrbare Antisemitismus* (The reputable antisemitism), which first appeared in the German weekly *Die Zeit* in 1969 (Améry 1969). Here he attacks a left-wing antisemitism that was no longer confined to socialist and communist parties, but had begun to materialise in the extra-parliamentary Left. The Six-Day War of 1967, Améry writes, had resurrected the image of the Jew as oppressor and war-monger, as capitalist and profiteer. He famously concludes: "It's a fact: Anti-Semitism, contained in anti-Israelism and anti-Zionism like the tempest in a cloud, is reputable again" (Améry 1969).

Jean Améry was not alone with his criticism of left-wing antisemitism. In the 1970s and 1980s, there were others — Eike Geisel and Wolfgang Pohrt, for example — who identified a stealthy acceptance of antisemitic undertones in Germany's moderate and radical Left. Singled out for criticism was, more often than not, the broad peace movement — nicknamed the 'peace mob' — that stood united in its opposition to the militarism of the United States. For author and journalist Wolfgang Pohrt (1982, 1984), the peace movement concealed differences of class and politics and in their place created the possibility of a German national self-discovery rooted in anti-Americanism. Pohrt predicted the end of left-wing politics in Germany: "A peace movement that knows no political parties or social classes, but only *Germans*, can only achieve one aim: the final failure of the Left" (Pohrt 1982, 73). Furthermore, Pohrt attacked anti-Zionism and the widespread support for the Palestinian liberation movement as a new manifestation of persisting antisemitic sentiments in Germany. The hatred of the US and Israel could unite the Left in a common movement that did not have to carry the burden of the past. Similar claims were made by the essayist Eike Geisel who criticised the peace movement for its anti-Israeli position and its attempt to leave Germany's National Socialist past behind (Geisel 1984, 1992, 1998). His polemical style caused controversy amongst his German and Israeli readership and made him a notorious critic of left-wing anti-Zionism.

Moishe Postone's critique of the Left was also an early influence for the emerging anti-German movement. In some of his texts, he found himself particularly shocked by the ease with which the German Left had ceased to confront the past and every-day realities of antisemitism in Germany (Postone 1986, 2005). The American social scientist had studied in Frankfurt during the 1970s and had kept strong ideological links with parts of the German radical Left after his return to the US. Although he had always remained critical during his years in Frankfurt, his break with the German Left became clear in his 1985 open letter, which addressed the 'Bitburg affair'. In May 1985, German chancellor Helmut Kohl had invited US president Reagan to the Federal Republic of Germany. The visit sparked off protests and peace marches everywhere in the country, directed against US imperialism and war. Hundreds of thousands turned up for demonstrations and rallies. However, when Kohl and Reagan visited a military cemetery in Bitburg, which was also the burial ground for a number of SS-soldiers, only a few hundred German anti-fascists staged a protest. The Bitburg affair was reported and discussed widely in the US press. However, German commentators remained relatively silent. According to Postone, there was no shock or outrage about a German leader paying tribute to the victims of World War II on a cemetery of the perpetrator 40 years after the liberation from National Socialism. In his *Open letter to the West-German Left*, Postone called the day of Kohl's visit to the cemetery a "day of disgrace" (Postone 2005, 51), unnoticed by the German population, which was content with the attempted reconciliation with Germany's past. The Left in West Germany, in particular, had neglected its critical and emancipatory role and closed its eyes to that historic moment. Instead its fight against imperialism and war had become a pretext to avoid confrontation with the Holocaust (Postone 2005, 56).

Mainstream society too was still dealing with its National Socialist past. In 1986/87, a group of historians advanced new interpretations in the context of giving Germany a new national identity. Ernst Nolte, in a widely debated article, argued that the Soviet gulags, rather than Auschwitz, should be seen as the 'original' horror, and that German Nazism was a reaction to Bolshevism. Jürgen Habermas accused Nolte and others of trying to portray National Socialism as a defence against Bolshevism, and of denying the singularity of German fascism. Habermas and Nolte were the main protagonists of a debate, known now as the *Historikerstreit* (historians' dispute, see New German Critique 1998), that tested the water for the possibility of a positive interpretation of German history. On the one side, conservative commentators argued for the centrality of Germany in the European community of nations-states based upon a guilt-free relationship with its history. On the other side, Habermas and others feared a conservative shift in German society and the alienation from the West. For Habermas, the only German nationalism that would not remove Germany from the achievements of the West or forget the terror of the past was a patriotism aligned to the constitutional values of the Federal Republic and to European integration.

It is important to remember this pre-unification context in West Germany from which the anti-German critique emerged. It was this atmosphere of 'German informality' and rediscovery which anti-Germans pledged to disrupt. They insisted on the commemoration of the Holocaust and the confrontation with Germany's National Socialist past as backbones of any left-wing project. In the process, they have engaged with criticisms of capitalism from Marx to Adorno and Foucault to Postone. They have antagonised the peace movement and declared anti-imperialists as their enemies. And, for a short while in the 1990s, they seemed to consolidate an anti-German campaign into a visible social movement that had a strong influence on left-wing debates in post-unification Germany.

"Germany — never again"

Major historical trigger events in the formation of the anti-Germans as a political movement were the fall of the Berlin wall on 9 November 1989, German re-unification on 3 October 1990 and the end of 'real-existing socialism'. In the run up to German re-unification and the first general elections of the newly founded state, a broad anti-national campaign emerged that opposed the newly-gained influence of unified Germany as an economic power (Mohr and Haunss 2004). Plans of re-unification were seen as a neo-imperialist West German coup to gain territory and international influence in the midst of a power vacuum in the East. The identification of a re-unified Germany with the German state of 1871-1933 was dismissed as a blatant move towards the establishment of a Fourth Reich. This Fourth Reich would not be built upon military might, but instead would manifest itself as a German economic giant spearheading the European project of integration. The anti-national Left suggested that the conservative and right-wing political spectrum in a re-unified Germany could attempt to renegotiate Germany's contentious Eastern border with Poland. It was now witness to a historical situation where, 45 years after the fall of the Third Reich and Germany's occupation by the allied forces, the country stood on the verge of regaining a hegemonic economic position in Europe. According to the campaign, there was no longer any feeling of guilt or even a sense that Germany had been punished for its World War II crimes. The German 'nation' had regained a positive image again and the notion of national pride was set to replace the one of collective guilt. Some in the anti-national coalition against re-unification even feared that the sudden rise of right-wing extremism could lead to a repetition of the events of 1933.

Although it was not anti-German in the sense that we understand the term today, one could describe the campaign against re-unification as the first public manifestation of an emerging anti-German movement. The campaign was driven by the short-lived alliance *Radikale Linke*, which was formed mainly of communists from the *Kommunistischer Bund*, members of the Greens and people

working for the periodical *Konkret*. In May 1990, more than 100 groups and organisations mobilised for an anti-national anti-unification rally to Frankfurt with the slogan 'Germany — never again'. According to the organisers, the demonstration was 20,000 strong. Another march was held in Berlin with 10,000 participants and a conference in Cologne attracted 1,500 (Hagen 2004; Schmid 2004).

Yet, this mobilisation was still far from constituting a distinguishable anti-German critique of German re-unification. The groups that had called for the demonstration were too diverse in their political ambitions and goals to form a homogenous movement. The rift was particularly clear between the long-established communist organisations and newer autonomous groups. Demonstrations and rallies that followed could never achieve a participation close to the 20,000 of the 'Germany — never again' rally again. After re-unification, the campaign collapsed. The *Radikale Linke* alliance dissolved and many of its members chose to join the post-communist Democratic Socialist Party (PDS) or the Green Party. Nonetheless, a start had been made for the consolidation of the anti-German movement. In the years after re-unification, anti-Germans began to bestow themselves an identity as a social movement, forming groups, publishing theoretical and political material and building up resources such as magazines and journals. And they began to clarify and develop an anti-German criticism that was distinct and often diametrically opposed to the agenda of the German radical Left.

In the early years of the anti-German movement, many of the controversies were driven by articles printed in anti-German magazines and by their publishers. Criticisms were often directed against the peace movement and aimed at attacking an apparently inherent nationalism and antisemitism on the Left. Increasingly, the anti-German position placed importance upon its support for the state of Israel. This came especially apparent in the wake of the second Gulf War in 1990/1991. After the US-led operation against Iraq had begun, Saddam Hussein had threatened Israel with a gas attack. It emerged that much of the Iraqi poison gas had been produced in West Germany. Israel did not form part of the war effort. Nonetheless, Iraqi rockets were fired onto Israeli territory, although none of them was equipped with poison gas. The peace movement mobilised hundreds of thousands for its demonstrations against the war, which was financially supported by the German Christian Democratic government. In many of the protests, the US was singled out as the perpetrators of an unjust aggression. However, anti-Israel and anti-Zionist positions also found a platform.

At this time, it was the magazine *Konkret* in particular that lent a voice to anti-German criticisms of the German pacifists. Eike Geisel, Hermann Gremliza and Wolfgang Pohrt were the most outspoken. They demanded that the German radical Left acted in solidarity with Israel that had been attacked by Iraq. They were especially shocked at the possibility of an Iraqi rocket attack on Israel with German-made poison gas. Pohrt, for example, wrote:

> It is unbelievable that Auschwitz-survivors in Israel are forced to find protection in shelters at night, under the sound of alarm sirens and with gas masks, while here the children and grand-children of mass-murderers [...] demand not the defence of the threatened, but peace with the aggressors (quoted in Hagen 2004, 25).

Solidarity with Israel meant support for the war against Iraq. This position not only antagonised the traditional Left, but also many of the anti-national allies. Possible reasons for and against the war were fiercely debated in radical journals and newspapers. The pro-war anti-Germans were keen on pointing out the pacifism in the peace movement and its inherent contradiction in the context of the liberation of Germany from National Socialism with major military means. They also argued that, despite Chancellor Kohl's financial support for the war, the peace movement should be seen as a German national project and opposed as such.

Those who described their own political positions as anti-German had often come from within the anti-national and anti-fascist movements in Germany. Radical anti-fascism had gained momentum with the rise of neo-Nazism and a number of racist and increasingly violent attacks on foreigners in the early 1990s. Re-unification had triggered a series of racist attacks in both West and East Germany. Most notoriously, the suburb of Rostock-Lichtenhagen was the scene of a prolonged xenophobic attack on a hostel for Vietnamese asylum seekers in August 1992. In the years after unification, over 135 foreigners were killed in similar racist attacks (Mut gegen rechte Gewalt 1999). In the wake of resentment and violence against asylum seekers the German Social Democrat government changed the laws regulating asylum claims, seemingly as a gesture towards the far right agenda. For many in the Left, such attacks and government 'responses' showed the racist consensus that permeated not only the fringes but society as a whole.

Part of the anti-fascist movement began to question such a perspective, however, at a time when state actors became increasingly aware and intolerant of neo-Nazi activities. In 2000, after a high-profile arson attack on a synagogue, Germany's Red-Green coalition government launched a zero-tolerance strategy of repression and surveillance against racist extremists in what was dubbed the 'State-Antifa-Summer' (see TOP Berlin 2009). Organised neo-Nazi structures and scenes were targeted, for example through the ban of the music network 'Blood and Honour' or the attempted ban of the far right National Democratic Party (NPD). The *Bundesverfassungsschutz* (Federal Protection of the Constitution) also embarked on a large scale programme of surveillance and infiltration of extreme right organisations. On the one hand, for revolutionary anti-fascist groups, it became increasingly difficult to paint the state as part of the racist consensus. On the other hand, the state also made use of existing and newly-founded civil society actors to implement programmes for the reintegration of racists and Nazis into the mainstream of society. While the resurgence of racist attacks post-1989 eventually brought together police and civil society activism, anti-German criticism was

developed as a theoretical current against the informal interest arrangement of state and anti-fascists. Practically, the anti-Germans at first continued to operate within the anti-fascist spectrum, especially in university-based groups, and to mobilise from within these ranks. However, revolutionary anti-fascism was eventually abandoned in favour of a critique of the 'national body' [*Volkskörper*] or the German nation as an ideological unit.

Return to the nation?

One of the most controversial antisemitism debates in re-unified Germany (and indeed in other countries) was sparked off by the publication of Daniel Goldhagen's book *Hitler's Willing Executioners* (Goldhagen 1996). The book was a bestseller and reached far beyond a purely academic audience (Elsässer and Markovits 1999; Künzel et al. 1997; Schoeps 1996; for criticism of the Goldhagen thesis see for example Eley 2000). In it, Goldhagen maintains the thesis that the Holocaust was the essential and inevitable outcome of National Socialist ideology. He argues that the Holocaust was particular to German National Socialism and could have happened in Germany only. For Goldhagen, it was the particular condition of German antisemitism – expressed by a large majority of the German population – that led to Auschwitz and the systematic murder of six million Jews. His study focuses on the perpetrators of the Holocaust and the involvement of "ordinary Germans" (Goldhagen 1996, 4). He challenges the proposition that the wider German population had no involvement and, indeed, no knowledge of the atrocities that were committed. The population, he elaborates, was neither forced to obey the orders to kill, nor was it subjected to punishment if orders were objected to. Instead, Goldhagen grants a certain "moral autonomy" to the ordinary German citizen (ibid.). The Holocaust should therefore not be understood as a secret extermination program, but is rather "best conceived as a German national project" (ibid., 11). As Goldhagen puts it, "[t]he most appropriate, indeed the only appropriate *general* proper name for the Germans who perpetrated the Holocaust is 'Germans'" (ibid., 6; emphasis in the original). This emphasis on the Germans as perpetrators put German nationality and national essentialism back into the debates surrounding the Holocaust: "namely no Germans, no Holocaust" (ibid.).

The theoretical debates of the Goldhagen study are symptomatic of a wider trend in the anti-German movement at that time towards more radicalism, more provocation and more national essentialism (Brym 2006; Hanloser 2004a; Kurz 2003). While this is certainly not true for the whole of the movement, so-called 'hardliners' or 'hardcore' anti-Germans have come to dominate the scene with their politics and controversies. This became obvious from the debates that resulted from the 1999 Kosovo War. The Federal Republic was now under a new 'Red-Green' leadership, a coalition of Social Democrats and Green Party. Green Party foreign minister Joschka Fischer ordered the first deployment of German troops

since 1945 in the war against Milosevic's Serbia. The deployment was justified with reference to the historic duty to prevent another Auschwitz. Serbia, it was argued, had committed genocide and ethnic cleansing. The radical Left was united in its opposition to the war. However, differences between anti-Germans and their anti-national allies quickly became visible. The anti-Germans argued that the German war effort in Kosovo was essentially a war against Serbian nationalism. Therefore, they considered anti-nationalism to be synonymous with German foreign policy. It was argued that anti-nationalism now justified a German war against a sovereign country and that the anti-nationalists had moved from a stance of "war – never again" to one of "war – never again without us" (Elsässer 1999). While the anti-national opponents of the war criticised German *and* Serbian nationalism, the anti-Germans argued that the two nationalisms were not equal to one another. The Left should refrain from criticising Milosevic's actions at this moment and show their full solidarity and support for Serbia. The Kosovo War was seen as a German war, partly resulting from German foreign policy in Yugoslavia. The USA, from the anti-German perspective, was only following Germany's lead in attacking Serbia. As a consequence of the anti-German argumentation against the Kosovo War, anti-nationalists became increasingly alienated from the anti-German cause. Gradually, the 'hardliners' found themselves without allies on the Left, but antagonistic to the peace movement, the counter-globalisation movement and the anti-nationalists.

The rift between the anti-Germans on the one hand and the rest of the Left on the other widened dramatically from 2000 onwards, when anti-German positions on the second Intifada, 9/11 and the Iraq War became untenable for the radical Left and internal confrontations multiplied. The events put a pro-Israeli standpoint at the forefront of all anti-German criticism. With an increase of suicide and rocket attacks on Israel during the second Intifada, anti-Germans demanded solidarity with the state of Israel from the German Left. Yet, from their perspective, the demands went unheard. Accordingly, they perceived a united front, or an 'Antisemitic International', behind the Left's condemnation of Israeli settlement policy and support for self-determination of the Palestinian people. For anti-Germans, this denotes a return to the rhetoric and ideology of pre-1945 nationalism. German antisemitism has turned into a blend of anti-Zionism and anti-Americanism, they argue. Furthermore, they identify an exacerbation of Islamic antisemitism, they believe to constitute the biggest threat to the state of Israel at this moment in time. Some anti-German groups have gone so far as to condemn Muslim immigrants in Germany for the return of an alleged antisemitic consensus in German society. Since the end of the 1990s, the pro-Israel tendencies amongst the anti-German communists have become visible on the streets, too. Anti-Germans have become most controversial for their display of national flags during anti-fascist demonstrations and Holocaust commemorations. The Israeli state flag is frequently used in actions and demonstrations against the processions and rallies of neo-Nazis in Germany. The existence of the state of Israel reminds right-wing extremists of Hitler's failure to exterminate the Jews, they argue.

Moreover, anti-Germans display the national flags of the allied forces in World War II — France, Britain, the US and the Soviet Union — during numerous Holocaust commemoration services. A special event in the anti-German diary has become the anniversary of the British-led air strikes on Dresden in February 1945. Anti-Germans then celebrate Germany's liberation by the allied forces from National Socialism, while for neo-Nazis it has become a day of mourning. However, the display of those national flags is provocation not only to neo-Nazis but also to anti-nationalists in the anti-fascist movement, and certainly to the anti-imperialists and pacifists on the Left.

The attacks of 9/11 have only hardened the anti-German position. Since then, ideas expressed in the periodical *Bahamas*, in particular, have begun to move away from a criticism of German nationalism towards the notion of Islamo-fascism or 'Islamic National Socialism'. From this perspective also "any criticism of the state of Israel is antisemitic" (Bruhn 2003). The pro-Israel, pro-US and anti-Islam stance of many anti-Germans cannot be understood without an appreciation of the relationship between anti-German critique and the Enlightenment process. Solidarity with Israel here does not represent identification with a nation-state, but constitutes an act that derives from an Enlightenment reasoning, which has as its ultimate aim a classless and stateless communist society. Defending Western values from 'Islamic terror', such anti-German perspectives regard the Enlightenment as an unfinished project, with capitalism representing a temporary step between theocracy and communism. Hence the celebrated anti-German phrase: "Israel is the armed attempt by the Jews to reach communism alive" (Initiative Sozialistisches Forum 2002). A communist revolution, however, is not possible until theocracy has been abolished. Here the US plays a leading role with its war on terror and Islamic fundamentalism. The fact that US policies are interest-driven does not change their usefulness in the Enlightenment process. In many ways, America has taken on this role from the French Republic. Originally, France and the French revolution were seen as bourgeois-revolutionary attempts to further the cause of the Enlightenment, and as such were supported by anti-Germans. Now, the state of Israel is considered from a similar point of view. Zionism, according to some anti-Germans, is the only remaining bourgeois-revolutionary project of the Enlightenment. More than that, it is a Jewish emancipatory project. For some anti-Germans, contemporary Zionism is comparable to French Jacobinism. Therefore, any criticism of Israel is not only considered antisemitic but also reactionary. Rather than Israel being an imperialist outpost on Arab land, they regard it as an emancipatory refuge for Jewish Holocaust survivors, their children and grandchildren. While in the long term Israel needs to be abolished just as any other state, at this moment in time 'hardcore' anti-Germans call for 'unconditional solidarity with Israel'.

The response of some anti-Germans to 9/11 also tested the tolerance of the movement by the wider radical Left in Germany — and broke it. The anti-German

assumption that the US-led war on Iraq should be understood as 'anti-fascist', since it was a direct response to the 'antisemitic' attacks on the Twin Towers, was no longer accepted in the majority of left-wing publications, websites, demonstrations or social centres. The *Bahamas* magazine, for example, had its webspace closed down and was removed from most radical bookshops. Anti-German groups were increasingly prevented from attending anti-fascist demonstrations and rallies. 'Hardcore' anti-Germans turned their animosity towards political Islam. With the 9/11 attacks seen as an expression of the destructiveness of the Islamic movement, the 'war on terror' was welcomed. In reaction to the radical Left's unwillingness to endorse the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, anti-Germans themselves called for the final break with the German Left, which they now regarded as standing at the forefront of a 'volkish'-nationalist reaction against Israel and the USA: "If one is to be serious about the demand 'For Communism', one has to recognise that liberation and emancipation can only be achieved against the [antisemitic] Left, never together with it" (*Bahamas*, quoted in Wetzel 2004, 117).

In the grasp of identity politics

The anti-German self-understanding, therefore, has taken a direction that sees itself more critical of ideology [*ideologiekritisch*] than critical of capitalism. However, Robert Kurz (2003) is quite right when he tries to define the ideological basis of the anti-German movement. While the national essentialism of the Israel solidarity politics could be dismissed as strategic, Kurz points us to the theoretical alignment of anti-German thought to the very analysis that it tries to overcome. Kurz, one of sharpest critics of what he terms "the anti-German ideology", has argued that its argumentation remains an inadequate response to what he calls "labour movement Marxism" [*Arbeiterbewegungsmarxismus*]. Kurz depicts class struggle as system-immanent, and instead focuses on an analysis of the fetish form of capital and its crisis. While the anti-Germans share this rejection of labour as revolutionary subject (based on their reading of Frankfurt School theory), they, Kurz argues, counter-posit not capitalist crisis but an ontological understanding of reason and civilisation. In the place of revolution, anti-German 'communism' succumbs to a mere defence of "bourgeois civilisation" (Kurz 2003, 63). Kurz is also critical of the traditional Left and its inability, as he says, to understand the relationship between National Socialism and capitalism. The anti-German movement exploits this lack of clarity, as much as it exploits Auschwitz to defend the "bourgeois subject" and to decouple the Holocaust from the historical development of modernity. For Kurz, the origins of anti-German ideology are found in "bourgeois discourses" (Kurz 2003, 11). In particular, he maintains, the dichotomous logic of 'barbarism' vs. 'Enlightenment' that characterises much anti-German criticism is structurally not dissimilar from the anti-imperialism that it

tries to distance itself from. Instead anti-Germanism perpetuates the binary conception of anti-modernity vs. modernity and projects it back onto the level of states and nations (e.g. Palestine vs. Israel, Europe vs. America).

It is interesting to note how the anti-German critique of ideology is not restricted to German nationalism and political Islam, but also applied to European nation-building. However, when 'hardcore' anti-Germans call for opposition to European integration – such as during a demonstration in Hamburg in 2004 – then this does no longer come as a critique of nationalism. Rather it is coupled with an affirmative relationship to nation-states that are seen as the bulwark of civilisation against barbarism. The Anglo-Saxon model is heralded as the only way to prevent a resurgence of European antisemitism. In the context of the Hamburg demonstration, supported by more than two dozen anti-fascist and communist groups from the anti-German spectrum, this translated into a call to "show your colours! – for Israel, against Old Europe" (Bahamas 2004). In the original German call 'show your colours' has a double meaning, also translating as 'show your flag'. It made clear thus that the display of national flags of Israel and Anglo-Saxon countries was encouraged. A speech at the demonstration also clarified the connection between the anti-Germans pro-Israel stance and their 'anti-fascism': "Because of our common aims – from the rejection of anti-modern and collectivist tendencies to the affirmation of Enlightenment as our permanent task – a coalition with Israel is in our interest" (Bahamas 2004).

Accordingly, left-wing solidarity with Israel, while it spans a movement much wider than that of the anti-Germans, has become a point of identification for the latter. Indeed, contrary to their claims, the defence of the Jewish state appears to be upheld on the basis of identity politics. Paradoxically, the treatment of 'a people' as a homogenous mass – something that anti-Germans accuse the anti-imperialist Left of – is reproduced in the anti-German discourse of Israel and the Jews (as well as of Germany and the US). Class and political differences and divisions within those societies are brushed over. 'The Jews' are treated as if 'they' represented a philosophy of liberation through their very existence as a 'nation' in the Middle East. The flag of the Israeli state here has particular significance in this recourse to identity politics. It is seen as a symbol not just of 'concrete anti-fascism' but as a sign of 'progressive values'. Hanloser, for example, cites a number of anti-German justifications for using Israeli and American national emblems for 'left-wing' symbolism: "Israeli flags on anti-fascist demonstrations", one anti-German group writes, "are self-evident. They are not only to be accepted, which would still mean that they had to be defended, but should be welcomed there" (quoted in Hanloser 2004b, 201). Another defends the anti-German 'pro-Enlightenment' position: "It is our dirty job to counter the threefold wretchedness in Europe, which is anti-Western, anti-modern and antisemitic. We can use a number of means to do this. One of them is the Israeli flag" (ibid.).

The 'unconditional solidarity with Israel' position of the anti-Germans lives from its rivalry with its anti-imperialist, pro-Palestinian counterpart. The latter is denounced as anti-intellectual and latently antisemitic, and seen as stuck in the very Marxist-Leninist ideology that had been taken to task by Adorno and the Frankfurt School. Following Adorno's logic, the anti-Germans condemn an anti-imperialist 'romantic anti-capitalism', which sides with the collectivity of the oppressed regardless of its ideological background. They contend that the anti-imperialist ideology, shared by Arab national liberation movements and the German Left alike, is based upon a foreshortened critique of capitalism that distinguishes between rapacious Jewish finance capital and the idea of a less evil form of productive capital linked to the labour movement. From the anti-German perspective, the historic association of Jews with the money sphere is analogous to the early National Socialist agenda to expropriate Jewish financiers. Similar accusations have been brought against the counter-globalisation movements more recently. The 'ideological coalition' of communist parties, national liberation movements, anti-globalists and Latin American socialist governments are thus described by anti-Germans as the 'Antisemitic International'. The focus on a continuation of national socialist thinking in bourgeois society, as well as in antagonistic political movements, brings with it a fixation on Germany that is analysed ahistorically. As such the anti-German ideology mixes up, or equates, the Germany of Kohl, Schröder and Merkel with that of Hitler. In the wake of the Gulf Wars, this perceived ideological coalition also included Saddam Hussein's Iraq — leading to the kind of bellicose argumentation that the anti-Germans are now infamous for. It is as if the anti-Germans wanted to defeat the Third Reich posthumously.

In terms of our discussion so far, the dichotomous understanding of modernity and anti-modernity is precisely one that the anti-Germans have made their own. As such they regard the anti-imperialist Left, Islamism and Nazism as united in their perceived opposition to modernity. This anti-modern movement stands, according to the anti-Germans, in defence of a culture of barbarism. In response, they feel that it is necessary to defend the achievements of modern civilisation and the Enlightenment.

Accordingly, in their relationship with the German Left, 'hardcore' anti-Germans often refuse to enter theoretical argumentations, and very much restrict themselves to polemical denunciations. This includes the ever-present accusation that anyone not sharing an affirmative view of Western civilisation is antisemitic or holds national socialist beliefs. After the terror attacks of 9/11, this view was confirmed by a perceived uncritical response of the Left, and anti-Germans projected their civilisation-revolutionary model onto the 'axis of good', primarily the USA and Israel. Anti-German anti-fascists thus adopted Auschwitz not as the starting point for a critique of the capital relation in the way that Horkheimer and Adorno had done, but as a means of legitimising Enlightenment ideology and the global war on

terror. Anti-Germanism therefore tends to equate capitalism with civilisation and progress, with the *Bahamas* magazine rallying its readers "to the defence of civilisation" (Bahamas 2001). *Bahamas* writes of a "pre-civilisation barbarism" that it juxtaposes to the "real-existing civilisation" in the modern capitalist era (ibid.). Germany, as the ultimate epitomisation of the barbaric, finds its contemporary, 'anti-fascist' opponents in the United States and Israel. As one anti-German group writes shortly after 9/11:

> [The antisemites and those who rationalise their beliefs] see the USA as a counter-image epitomising everything that has remained unachievable and is thus hated: cosmopolitanism, the promise of individual happiness and material wealth" (Antideutsche Gruppe Wuppertal 2001).

Rhetorically, anti-Germans combine the defence of Western civilisation with the historical possibility of a movement towards communism: "for civilisation – for communism!" (ibid.). At the same time however, anti-Germans around the *ISF* and the magazine *Bahamas* abandoned the critique of modern capitalism for a critique of German ideology, thus focusing entirely on the Holocaust and National Socialism. The *ISF* argued that antisemitism was a necessary component of the bourgeois, capitalist society; a kind of "immanent false consciousness" of its members (quoted in Kurz 2003, 19). As Kurz (2003, 30) writes, the anti-Germans thus replaced a critique of the nation and nationalism with a critique of the specificity of Germany (and Islam and Third Worldism). Instead of grasping the 'German ideology' as a specific historical manifestation of modernity, he writes, the anti-Germans proceeded to an ahistorical and isolated critique of the Germans. In its typically polemical fashion, the *ISF* thus stated that Germany should be understood as "the society that can find its inner unity and identity only in annihilation and mass murder" (Initiative Sozialistisches Forum 2001).

Conclusions

The anti-German critique of the Left is easily swept aside as a guilt-complex of German anti-fascists or the obsessive referral to Auschwitz. Their accusations of antisemitism, nationalism or even Nazism directed at left-wing politics are usually met with angry rejection or the dismissal as a fixation on identity politics. There is some truth in the latter, as Robert Kurz has shown. Nonetheless, in order to begin to understand where the anti-German critique of ideology has become ideological itself, it was certainly necessary to situate it in the development of German radical Left thought, and the specificity of an extra-parliamentary Left faced with re-unification and national renewal. The anti-Germans have not materialised into a vacuum of the German Left, but are a direct result of the latter. Much of anti-German thought achieves its high-level of theoretical sophistication through its

philosophical reliance on Marxian and Frankfurt School critical theory. Its origins are also found in the critiques of German anti-imperialist and armed struggle groups, rejecting their anti-Zionist and anti-intellectual actionism. However, a coherent political analysis that could consolidate the anti-Germans as a significant part of the German anti-fascist movement was only developed in the wake of German unification and increasing xenophobia as well as resurfacing antisemitism. Significantly, this was not just restricted to the radical right-wing fringes of German society, but was seen by many anti-fascists as an integral element of the German bourgeoisie. It is in this context that the radicalisation — and subsequent perversion — of anti-German thought took place. By describing how anti-German thought has returned to an essentialist notion of the nation, turning it at times into something more akin to anti-Muslim materialism, I have sought to draw the line between anti-nationalism and anti-Germanism in its 'hardcore' form.

I am aware that I have presented the anti-Germans as a very textual and theoretical stream rather than as a social movement. In parts, this is to counteract the journalistic and activist fascination with the anti-German street presence, their slogans and flag-waving. More than that however, if one is to make a more critical distinction than that between 'hardcore' and 'softcore' anti-Germans, one would have to point to a discrepancy between their theoretical anti-collectivism and their 'praxis' as a social movement. On the one hand, anti-German 'communism' becomes manifest in its intellectual sophistication and abstractness, especially where it is presented as a critical theory, i.e. as a negation of the affirmative politics of national liberation and collective actionism. From the perspectives of *Bahamas* or the *ISF*, for instance, collectivity becomes synonymous with fascism, and the perpetrator of Auschwitz is the collective willpower of the German mob. Israel and America are seen as representing a revolutionary Enlightenment that alone can defend the individual from nationalism. On the other hand, anti-Germanism has also taken the shape of a protest movement, which inevitably has to make reference to concrete, practical politics. This is where the anti-German ideology is driven ad absurdum. Paper planes thrown at Dresden citizens remembering the 1945 allied air raids on the city symbolise an 'anti-fascist' air force amid chants of 'Bomber Harris — do it again'. Israeli flags take the meaning of a 'pro-civilisation' alliance of anti-German communists and Israeli conservatives. Bellicose calls for American air strikes on Iran are apparently meant to create the civilisational pre-conditions for communism. Anti-Germanism thus itself becomes affirmative of the ideological baggage it starts out to criticise — with reversed signs.

Previous analyses of the anti-German phenomenon as it appears 'in the streets' have tended to make predictions about its future development, usually predicting a rapprochement to conservative or neo-liberal politics and its disappearance from the scene of the radical Left. The 'hardcore' anti-Germans of the *Bahamas* journal, meanwhile, seem to take the logical consequence of the impossibility of combining their version of critical theory with practical, collective action. In the call for a

recent conference, *Bahamas* distance themselves from the anti-German label precisely because it has given the German Left the appearance of trying to draw lessons from Auschwitz once again: "The conference [...] does explicitly not call itself anti-German and the organisers dispense with being part of a practical solidarity with Israel" (Bahamas 2009).

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Comunicação: indicadores históricos e culturais do Pina

(Communication: the historical and cultural indicators of Pina)

Maria Cristina Guimarães Oliveira e Odalisca Moraes

Resumo

O Brasil é um país que se caracteriza por uma grande diversidade social e cultural. Num contexto histórico de desigualdades, como se tornou o caso brasileiro é absolutamente necessário que se possam exercer efetivamente os direitos políticos visando à conquista definitiva dos direitos sociais e o enfrentamento dos desafios impostos pelo desemprego e pela heterogênea distribuição da riqueza. Tomou-se como campo de análise a Comunidade do Bode, no bairro do Pina – Recife, que apresenta um alarmante quadro de ausência de participação, de organização social apropriada e especialmente, sem recursos para a sobrevivência, pela defasagem de seus processos produtivos. Como as autoras desenvolveram pesquisa no local, foi possível o acompanhamento e a observação de grupos populares em busca de alternativas comunicacionais, o que possibilitou a constatação da riqueza cultural (artística e histórica) que caracteriza as comunidades populares, construtoras da própria história e que vêm resistindo, ainda que de forma subalterna, à apropriação, pelos meios massivos de comunicação, de suas raízes e sobretudo, dos seus vínculos de identidade social. Dentro de sua dinâmica histórica, o bairro do Pina revela grupos, tradições e uma cultura ainda permanente e presente entre seus integrantes; no qual a revelação da comunicação surge com um forte indicador de resgate da história cultural da comunidade.

Introdução

O espaço comunicativo tem uma notável capacidade de mixar coisas que aparentemente não se misturam como discursos díspares e transformá-los numa única massa com grande poder simbólico, objetivando a construção de um imaginário que venha a corroborar ou transformar a identidade do espectador. No espaço comunicativo a ideologia é o principal fomentador do discurso e se pensarmos a ideologia como resultado, especialmente do conflito de classes, esta é motivada essencialmente por questões econômicas e políticas que se tornam

formadoras da consciência e são transmitidas em todo o espaço que perfaz o âmbito comunicacional. Entendemos então, que o espaço de atuação comunicacional se estende desde o diálogo, até o espetáculo amplamente produzido pelas identidades que resistem e permanecem. O contato com comunidade excluídas, mediante o acompanhamento de experiências alternativas de organização e de sobrevivência, desenvolvidas por grupos populares mais organizados, nos dá conta da especificidade comunicacional desses setores, principalmente aquela no âmbito do associativismo e do trabalho no espaço e interesse populares; na medida em que encontram dificuldades de pensar (e realizar) o coletivo. Em certas sociedades, a formação da opinião é exercida por diferentes agentes, através do uso das manifestações culturais que, utilizando-se do espetáculo, se dirige de forma direta à sua platéia, comunicando-se através de metáforas qualificadas e proporcionadas por aquilo que é artístico.

A comunidade do Bode – Pina possui vários grupos artísticos em múltiplos ramos da produção cultural (maracatus, blocos de carnaval, cirandas, grupos de reggae) que perfazem a estrutura da comunidade e propiciam o estabelecimento de um processo comunicacional extremamente rico e valoroso aos grupos culturais; assim ao possibilitarem a expressão dos cidadãos, auxiliam na aquisição de uma melhor bagagem cultural, auto-estima e consciência crítica. Especialmente, incentivam através da comunicação o fortalecimento de laços comunitários e permitem, por exemplo, apoio ao estabelecimento de uma nova cadeia produtiva de pesca de mariscos, dentro da atividade tradicional da pesca na comunidade, ainda que essa atividade seja realizada em bases artesanais. O que favorece a geração de empregos e a interação social, através de uma comunicação participativa - instrumento de desenvolvimento social solidário e sustentável.

O que vai ao encontro da opinião de Semeraro (2000) quando defende a opinião de Gramsci sobre ideologia e construção do conhecimento e mostra exatamente este detalhe: a capacidade de luta, da formação de sua autonomia, da organização e das conquistas sociais abertas a uma história que não garante nada a priori. Então, para serem efetivas, as conquistas das classes subalternas não podem se restringir às reivindicações econômicas à produção e ao consumo material, mas devem inaugurar uma nova maneira de pensar, instaurando valores e relações sociais que promovam à participação, a criatividade, a construção de um conhecimento democrático que permita um progresso intelectual de massa.

Espetáculos culturais são as formas mais vivas e completas de comunicação. Uma comunicação direta e humana, provocando e sentindo a reação da platéia. A mensagem assim se transfere por intermédio de todos os sentidos, num exemplo de percepção total. Pelo exposto é aceitável se apontar para o fortalecimento dos processos de comunicação entre os integrantes da Favela do Bode, o que mostra por sua vez, que é possível se transpor à ética de interesses individuais para a ética do coletivo. Há um elemento comum de igualdade, que se materializa tanto nas expressas condições sociais, como nos laços de solidariedade encontrados entre

alguns grupos da referida comunidade. Observamos que a comunicação está, corretamente, associada ao sentido que as pessoas dão às articulações, confirmando estudos das mediações e das construções próprias de cada realidade.

É possível, então, concordando-se com Martín-Barbero (2002) afirmar que os modos de viver e de perceber, sobretudo as mediações apontam para a essência da questão, ou seja – a latente disputa por uma melhor posição na corrida pela vida. O que exige uma economia forte, que garanta sobrevivência para todos, uma consciência social e a crença na concepção de um Estado mais qualificado, pois é o instrumento mais decisivo para implantação e funcionamento de políticas sociais apropriadas a cada realidade.

Metodologia

O trabalho se desenvolveu numa perspectiva explicativa, com apoio na literatura para o entendimento das questões culturais e seu tratamento dentro do modelo comunicacional estabelecido. Para Menezes (2002) a pessoa que estabelece uma relação com os meios experimenta a necessidade de se encontrar com outros para sentir-se sujeito, assim evidencia-se que a recepção comporta e contribui para o exercício da cidadania. A abordagem da comunidade de forma participativa permite que se interpretem as múltiplas determinações que interferem na comunidade do Bode. De tal modo, a realidade ao se tornar compreensível, permite novas idéias e teorias elaboradas, isto porque a teoria não surge de uma observação neutra de fatos isolados e sim de sua própria realidade, escreve Franco (1998).

Resultados e discussão

Os grupos organizados e representados sob a forma de bens culturais tais como: blocos carnavalescos, maracatus, grupos de reggae têm sua estrutura minada pela razão comunicativa imposta, pois quando um desses grupos se vê na contingência de comunicar-se com a totalidade dos cidadãos da referida comunidade tem que recorrer aos modelos comunicativos de longo alcance, esses estabelecidos na forma de mídia. Porque a necessidade nunca é sanada, uma vez que os grandes grupos não veiculam informações sem um retorno econômico (são muito comerciais) e dimensiona-se, além disso, a grupos de cidadãos muito específicos, ficando a comunidade sem um veículo "próprio". Neste caso, a rádio comunitária surge como a alternativa de difusão das atividades dos grupos culturais ao tempo em que são indicadores da "vida" comunicacional da comunidade.

Buscando estabelecer as principais ações de assessoria e acompanhamento para influenciar o desenvolvimento e a integração esperada na comunidade da Favela do Bode, podemos afirmar que há uma aproximação em andamento. Isto porque, na perspectiva dos chamados elementos históricos e culturais, a comunicação favorece a recuperação da tradição humanista das ciências da cultura e rejeitam reduções positivistas da comunicação. Assim os diferentes grupos existentes na comunidade do Pina negociam espaços de influência, buscam espaços de poder e utilizam o contexto da história e da cultura como uma variável intermitente, cuja recepção se dá num processo construtivo e dialético. O diálogo aberto juntamente com a participação de todos deixa evidenciado o papel da comunicação como determinante da cultura da comunidade e a possibilidade de resgate de uma história, que é de luta.

Considerações finais

A comunicação como produto da interação social e do conhecimento humano deve produzir o conhecimento do social e dos relacionamentos produzidos. Na comunidade do Bode, o processo cultural, artístico e histórico se entrelaça com a questão social — ali, ainda bastante indefinida é onde a economia e a política se tornam indissociáveis. Esse entrelaçamento deve surgir da equação pela solução de seus atributos essenciais: pois são cidadãos de direito, mas parcamente inclusos na dinâmica social mais geral resultado do sistema econômico dominante. A perspectiva é a de encontrar instrumentos que ampliem a participação da população em sua busca por democratizar o poder e onde, a comunicação, sob todas as formas possa ser utilizada pelo interesse coletivo

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Extensão ou comunicação? O audiovisual como um instrumento facilitador da comunicação no assentamento do MST Olga Benário

(Extension or Communication? Audiovisual technologies as aids to communication in the Olga Benário MST settlement)

Lívia Moreira Alcântara e Elder Gomes Barbosa

Resumo

Este trabalho visa compartilhar com os moradores do assentamento Olga Benário, do Movimento dos Trabalhadores rurais sem Terra (MST), localizado no município de Visconde do Rio Branco - MG, a experiência da produção de um vídeo popular sobre a construção das habitações no local. A partir da descrição das atividades realizadas para a produção do vídeo, far-se-á uma discussão acerca do processo comunicativo estabelecido na comunidade, utilizando-se de conceitos envolvendo a extensão e a comunicação. Pretende-se mostrar como as metodologias utilizadas para a construção do vídeo contribuem para a auto-reflexão dos sujeitos envolvidos na atividade, tanto no tocante da habitação, quanto na relação entre assentados e técnicos que estão participando do projeto de habitação.

Abstract

This action note intends to share the experience of producing a popular video about local ways of building dwellings, made with the residents of the rural settlement Olga Benário, part of the Landless People's Movement (MST), situated in the city of Visconde do Rio Branco – MG. From describing the activities involved in producing the video, it develops a discussion of communicative processes located within the community, using concepts of extension and communication. The note aims to show how the methodologies used for the construction of the habitations contribute to the reflexive processes of the citizens involved in actions around housing issues, and the relationship between the residents and the technicians who participate in the housing project.

Introdução

O projeto de extensão "Comunicação Popular: do diálogo com as famílias à produção audiovisual"[1] tem o objetivo de possibilitar a documentação audiovisual da construção de moradias no assentamento Olga Benário, área organizada pelo Movimento dos Trabalhadores sem Terra (MST), localizada no município de Visconde do Rio Branco - MG. Este atua de forma conjunta com outro projeto de extensão, o "Terra Crua: uma alternativa para a produção de habitação social em assentamentos rurais", responsável pela condução do processo de construção participativa das casas.

Ambos projetos são vinculados ao Programa Institucional de Bolsas de Extensão (PIBEX), e não entendem a atividade de extensão enquanto o ato de estender o conhecimento ao outro e sim como uma relação de aprendizado mútuo que se dá através da articulação de "pensamento-linguagem-contexto ou realidade" e, além disto, através do compartilhamento de convicções (Freire, 1977: p. 70 e 72).

Essa discussão levantada por Paulo Freire, relativa à atividade de extensão enquanto uma prática dialógica (comunicação) ou de invasão cultural e escravizadora do homem (extensão), é ainda pertinente nos dias de hoje, dada a necessidade de democratização do conhecimento científico e de redescoberta da coletividade.

Neste sentido, através da descrição do processo de produção audiovisual, realizado durante o ano de 2009, no Assentamento Olga Benário, far-se-á nesse artigo uma reflexão sobre a proposta do projeto "Comunicação Popular" relativa à construção coletiva do conhecimento através da comunicação.

Breve histórico do projeto "Comunicação Popular".

A aproximação entre o projeto "Comunicação Popular" e o assentamento Olga Benário iniciou-se através do projeto Terra Crua, que conta com uma equipe interdisciplinar e já havia começado a atuar no local na construção participativa das habitações do assentamento. A partir da avaliação de que era necessário documentar a experiência, inseriu-se mais uma área de conhecimento na equipe, a comunicação social.

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[1] O projeto "Comunicação Popular: do diálogo com as famílias à produção audiovisual" tem como objetivo participar junto às famílias (do assentamento Olga Benário) do diálogo conduzido pelo projeto Terra Crua, relativo às decisões sobre a concepção e construção das moradias, atuando como interlocutor e possibilitando a documentação audiovisual do processo por parte dos assentados.

O grupo passou a ser composto por estudantes e educadores da arquitetura, economia doméstica, engenharia ambiental, engenharia civil e comunicação social. E para que as cinco áreas dialogassem e "acertassem os ponteiros", toda a equipe passou por um estudo teórico e coletivo de textos relacionados à habitação, às técnicas alternativas de construção, à extensão e à comunicação.

Paralelamente a estes estudos, aconteceram reuniões com a presença dos moradores do assentamento Olga Benário para que fossem identificadas as necessidades habitacionais das famílias e construído um calendário de encontros entre os assentados e o projeto "Terra Crua", norteando as ações.

A equipe de "Comunicação Popular" é composta por uma professora[2] do curso de comunicação social da Universidade Federal da Viçosa, dois estudantes também da área de comunicação, um técnico da Associação Estadual de Cooperação Agrícola (AESCA) que trabalha para o assentamento. Quanto aos recursos técnicos, a equipe disponibiliza apenas de uma filmadora mini-DV e câmera fotográfica.

A temática habitação como objeto de comunicação

A transformação da realidade necessita de um esforço coletivo, como explica Freire (1992):

> Não há, realmente, pensamento isolado, na medida em que não há homem isolado (Freire, 1977: p.66)

Nesse sentido, se faz necessário uma abordagem da comunicação em uma perspectiva que incentive o diálogo entre todas as partes envolvidas no referido processo comunicacional, que contenha em sua base o próprio pensamento da comunidade sobre a sociedade e suas problemáticas. Tendo em vista isso, o projeto "Comunicação Popular" se orienta na perspectiva da comunicação popular, que, segundo Peruzzo (1998) é:

> [...] resultado de um processo, realizando-se na própria dinâmica dos movimentos populares, de acordo com suas necessidades. Nessa perspectiva, uma de suas características essenciais é a questão participativa voltada para a mudança social. (Peruzzo, 1998: p. 115)

Mais especificamente, sua forma de produção, vai ao encontro com o conceito de vídeo popular, que, nos dizeres de Santoro (1989) é:

> Uma tentativa de conceituação da expressão 'vídeo popular' deve partir, no nosso entender, do reconhecimento do conjunto das produções e dos modos de atuação dos grupos de vídeo junto aos movimentos populares. (Santoro, 1989: p. 59)

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[2] Soraya Maria Ferreira Vieira é Soraya Ferreira é doutora em Comunicação e Semiótica pela PUC/SP e doscente da Universidade Federal de Viçosa.

Peruzzo (1998) e Santoro (1989) estão em sintonia com Freire (1977) ao explicitarem que a comunicação popular é construída conjuntamente com os movimentos sociais. Santoro (1989), ao aprofundar o conceito de vídeo popular, destrincha esta parceria com os movimentos sociais. Ele aponta que o vídeo popular pode ser: produções de vídeo por grupos ou instituições ligados diretamente aos movimentos populares; produções de grupos independentes que partem dos interesses e da ótica dos movimentos populares; processos de produções que contam com a participação direta dos integrantes dos movimentos sociais e o processo de exibição de programas de interesses de movimentos populares com o objetivo de formação e informação das classes populares. (Santoro, 1989: p. 60-61)

Tomando como base a explanação de SANTORO (1989), pode-se dizer que a experiência de audiovisual no assentamento Olga Benário é uma iniciativa de vídeo popular, já que é uma ação de um projeto, o "Comunicação Popular", diretamente ligado ao MST, que trabalha de forma conjunta com o movimento.

Quanto ao tema, o vídeo aborda a habitação, assunto de extremo interesse para os movimentos sociais, inclusive para o MST, que enfrenta problemas com a política de habitação do Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (INCRA).

A construção das moradias em assentamentos de reforma agrária do INCRA acontece através do acesso ao crédito da habitação após a aprovação do Plano de Desenvolvimento do Assentamento (PDA). O INCRA disponibiliza um modelo de casa popular. Mas este modelo de habitação não é compatível com o modo de vida do campo e apresenta inúmeros problemas como, por exemplo, o tamanho insuficiente e o uso materiais de construção de má qualidade. O assentado poderia construir um modelo de casa diferente, mas esta alteração demandaria a apresentação de um projeto arquitetônico e a comprovação de sua viabilidade. Tais demandas necessitam da contratação de um profissional para que se cumpram, ou seja, a alteração do projeto arquitetônico inicial, disponibilizado pelo INCRA, torna-se inviável para os assentados.

 No assentamento Olga Benário este processo está se dando de maneira diferenciada, pois a comunidade conta com a mediação do grupo de extensão "Terra Crua: uma alternativa para a produção de habitação social em assentamentos rurais", que está desenvolvendo um processo participativo de projetação arquitetônica a partir do resgate de conhecimentos locais e da capacitação técnica dos assentados na área da construção civil.

A construção das casas no assentamento Olga Benário representa uma experiência importante em relação ao problema da habitação enfrentado pelo Brasil e à luta por moradia travada pelos movimentos sociais. Deve, portanto, ser discutida dentro da

perspectiva da luta destes movimentos sociais, a partir da ótica da luta de classes, como assinala Engels (1979):

> Para pôr fim à crise da habitação não há senão um recurso: eliminar pura e simplesmente a exploração e a opressão da classe trabalhadora pela classe dominante. (Engels, 1979: p. 1)

A documentação audiovisual do processo de construção das habitações no assentamento Olga Benário tem, assim, a finalidade de, através de uma experiência vivenciada em um assentamento do MST, trazer à tona acúmulos teóricos e práticos no tocante à habitação, em um formato acessível aos assentados e à população de forma geral. A idéia é que o vídeo se torne um material de formação e contribua principalmente para a discussão das políticas públicas habitacionais.

O tema da habitação e, mais especificamente, a construção das casas no assentamento, constituem o objeto da comunicação, partilhado pelos técnicos da equipe do "Terra Crua", do "Comunicação Popular" e pelos assentados. Como afirma Freire (1992):

> [...] a comunicação eficiente exige que os sujeitos interlocutores incidam sua "ad-miração" sobre o mesmo objeto; que o expressem através de signos lingüísticos pertencentes ao universo comum a ambos, para que assim compreendam de maneira semelhante o objeto da comunicação. (Freire, 1977: p. 70)

Detalharemos a seguir como acontece a interação entre estes sujeitos, numa relação horizontal de aprendizado a partir do contato entre os saberes: popular e científico e, utilizando o diálogo como principal ferramenta.

O diálogo com as famílias

O contato da equipe de comunicação com os assentados aconteceu por intermédio do grupo "Terra Crua", que já havia iniciado suas atividades no início do ano de 2008. Através de conversas com os assentados a equipe de comunicação propôs que fosse documentada a experiência que eles vivenciariam na projetação e construção coletiva de suas habitações. A comunidade consentiu que fossem filmadas as reuniões mediadas pelo projeto "Terra Crua" e a gravação de entrevistas

As reuniões acontecem por núcleos de bases, conforme a organização do MST em que as famílias são divididas em núcleos para facilitar o cumprimento das demandas, discussões e tomadas de decisões. Através desta estrutura, já existente no assentamento, o "Terra Crua" atua. Assim, as reuniões para discussão dos aspectos arquitetônicos e formulação de plantas das casas são realizadas nos três núcleos de famílias existentes no Olga Benário: Santa Helena, Lênin e União.

Inicialmente, foi proposto que os assentados participassem diretamente do processo de produção do vídeo, apoderando-se, inclusive, dos equipamentos de filmagem. Porém, esta ação não se concretizou. Os assentados envolvidos no processo de construção participativa de suas casas desempenham diversas atividades agrícolas, criação de animais e ocupações políticas relativas ao MST, restando pouco tempo para que dediquem à produção do vídeo. Outro motivo é que, para o assentamento Olga Benário, a atual conjuntura (local) não é favorável à centralização de assentados para a produção deste vídeo. No momento, outras demandas, como a construção das casas, exigem dedicação e são prioridades para eles.

Cogitou-se a possibilidade de se inserir jovens assentados na equipe. Porém, as reuniões sobre a moradia acontecem em horários que estes jovens estão na escola. Além disto, o assentamento passa por problemas internos quanto aos seus jovens, que estão saindo para trabalhar nas cidades vizinhas, se desligando da dinâmica interna do movimento.

A participação da comunidade na produção do vídeo vem acontecendo em outros níveis. Se, por um lado, não houve sucesso nesta total inserção dos assentados no processo de produção do vídeo, por outro, esta experiência pôde ser encarada com relativa naturalidade. Pois, como explica Peruzzo (1998):

> Concretamente, a participação popular na comunicação comunitária pode significar, numa gradação crescente: o simples envolvimento das pessoas, geralmente ocasional, no nível das mensagens, ou seja, dando entrevistas, avisos, depoimentos e sugestões, ou cantando, pedindo a inserção de músicas e aderindo a concursos; elaborar matérias (notícias, poesias, desenhos); compartilhar a produção global do jornalzinho, do programa de rádio etc.; tomar parte na definição da linha política, do conteúdo, do planejamento, da edição, do manejo de equipamentos; compartilhar o processo de gestão da instituição comunicacional como um todo. (Peruzzo 1998: p. 142-143)

As reuniões de planejamento das atividades arquitetônicas acontecem sempre entre a equipe do projeto de extensão "Terra Crua", o projeto de "Comunicação Popular" e o técnico da AESCA. Este técnico está diretamente ligado ao assentamento, tendo conhecimento geral das necessidades, perspectivas e posições do movimento em âmbito nacional e local. Além disto, ele também faz parte da equipe de comunicação, auxiliando nos direcionamentos do vídeo.

Os comunicadores responsáveis pelo vídeo, no caso a equipe do projeto "Comunicação popular", se entendem como sujeitos no processo de luta pela reforma agrária, posicionando-se ao lado dos movimentos sociais. Tal ponto, por si só não justifica o caráter participativo, mas a escolha de classe dos comunicadores contribui para que o trabalho desenvolvido esteja em consonância com a ótica da comunidade envolvida (Santoro, 1989: p 108).

Quanto às entrevistas, elas têm sido realizadas em dias extras às reuniões relativas ao projeto arquitetônico, agendando-se previamente com as famílias. Realizou-se até o momento duas baterias de entrevistas: uma com o núcleo União e outra com o núcleo Lênin. Para estas entrevistas construímos um roteiro aberto, com perguntas mais gerais, buscando não limitar o entrevistado a perguntas pontuais.

Em relação ao conteúdo, buscou-se explorar: o passado de moradia dos assentados; informações relacionadas às suas origens (rural ou urbana); e a opinião dos assentados com relação às mudanças das plantas arquitetônicas construídas coletivamente por eles em relação à planta proposta pelo INCRA.

Metodologicamente, estas entrevistas foram realizadas através de um bate-papo, dando espaço para que os assentados falassem livremente, sem ocorrer um bombardeio de perguntas. Através da prosa, puxando assunto da casa em si, deixamos que o assentado expusesse suas angústias e sonhos. Procuramos quebrar com a lógica das entrevistas do telejornalismo, que ficam totalmente sob poder do entrevistador. Sabendo do poder do comunicador, que detém a câmera, entendemos como necessária a ampliação da possibilidade de expressão dos entrevistados (assentados) e valorizamos os elementos não previstos trazidos por eles.

Para a documentação foi escolhido o formato vídeo devido às facilidades que esta tecnologia oferece, principalmente no que se refere à comunicação com as massas. O vídeo tem um potencial de comunicação enorme, podendo constituir-se em um material de formação e conscientização. Como aponta Santoro 1986:

> É isso que dá ao vídeo sua razão de existir, quando se pensa na sua relação com os movimentos populares, e tal tecnologia tem, no momento, oferecido um espaço de atuação, sem que o acreditemos revolucionário e transformador por si só, mas como mais um instrumento de comunicação, bastante apto à memória, divulgação e discurso dos movimentos populares. (Santoro, 1986: p.170)

A documentação do processo se dá através do formato documentário. Nichols (2005) define dois tipos de documentários: os de satisfação de desejos ou ficção e os de representação social, assim descrito:

> Os documentários de representação social são os que normalmente chamamos de não-ficção. Estes filmes representam de forma tangível aspectos de um mundo que já ocupamos que compartilhamos. Torna visível e audível, de maneira distinta, a matéria que é feita a realidade social de acordo com a seleção e organização realizada pelo cineasta. (Nichols, 2005: p. 26)

O formato documentário é apropriado para o registro de um acontecimento que não permite o conhecimento total do seu desenrolar e foi a forma mais adequada que encontramos de expor este fato.

Quanto ao estilo de narração do documentário, excluímos o *off* jornalístico, buscando nas próprias falas dos entrevistados o fio condutor para o vídeo. Não negamos que a própria organização destas falas já é uma narração exterior, mas pretende-se externalizar teórica e esteticamente o caráter participativo.

Para fazer a conexão da experiência do assentamento com os acúmulos teóricos e práticos que existem no âmbito da habitação busca-se arquivos de vídeos que tratam do tema a fim de inseri-los no documentário.

Quando concluído o vídeo, pretende-se exibi-lo para a comunidade e então serão feitas alterações com base na avaliação dos assentados.

A construção das habitações ainda não terminou. A equipe do "Terra Crua" encontra-se em fase de produção do projeto arquitetônico de execução baseado nas discussões e escolhas das famílias. O subsídio para a construção das casas ainda não foi liberado pelo INCRA.

Considerações finais

Os membros do projeto "Comunicação Popular" acreditam que um processo de comunicação participativa é uma das maneiras de se realizar uma ação educativa-libertadora. Por isso, a equipe atua de maneira conjunta com os moradores do assentamento Olga Benário, em busca de uma prática que seja mais comunicativa do que extensionista. O que vem a respeitar a própria lógica estrutural do MST, que se caracteriza por ter a participação direta dos assentados na tomada de decisões concernentes ao seu espaço.

Dentro disso, o formato vídeo ajuda no entendimento do processo de construção de habitações, conduzido pelo "Terra Crua", por parte comunidade, que, em sua maioria, é composta por analfabetos. Logo, o produto final carrega essa especificidade dos moradores, que são membros concretos no processo de confecção do mesmo, já que ele é feito com o uso de uma linguagem acessível aos moradores. O vídeo, então, se constitui como uma prática eficiente de comunicação entre técnicos e moradores, no desejo de se buscar uma linguagem comum aos dois mundos.

Para essas pessoas que não tem acesso ao mundo letrado, o vídeo é parte fundamental no processo de conscientização. Sendo esse despertar crítico imprescindível para a busca de novos paradigmas na sociedade, como fala Freire (1977):

> (...) e sua representação crítica repousa numa crença também crítica: a crença em que os homens podem fazer e refazer as coisas; podem transformar o mundo. Crença em que, fazendo e refazendo as coisas e transformando o mundo, os homens podem superar a situação em que *estão sendo* um quase

> *não ser* e passar a ser um *estar sendo* em busca de *ser mais.* (Freire, 1977: p.74)

Quando finalizado, pretende-se ainda que o vídeo seja exposto em outras localidades que passam pelo mesmo problema, sendo ele, por si só, fomentador de debates acerca das políticas públicas de habitação no Brasil e das próprias técnicas metodológicas utilizadas pelo "Terra Crua". O relato que expomos aqui é apenas o início de uma reflexão sobre a comunicação popular e o desafio dos comunicadores engajados nesta luta quanto à prática extensionista da mesma.

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The Bil'in model of wall resistance

Iyad Burnat

In the occupied Palestinian West Bank, a 770 km Separation Wall weaves in and out of Palestinian towns and villages separating Palestinians from their homes and land.

The construction of this wall by Israel isolates 29 Palestinian towns (an area of 216,567 dunums or 54141 acres) from the West Bank and leaves them on the Israeli side of the wall.

Within the West Bank remain 138 villages with an area of 554,370 dunums unable to access the towns that are on the other side of the Wall. The construction of this separation wall is set to illegally isolate and fragment 12.6% of the total area of the West Bank, or 5,661 sq. kilometers of Palestinian land.

These Palestinian lands seized by Israel are especially important as they are the most fertile, and often provide an underground source of water. In addition, much of the land seized surrounds Jerusalem.

Confiscation of Palestinian land is further aggravated by the construction of illegal Israeli settlements beyond the Green Line.

Palestinians are forbidden from living in these Jewish-only colonies and using the roads that connect them to one another. Barriers and checkpoints further divide Palestinian land into islands and cantons, thus leaving the facts on the ground incompatible with the possibility of establishing contiguous Palestinian state. These conditions have paved the way for a strong movement of popular resistance, and this is what we have done.

Bil'in, to the west of Ramallah, central West Bank, is a small Palestinian village surrounded by valleys and mountains, and situated in between Jaffa and Jerusalem.

Bil'in has a population of 1,800. Many people there work in agriculture. The people of Bil'in are good, simple people, who embrace freedom and peace and reject any notion of injustice or oppression.

Over the years, Israel's confiscation of land from Bil'in was used for the purpose of building illegal settlements. In 1980's, the settlement Mitat Oz was built on land belonging to the people of Bil'in. In 1990 Israel confiscated more land from Bil'in in order to build another settlement called Kiryat Sefer. Most recently, in 2002, Israel built a new settlement called Mitet yaaho on more land stolen from Bil'in villagers.

In April 2004 the Israeli government announced its intention to build the Separation Wall on even more land from the village of Bil'in. Quickly, the villager formed the Popular Committee Against the Wall and its Settlements (PCAWS).

The PCAWS coordinates with lawyers and legal advisers in order to represent citizens of Bil'in whose land was stolen for the development of illegal settlements or the construction of the Separation Wall. This committee prepares daily and weekly activities, organizing with support by international and Israeli activists.

Construction on the Separation Wall in Bil'in started by Israel's Military bulldozers on February 2 2005. The Separation Wall cuts through 2 kilometers of the villages land and is situated 5 kilometers east of the Green Line. It's bizarre placement is clearly not related to security as Israel regularly claims, but the theft of land and building of settlements.

In order to pave the way for these illegal activities, Israel has uprooted and destroyed nearly 1,000 olive trees owned by local farmers. Those olive trees, located on 2300 dunams of land west of the Separation Wall were considered to be Bil'in's main source of livelihood. Other land seized was used for growing grain, and vegetables, and sometimes used as pasture for livestock.

It is no surprise that the Separation Wall has significantly weakened the economic resources of the village. The land which remains accessible to the Bil'in residents on the eastern side of the Wall is mostly the built-up residential area.

This reality has required villagers to purchase land from neighboring villages, or migrate to Ramallah or Arab or foreign countries (so-called voluntary migration). For the families living in Bil'in, it is a choice either to live in the squalid conditions created by the occupation in the lowest levels of poverty or voluntary migration.

As villagers rejected both of those options, the only thing remained to them was the popular resistance in order to regain access and control over their land no matter what is the obstacles maybe. For Bil'in villagers, they are prepared to work until they see the demolition of this Wall and the illegal settlements from their land.

The struggle

The preparatory phase

I started this journey through the formation of the People's Committee, which is part of the National Committees against the Wall.

We worked closely with international peace activists, especially those with the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), to study the area and explore the possibilities available to us.

In addition to meeting with the lawyers in order to understand the legal status of the Separation Wall in Bil'in, we also coordinated with members of the PNA and explained to them the dangers of the Wall and encouraged them to act

quickly in their political capacity before construction as set to begin and destroy the land.

The start

On 20 February 2005, the bulldozers began the construction of the Separation Wall in Bil'in. The popular demonstrations in Bil'in began quickly in order to counter these illegal activities and saw the participation of all members of society in Bil'in including youth, women, and children.

The women in Bil'in began meeting on a daily basis in the town's senate in order to become more organized in their resistance. Weekly marches were held, one on Friday and the other on another day (often Sunday). Marches have also been carried out during other social and national holidays such as Women's Day and Children's Day.

Creativity

Popular resistance in Bil'in has taken many forms. Our weekly demonstrations in front of the Wall include the use of drums, boxes, re-enacting imprisonment, model coffins, tombstones, adhesive tape, mirrors, a snake, a Wall model, and a large Palestinian flag.

In addition, the residents of Bil'in have portrayed characters from the film *Avatar* and the personalities of Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela.

We chose these various characters in order to draw attention to their important work in human rights, and civil rights. In the case of Mandela, we portrayed him due to his insistence on the rights of the Palestinians and the destruction of their lives after the building of this Wall.

On another occasion the people in Bil'in, who, as previously mentioned are mostly simple farmers, put themselves in sealed barrels in front of the Wall on their stolen land. It was an interesting paradox where the Israeli Occupation Forces used the ugliest, most violent means of suppression to remove the Palestinians from the barrels and the Palestinian farmers peacefully protested the confiscation and theft of their land.

Despite regular oppression, these creative methods of protest have played an important role in increasing the persistence and presence of international solidarity activists and strengthening their relation with the local community in Bil'in. the Israeli and international activists have also helped in getting more media coverage to the struggle in Bil'in.

The struggle on the other side of the wall

Israeli solidarity activists had played an important role in exposing the illegal forgery cases groups like the municipal council of the illegal settlement (Modi'in

Illit), construction companies (Green Park) and (Heftsiba) and some staff in the civil administration of the military.

Those people began building the illegal settlement of Matityahu East in 2002-2003 as their government was invading all West Bank cities, they started construction without obtaining a license from their government, and the fact that Palestinian farmers were afraid to reach the construction site also helped them.

The community in Bil'in responded by setting up mobile homes close to their confiscated land and near the newly built illegal settlements. Interestingly the Palestinian owners of the land are not allowed to live on their land and must watch as it is used to build settlements for Jews only.

One of the major struggles has been for the farmers to continue to work on their land after the building of the Wall. The Popular Committee urged the citizens to be present on their land and work to the best of their ability.

There are some significant obstacles to this. The Wall was completed in April 2006. Since then, the only access to it has been though a military gate manned by Israeli forces. Passage through this military gate has required the Palestinian owners of land to comply with military issued curfews, apply for permits issued by Israel in order to access the land and face arbitrary denials when trying to cross.

Results of the Bil'in resistance

1. On 4th \ 9 \ 2007, the Israeli Supreme Court ruled that the placement of the Wall was illegal as it did not meet the justification provided by the Israeli army (that it was built for "security purposes").

The court recommended that the Israeli Army demolish the wall and push it back a length of 500 meters or approximately 1000 dunums in order to decrease the negative effect it was having on the indigenous population. In reality, the Wall was moved less than half of the recommended length. This achievement, although not a final victory, keeps us hopeful that our efforts are continuing to bring us closer to a just decision to this land confiscation.

2. The military gate to remain open during day and increase those hours as needed.

3. Demolition of some houses in the settlement and to bring some pieces of land inside the settlement and its surroundings to its Palestinian owners.

4. Bil'in has become a symbol of popular resistance to the Wall and settlements, on the nationally and internationally level. The village also has become the focus of international solidarity.

5. The resistance of Bil'in village have unified the community against the Israeli occupation overcoming many problems between different Palestinian political rival groups.

6. Bil'in has become a touristic site national and internationally.

7. The Popular Committee Against the Wall won four local/international awards:

> 1. Palestine Prize for Excellence and Creativity Award discretionary nominal
>
> 2. Yasser Arafat Award for achievement and worth $25,000 in 2007
>
> 3. Carl von Ossietsky Award from Germany, in 2008
>
> 4. Award for innovation from the Arab Thought Foundation in Kuwait and worth 50,000 in 2009.

8. Work, lectures, workshops and international conferences to resist the occupation and the wall and settlements were held in order to spread the experience of Bil'in.

9. On May 26 2008 Ashraf Ibrahim Abu-Rahma temporarily stopped the expansion of a settlement by obstructing the use of a crane used to expand the settlement.

Elements that contributed to the success of the experiment

1 – An enlightened young leadership, keen to preserve national unity

2 - Israeli and international solidarity activists

3 – Consistency and continuity

4 - Creativity and innovation in ideas for resistance

5 – The Bil'in website and up to date information for the world

Israeli military response

Throughout our protests, we have been met with bulldozers working on the wall, the army using sticks to beat up demonstrators, the usage of tear gas, stun grenades and rubber bullets on civilian protesters.

The Israeli army has experimented with new weapons such as salt and electrical weapons, Alvsolip sponges and hoses. Hundreds of participants have been injured, some on many occasions.

The Israeli army has used collective punishment on the villagers by setting up barricades in the town to prevent workers from leaving to work on the other side of the wall and preventing citizens from obtaining permits to cross into Israel. Curfews are regularly imposed, especially on Fridays, to prevent international peace activists and press from reaching the area.

The Israeli Army may declare all of Bil'in a "closed military zone" and order the residents to stay in their homes on Fridays or face arrest for their participation in the popular resistance. In addition, the Army tried to deploy undercover

units, among the protesters in order to gain any information that may justify their excessive use of force on the people of Bil'in.

The village is the target of night raids where the Israeli forces instill fear and panic in the people by suing stun grenades, barging into homes, beating and arresting people including children under the age of 16, all for their participation in the weekly demonstrations.

The price paid by the village of Bil'in

1 – Israeli military fire killed Bassem Abu Rahma on April 17 2009. Abu Rahma was a local organizer of the weekly protests against the wall in Bil'in. He died after a tear gas bomb fired by an Israeli soldier hit him in the chest.

2 – In the course of the six years long struggle against the wall in Bil'in at least 1200 people have been injured by the army fire; 10 of whom seriously injured.

3 - 85 people from the village have been arrested by the military, including members of the People's Committee and their children.

4 - Breaking into homes and night raids by the Israeli forces has caused many psychological problems for children in the village.

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Alternative International Labour Communication by Computer After Two Decades[1]

Peter Waterman

Will offline social movement organisations be willing to cede control as ordinary people increasingly leverage social networking tools to channel their own activities? The destruction of hierarchies online means that top-down organisations will face increasing pressure from members to permit more rank-and-file debate and input. This is a healthy process and a long time in coming. If traditional organisations are to embrace the dynamism of the social networking sphere and move beyond simply posting op-eds on *Huffington Post* [a US website - PW] written by union presidents or NGO executive directors, they will have to cede significant control. Organisations that resist this trend will become increasingly irrelevant, online and offline. (Brecher, Costello[2] and Smith, 2009)

Rather than having more representatives or improving representation, rather even than having a form of direct democracy where 'the people' get to vote for many more purposes than merely electing leaders, the alterglobalisation movement suggests a form of democracy that rejects all formal and fixed representation... Through decentralisation and connectivity, decisions that affect an entire network of people can, in principle, be discussed at every node of that network and then decided through communication between nodes. This communication is carried out by people who act as very temporary 'representatives'...who have no decision-making power, but transmit the necessary information to make a collective decision – even a global one – in all the affected local contexts. (Maeckelbergh 2009)

[T]here is now a brief window of opportunity – a moment outside 'normal' time – where a network of social movements can actively form and radically reshape the world. To do so successfully, future movements must consciously try to avoid two distinct fates: either the dissolution into a decentralised network of loose clusters of relatively isolated groups, movements and individuals – the fate of the summit-hopping phase of the movement of movements – or a decline towards a centralised network of cadres, which severely damaged the movement in the Sixties. Our lines of flight from these dead-ends consist in wilfully pushing ourselves to learn from successful networks and evolve towards a mature distributed network with

[2] This was the last piece written by Tim Costello before his untimely death in late 2009. For Tim's life see the appreciation written by Jeremy Brecher in *Interface* 2/1.

abundant hubs and a powerful long tail: a movement with both mass participation and dynamic hubs of people and events, capable of evolving and responding rapidly to a fast-changing world. (Halpin and Summer 2008)

Although a primarily Turkish event, this conference (and international labour film festival) suggest that *alternative international labour communication by computer* – and discussion on such - was alive and well in 2010. See http://laborcomm.org/konferans-programi/.

Introduction

Early 2010 I launched an online survey on Alternative International Labour Comunication by Computer (AILCC) for this special issue of *Interface* (*Appendix 1*). Although this was sent out to maybe 20-30 relevant individuals or online projects, most of whom I personally knew, I received only two replies. This less-than-meagre response clearly raises more questions than it provides answers. It nonetheless provides a provocation to reflection by myself and, hopefully, to other experienced or would-be researchers. This is particularly so if such research is motivated by the general perspective on democracy suggested by Maeckelbergh, the questions, concerning the internet and movement organisations, raised above by Brecher, Costello and Smith, and the critical orientation towards 'our' networking of Halpin and Summer. In what follows I will 1) provide some background, 2) see what can be drawn out of the two responses, 3) indicate the increasingly varied and expanding terrain of AILCC, 4) consider the light thrown by some of the literature around the topic, The Conclusion will consider 'What is to be Done?'.

1. Background

A short history of a short history.[3] Once upon a time, even before the 'internet' and 'cyberspace' had entered coffee-break labour union discourse, Kristen Nygaard, a Norwegian computer pioneer and social democrat, tried hard and failed totally to convince the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to go where no international union federation had gone before (Graham 1982). The proposed name of his online project was Unite/Unité (Unidad being evidently considered irrelevant to such a project). One of the reasons for this failure was the idea that this should be a *decentralised* network.[4] Around the same time, various union activists, labour-support groups and academics began to explore the possibilities of the new information and communication technology (ICT) for networking labour internationally (Lee 1997, Waterman 2001, 2009). Whilst much

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[3] The following account invites better researched ones - but that goes for the rest of the paper also.

[4] When the ICFTU finally set up its own website in the mid-1990s, it was non-dialogical. And although the organization has now evolved into the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), its website remains a broadcasting, or one-to-many, site. For a more explicit expression of Left institutional fears of networking, see how the Socialist Workers Party in the UK responded to informal international networking amongst its members even in the new networked millenium (ISO/IST List 2002).

of this new wave was directed toward 'the shopfloor, the grassroots, and the community', the rise of neo-liberal globalisation led both to a decline in the informal and autonomous labour projects and the rise of national and inter/national *union* projects (Hodkinson 2001, Shostak 1999). International labour internet projects independent of the traditional unions did continue but were not much reflected upon (see, however, Robinson 2008, Waterman 2007). Meanwhile the dramatic birth of the 'global justice and solidarity movement' in the 2000s was both facilitated and stimulated by an explosion in cyberspace activity and self-reflection (Colectivo Política en Red 2007, Develtere and Huybrechs 2008, Fuster Morell Forthcoming, Jong, Shaw and Stammers 2005, Wainright et.al. 2008, Walch 1999).

My cyberspatial (dis)qualifications. The Waterman (2009) reference shows my involvement with questions of internationalism, communication/culture, ICT and labour in the 1980s-90s. One of the pieces here collected, from 1992, was entitled International Labour Communication by Computer. During the same period I was also involved with various online projects, attended numerous international conferences, and had intensive exchanges with a number of pioneers of international labour communication — including the two survey respondents, Eric Lee (of LabourStart) and Dave Hollis (then associated with LabourNet UK, LabourNet Germany, now of Netzwerk-IT). In the 1990s I set up two 'global solidarity' websites,[5] both of which faded or folded due to my being somewhat digitally-challenged. More recently, I have had a personal blog established for me on the bi-lingual *Choike* portal in Montevideo, am associated with the open-access online journal, Interface, and am developing, with Canadian union officer/intellectual, Brian Green, a WordPress blog. This is entitled ReinventingLabour ('in the light of capitalist globalisation, informatisation and the global justice and solidarity movement').[6] Looking back now I have the feeling that if I was ahead of the curve in the 1980s-90s, the curve — or was it a swoosh? - left me way behind in the 2000s. So this is also an attempt to catch up, or to at least encourage others, to take over the baton.

2. The Survey

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[5] This was with the crucial assistance of a Uruguayan former student, Daniel Chavez, now with the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam.

[6] Late-2010 I find myself balancing between ReinventingLabour and Eric Lee's new edition of UnionBook (for which see footnote 10 below). ReinventingLabour is an individualistic effort even if two of us are involved and requires certain webskills. UnionBook is, so far, open, unmonitored, hosts numerous groups and individuals — and requires minimal blog skills. Moreover, the latter allows RL to (also) have a group space here! Perhaps, on the cautionary principle (if anything can go wrong, it will), we would be advised to keep RL going independently.

I think the two respondents speak clearly - not to say bluntly - for themselves. They only require supplementing by reader access to the two sites concerned, Eric Lee's multilingual [LabourStart](#) and Dave Hollis' mostly German-language [NetzwerkIT](#). The two responses suggest radically different orientations, the first accepting the parameters and discourses of the traditional inter/national trade union organisations, the second a radical rejection of these in favour of the network form and the anarchist/autonomist tendency within the GJ&SM. The two projects, moreover, differ so much in scale of coverage (socio-geographically), reach (in terms of audience), participation (contributors), technology (functions), that it would be tempting to see these as binarily opposed - if not as Manichean opposites (Vice v. Virtue). This would, however, be misleading, and then on two grounds: 1) we are looking at just two responses/projects, with the respondents being both white, male, West European-based (Dave is from the UK, Eric from the US), both born 1955!; 2) Manichean oppositions, and even unloaded binary ones, are obstacles to an understanding of emancipatory ICT as a complex, contradictory and intertwined process (Halpin and Summer 2008).

I note in particular from Eric's response his

1. Unqualified identification with the traditional trade union movement;

2. Notion of union internationalism as somehow both virtuous and timeless

3. Distancing himself from the idea of 'media activism';

4. Unfamiliarity with the concept of gender bias.

5. Dismissal of the idea that new media would lead to an alternative to the traditional unions:

   > I know that in the 1990s there were some who argued that the new media would create something utterly new, something different from and even opposed to the existing trade union movement. That has not turned out to be the case, at least not from what I can see [...] Some of those who argued for some kind of new global solidarity movement based on the web as an alternative to unions have long-since disappeared from the scene, moving on to other things[...] Meanwhile, the same cumbersome, slow-moving, unfashionable unions that were to have been eclipsed by the new technology are still there, doing their job.

In sum, Eric Lee's notion of what he and his remarkable LabourStart project are doing is of applying/supplying ICT to this historical movement organisational form, of empowering, continuing, extending traditional unionism, of democratising it and increasing its capacity for solidarity activity.

I note, in particular, from Dave's response his

1. Favouring of labour networking and the newest global social movements over traditional trade union organisations;

2. Preference for (cautious) cooperation with individuals or 'projects' rather than organisations;

3. Recognition of gender bias in his project (without considering this problematic);

4. Favouring of 'transnational' (regardless of borders?) over the 'international' (a relationship between the nationally identified?), though his transnational practice seems in largely confined to Europe;

5. Belief in the power of alternative labour media to challenge, subvert or overcome union hierarchy and complicity with capital:

   Alternative labour media are something they cannot control and this often makes it dangerous to unions when they highlight/expose dubious union activities in general or in the workplace. You sometimes see the most unholy of alliances (union + management) when there are independent voices in the workforce.

In sum, Dave Hollis would seem to consider his modest ICT project as part of just that subversive/emancipatory effort Eric Lee dismisses. Largely confined to Europe and the German language, he nonetheless sees his project as part of the global justice and solidarity movement, though this appears to be more by identifying with than practically networking with it.[7]

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[7] Invited to comment on a draft of this paper, Dave Hollis interjected at this point:

This is not quite true. Yes, we see ourselves as part of the social movements. We also have networked with, for example, the *Sozialforum Nürnberg* in the direct case of the closure of the AEG factory in Nürnberg. See the social forum campaign, 'Jobkiller Electrolux', that is to be found at http://www.netzwerkit.de/projekte/electrolux/jobkiller.　Furthermore, we also host the SF's site. I do realise that it is a relatively small example. Although Electrolux, who lost about € 25 million in sales, may see it differently.

Even if we are largely European, btw, the UPS project is also linked from the US, it is an achievement in itself to have got that far.

The question of our attitude to the trade unions is something that needs to be better put. You are right as to our orientation and cautiousness. That said, we have cooperated with union organisations be they local (ver.di, Braunschweiger Zeitung) or national (ver.di, UPS/Galeere). In the latter case, ver.di directly links to us. [ver.di = German United Services Union – PW].

This 'co-operation' stems from our attitude of helping people to help themselves. If union branches or unions agree to this, they are welcome. However, we stick to our orientation and to the fact that individuals and not organisations participate in Netzwerk IT. (Email received 100610).

3. AILCC 2010

Eric Lee is right: the forward march of AILCC halted in the 1990s, but, like legendary US labour martyr, [Joe Hill](#), it never actually died. If one compares his with Dave Hollis' site, one could easily dismiss the latter. But whilst Eric's portal is a multi-functional, multilingual, innovatory and still-expanding project, and whilst he has recruited hundreds of correspondents, and has his news, solidarity campaigns and applications reproduced throughout international labour cyberspace, there are limitations to his project. And whilst Dave might seem to be running an alternative project that is both tiny and self-isolated, there are numerous other related projects, in Germany, in Europe and elsewhere that either survived the 1990s or that have grown up in parallel with the GJ&SM.

I do not have an overview of this expanding universe, far less can I here critically analyse or even simply categorise it. I can only list a number of interesting sites, of very different kinds, some of which may have survived or limped from the 1980s, some a few years or months old. Some may be no longer updating. They are listed in *Appendix 2*, with a little (self-) description for interested readers to explore, add to or analyse. A few comments:

- Some I only found whilst writing this piece, such as the remarkable bilingual *Sendika.Org*. Significant is that this comes from the borderlands between the Global North and the Global South.

- When anarchist activist [Emma Goldman](#) said that if she couldn't dance she had no interest in the revolution, she was making a critical remark about a continuing movement shortcoming. So, I find the *New Unionism Network* aesthetically outstanding, in part because it is even concerned with how it looks, and then because it clearly considers that labour activists have, or need, a sense of humour.

- The five or six sites addressed primarily to women workers or working women gives these an international profile absent from union sites – as well as from those of my two survey respondents!

- The two China solidarity sites offer visitors contrasting options in their orientations. Perhaps it is because they exist in infinite space that they are hardly required (as earthly Left equivalents have traditionally been) to compete for a limited audience or restricted place.

- I include such sites as the *International Alliance of Inhabitants*, the *Basic Income Earth Network* and *Via Campesina* precisely because the working people or issues here addressed would never be so within the hegemonic understanding of 'the labour movement' (customarily reduced to trade union

organizations) but which I consider necessary to its reinvention under contemporary capitalism.

- An event, Organizing a Labor Movement for the 21st Century: US Social Forum 2010, is included because of the alternative this represents not only to the narrow vision being projected at the same moment by the ITUC Congress in Vancouver, and also because of the alternative it provides to the meagre labour fare at the World Social Forum...umm?...as-we-know it?

- A charter coming out of another event, Degrowth Declaration Barcelona 2010, is included also by way of contrast to the profoundly backward-looking utopianism of the traditional union internationals.

- I cannot even begin to consider whether, or which, of these sites consider themselves as linked to the trade unions, nationally or internationally, nor to a new labour movement in some more extended sense. Nor can I sort them out in terms of closeness to or distance from state or inter-state institutions and/or funding. Nor am I particularly concerned about whether, unlike most inter/national union sites, they are subversive of capitalism or limited to a 'kinder, gentler' one.

- I cannot even consider whether or not they reproduce the conventional one-to-many model of most union sites, or whether they open out to an emancipatory alternative. What I can claim for the listing is that it represents a burgeoning world of international labour communication that exists way beyond the factory gates, the office doors - or the union office.

4. Resources and literature

Let me here first draw attention to certain resources surrounding or underlying the responses of Eric and David themselves. Some, if not all of these, can be found on their own websites. These may themselves contribute not only to an understanding of their contrasting projects but to future research on our subject area more generally.

Eric Lee/LabourStart. Apart from his early and influential book (Lee 1997), Eric Lee has written a series of serious papers on labour, and the internet more generally. He also has a personal blog (under the LabourStart e-dress) which reveals his prolific journalistic contributions, often about the internet or internationalism, and his political positions. Recently he has published a substantial chapter in an academic work, dealing with 'the LabourStart experience' (Lee 2010). Whilst concentrating on the News and Campaigning features of LabourStart, this chapter provides considerable information on both the successes and problems of the project. It also reinforces the impression already given in his survey response that this is a West Europe-based network, reproducing its

'particularistic internationalism' (one assuming that traditional Western unionism, industrial relations and social-partnership with capital and state are the norm to which Southern unions do or should aspire). One further impression from the site itself and from this particular chapter. This is that the management or control of LabourStart does not operate on the model of a distributed network (like a spiderweb, with multiple lines and directions of communication) but on a centralised model (like that of early national railway systems, with a hub and many peripheries), or possibly that of a wheel (with an axle, spokes and a hypothetically conjoined periphery). Participation seems to be more a matter of correspondents providing information, and inputs at LabourStart conferences[8], than having any shared control of the network. This, however, would again require systematic research. And despite the impressive sophistication, multi-functionality and reach of LabourStart, I have been able to find little significant research – far less critical research – on it.[9] Indeed, the most substantial criticism of LabourStart may be of Eric Lee's labour Zionism.[10]

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[8] A major international LabourStart conference was to take place in Canada, July 2010, as I was writing this, http://www.labourstart.org/2010/. I looked forward to seeing any contributed documents or eventual reports. As of August 2010, however, these have been meager in the extreme. There were one or two reports in the Left media in North America but these contained little of substance. Personal attempts to obtain further information from the writers of such achieved nothing. Eric Lee himself has not reported back on the event. He did set up a conference group on his UnionBook pages. But as of mid-August it had just 22 members and little content and less feedback. The impression left is that this was less of a conference than a rally, intended less to advance dialogue and action on Global Solidarity than to rally the LabourStart community. Much more must have occurred and evidence to this effect would be welcome.

[9] Whilst Robinson (2008) uses, rather than critiques, LabourStart, he makes an important contribution to the study of the email solidarity campaigns that the project prides itself on. More on Robinson's study later. David Renton (2004?) discusses not only the LabourStart and the LabourNet projects but also the individuals involved (including myself, I discover 15 years later!) and their different ideas of the relationship between the internet and labour internationalism.

[10] Criticism has been of Eric Lee's identification with the Israeli state, as evidenced by the disproportion between his coverage of Israeli and Palestinian labour news, and of his support for Israeli militarism, http://www.labournet.net/other/0706/labstart1.html#b. Eric also identifies with the increasingly marginal Israeli Zionist union centre, Histadrut (for which see Greenstein 2009). It is my impression that he has made an effort to re-balance his coverage over the years, reporting extensively on union criticism of the Israeli wars against and occupation of Arab territories. This has not, however, meant that he has since separated his militant Zionism - and support for Israeli wars and high-seas piracy - from LabourStart (see again his own blog pages, http://www.ericlee.info/blog/). Nor does it mean he is going to publicise union solidarity campaigns with Palestine on his ActNOW! pages. Eric, moreover, hosted on the *old* version of his UnionBook the apparently autonomous, pro-Israeli, TULIP website, a site he publicly represents and actually owns! http://www.unionbook.org/pg/groups/13644/tulip-trade-unions-linking-israel-and-palestine/. The question must therefore arise of whether this particular TULIP was not also originally planted by him. Elsewhere he has accused unions criticizing Israel of anti-semitism, though in this case in his personal capacity (Lee 2009). Whilst this is the increasingly evident Achilles Heel of someone claiming to be in favour of international socialism, universal human rights and global labour solidarity, I actually consider it of marginal significance to a critical understanding of the LabourStart phenomenon. I note, however, that the *new* version of UnionBook (introduced around September 2010), provides so far no space for TULIP.

Dave Hollis/NetzwerkIT. One can find on this site a couple of papers co-authored by Dave Hollis that suggest his and its orientation. The key one here is the co-authoured piece on capitalist globalisation and on networking as an appropriate form for societal and workplace response to such (Rösel, Hollis and Wanzek 2005).[11] They distinguish between three models, the the Line, the Star and the Fully-Connected. This advances on the language I have used above. The diagram below shows there can be even more. Whilst, on the one hand. Rösel, Hollis and Wanzek recognise that one can consider organisations *as* networks, networks *within* organisations - and even that a network can be also considered in *organisational* terms, they favour the Fully-Connected network as the model in which everyone can communicate with everyone, in which there is no hierarchy, no centre and no identifiable (permanent?) leadership (compare again Halpin and Summer 2008). It occurs to me, finally, that the Star, with no (or even with *limited*) direct connection or information flows between the peripheral nodes, may be the common model of the international trade union organisation...and therefore also for Eric Lee's LabourStart?
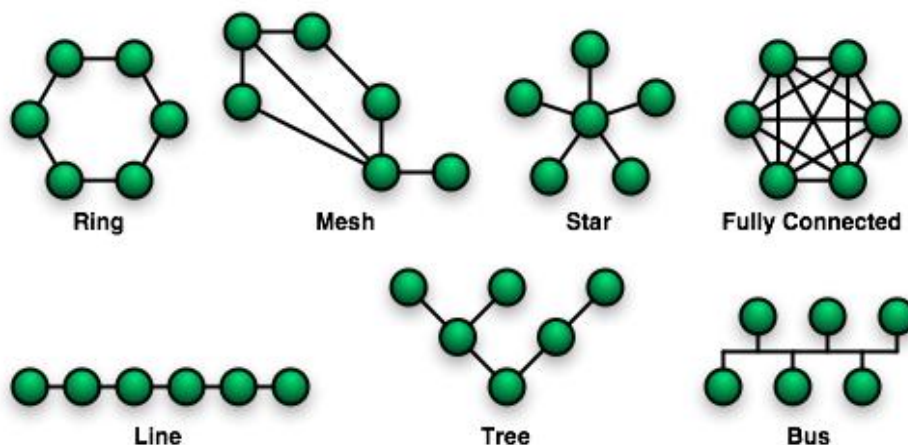
Rösel, Hollis and Wanzek (2005) argue further that:

> As simple as it sounds, our task must be to build networks and to expand them. Our experience shows that a network is a place of exchange, activities, and can be understood as an Internet platform.

UnionBook, moreover, has so far displayed an exemplary openness to and tolerance of dramatically varied groups and attitudes. I am hoping it will prove to be that agora for international labour dialogue I have been seeking for a couple of decades.

[11] His other paper is one co-authored with myself, in both English and German (Hollis and Waterman 2008a,b)

Networks are built up from below. This is already in the structure of a network. This is true both for the employed and among the unemployed. There should be no limits to the world of work. Work is a part of the society as a whole. All social issues are important to us, and sometimes vital. Therefore, there is an openness to other social movements and a perception of a collective interest. We take up political issues. Some of them are vital. Here are some examples: freedom, the right to freedom of expression, democracy and human rights, freedom of association - for all other forms of self-organization. The general right to strike, the right to solidarity strikes and campaigns, the fight against political dismissals. As networks, it is understood that we must be part of the social movements. What is also clear that no higher-level structures are necessary to allow different networks to communicate with each other and coordinate their activities. It is sufficient for the networks to be linked. Since communication is possible, and where there is a common interest to do something, whether for the network as a whole or parts thereof, it will be done. We...know...that networks imply a different way of dealing with each other. This includes the recognition that a network imply perception of a collective interest. Networks are not everything. There are many important policy issues that will need to be clarified. This will have to be done, however, as a part of the social movements. [Google-aided translation. PW]

The networking models and specifications above may help in initially distinguishing between networks with different information flows, but are insufficient, I think, for both analysis and strategizing.[12] Thus, even if we were to decide that LabourStart *was* a Star and NetzwerkIT a Fully-Connected network, this would only tell us about their information flows. It would hardly help us in dealing with the significance of the kind of information flowing, in what quantity, in which direction(s) and to what effect. Nor would it tell us about the ideology/ies or discourse(s) framing or framed by the flows. Nor would it allow us to identify possible contradictions within each model, nor problems confronting AILCC as a whole.[13]

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[12] Further sophistication in the conceptualization of emancipatory networks is provided in a study of feminism and the global justice movement by Eschle and Maiguashca (2010:153). Here they distinguish between Globalised Think Tanks, Umbrella Organisations (with strong hubs), Cuckoo Organisations (where the hub moves between members), Tangled Webs (links in multiple directions, light or non-existent hub) and Hybrid Networks/Federations (affiliated groups with much affiliate autonomy).

[13] It occurred to me after completing this paper that I could and should have made reference to Indymedia as an international social movement communication model, one now with a decade of experience and about which there is a considerable literature. An early piece that comes to mind is that of Dorothy Kidd (2003). For further sources, use Google, Google Books or Google Scholar.

Social Movements 2.0 is the title of the piece by Brecher, Costello and Smith (2010).[14] It has the advantage of being by alternative international *labour* communicators but to be talking about the social-movement:cyberspace relation more generally. Here are their positive points on social networking (YouTube, Twitter, etc). These, they argue, have the advantages in terms of

    1. Group formation

    2. Scale and amplification

    3. Interactivity

    4. Destruction of hierarchies

    5. Cheapness and ease of tools

And these are the questions these applications pose about social networking for emancipatory purposes:

    1. What does it mean when individuals begin organising outside and without the help of traditional organisations?

    2. It's easy and cheap for organisations to bring people together into a swarm or smart mob, but what do you do with them then?

    3. Will offline social movement organisations be willing to cede control as ordinary people increasingly leverage social networking tools to channel their own activities?

    4. How do labor and social movement organisations address the dangers associated with online action?

    5. How do we track the demographics of who's online and who's not and what tools they are using?

    6. How do we present complex ideas online?

    7. How does offline and online social movement building fit together?

    8. How can social movements wield real power online?

These arguments for and questions about Web 2.0 are clearly relevant to social movements in cyberspace generally, and to what I would call the 'collective self-articulation of labour' in particular.[15] By my initial quotation, I have clearly

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[14] Compare with the item on trade unions and social networking by Carmel Wolfson (2008).

[15] A discovery too late to be worked into the body of this paper is a substantial piece on the World Social Forum and the web by Mayo Fuster Morell (forthcoming). Mayo, who has been engaged over the years in WSF and other online projects does not satisfy herself with showing the difficulties even pro-WSF unions have with the loss of control implied by cyberspace processes. Nor, for that matter, with showing that this fear of flying is shared with major NGOs and other hierarchically-structured

prioritised their Point 3. This is because of the hegemony of a particular and historically-specific institutional form, the 'trade-union-as-we-know-it',[16] over the 'labour-movement-as-a-whole'. The latter could be considered, in the language of Boaventura de Souza Santos (2004) as either 'invisible' or 'emergent'. But even though the trade-union-as-we-know-it only 'represents' (even in formal terms of membership) 10-15 percent of the world's workers, it is still commonly considered to 'represent' the (future of?) the other 85-90 percent.[17] The hegemony is so long-lived, wide and deep that most Left criticism of the trade union movement – North, South, East or West - *confines* itself to the trade unions and takes place in terms of their bad ideology ('reformism') and worse leadership ('bureaucracy').[18] Many of even innovatory international labour websites tend to reproduce the on-line trade union practice of either lacking open feedback, or confining and controlling discussion. Furthermore, the 'labour-movement-as-a-whole' really needs to be still considered the 'labour-movement-as-a-hole', in other words as a space waiting to be 'populated' (in Cyberian terminology). The kind of 'alternative' sites and projects listed above may represent an emergent online labour movement. But they are not

bodies. She also shows at length, in detail, and with conceptual sophistication, the problems of 'scaling up' the so far limited cyberspace activities of both the WSF and the broader movement.

[16] The 2010 Congress of the ITUC provides a place and moment to consider how the world's major international trade union organization views both itself and its Others. Despite the limited percentage of the world's working classes under the ITUC umbrella, it spoke of itself (and was spoken about by both the dominant and alternative media) as if it were *the* voice of labour globally. It also seemed to consider itself the voice of the *people of the world*. The new kind of branding-conscious Congress slogan was 'Now the People – From The Crisis To Global Justice'. Yet Congress resolutions in practice reduced 'the people' to the unionised (and, now, those hypothetically unionisable). These members, in their vast majority, did not know that this Congress was occurring, far less what its decisions were. And, whilst representatives of the international financial institutions (surely those *responsible* for this crisis) were invited to address Congress, speakers from 'political' and 'civil society' appeared only on Day 3. The ITUC report suggested their function was more to assure than to challenge Congress. The representatives of the IMF and WTO had already spoken approvingly of the global role of the ITUC. There was little to distinguish the one visiting party from the other. The ITUC thus continues to sleep with or under the enemy whilst making a cautious nod to the more *salonfähig* (salon-acceptable) tendency within global civil society. It elected a new top leadership, including one woman, but almost all from Western capitalist liberal democracies.

[17] If I place 'represent' here within distancing quotes, this is because of my introductory quotation from Marianne Maeckelbergh, suggesting that networking enables us to surpass representative and even direct democracy.

[18] Sometimes Left criticism of the International Trade Union Confederation abandons even these conventional pejoratives, leaving one with the question of what 'Left' means today. This is the case with the (ex-)Communist *Comisiones Obreras* in Spain (Boix and Doz 2010) in a piece which manages to also abandon such conventional Left terms as 'capitalism' and 'socialism'. As for the US Communist-linked People's Voice, it had no criticism to make of the ITUC Congress at all - leaving one with the question of what 'Communist' means today.

necessarily linked. Most will not even know of the *existence* of such others! And even if there is such recognition or networking, they may not be agreed about whether, for example, they do or should recognise themselves as autonomous from, alternatives to, or extensions of, the trade union movement.[19]

What Brecher, Costello and Smith do not consider are the implications of Web 2.0, or cyberspace more generally, for a new kind of labour *internationalism*. There are here real problems, for a radically-democratic communication practice, of 1) the concentration of internet initiatives in the North (see the countries of origin in the list above) and 2) of their domination by English – or German in the case of NetzwerkIT, LabourNet Deutschland, and Dutch in the case of TIE Netherlands). Even though many online and international labour projects are bi- or multilingual (with LabourStart again way out in front), and even though GoogleTranslate allows for at least an impression of what a foreign text is about, there is still some time to go before shopfloor- or community-level labour activists are going to be able to literally understand and effectively communicate with each other. Then there is 3) the problem that most international union/labour solidarity sites assume 'solidarity' to mean primarily a relationship on the North/South *axis*, and in a North/South *direction*. This often leads to conflation of solidarity with 'development cooperation'. Whether motivated by discourses of 'development',[20] inspired by feelings of guilt or charity, or even notions of the noble (or revolutionary) savage, these are limited or one-sided orientations. Each of the three points above raises the necessity for a self-reflective and publicly self-critical attitude toward such activity. And this in turn raises the need also for a theory (or theories) of the emancipation of labour and of global social emancipation more generally. But before turning to such general issues I want to consider one more contribution to an understanding of the relationship between labour networking and international solidarity.

The specificities of online labour activity. My reference here is to a paper by Bruce Robinson (2008) which addresses the solidarity action campaigns of

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[19] Consider here Eric Lee's characterization of his institutionally separate project as 'the news and campaigning website of the international trade union movement', or that of Marc Belanger of the equally separate RadioLabour as 'the international labour movement's global radio station'. This could be dismissed as advertising copy. Yet, bearing in mind that they both tend to take the Global Unions family, and unions recognized by such, as the parameter of their operations, the claims will raise few eyebrows. On the other hand, in so far as their claims are accepted within the hegemonic union world and uncontested by alternatives, we have to recognize that both initiatives came from such organizationally independent entities! This suggests a broadening or loosening of the traditional control union organizations have tended to exercise over their communication activities.

[20] There was once, apparently, a lecturer in Latin American politics who required of his students that they not use the word 'populism'. Brilliant if cruel! I likewise consider 'development' an imprisoning, if not a poisoned, word and would like to see it referred to an International Court of Epistemological Justice. 'Development' discourse and practice is surely responsible for millions more deaths than Islamic and Zionist fundamentalism combined.

LabourStart (now called [ActNow!](#)). Alongside news, this feature seems to be considered by Eric Lee the most significant function of LabourStart. Robinson, who clearly appreciates this activity, employs a methodology that permits us to see its limitations and, therefore, the challenges it raises. He identifies the three major collective actors in cybersolidarity - the Protagonists, the Intermediaries and the Respondents (my capitalisation). There is also, of course, the Target aimed at. The Protagonists, or subjects, are those who are seeking solidarity, or on whose behalf solidarity action has been called for, and who are therefore there at the beginning and end of the action. The Intermediaries are a variety of communicators, most crucially the networkers. These carry out a range of functions, including:

> Maintaining the infrastructure...that enables the dissemination of the information and the campaigning...initiating, monitoring and backing up the campaigns; and building and maintaining a constituency of potential participants... (Robinson 2008:158).

Moving on, Robinson also identifies the Respondents, in this case trade unionists, possessing the 'trade union...ethos of solidarity and internationalism and organisational identities as trade unionists' (159). This does not, of course, guarantee the success of a particular campaign (nor of campaigning in general?). In considering success, Robinson suggests two measures, one being the impact of the action on both the Protagonists and the Target, the other being the mobilisation of Respondents – in other words the number of those who have endorsed the campaign or sent emails. There is, he says, no necessary correlation between these two dimensions. One major problem of such online campaigning, Robinson argues is that:

> Control of the actions is in the hands of the networkers rather than those directly affected by the outcome of the action....There is...a potential of conflict of interest here. The ability of the networkers to choose news and select which campaigns are taken up...lays them open to accusations of favouritism or censorship. (161).

Although he is not criticising LabourStart, Robinson does reveal Eric Lee's options here: that calls should come from 'an official trade union', that the best campaigns are those with the support of such union organisations, local, foreign or international. Finally, Robinson makes several references to the LabourNet model[21], which favours worker-to-worker relations *regardless* of whether these are officially endorsed or not, and to

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[21] It should be pointed out that whilst there are various national LabourNets, the attempt to create a global ring of such seems, regrettably, to have run into the ground. The impression given from the list of other LabourNets and the UnionRing feature on the index page of [LabourNetUK](#) is that they do not significantly interact.

> Open forums and many-to-many e-lists which have different methods
> of operation from the centralised one-to-many model embodied in
> email campaigns. (16)

And although Robinson seems to favour the kind of model suggested by Dave
Hollis and NetzwerkIT, this suggestion is more implicit than explicit. But the main
point I wanted to draw out of his piece is precisely the necessity for more specific
conceptual and research tools when looking at the quite different kinds or functions
of international labour communication online.

What needs specifying or broadening from the Robinson approach would be his
classification - Protagonists, Intermediaries, Respondents and Targets - as also
their application, here, primarily to the trade-unions-as-we-know-them. There is,
at least in his classification, no consideration of feedback between Protagonists and
Respondents, nor of the *meaning* given acts of solidarity at either end of the
relationship. Nor is there the reality of much if not most of effective international
labour solidarity today — the address to and involvement of the general public or,
more specifically, of what is today called Global Civil Society.

5. Concepts and strategies

In this somewhat loose series of recollections, analyses, literature reviews and
criticism, I am aware of having talked somewhat glibly about 'alternatives',
'internationalism', 'emancipation' and 'solidarity', of having failed signally to
specify the meaning of 'trade-unionism-as-we-know-it' (TUAWKI?), and of having
pointed toward some unspecified future of a new networked labour
internationalism. I have written about these extensively elsewhere and refer the
interested to such [sources](). I should, however say at least a little more about
TUAWKI, the emancipation of labour, global social emancipation and the
relationship between ICT and internationalism.

TUAWKI. We may start with this critique of the contemporary trade union form, as
'organising for defeat', from Canadian union officer, [Brian Green]():

> what we understand to be the trade union is an organizational form
> that originally emerged to serve the needs of a very particular group of
> workers — white, "skilled," and male — whose relative privilege in
> comparison with other workers was threatened with the ascent of
> industrial capitalism and the Fordist mass worker. Insofar as that
> model was expanded and reconfigured after the 1930s, the labour
> movement consolidated its victories in a tripartite industrial relations
> regime that acknowledged the legitimacy of workers' demands only as
> they facilitated productivity increases and were pegged to a steady rate
> of profit. When, once again, a political recomposition of global working
> class struggles effectively challenged the limits of entitlement in the

post-1968 era, the trade union model was thrown into crisis not only by its lack of preparation or the political conservatism of some if its members, but precisely because its organizational structure and strategic vision were thoroughly bound up with the tripartite model and with the Keynesian compromise.

Brian Green's critique is addressed, actually, to North American trade unionism, though it could be taken as extending implicitly to unionism in industrialised capitalist liberal democracies more generally. Given, however, the appeal of this 'developed' model to unions and unionised parts of working classes in peripheral capitalist countries, given the systematic promotion of this by the social-partnership International Labour Organisation, and given that unions in Communist states were themselves incorporated into what might be called a social*ist*-partnership with their ruling parties and authoritarian states, the critique has quasi-universal application. Thus, even such previously radical-nationalist, Left or socialist union centres as Solidarnosc in Poland, the Central Única dos Trabalhadores in Brazil and the Cosatu in South Africa, have been largely incorporated into the hegemonic global model.

The emancipation of labour. There is a long but almost forgotten tradition in the labour movement which calls for the abolition/surpassing of the wage relationship (aka wage slavery). This is the direct or indirect manner (sub-contracting, the 'family wage' supposedly covering the housewife) through which capitalism exploits labour, reducing it to a commodity. One can find this call in the documents of the First International, in the very name of the first Marxist political organization in Russia, in the Preamble to the Constitution of the anarcho-syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. A revival of this tradition, and its re-specification in the light of a globalised networked capitalism - and in relation to the GJ&SM - is overdue.[22]

Global social emancipation. I take my text here from a major research project with the title, Reinventing Social Emancipation:

> The paradigm of social emancipation developed by western modernity is undergoing a deep and final crisis. Social emancipation must, therefore, be reinvented. It must be understood as a form of counter-hegemonic globalization relying on local-global linkages and alliances among social groups around the world which go on resisting social exclusion, exploitation and oppression caused by hegemonic neoliberal globalization. Such struggles result in the development of alternatives to the exclusionary and monolithic logic of global capitalism, that is to say, spaces of democratic participation, non-capitalistic production of

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[22] My own attempt to do so, in a Global Labour Charter Project, has been damned with the faintest of praise, even by close friends. You have been warned.

goods and services, creation of emancipatory knowledges, post-colonial cultural exchanges, new international solidarities.

ICT and internationalism. I failed above to mention that the full title of my 1992 paper was 'International Labour Communication by Computer: *A Fifth International?* Its conclusion was, summarily, that if we had ILCC we would not need a Fifth International! Unfortunately, this conclusion has not been drawn by even the radical Left, which was trying in 2010 to recreate a state-dependent and institutionalised international (Waterman 2010). Moreover, as I have just said, any emancipatory global labour movement network has not yet come into existence. And, finally, it seems that union, labour movement, political and academic reflection about the matter has – with exceptions – hardly advanced beyond the early wave during which that 1992 paper was written.

Conclusion: What is to be done?

This paper has been intended as a provocation to further research on ILCC. And, obviously, to further provoke dialogue on the matter. So, drawing on another paper from that period (Waterman 2001), let me, in conclusion, offer

26 propositions on networking, labour and solidarity under/against/beyond a globalised and informatised capitalism

1. Networking is becoming the dominant 'relational form' under capitalism;

2. It is a highly contradictory form which can, however, be more fully, creatively and democratically used by popular, radical-democratic and anti-capitalist forces;

3. Notions of networking and internationalism, understood as necessary for modernisation and/or human emancipation, can be traced back to at least the time of the French and Industrial Revolutions. Since that time they have been a matter of political dispute between capitalists/technocrats/authoritarians and socialists/democrats/libertarians;

4. Networking is the most ancient, common, and therefore popular ('of the people'), relational form, today given worldwide reach and capacity for both domination and emancipation;

5. It engenders new forms of work, workers, products and enterprises, with anti- or even post-capitalist potential;

6. The general understanding of networking in the international labour movement is a limited one;

7. It surpasses the traditional organisational forms (union, party) in so far as it allows for the articulation (joining, expression) of both general and particular interests within and between working classes – and others;

8. The organisation:networking relation should be understood neither as a binary opposition, nor as one of vice versus virtue, but as a dialectical one, in which labour organisations and institutions may survive and even flourish to the extent that they understand and adapt to the logic of the network;

9. CMC is not only a *tool* but also a *community* (cyberspace - meaning new supra-national and even supra-terrestrial places, with their own (disputed or disputable) laws, traditions and values, and also *utopia* (a not yet existing but desirable place, to be imagined and created);

10. Networking is not simply an aspect or process within capitalism but also a way of understanding (and therefore surpassing) capitalism, racism, sexism, militarism, environmental destruction, etc;

11. The networking form allows for the development of a new and complex global solidarity movement surpassing the limited or failed inter/nationalisms of the now-passing national-industrial capitalist era;

12. In so far as networking is a communicational rather than an organisational form, it is itself articulated with the media and culture, which are becoming increasingly central to both capitalist society and social movements, implying for the latter that any new internationalism is increasingly a communicative and cultural matter.

13. If it is to become relevant to labour internationalism in the era of globalisation, the pyramidal international union organisation must be transformed into an information, advice and support service that stimulates multi-directional and multi-level contacts between workers, unions and the labour movement generally. (The same holds for non-labour internationals);

14. The challenge confronting international union organisations is not only a networked capitalism and the networked state: it is also the networked anti-capitalist, anti-statist, anti-globalisation movement;

15. If not informed by a broader vision or leadership, international labour networking can reinforce an enterprise or corporate identity and undermine broader solidarity;

16. The new electronic media make possible and necessary a new kind of fe/male labour activist, reaching out beyond the enterprise and the union office, listening to, linking waged-workers up with, and empowering, the increasing number of 'foreign', 'marginal' and other 'a-typical' workers;

17. The form taken by contemporary democratic international movements – networked, flexible, media-oriented and communication-sensitive - suggests

the future model for an effective international labour movement in the age of globalisation;

18. The notion that international electronic networking is the inevitable province of the rich and privileged, or has to be diffused from the rich, advanced, developed countries/unions/people, to the poor, marginal and powerless ones is questioned by certain Third World experiences, emancipatory movements and even technological developments;

19. The desirability of the networked electronic union appears to be required by the nature of labour in the information industries but is today possible and even necessary for all working people, and for any effective international solidarity;

20. The potential of the electronic media is not so much their capacity to 'mobilise' working people within and for the old labour institutions, but to make them 'more mobile' under and against a globalised and networked capitalism more generally;

21. There must be a dialectical interplay, in a new international labour movement, between the politics of cyberspace and the politics of place, inspired by a meaningful understanding of solidarity;

22. Globalisation, computerisation and informatisation make it possible and necessary for the international labour movement to rethink 'work' and the wage-labour relationship in terms, for example, of locally-relevant, ecologically-friendly, cooperatively-controlled but high-tech production;

23. Development of a networked labour internationalism requires political action by the labour movement – in partnership with civil society - in/against the institutions/arenas in which control is exercised over the technology, access to and the content of electronic media and cyberspace;

24. An understanding of the international labour movement in network terms can break down the traditional division of labour within the movement, between the categories of 'thinkers' and 'doers';

25. Those who consider that the future of the labour movement lies in networking are going to have to meet the widespread feeling, within and around the movement, that - unlike other social movements – labour needs its institutions and that this need is justified;

26. The development of networking within the international labour movement would be stimulated by the production and circulation of a declaration or discussion document, expressed in language accessible to not only the computer savvy but also internationalist activists beyond.

Two final points.

Firstly, Point 26 has for me the highest priority and is surely the easiest to achieve. Whilst I do not feel inclined to myself draft such a document, I can assure such drafts and discussion place/space on the ReinventingLabour blog. Here, incidentally, there can already be found a not unrelated charter on Citizens' and Artists' Rights in the Digital Age.

Secondly, anyone who failed to receive (or received but failed to answer) my survey invitation when initially posted should feel free to respond now. The questions can be found in *Appendix 1.*

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Appendix 1: Survey Instrument

1. How would you describe or characterise your own international labour media project, including a) how it differs from or adds to traditional trade-union media, b) how it relates not only to such   but also to other alternative international media projects.

2. How would you characterise your activity? Do you consider yourself an 'international labour media activist'? If not, what? How do you relate to others like yourself? And to trade unionists and/or other kinds of labour activists?

3. What are the challenges, problems and issues that alternative labour media have raised for the trade unions and/or other forms of labour and/or social movement activism?

4. Do you consider 'alternative international labour media' (or however you wish to characterise your field of activity) gender neutral? Or does it reproduce the discourse and practices of traditional patriarchal media?

5. Do you consider that technical criteria and the logic of the media production in which you are involved influence or actually limit your efforts to treat your medium (or media) as the voice of working people (also beyond the unions) or, to put it another way, of international labour protest in general?

6. In so far as you consider your activity as 'internationalist', how does this a) relate to traditional internationalist labour communication/culture, and b) relate to a novel kind of labour or social-movement communicational/cultural internationalism?

7. How do you support yourself financially and how are your projects funded? To what extent, if any, are such sources of income a constraint on what you would like to do?

8. Do you have a problem with these questions? Feel free to replace, or add to, them!

Appendix 2:

List of Labour-Related Online Projects, Mid-2010
(Geographic bases indicated in square brackets where available)

- Asia Monitor Resource Centre. 'to support and contribute towards the building of a strong, democratic, and independent labour movement in Asia by understanding and responding to the multiple challenges of asserting workers' rights to jobs, decent working conditions, and gender consciousness, while following a participatory framework'. [Hong Kong].

- Australia Asia Worker Links. 'Workers Change the World'. [Australia].

- Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN). 'serves as a link between individuals and groups committed to or interested in basic income and fosters informed discussion on this topic throughout the world'. (Belgium).

- Border Thinking on Migration, Trafficking and Commercial Sex. Blog of writer and activist, Laura Agustin. [Western Europe?].

- China Labour Bulletin. 'A proactive outreach organisation that seeks to defend and promote the rights of workers in China. We have extensive links and wide-ranging co-operative programs with labour groups, law firms and academics throughout China, as well as with the international labour movement'. [Hong Kong].

- China Labour Net. 'Our understanding of the labour movement and workers' rights extends beyond union rights and economic rights, it includes the emancipation of labour'. [Hong Kong].

- December 18. 'advocates for a world where migrants are not discriminated against because of their sex, race, colour, language, religion or conviction, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, nationality, age, economic position, property, marital status, birth or any other status.' [Belgium]

- Degrowth Declaration Barcelona 2010. Academics, activists and practitioners met in Barcelona to structure proposals toward an alternative, ecologically sustainable and socially equitable degrowth society. The conference was conducted in an inclusive and participatory way. In addition to standard scientific presentations, some 29 working groups discussed hands-on policies for degrowth and defined research questions, bringing together economic,social and environmental concerns. [Spain]

- Global Labour Strategies. 'to contribute to building global labor solidarity through research, analysis, strategic thinking, and network building around labor and employment issues...[L]abor movements and their allies around the world are at a watershed moment...The choice for unions and worker organisations everywhere is to adapt to global realities and build a global labor movement or decline into irrelevance'. [USA].

- Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP). 'established as an informal alliance in 1992 by a group of sex worker rights activists working within sex work projects around the world...has influenced policy and built leadership among sex workers and facilitated the development of regional and national networks of sex workers and sex work projects. [UK]

- International Alliance of Inhabitants. 'Creating A Common Global Space Of Solidarity For Urban Social Movements...for the unity of urban social movements which strive to give concrete expression to economic, social and cultural rights, as well as housing rights in particular. It is launched by the organisations and networks of inhabitants, co-operatives, tenants' unions, community centres, original populations and committees for housing rights all over the world'. [Spain?].

- International Centre for Union Rights. 'an organising and campaigning body...defending and improving the rights of trade unions and trade unionists throughout the world'. [UK].

- International Committee in Support of Fishworkers. 'an international non-governmental organisation that works towards the establishment of equitable, gender-just, self-reliant and sustainable fisheries, particularly in the small-scale, artisanal sector.[India/Belgium]

- International Dockworkers Council. 'an association formed by organisations of dockworkers from all over the world. It is defined by its basic principles as being a unitary, independent, democratic, assembly-based working-class organisation'. [Spain].

- LaborTech. 'bringing to bring together labour video, computer and media activists in the US and from around the world to build and develop labour communication technology and media....We believe that a critical task for labor is building a labor communication media movement that can tell our stories and break the corporate information blockade in every corner of the world'. [USA].

- LabourNet Deutschland/Germany. [Google-aided translation] 'the trade-union meeting place, linking those with and without a job...We are part of the global LabourNet initiatives, interested in the positive aspects of the new technologies for use in an emancipatory manner. [Germany]

- Maquila Solidarity Network — 'A labor and women's rights organisation that supports the efforts of workers in global supply chains to win improved wages and working conditions and a better quality of life'. [Canada/Mexico]

- Minga Alternativa de Movimientos Sociales. 'una iniciativa de comunicación impulsada por diversas redes y coordinaciones sociales de América Latina y el Caribe, que se han planteado unir fuerzas y buscar respuestas conjuntas en este plano, entendiendo que la comunicación es estratégica para la acción social'. [Ecuador].

- New Unionism Network. 'New unionism is about organizing, internationalism and workplace democracy. Bringing these together requires creativity. Taken together, this is the practice of New Unionism [...] This means that unions need to listen. It means shifting union HQ down into the workplace. It means engaging around issues that members choose, irrespective of traditional 'management prerogatives'. Most importantly, it means challenging the master-servant relationship at work. This involves linking up with colleagues across company supply chains, within social movements, and beyond national borders. [France/UK].

- No Sweat. 'No Sweat exists to fight against sweatshop exploitation. We organise solidarity for sweatshop workers from the UK to the four corners of the world. We stand for workers' self-organisation, international solidarity and for the right to organise in every workplace'. (UK).

- Organizing a Labor Movement for the 21st Century: US Social Forum 2010. Programme of labour workshops at USSF, Detroit, June, 2010. A one-off event but providing basic information and email addresses relating to a wide spread of workshops. [US]

- This Tuesday - Logs on Migrations, Labour, Transnational Organising 'gathers best-practice information about organisations, projects and campaigns mobilising and researching contingent and migrant labor. We hope this information contributes to the construction of a powerful movement that integrates workers, their organisations, supporters, net activists and independent media'. [????]

- Radio Labour. 'the international labour movement's global radio station. Its audiocasts are available on the RadioLabour website, Facebook, iTunes and community radio stations around the world' [Canada].

- Red de Mujeres Trabajadores Sexuales de Latinoamérica y el Caribe. Haciendo el trabajo sexual visible para la inclusión. [Argentina]

- ReinventingLabour. 'for people....who seek a space to share ideas and resources regarding challenges and potentials to strengthen a vibrant, critical, plural and emancipatory movement of all kinds of working people

everywhere – a movement intimately related to the new 'global justice and solidarity movement'. [Canada/Netherlands].

- [Respect and Rights for Domestic Workers](). 'web site of the International Domestic Workers' Network (IDWN), an initiative of domestic workers' unions together with support organisations'. (Switzerland).

- [Sendika.Org/LabourNet-Turkey.]() 'aims to contribute to...the labor unions to renew themselves and to become more democratic; the creation of a joint union movement;...the building of a new labor movement which will be a part of the international labor movement. To fulfill the above tasks in the electronic media, it has set as its goal to become a reference, an information-document resource and a platform for all activists who wish to contribute to this process'. (Turkey)

- [SolEcoPedia](). 'The Shared International Encyclopedia for Solidarity and Social Economy'. [France?]

- [Southern Initiative on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights](). 'an active and living voice of workers in the Global South representing a diverse and broad spectrum of trade unions committed to global economic justice which seeks to inspire ordinary workers to take up and intensify class struggles against the exploitative system of neoliberal globalisation and the increased suffering of workers and communities in all our countries'. [Australia].

- [Transnationals Information Exchange – Germany](). 'a global grassroots network of workers active in workplaces and communities. It includes both union and non-union activists in the formal and informal sectors. tie aims to encourage, organise, and facilitate international consciousness and cooperation among workers and their organisations in various parts of the world'. [Germany].

- [StreetNetInternational.]() 'to promote the exchange of information and ideas on critical issues facing street vendors and market vendors and hawkers (mobile vendors) and on practical organising and advocacy strategies'. [South Africa].

- [Via Campesina](). 'the international movement of peasants, small- and medium-sized producers, landless, rural women, indigenous people, rural youth and agricultural workers. We defend the values and the basic interests of our members. We are an autonomous, pluralist and multicultural movement, independent of any political, economic, or other type of affiliation'. [Indonesia].

- [Women in Informal Employment: Globalising and Organising]() ('The common motivation for those who join the network is the relative lack of recognition, understanding, and support for the working poor in the

informal economy, especially women, by policy makers, economic planners, and the international development community'. [USA/UK].

- [World March of Women](#). 'an international feminist action movement connecting grass-roots groups and organisations working to eliminate the causes at the root of poverty and violence against women...Our values and actions are directed at making political, economic and social change. They centre on the globalisation of solidarity; equality between women and men, among women themselves and between peoples; the respect and recognition of diversity among women; the multiplicity of our strategies; the appreciation of women's leadership; and the strength of alliances among women and with other progressive social movements. [Brazil]

- [WomenWorkingWorldwide](#). 'works with an international network of women workers...Our central ethos is that it is women themselves who are calling for change in their working conditions and networks such as WWW can make sure that their voices are heard and not ignored. [UK]

- [World Social Forum Labour and Globalisation List.](#) List of unions and other labour organisations identified with the World Social Forum and the global justice and solidarity movement. [Italy]

About the author

Peter Waterman (London 1936) worked for the international Communist movement in the 1950s and '60s. Through the 1970s-90s, he was a left academic-activist on labour and social movements. In the late-1980s he initiated the international debate on 'social movement unionism'. Now retired, he writes on international labour, the WSF and the global justice and solidarity movement. He is published widely, in English and other languages, in print and on the web (see http://reinventinglabour.wordpress.com and http://blog.choike.org/eng/category/peter-waterman. He can be contacted at peterwaterman1936 AT gmail.com

Response to Alternative International Labour Communication Survey

Eric Lee

How would you describe or characterise your own international labour media project, including a) how it differs from or adds to traditional trade-union media, b) how it relates not only to such but also to other alternative international media projects.

LabourStart, the news and campaigning website of the international trade union movement, was founded back in 1998. At the time, it was one of very few union websites – other than the online brochures some unions were slowly putting up. It was a unique effort to create a global site, multilingual, open to both union officials and rank and file members. That is, of course, no longer the case. There are hundreds of great union websites today.

What distinguishes LabourStart is its global reach – now appearing in 24 languages, publishing links to some 90,000 news stories every year.

LabourStart differs from traditional trade union media in the way that all such Internet-based efforts do – it is more immediate, more global, and more dynamic than union media have normally been.

If by other "alternative international media projects" you mean things like IndyMedia, LabourStart has no particular relationship with them except to use them as sources of news.

How would you characterize your activity? Do you consider yourself an 'international labour media activist'? If not, what? How do you relate to others like yourself? And to trade unionists and/or other kinds of labour activists?

I would not characterize myself as a "media activist" of any kind. LabourStart is not merely a medium like a television station. It is a campaigning project. What we do is what good trade unionists have always done – educate, agitate and organize. If I was looking for a term to describe what I do, it would be one or all of those – educator, agitator or organizer.

"Others like myself" would mean other trade unionists, and I relate to them as comrades. In other words, LabourStart is a joint effort involving tens of thousands of trade union members around the world. Over 750 of them are volunteer correspondents; tens of thousands regularly sign up to our online campaigns; more than 60,000 subscribe to our email newsletters in more than a dozen languages.

We are part of a very large movement – not something outside of that

movement.

What are the challenges, problems and issues that alternative labour media have raised for the trade unions and/or other forms of labour and/or social movement activism.

I think the challenges have been raised by the new media in general and not specifically by "alternative labour media" (whatever that is).

For example, by giving everyone access to everything, as the web did, certain union structures that were previously several stages removed from rank and file workers were overnight connected directly to those workers – through websites and email.

I'm thinking primarily of the global union federations, which used to deal only with affiliate unions, never with members of those unions. All that changed in the 1990s when union members began to visit GUF websites and send them emails.

The new technology has also speeded things up beyond recognition. The days when the arrest of a union leader would lead to the publication of a print bulletin, sent out by post – that now seems leisurely and quaint. We now respond within hours, sometimes minutes, to major violations of union rights as we learn about them. This is campaigning at the speed of light, and is something utterly new to the trade union movement.

It requires a certain agility, a flexibility, that we are learning.

Do you consider 'alternative international labour media' (or however you wish to characterize your field of activity) gender neutral? Or does it reproduce the discourse and practices of traditional patriarchal media?

I can't say I understand the question.

Do you consider that technical criteria and the logic of the media production in which you are involved influence or actually limit your efforts to treat your medium (or media) as the voice of working people (also beyond the unions) or, to put it another way, of international labour protest in general?

The only limits I can think of are (a) we cannot reach everyone online because not everyone is online and (b) when you start dealing with rank-and-file workers, and not just with the people tasked with international relations in unions, you run slam up against the problem of languages.

In so far as you consider your activity as 'internationalist', how does

this a) relate to traditional internationalist labour communication/culture, and b) relate to a novel kind of labour or social-movement communicational/cultural internationalism?

The work we do at LabourStart is a continuation of, you might say, a 21st century adaption of, traditional labour solidarity.

Of course our movement adapts and changes over time, and the way we do things now differs with how we once worked, but certain core principles still apply.

The values of solidarity, accountability and democracy are still central to what we do, which is one of the reasons why LabourStart works so closely with the existing, democratically-elected leaderships of unions everywhere — as well as with rank-and-file members.

I know that in the 1990s there were some who argued that the new media would create something utterly new, something different from and even opposed to the existing trade union movement. That has not turned out to be the case, at least not from what I can see.

Some of those who argued for some kind of new global solidarity movement based on the web as an alternative to unions have long-since disappeared from the scene, moving on to other things.

Meanwhile, the same cumbersome, slow-moving, unfashionable unions that were to have been eclipsed by the new technology are still there, doing their job.

How do you support yourself financially and how are your projects funded? To what extent, if any, are such sources of income a constraint on what you would like to do?

LabourStart is financed primarily by donations from trade unions and individual trade unionists. In addition, we do web design work on consulting for unions at local, national and global level.

Response to Alternative International Labour Communication Survey

Dave Hollis

1. How would you describe or characterise your own international labour media project, including a) how it differs from or adds to traditional trade-union media, b) how it relates not only to such but also to other alternative international media projects?

See http://www.netzwerkit.de/faq (in German) or http://www.netzwerkit.de/leaflet for a short version in English.

a) It differs in a number of ways from traditional union methodology:

> i) In the emphasis on the self expression of interests and the rejection of "interest-representation".

> ii) "Projects", i.e. those who organise themselves, also speak for themselves. There is no Netzwerk IT "party line". There is also no membership.

> iii) Promotion of "networking" and non-hierarchical structures.

b) We are open to anyone who wishes to talk to us or work with us. For instance, *ver.di*, a German national union, promotes to a certain extent, the UPS Workers' site, "die Galeere", "the galley". Cooperation is, however, on the basis of individuals or projects but not as Netzwerk IT.

c) We are also beginning to cooperate with "Chefduzen". It will be based on pooling resources when attacked legally, supporting each other technically or, for instance, providing space in those situations that groups want more than just the forums of Chefduzen. (See http://www.chefduzen.de, The Forum of the Exploited). In all cases the autonomy of the projects/groups will not be injured. According to LabourNet Germany we also cooperate with them. Well, we do send them information from time to time.

2. How would you characterize your activity? Do you consider yourself an 'international labour media activist'? If not, what? How do you relate to others like yourself? And to trade unionists and/or other kinds of labour activists?

a) yes, depending on how you define "labour". We position ourselves as being part of the social movements and not as an aspiring trade union.

b) We are open but cautious. Our emphasis on participation in Netzwerk IT is at a personal level and the rejection of the participation of organisations is important for us.

3. What are the challenges, problems and issues that alternative labour media have raised for the trade unions and/or other forms of labour and/or social movement activism?

Alternative labour media are something they cannot control and this often makes it dangerous to unions when they highlight/expose dubious union activities in general or in the workplace. You sometimes see the most unholy of alliances (union + management) when there are independent voices in the workforce. For this reason most of those who are involved in projects hide their identities to protect their jobs.

4. Do you consider 'alternative international labour media' (or however you wish to characterize your field of activity) gender neutral? Or does it reproduce the discourse and practices of traditional patriarchal media?

Yes. Even if it is mainly men one sees in the projects.

Participation is open and whoever participates has a say.

5. Do you consider that technical criteria and the logic of the media production in which you are involved influence or actually limit your efforts to treat your medium (or media) as the voice of working people (also beyond the unions) or, to put it another way, of international labour protest in general?

The use of technology, its power and effects, is underestimated. It is difficult to trim a system so that anyone can use it. Even what technical instrument one can and should use on a website is often an important question.

6. In so far as you consider your activity as 'internationalist', how does this a) relate to traditional internationalist labour communication/culture, and b) relate to a novel kind of labour or social-movement communicational/cultural internationalism?

Internationalism or transnationalism? The internet is transnational. We have projects in four countries: Germany, Austria, Slovenia (or is it the Czech republic, I don't really know) and Switzerland. We also now have a blogger from Italy when he gets his finger out of his arse or his baby daughter lets him have some sleep.

7. How do you support yourself financially and how are your projects funded? To what extent, if any, are such sources of income a constraint on what you would like to do?

We very much support ourselves. We have the monthly costs of hosting (25 Euros and any donations we can give our alternative provider (Wissenschaftsladen, Dortmund, see our FAQ). It is otherwise a zero budget project. It "just" costs lots of time. We ask and get donations but we have no backers. We have had a large donation for a server, but we had to go and beg for that and it was a one-off deal.

8. Do you have a problem with these questions? Feel free to replace, or add to, them!

They are a little vague and I am not sure they are meant for us.

Are we too exotic, perhaps?

Декларация о политике, знании и искусстве

Платформа «Что делать?»

Наши принципы: самоорганизация, коллективность, солидарность

Платформа «Что делать?» объединяет художников и философов, социальных исследователей, активистов и всех тех, кто нацелен на совместную реализацию исследовательских, публикационных, художественных, образовательных и активистских проектов.

Все инициативы платформы основаны на принципах самоорганизации и коллективности. Эти принципы реализуются посредством политических форм координации деятельности рабочих групп – современного аналога советов. Проекты, которые реализует та или иная группа-совет, репрезентируют всю платформу и находятся в тесном взаимодействии друг с другом. В то же время существование платформы создает общий контекст интерпретации проектов ее индивидуальных участников.

Мы руководствуемся также принципом солидарности, организуя и поддерживая сети взаимопомощи со всеми низовыми группами, разделяющими принципы интернационализма, феминизма и равенства.

Требования (не)возможного

В реакционный исторический момент, когда элементарные требования возможного преподносятся как романтическая невозможность, мы остаемся реалистами и настаиваем на простых и понятных вещах. Необходимо уйти от фрустраций, вызванных историческими неудачами реализации левых идей, и раскрыть заново их освободительный потенциал.

Обращаясь к широкой аудитории, мы говорим: быть свободным и жить достойной жизнью естественно для каждого человека – стоит только найти в себе силы бороться за это. Первое, что нами движет – это неприятие любых форм угнетения, искусственного разобщения людей и эксплуатации. Поэтому мы стоим за справедливое распределение богатства, созданного человеческим трудом, и всех природных ресурсов, для блага всех.

Мы интернационалисты – и требуем признания равенства всех людей, вне

зависимости от места их проживания и происхождения.

Мы феминисты – и против любых форм патриархата, гомофобии, гендерного неравенства.

Капитализм не является тотальностью

Мы исходим из того, что капитализм не является тотальностью – в смысле популярного тезиса о том, что «нет ничего вне капитала». Задача интеллектуала и художника – последовательно разоблачать миф о безальтернативности глобальной капиталистической системы в ее историческом измерении.

Мы настаиваем на очевидном: мир вне господства прибыли и эксплуатации не просто может быть создан, но всегда уже существует на уровне микро-политики и микро-экономики человеческих отношений и творческого труда.

Необходимо открыть это радостное пространство жизни для максимально большего количества людей. Историческим становлением этой экономической, политической, интеллектуальной и творческой эмансипации и является коммунизм.

Коммунистическая расшифровка капиталистической действительности

Подлинно свободный, живущий в полноте своего бытия человек – это человек, восприимчивый к различным наукам, критически исследующий себя и мир. Однако узкая специализация научного знания в капиталистическом обществе ставит это знание на службу господствующему классу – частные исследования отвечают частным интересам, а исследования общества, нацеленные на универсальность критического высказывания, не находят институциональной поддержки.

Мы утверждаем, что существует только одно знание – знание, которое способствует раскрытию призвания человека быть свободным вместе с другими. Критическое знание не должно быть товаром, и его как можно более широкое распространение – просвещение и образование – является делом каждого интеллектуала и работника культуры. Такой синтез теории и практики, познания мира и его преобразования, мы называем коммунистической расшифровкой капиталистической действительности.

Мы повторяем вслед за Марксом: «Мы не говорим миру: "перестань бороться – вся твоя борьба пустяки; мы дадим тебе истинный лозунг борьбы". Мы только показываем миру, за что собственно он борется, а

сознание такая вещь, которую мир должен приобрести себе, хочет он этого или нет» (из письма Арнольду Руге, сентябрь 1843 г.).

Верность интеллектуальному и художественному авангарду XX века

Мы признаем важность авангардной мысли XX века для переосмысления и обновления левой философской и политической традиции. Мы считаем, что для этого обновления необходим максимально открытый, недогматический подход, предполагающий критическую рецепцию понятий, концепций и практик, сложившихся вне рамок доктринального марксизма. Насущную задачу мы видим в том, чтобы восстановить связь политического действия, ангажированной мысли и художественного изобретения.

Классовая композиция

Одной из основных проблем теории остается определение классовой композиции современного общества. В настоящее время, когда радикально трансформируются трудовые отношения, меняется и само понятие классов. Мы уже не можем полностью полагаться на прежние определения пролетариата и буржуазии, а также старые формы организации борьбы за освобождение.

Мы считаем, что необходим дальнейший пересмотр классовой теории, учитывающий современный этап развития антагонизма между трудом и капиталом. Мы утверждаем, что этот антагонизм остается центральным и не только не исчезает в ситуации трансформации общества, но, напротив, усиливается и поэтому требует нового осмысления. Здесь также возникает вопрос о переосмыслении стратегии и задач критического интеллектуала в рамках меняющейся конфигурации производительных сил.

О задачах современного искусства

Современное искусство, которое производится в качестве развлечения или товара — не есть искусство, а есть поставленное на поток изготовление подделок и дурмана для утехи пресыщенного новизной «творческого класса». Одна из важнейших задач сегодня — разоблачать новейшую систему идеологического контроля и манипуляции людьми, псевдо-творческая активность которой — не более чем коммодификация уже не только результатов труда, но и всех форм жизни.

Мы убеждены, что подлинное искусство — это искусство де-автоматизации сознания сначала художника, а потом — зрителя. И поскольку искусство

представляет собой деятельность, открытую каждому, ни власть, ни капитал не могут монополизировать право на «владение» искусством. Один из ответов на вечные дебаты об автономии искусства – это возможность его производства независимо от арт-институций, государственных либо частных. В современной ситуации необходимое для развития искусства самоотрицание происходит вне институциональных практик.

Место искусства, как публичной формы реализации творческого потенциала каждого человека, в исторические моменты подъема революционной борьбы всегда было и будет в гуще событий, на площадях и в коммунах. В такие моменты его формой становится уличный театр, плакат, акция, газета, граффити, народное кино, поэзия и музыка. Актуализация этих форм на новом историческом этапе и есть задача подлинного художника.

Каково место революционного искусства в ситуации реакции?

В ситуации временного отсутствия массовых движений за преобразование общества место искусства все равно остается на стороне угнетенных, и главной его задачей является выработка новых форм чувственного и критического восприятия мира в перспективе коллективного освобождения. Искусство должно существовать не для музеев и дилеров, а для выработки и артикуляции нового модуса «освобождающей чувственности», становиться инструментом познания мира в тотальности его противоречий.

Музеи и институции искусства должны функционировать как депозитарии и лаборатории эстетического познания мира, но мы должны оградить их от приватизации, экономизации и подчинения популистской логике культуриндустрии. Именно поэтому мы считаем, что полный отказ от сотрудничества с институтами культуры и академией является в данный момент неправильным решением, несмотря на то, что большинство этих институций во всем мире заняты откровенной пропагандой товарного фетишизма и сервильного знания. Политическая пропаганда любых иных форм человеческого призвания вызывает либо жесткое отторжение системы, либо интеграцию в нее по законам зрелища. Но в то же время система неоднородна, жадна, глупа и зависима. Это оставляет нам сегодня пространство для использования институций в целях пропаганды своего знания, которое могло бы достигать широкой аудитории, не поддаваясь при этом искажениям.

Поэтому требуется выработка ясных критериев, где, на каких площадках следует вести борьбу, какие проекты необходимо бойкотировать и разоблачать, а с кем – и на каких условиях – возможно сотрудничество.

Программа-минимум

В текущей ситуации мы предлагаем самоуправляемым коллективам руководствоваться следующей программой минимум:

– Недопустимо вмешательство внешних факторов в разработку замысла и реализации своего проекта. Недопустима передача эксклюзивных прав на дистрибуцию результатов деятельности, недопустима прямая и косвенная реклама институтов власти и капитала в рамках проекта.

– экономические отношения должны выстраиваться политически. Нужно коллективно требовать достойных условий оплаты труда, и, таким образом, вступая в рабочие отношения с институциями власти, демонстрировать их капиталистический, эксплуататорский характер.

– не следует участвовать в проектах, если их результат (символический капитал, прибавочная стоимость) может быть инструментализирован для политических целей, противоречащих внутренним задачам работы коллектива.

– в процессе реализации проекта нужно стремиться к максимальной «непрозрачности» своей деятельности, стремясь при этом производить ситуации, смысл которых может быть полностью выявлен только вне ограниченных рамок конкретных производственных отношений. Это значит – конструировать потребительную стоимость работы таким образом, чтобы ее перевод в меновую стоимость был максимально затруднен для институций власти.

В то же время мы настаиваем на бескомпромиссной критике и борьбе против всех институций культуры, строящих свою работу на коррупции и примитивном обслуживании интересов коммерческих структур, государства, идеологии. Этим недоумкам и проституткам требуется постоянно «бить по рукам» и указывать на их позорное место в истории, и мы будем этого добиваться всеми средствами!

Локальная специфика борьбы

Мы требуем, как минимум, прекращения негласной цензуры и репрессий, направленных против любых форм политической и культурной деятельности.

Из этого требования следует необходимость осуществления государственной и общественной поддержки независимых от частных

интересов социальных исследований и практик критического искусства в России. Избегая традиционного выбора между «реформизмом» или «радикализмом», мы настаиваем на поиске специфической локальной композиции требований и программ преобразований. Для начала мы требуем конкретные вещи: общественные фонды должны прозрачно распределяться для поддержки в публичном пространстве исследовательских и художественных высказываний, а также идущих снизу общественных инициатив. Они должны использоваться, в том числе, и для поддержки деятельности, основанной на жесткой критике современных институтов власти, как в культуре, так и в политике. С другой стороны, это возможно только при радикальной общественной трансформации, которая подорвет всю систему авторитарного капитализма. Для создания условий этой трансформации необходимы новые формы координации со всеми другими фронтами борьбы – с рабочими, профсоюзными, экологическими, феминистскими, анти-авторитарными движениями и распространение моделей активистского самообразования, политизации художественных и интеллектуальных практик – как основания будущей широкой консолидации для политической и идейной гегемонии левых в обществе.

Работники культуры – художники, интеллектуалы, кураторы, исследователи!

Объединяйтесь со всеми людьми труда, которые, несмотря ни на что, продолжают борьбу за свободу и достоинство человека! Только вместе мы можем вырваться из плена нищеты повседневности, депрессии и страха.

Есть только один мир – и он будет таким, каким мы его делаем сейчас!

A Declaration on Politics, Knowledge, and Art

Chto delat / What is to be done?

Our Principles: Self-Organization, Collectivism, Solidarity

The Chto Delat platform unites artists, philosophers, social researchers, activists, and all those whose aim is the collaborative realization of critical and independent research, publication, artistic, educational and activist projects. All of the platform's initiatives are based on the principles of self-organization and collectivism. These principles are realized through the political coordination of working groups — the contemporary analogue of soviets.

The projects undertaken by any of these groups represent the entire platform and are closely coordinated with one another. At the same time, the existence of the platform creates a common context for interpreting the projects of its individual participants. We are likewise guided by the principle of solidarity. We organize and support mutual assistance networks with all grassroots groups who share the principles of internationalism, feminism, and equality.

Demanding the (im)possible

At this reactionary historical moment, when elementary demands for the possible are presented as a romantic impossibility, we remain realists and insist on certain simple, intelligible things. We have to move away from the frustrations occasioned by historical failures to advance leftist ideas and discover anew their emancipatory potential. We say that it is natural for each person to be free and live a life of dignity. All that we have to do is to find the strength within ourselves to fight for this. The first thing that motivates us is the rejection of all forms of oppression, the artificial alienation of people, and exploitation. That is why we stand for a distribution of the wealth produced by human labor and all natural resources that is just and directed towards the welfare of everyone.

We are internationalists: we demand the recognition of the equality of all people, no matter where they live or where they come from.

We are feminists: we are against all forms of patriarchy, homophobia, and gender inequality.

Capitalism Is Not a Totality

We believe that capital is not a totality, that the popular thesis that "there is nothing outside capital" is false. The task of the intellectual and the artist is to engage in a thoroughgoing unmasking of the myth that there are no alternatives to the global capitalist system.We insist on the obvious: a world without the dominion of profit and exploitation not only can be created but always already exists in the micropolitics and microeconomies of human relationships and creative labor. We have to reveal this joyous space of life to the greatest number of people. The historical becoming of this economic, political, intellectual, and creative emancipation is communism.

The Communist Decoding of Capitalist Reality

The person who is genuinely free, who lives in the fullness of their being, is a person who is alive to various sciences and disciplines, who critically examines themselves and the world. However, the narrow specialization of scientific knowledge in capitalist society places knowledge in the service of the dominant class. Individual research serves private interests, while research of society, research based on the universality of critical utterance, is not supported institutionally. We affirm that there is only one form of knowledge — knowledge that enables the discovery that the calling of human beings is to be free with other human beings. Critical knowledge should not be a commodity, and its maximally widespread distribution — enlightenment and education — is the cause of each intellectual and cultural worker. This synthesis of theory and practice, knowledge of the world and its transformation, we call the communist decoding of capitalist reality. We repeat along with Marx:

> We do not say to the world: Cease your struggles, they are foolish; we will give you the true slogan of struggle. We merely show the world what it is really fighting for, and consciousness is something that it has to acquire, even if it does not want to. (Letter to Arnold Ruge, September 1843.)

Faithfulness to the Intellectual and Artistic Avant-Gardes of the Twentieth Century

We recognize the importance of twentieth-century avant-garde thought for the rethinking and renewal of the leftist philosophical and political tradition. We believe that in order for this renewal to happen we need a maximally open, non-dogmatic approach that presupposes a critical reception of ideas, concepts, and practices that have formed outside the framework of doctrinal Marxism. Our

urgent task is to reconnect political action, engaged thought, and artistic innovation.

Class Composition

One of the basic problems of theory remains the definition of contemporary society's class structure. At present, when labor relations are in a process of radical transformation, the very notion of classes is changing as well. We can no longer rely wholly on the previous definitions of proletariat and bourgeoisie, or on old forms of organizing the struggle for liberation. We believe that we have to continue to re-examine class theory by considering the contemporary development of the antagonism between labor and capital. We affirm that this antagonism remains the central one. The transformation of society has not only not made it disappear; on the contrary, this antagonism has only been exacerbated and therefore needs to be interpreted anew. We are also faced here with the question of rethinking the strategies and tasks of the critical intellectual in a conjuncture where the configuration of productive forces is changing.

The Tasks of Contemporary Art

Contemporary art that is produced as a commodity form or a form of entertainment is not art. It is the conveyor-belt manufacture of counterfeits and narcotics for the enjoyment of a "creative class" sated with novelty. One of our most vital tasks today is unmasking the current system of ideological control and manipulation of people. The pseudocreativity of this system is no more than the commodification not only of the fruits of their labor, but also of all forms of life. We are convinced that genuine art is art that de-automates consciousness — first, that of the artist, then that of the viewer. And because art is an activity open to everyone, neither power nor capital can have a monopoly on the "ownership" of art.

One answer to the perennial debate on art's autonomy is the possibility that it can be produced independently of art institutions, whether state or private. In the contemporary conjuncture, the selfnegation essential to art's development happens outside institutional practices. As a public form of the unfolding of each person's creative potential, the place of art during moments of revolutionary struggle has always been and always will be in the thick of events, on the squares and in the communes. At such moments, art takes the form of street theater, posters, actions, graffiti, grassroots cinema, poetry, and music. Renewing these forms at this new stage in history is the task of the genuine artist.

What Is the Place of Revolutionary Art in a Time of Reaction?

Although mass movements for the transformation of society are temporarily absent, art's place is nevertheless still on the side of the oppressed. Its central task is the elaboration of new forms for the sensual and critical apprehension of the world from the perspective of collective liberation. Art should exist not for museums and dealers but in order to develop and articulate a new mode of "emancipated sensuality." It should become an instrument for seeing and knowing the world in the totality of its contradictions. The museums and institutions of art should function as depositories and laboratories for the aesthetic exploration of the world. We should, however, shield them from privatization, economization, and subordination to the populist logic of the culture industry.

That is why we believe that right now it would be wrong to refuse to work in any way with cultural and academic institutions — despite the fact that the majority of these institutions throughout the world are engaged in the flagrant propaganda of commodity fetishism and servile knowledge. The political propaganda of all other forms of human vocation either provokes the system's harsh rejection or the system co-opts it into its spectacle.

At the same time, however, the system is not homogeneous — it is greedy, stupid, and dependent. Today, this leaves us room to use these institutions to advance and promote our knowledge. We can bring this knowledge to a wide audience without succumbing to its distortion. That is why we need to develop clear criteria for deciding in which venues we can conduct our struggle, which projects should be boycotted and denounced, and with whom and on what conditions we can collaborate.

Our Basic Program

In the current situation, we propose that self-governed collectives use the following basic program as their guide:

– Don't allow external factors to intervene as you develop your ideas and realize your projects. Don't give away exclusive rights to the distribution of your work. Don't directly or indirectly advertise the institutions of power and capital within your projects.

– Economic relations have to be built in a political way. You need to collectively demand that your labor be compensated fairly and with dignity. By entering into

a working relationship with the institutions of power, you demonstrate their capitalistic, exploitative nature.

– Don't participate in projects whose results (symbolic capital, surplus value) can be instrumentalized for political ends that contradict the internal tasks of your collective's work.

– As you realize your project you should try to make your work as "non-transparent" as possible. At the same time, you should strive to produce situations whose meaning can be fully manifested only outside the limited frame of concrete relations of production. This means that you should construe the use value of the work in such a way that institutions of power will be hard pressed when they try to convert it into exchange value.

At the same time, we insist on an uncompromising critique of and struggle against all institutions of culture that base their work on corruption and the primitive servicing of the interests of commercial structures, the state, and ideology. We must constantly "slap" these dimwits and prostitutes "on the wrist" and show them their shameful place in history. We will use all the means at our disposal to make this happen.

The Local Aspect of the Struggle

We demand, as a minimum, the abolition of tacit censorship and an end to all repression of political and cultural activity. It follows from this demand that we need state and public support for social research projects and critical art practices in Russia that are independent of private interests.

Avoiding the traditional choice between "reformism" and "radicalism", we insist on the search for a specific, local configuration of demands and transformational programs. For a start we demand a few concrete things. Public funds should be transparently distributed for the support of research and art in the public space, as well for grassroots initiatives. They should also be used to support work based on the harsh criticism of contemporary institutions of power, both in culture and in politics. On the other hand, this is possible only as part of a radical social transformation that would undermine the entire system of authoritarian capitalism. In order to foster conditions for this transformation, we need new forms of coordination with all other fronts of the struggle—with workers, trade unions, environmentalists, feminists, and anti-authoritarian activists. We have to propagate models of activist self-education and the politicization of artistic and intellectual practices. These are the bases for a future broad consolidation of leftists and the hegemony of our ideas in society.

December 2008, first published at the newspaper "When Artists Struggle Together"

About the author

The platform Chto delat / What is to be done? was founded with the goal of merging political theory, art, and activism in early 2003 in Petersburg by a workgroup of artists, critics, philosophers, and writers from Petersburg, Moscow, and Nizhny Novgorod.

Chto delat works through collective initiatives organized by "art soviets," inspired by the councils formed in revolutionary Russia during the early 20th century. These "art soviets" want to trigger a prototypical social model of participatory democracy, translating an open system for the generation of new forms of solidarity into the realm of contemporary cultural work. The "art soviet" takes on the function of a counter-power that plans, localizes and executes projects collectively.

Website: www.chtodelat.org

Colin Barker's assumptions about Solidarnosc:

Not so much controversial as a-historical?

Peter Waterman

Colin Barker's article on '...*emotion, organization and strategy in Solidarnosc, 1980 – 81*', *Interface,* May 2010, is an innovative and sophisticated piece of empirical and theoretical work on what was surely the major national working-class movement since World War II. He deploys an impressive range of social-movement theory to consider the dramatic rise and eventual fall of this movement. His concern with emotion adds significantly to traditional political-economic writing both on Solidarnosc in particular and social movements in general. Yet he ends with this blunt statement:

> If nothing else, the Polish movement tested to destruction the suicidal proposition that mass movements should seek to 'change the world without taking power.' That route, Solidarity's fate reveals, leads to misery.

There is little if anything in the preceding analysis that would lead readers to this startling conclusion. True, we have some warning in his abstract:

> This whole paper rests on a controversial assumption, namely that Solidarity in Poland was (at least potentially) a social-revolutionary movement.

I find this, indeed, a controversial assumption. If it is a proposition, it is one hardly addressed in the paper. The notion appears to be based on a series of merely implicit assumptions, hinted at by occasional reference to the Russian Revolution. If only, Colin seems to suggest, there had been in existence in Poland a revolutionary proletarian party, there might have been a social revolution, rather than the sorry and merely political transition from state capitalism to neo-liberalism.

This is a somewhat iffy formulation and one that avoids dealing with the historical and social reasons for the lack of such in Poland in the early 1980s. As founder-editor of the *Newsletter of International Labour Studies* (NILS), in the 1980s, I had followed with much sympathy and hope the struggles in Poland, but been acutely aware of the nationalist and religious element within and around Solidarnosc, as well as the problematic mediating role of the dissident intelligentsia. (The NILS focus on internationalism also revealed both the limitations on this *within* Solidarnosc and the social-liberal paternalism of the most powerful Western unions *towards* this body).

The other oddity in Colin's conclusion is the suggestion that what happened in the early 1980s disproves an argument formulated by John Holloway...20 years later! This means that Colin is taking a case from *before* the collapse of Communism, the final decline of social democracy, the high tide of globalisation, the stagnation or retreat of the international labour movement, to dismiss a theory developed not only in *the wake of such* but inspired by the *rise of* the Zapatistas - an entirely novel kind of social movement. Colin's ambitious and innovatory exercise is then reduced to a convoluted device for a return to the experience of the Russian Revolution, which took place in radically different national and international social circumstances, under and against a still recently industrial and capitalist regime – and almost 100 years ago!

Holloway is way too poetic for me, but I do recognise his as one thought-provoking search for other meanings of, and strategies for, human social emancipation. (Consider here only some of the extensive writings of Ezequiel Adamovsky, Seoane and Taddei, Boaventura de Sousa Santos). Such anti-capitalist theorising/strategising puts in question, the empirical priority or strategical prioritisation of the political party (or The Party) over the social movement(s), as well as the notion that one can 'capture' state power (on either the social-democratic, communist or national-populist model), with the consequent implication that one needs, rather, to undermine, to dissolve, to distribute, take back and to extend power/s.

Would it not therefore be more relevant for us today to think of Solidarnosc as an initial step away from the domination of social movements by state-oriented political parties? Its eventual failure (except in the not inconsiderable achievement of initiating the collapse of the Soviet bloc!), like the stalemate in the Zapatista struggle, certainly is cause for serious reflection. But there is nothing in either the Polish case, nor in Colin's argument, to suggest that there then existed even the remote possibility that a vanguard party of the revolutionary proletariat would have – could have – led in Poland to the creation of either a classical 'dictatorship of the proletariat' on the early Soviet model, nor a socialist state on one of many hypothetical participatory or direct-democratic models.

Colin's impressive analytical and theoretical capacities, it seems to me, would be better employed in application to contemporary social movements, and without archaic or a-historical assumptions of which collective subject possesses emancipatory capacities, and why it requires mediation/leadership by a (self-nominated) revolutionary vanguard.

About the author

Peter Waterman (London 1936) worked for the international Communist movement in the 1950s and '60s. Through the 1970s-90s, he was a left academic-activist on labour and social movements. In the late-1980s he initiated the

international debate on 'social movement unionism'. Now retired, he writes on international labour, the WSF and the global justice and solidarity movement. He is published widely, in English and other languages, in print and on the web (see http://reinventinglabour.wordpress.com and http://blog.choike.org/eng/category/peter-waterman. He can be contacted at peterwaterman1936 AT gmail.com

Response to Peter Waterman

Colin Barker

I feel like Peter Waterman's cake: he is trying to have me and to eat me. He praises my empirical and theoretical work and my attention to emotions, but attacks my premises and my conclusions.

In particular, he finds my conclusion - that Solidarity's story showed that aiming to change the world without taking power is a suicidal policy – 'startling' and quite disconnected from my previous analysis. This is a very odd reading.

Surely the bulk of the article is constructed around an account that leads to this conclusion? That's why I discuss the similarities between the inter-factory strike committees and soviets and workers' councils. That's why I suggest the political situation after August 1980 was a form of 'dual power'. That's why I focus on the Solidarity leaders' view that the membership's aspirations were too radical. That's why I point up the leadership's concern to limit the movement. That's why I argue that the Polish regime believed its own existence to be incompatible with Solidarity. And that's why the logic of the situation was that either Solidarity must break the regime, or the regime would break it.

The article suggests there was a revolutionary situation in Poland, in the sense that Lenin or Trotsky - or Tilly - used the term: the rulers could no longer rule in the old way, and the ruled were no longer willing to be ruled that way. Peter apparently disagrees, but doesn't say why, or how he would characterize the outcome of Solidarity's August victories. My reading of the emotional life of Solidarity is bound up with the narrative of how that revolutionary situation arose, and how it was – tragically – resolved. I don't see how you can like the one and reject the other: they're all part of the same story.

Second, such revolutionary situations, or what Teodor Shanin terms 'axial moments', are not everyday occurrences. Their outcomes can shape the pattern of social development – and thus the space within which movements can develop – for many years. Those outcomes are not inevitable, but depend on what people say and do, how they organize. If we are to succeed in transforming the world, we shall pass through further such critical moments, and our theories and our practices will be put to serious test. I think we can learn important things for the future from the study of such moments in the past. One thing the Solidarity experience suggests is that a movement leadership that sets it face resolutely against challenging state power will lead that movement into demoralization and defeat. So the absence, *inside* Solidarity, of a coherent left opposition was part of the story of Solidarity's defeat.

Third, what's at issue is not the 'empirical priority or strategic prioritization of the political party (or The Party) over the social movement(s)'. That's a confusing formulation, setting one form *over* another, and potentially

misrepresenting both. Movements are not homogeneous entities, all of whose adherents think the same. Actual movements are full of debate, opposition, argument. Any movement of any significance is full of 'tendencies', 'factions', 'parties' and the like arguing for different ways forward. Some call themselves 'parties', others (like the Polish dissident intelligentsia or the Church) deny that they are 'parties;' but in reality act like them. There are parties and parties: some are opponents of movements, others are part of their inner life.

Fourth, I find Peter's discussion of *power* as confusing as John Holloway's. Do movements *need* power to achieve their goals? How, for example, can the demand to re-order humanity's relationship with the natural environment even be conceived without a simultaneous discussion of the power required to carry it through — both power to *stop* current destructive practices by corporations and states, and power to *summon and organize the resources* to replace existing energy sources and uses with more sustainable forms?

The real issue is not whether movements need power, but whose power we're talking about and how it should be organized and distributed. What was most exciting about Solidarity was that it created new institutions of popular power, organized and coordinated from below. If Solidarity had sought to 'capture' the existing state power in Poland, that would indeed have been a self-defeating path. For the whole critique of the existing state power that Solidarity's members voiced very powerfully involved an attack on its undemocratic and repressive character, its authoritarian organization and so forth. For Solidarity to pursue power it would have had to extend its own democratic forms, seeking to replace these as the principles of political and social life, against the existing state power. Rather than disempowering and demobilizing its own members (the actual policy of its leaders after March 1981), it would have had to work to empower and mobilize them further. If Solidarity had taken seriously its own social and economic programme, 'For a Self-Governing Republic' (adopted at its autumn 1981 Congress), it would have had to break with the politics of 'firefighting' in favour of active solidarity.

Was there an *audience* within Solidarity for such ideas? My argument (developed further in other writings, referenced in the article) is that there was: sections of the 'radicals' within Solidarity were groping for alternatives to the Walesa group's ideas. The regime did not give them sufficient time and space to develop them.

Such ideas are of more than historical interest. They have re-appeared in struggles in Argentina and Bolivia in the past decade, and they will re-appear again, wherever live social movements find themselves developing the capacity to change the world. Such movements, rooted in the everyday lives of ordinary working people, are the only forces with the capacity to transform social and political life. The job of socialists — and this is ultimately what the argument is about — is to argue *within* movements that they should do just that, rather than restrict themselves to what's possible without challenging the regime in power..

Is this a case, as Peter sneers, for 'a (self-nominated) revolutionary vanguard'? Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that those who see the potentials and the dangers

in a given movement have a responsibility to test out their views on their fellows — that's part of movement democracy. There's always an element of 'self-nomination' in any attempt to persuade others of a position. Peter, after all, self-nominated himself as my critic, as is his right. A vanguard only *becomes* such if others accept its arguments, and if it learns to develop those arguments from the conversations it has with others. What's self-defeating is a refusal of intra-movement politics.

About the author

Colin Barker is a retired Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Manchester Metropolitan University, currently enjoying "honorary" status. Since the early 1960s, he has been a member of the Socialist Workers Party, formerly the International Socialists. Since 1995, he has been one of the organizers of the (almost) annual International Conferences on Alternative Futures and Popular Protest", held around Easter at Manchester Metropolitan University. He can be reached by email at c.barker AT mmu.ac.uk or barcolin AT googlemail.com.

Policing and repression of anti-globalization protests and movements: a bibliography of English-language material

Tomás Mac Sheoin

Note

The following bibliography assembles a variety of material –from the news media, the movement, academia and the security forces- on the policing and repression of the anti-globalization movement (AGM). The following should be noted:

Material included. There is a massive literature on the AGM, much of which deals with these issues en passant. Only sources with these issues at their core are cited.

Material not included. Given the subject of the bibliography it should come as no surprise that certain parts of the literature are underrepresented due to the lack of enthusiasm, for example, of certain sectors of the security forces in making documentation publicly available. Readers are invited to visit the websites of two international programmes – the UN's International Permanent Observatory on Security During Major Events (http://lab.unicri.it/ipo.html) and the EU's EU-SEC, Coordinating National Programmes on Security during Major Events in Europe (www.eu-sec.org) – and note that, while most programmes these organisations fund bristle with freely-available reports, reports are strangely unavailable from these sites.

Material on the media demonisation of the AGM – basic to security force and state management of the movement – has not been included and hopefully will be the subject of a further bibliography.

Material on the Internet. Wherever possible, a free downloadable Internet address is given for material. For internet sources, date of access is given. In the (not totally unlikely) case of these sources disappearing, a further Internet search may be worthwhile, as at least some of these sources appear on multiple sites.

Bias of the material. The bibliography mirrors the literature in that it is biased towards experience in core countries.

Draft nature of the work. This is a first draft and the compiler would welcome communications that drew his attention to sources he has failed to cite. He can be contacted at tomas.x AT ireland.com

Context

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Book reviews: *Interface* volume 2(2)

Reviews editor: Aileen O'Carroll

Books reviewed this issue:

Bob, Clifford (2005). *The marketing of rebellion: insurgents, media and international activism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (xiv, 237pp. $26.95 pbk)

Reviewed by Tomás Mac Sheoin

John Charlton (2009). *Don't you hear the H-Bomb's thunder? Youth and politics on Tyneside in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties.* Pontypool: North East Labour History / Merlin Press. (202pp, £14.95 pbk)

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Reviewed by Stefania Milan

Bob, C (2005) *The marketing of rebellion: insurgents, media and international activism.* **Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (xiv,237pp. $26.95 pbk).**

Reviewed by **Tomás Mac Sheoin**

Advice for local groups looking for international support

Local groups or movements looking for an alliance with or support from an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) are more likely to succeed if they: have an articulate, college-educated and well-travelled leader, who speaks English or another world language (charisma helps as well); create international awareness of their cause through the media, lobbying, tours, etc.; choose carefully which INGO to approach (i.e. do market research); document their struggle through the production of pictorial and video evidence, media and eyewitness reports (thus reducing INGO transaction costs); present a united front by hiding or squelching internal dissent; use non-violent tactics, or, if they use violence, present this as necessary self-defence; simplify their struggle (INGOs prefer black and white to shades of gray); highlight the international aspects of their struggle at the expense of local aspects, even if the latter are central to the struggle; frame their struggle to resonate with what's currently fashionable among INGOs, if necessary shifting the focus from their main local enemy to a less central international enemy; organise in a gender-sensitive and ethnic-tolerant way; and finally if their organisation, methods and aims overlap with those of the target INGO.

This possibly cynical summary of what local or national groups need to do to be successful in international campaigning and obtaining international support has been distilled from the book under review. Bob's book is primarily an academic treatise analysing interactions between insurgent groups and INGOs but can also be used as a 'cookbook' for local movements. It provides a refreshing breath of fresh air through its critical examination of this subject.

Growth of transnational activism

The last two decades have seen a huge growth in international and transnational political mobilisation by non-state actors which has been praised by both academic and activist analysts. On the academic side, the growth of this activism, whether termed global civil society (GCS), transnational social movements (TSMs), international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) or transnational advocacy networks, has prompted the appearance of a large social sciences literature, much of it enthusiastically celebrating the arrival of this 'new' actor on the global stage.

Just as some social scientists once welcomed the arrival of the new social movements – green, gay, etc. - as the new revolutionary subject in place of the working class, so now GCS, 'globalization from below'or 'counterhegemonic globalization' have become the repository of hopes for social, political and economic change.

While there's been an explosion of writing in recent times on transnational activism, what is unusual in Bob's work is that it is useful to campaigning groups. This is an academic book that could be unhesitatingly recommended to a local activist searching for transnational allies, as he analyses why certain local movements are taken up by large INGOs. While his presentation of the international competition for support from INGOs as a market may offend some sensibilities, it provides an excellent method of analysis: only a fool could deny the inequalities in power and resources that underlie relations between INGOs and their local allies. Bob analyses these relationships in terms of power exchange and competition.

Bob's work is based on a few straightforward insights. There are a multitude of local groups engaged in struggles around the world who are searching for transnational support and only a limited number of INGOs and solidarity groups providing this support. In this situation where the power balance between local groups and INGOs is skewed towards the international, power inequalities are inevitable. To put it bluntly, INGOs can pick and choose which local groups to support. Even with the best will in the world, INGOs are limited (due to resources) in the number of campaigns they can run and groups they can support. They will choose to support whichever local group(s) best fit their current requirements or priorities. Thus, if a local group wants INGO support, it helps to frame its struggle in the terms and priorities of its chosen INGO target.

> NGOs usually have the upper hand in these exchanges. Their concerns, tactics and organizational requirements create a loose but real structure to which needy local insurgents must conform to maximize their chances of gaining support. The asymmetry also fuels competition between challengers. Just as in the world economy, where local contractors must meet the demands of multinational corporations, local insurgents, vying against one another for scarce international assistance, must satisfy NGO expectations. (p.21)

Another praiseworthy aspect of Bob's work is that it looks at these transnational relationships not only from the point of view of the western INGOs, but also from the point of view of the local movements, thus granting the movements the grace of agency, and correcting the top down approach of much international literature on transnational activism: 'Contrary to most recent scholarship, I highlight the action, innovation, and skill of movements themselves...This book places local groups at centre stage, focusing on the risky and difficult strategies they deploy to galvanize

external help in the face of domestic despotism and international indifference.'
(p.4)

Case studies

The core of his book consists of two case studies -of the Ogoni movement MOSOP in the Niger Delta in Nigeria and of the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico. Looking in detail at the attempts by the Zapatistas and Ogoni to obtain transnational allies, Bob notes how the groups successfully altered their tactical, ethical and organizational features to match the requirements of their INGO supporters (p180). He also provides a contrasting account of similar local movements from the same area at the same time which failed to obtain international support.

The Ogoni case study is richer than the Zapatista one as it's based not only on the literature but also on interviews with INGOs and MOSOP officials. This results in an excellent case study of the interactions of MOSOP with INGOs. This began with a first attempt to interest NGOs through an international campaign from 1990 to 1992, an attempt that failed as the frame MOSOP presented at the time did not fit with the missions of the INGOs it approached. Support grew from January to June 1993, when MOSOP shifted to an environmental frame attacking the oil transnational Shell's operations in the Niger Delta. MOSOP's growing campaign in the Delta led to state repression which resulted in the dispute fitting the human rights frame of a further raft of INGOs. As state repression deepened, INGO involvement increased from July 1993 to December 1995. After this however, from 1995 to 2002, support declined as state repression killed the movement in Nigeria, Shell softened its position and disputes among MOSOP cadre sapped energy and alienated transnational support.

The current struggle inside the Niger Delta, involving a rise in armed militant groups whose tactics include sabotage, kidnapping and killing of oil TNC personnel, has little international support. Bob's conclusion sounds a warning note about the interactions between movements and transnational supporters:

> this outcome hints at both the costs and limits of NGO activism. Notwithstanding the many benefits it bestowed, NGO intervention came at the price of MOSOP's downplaying its core minority agenda. The association between repression and international activism also suggests the need for caution both by local movements and NGOs. The pursuit of foreign backing may drive a movement to actions and rhetoric that, although necessary to attract overseas allies, have provocative effects at home. Once gained, NGO assistance may promote unrealistic expectations both about an insurgency's prospects and its patrons' power to achieve them (pp.115-116).

The Zapatista case is less successful, partly because Bob restricts his concerns to INGOs. For the Zapatistas, what is most interesting is not the response of the

INGOs but the much broader response among social movements. Here an analysis of the International Encounters organised by the Zapatista would have been useful, as would interviews with the likes of Harry Cleaver (who was instrumental in spreading Zapatista texts over the internet). This wider analysis would have brought out the similarities between the old 'Third World' international solidarity networks and those which grew around the Zapatista cause - one example would be how the revolutionary tourism to Chiapas echoed the cane-cutting brigades to Cuba - which might distract from an emphasis on the novelty of networks. Yet these networks were both traditional and novel, and admitting the former helps highlight the latter.

Criticisms

Bob's work has been criticised for its criticism of INGOs by those who are uncomfortable with his use of market analysis and terms such as patron and client to describe relations between movements and INGOs. Others balk at the comparison of INGOs with transnational corporations (TNCs), yet the comparison is valid, as anyone with experience of dealing with, for example, Greenpeace International with its centralised decision-making, can attest. Moreover Bob persistently reiterates that INGO decision-making takes place in an ethical context and INGO cadre care about and are motivated by their causes: however, he argues that a failure to critically analyse INGO strategies 'leaves analysts with no reliable means of explaining behaviour' (p.7) INGOs are not the same as social movements: as Bob notes:

> NGOs at their roots are organizations –with all the anxieties about maintenance, survival, and growth that beset every organisation. In the formation of transnational relationships, these realities create frictions. No matter how cohesive their networks, local movements and transnational NGOs have distinct objectives, constituencies, and approaches, operate in disparate political settings, and are motivated by divergent needs. (p.14)

A more germane criticism is that Bob's evidential base is limited in the quantity, type and target of campaigns it analyses. On the first of these his work is essentially limited to two campaigns (supplemented by short references to a host of others); on the second, both campaigns are for regional autonomy, thus aiming to change national rather than international policy (p8); while on the third, the main targets are national governments, one TNC and — peripherally - one international trade agreement. A broader evidential base would give a better foundation for Bob's generalisations.

Does transnational campaigning work?

Bob also examines what for many (and in particular for activists) is the central question: exactly how useful are transnational allies? Are campaigns with transnational assistance more successful than campaigns without it? How much energy should local movements devote to transnational work? International audiences can be fickle, the issue attention cycle waxes and wanes, a struggle once fashionable can become stale: thus the INGOs can move on to the next movement and struggle, while the local group is left still waging their struggle. In both cases he analyses, no final victory can be claimed, though this grows at least partly from the nature of the campaigns he highlights: in the Ogoni case, 'although Nigerian policy towards the Delta has changed and the Ogoni campaign probably played some role in these shifts, the fundamental problem faced by the Ogoni and the other minorities – their political marginality in Nigeria - remains unsolved and little-known abroad.' (p.115) In the Zapatista case, the continued existence of the Zapatistas and their campaigns can be considered a partial victory, while international solidarity was instrumental in restraining Mexican state repression.

Perhaps these questions are better answered by less wide-ranging struggles or campaigns than those Bob details – those on environmental issues, for example. The record is mixed. In cases where major protagonists in these struggles are foreign (TNCs or international financial institutions (IFIs)) transnational campaigns can sometimes be successful in forcing the withdrawal of the foreign party. However, unless the struggle is also waged and won locally and nationally, this is not always a conclusive victory. In the case of the Narmada dam, for instance, the IFI was forced to withdraw, but the project went ahead with support from the local state and local capital. In another case, that of Bhopal, campaigners have had to fight foreign, national and local opponents: here transnational allies were of great use, but essential to the campaign was continuing local organising in Bhopal and India (see www.bhopal.net). While no definite answer can be formulated, local movements need to carefully evaluate the amount of effort they put into transnational campaigning.

Despite its limitations, Bob's work is a welcome addition to the literature on transnational activism. It provides useful analytical tools which can be used by both local movement and INGOs to evaluate their work. It is particularly welcome for the realism with which it treats the connections between local social movements and INGOs. Its main achievement is in providing the evidence and analysis that backs up its concluding statement:

> "Global civil society" is an arena of sharp competition where myriad weak groups fight for recognition and aid. It is a sphere in which hard-nosed calculation of costs and benefits constantly competes with sympathy and emotion. And it is a place where the real needs of local people are one factor, not necessarily the most important, in sparking international activism (p.195)

About the reviewer

Tomás Mac Sheoin is an independent scholar who writes on the chemical industry and popular movements. He has written *Asphyxiating Asia* (Goa: Other India Press: 2003) about the chemical industry in India.

John Charlton, 2009, Don't you hear the H-Bomb's thunder? Youth and politics on Tyneside in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties. Pontypool: North East Labour History / Merlin Press. (202pp, £14.95)

Reviewed by **Laurence Cox**, *National University of Ireland Maynooth*

Don't you hear the H-Bomb's thunder? is a lively, clearly-written account of one of the regional experiences that made up the first British New Left: direct action campaigns against nuclear weapons, the first stirrings of counter-cultural revolt, and the rise of left politics outside the framework defined by the Labour and Communist parties. A participant himself, socialist historian John Charlton carried out extensive interviews with others from the period and woven their narratives into a coherent and always interesting study of *wie es eigentlich gewesen*.

If their mostly working-class parents' worlds had been massively shaped by poverty, world wars and family trauma, in an English Northeast defined above all around heavy industry, their children - young adults around the year 1960 - grew up in a world marked by definite material improvements on the ground, but overshadowed by Cold War, institutionalised racism in South Africa and the USA, and a deeply conservative culture. Charlton's chapters organise these experiences: moments of coming to political awareness, the defining moment of the struggle against nuclear weapons, the encounter with youth music and culture, the formation of a Labour youth group which - as elsewhere - rapidly escaped the party's control, and the radicalisation towards Trotskyist politics.

Some classic studies have been carried out in this mode, such as Fraser's (1988) oral history of 1968 in multiple countries, or Hamon and Rotman's (1987) account of the French New Left from opposition to the Algerian war through to the movements of the 1970s. As the first New Left ceases to cast such a powerful shadow on the British intellectual left (or as that formation disaggregates in different directions), studies of phenomena such as *New Left Review* are coming into their own.

What "early New Left" figures such as EP Thompson or Raymond Williams would no doubt have stressed is that such formative moments are not only metropolitan, and cannot be fully understood through accounts of leading intellectuals, key organisations, or indeed celebrities. "The regions" are often (not always) recipients of events elsewhere (so too indeed are whole countries, as the struggles of the period against nuclear war, apartheid, segregation or the Vietnam War suggest). But they are *actively* so; their response, or lack of it, is often determining for the overall development of a movement.

One disappointment for me was that this book did not bring this point out more; it shows very effectively how participants' political careers were shaped by history and social context, but rather less how they, and the larger movements they were part of, went on to affect that context - or rather, given the methodological constraints of an oral history, how participants understood the long-term effects of their politics then and subsequently. In one sense, perhaps, Charlton does offer a sober assessment of the quantitative significance of this group, which was strong enough to be part of unseating the dominance of the old, Labour / Communist left and to put new issues and forms of organising on the agenda, but far smaller numerically than participation levels later in the decade, which then shaped subsequent developments more powerfully. "Early risers", perhaps, have the joy of "bliss it was in that dawn to be alive", but are unlikely to be able to determine what happens next.

In Charlton's account, class, gender and ethnicity are all shown as structuring people's experience and lives, most powerfully in the chapter on what their parents' lives had been like. He shows how important it is to *situate* movements vis-à-vis a region's economic situation and its political structures (which, as Vester et al. 1993 show, explain much of the different character of post-1960s movement milieux). As he observes, most of his characters show substantial continuity vis-à-vis their parents; there are differences and fallings-out, but relatively little of the rebellion often held by conservatives to underly youthful radicalism. Similarly, as he can now observe fifty years on, most surviving participants have worked in areas linked to human needs and have maintained a general orientation towards progressive politics, whatever their specific choices and levels of activity.

The socio-politically aware oral history traditions of the European left (Thompson and Burchardt 1982, Portelli 1999) have much to offer us. They can give a sense of how we as individual human beings "do" movement participation - which is no doubt often more easily accessible to us in retrospect and collectively than to individuals at the time, particularly when those individuals are trying to grasp their situation, making far-reaching choices under pressure, growing into adulthood, and on occasion making history.

They show how personal pathways through campaigns, organisations and subcultures work - pathways which in turn construct those collective situations in

practice, but which a top-down analysis often misses. They also show the crucial role of cultural milieux and friendship groups: these pathways may be personal, but they are shared ones, even as milieux and groups are broken and new ones made under the pressure of choice and struggle. As we live our own struggles, humanising them - without reducing them to individual biography - is important both to creating "movements with a human face" and to offering alternatives worth living to other people.

The rich texture and practical focus of Charlton's book make it a pleasure to read. As a source of insights, stories and facts, it will continue to affect many readers long after they put the book down. As we labour under the threat of new kinds of massive, system-induced destruction - in some ways eminently comparable to those of nuclear war was in the years leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis - it can, perhaps, also be helpful to remember that we have faced this situation before, fought against it, and - arguably - won.

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About the reviewer

Coming to political activism in the second anti-nuclear weapons movement of the 1980s, Laurence Cox's 1999 doctoral research looked at the counter-cultural milieux underlying social movement activism. He has been involved in two oral history projects in working-class Dublin and is an editor of *Interface.* He can be contacted at laurence.cox AT nuim.ie

Reger, Jo, J. Daniel Myers, and L. Rachel Einwohner, eds. 2008.
***Identity Work in Social Movements*. Minneapolis: University of
Minnesota Press. (312 pp, $25 pbk)**

Reviewed by **Maite Tapia**, *Cornell University*

The construction, maintenance, and renegotiation of collective identities are crucial
to the success of social movements. This collection explores the complex ways in
which "identity work", or "all the activities involved in creating and sustaining
identity" (4), occurs. The chapters revolve around two fundamental themes. The
first is the theoretical framework of Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier (1992), which
outlines three critical components of identity work: setting "boundaries", or the
difference between movement participants and others; developing "consciousness",
or interpretative frameworks fundamental in defining shared interests; and
"negotiation", or the actions of members of a social movement. The second theme
is the notions of "sameness" and "difference", or how activists construct a collective
identity by focusing on their similarities with each other and their differences from
the opposition. Instead of treating these concepts as distinct choices, however, the
authors show how they often occur simultaneously.

The book is organized into two parts followed by an afterword. The chapters in part
one illustrate the identity strategies, whereas those in part two examine the
challenges involved in identity construction. In describing a contested anti-gay
ballot proposal in Cincinnati, Ohio, Kimberly B. Dugan starts off by explaining how
the Christian Right on the one hand, and the gay, lesbian, and bisexual movement
on the other, construct and deploy their collective identities as a strategy to win
over the public, emphasizing how both movements simultaneously cast themselves
as similar to and different from the mainstream. Next, Elizabeth Kaminski and
Verta Taylor illustrate how music and songs are used by drag queen performers in
Key West to create their identity. Again, the boundaries between "us" and "them"
become blurred: certain songs enhance feelings of solidarity with both the gays and
heterosexuals in the audience, while other songs critique the traditional gender
roles, emphasizing clear boundaries between the drags and the audience. Another
mechanism for constructing, or rather reconstructing, collective identity is revealed
in the following chapter, in which Todd Schroer shows how the white racialist
movement uses the Internet in an attempt to alter the negative image society has of
its members. This effort to destigmatize their identity has largely failed, however,
as these websites are viewed by very few people.

Next, the focus shifts to the influence of the broader environment in constructing
collective identity. Jo Reger compares the shaping of feminist activism at two
college campuses. Different boundaries were constructed when the campus was
located in a community hostile to feminism versus one that was more open. Part
one ends with two chapters in a non-US setting. Rachel L. Einwohner's analysis of

"passing" as a form of identity work describes the strategies of Jewish resistance fighters in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. In order to get over to the "Aryan side" to get weapons and supplies, the Jewish activists had to hide their true identities and pass as non-Jews. Finally, Kevin Neuhouser takes us to a Brazilian favela, Caranguejo, illustrating the conflicting gender identities of women activists deployed during collective actions. Confronting the police, these women would act like both men and women, whereas to maintain the support of husbands and boyfriends they would downplay the feminist part and frame these actions as paternal, rather than maternal.

Part two illustrates the hard work involved in constructing identities. Linking social psychology to social movement literature, Daniel J. Myers describes the development and sustainability of "ally activism". He shows how allies such as heterosexual members of a gay movement need to overcome distinct identity processes. Unlike direct beneficiaries, allies often need to go the extra mile and prove sincere commitment to the movement in order to be perceived as credible members. Along the same lines, Susan Munkres' chapter examines how a US-based solidarity movement allies with Salvadoran peasants. The American activists "deeply" identify with the people from the village in El Salvador, developing emotional bonds and a collective identity of "sistering". Munkres explains as well, however, the limitations of this "deep identification" of privileged outsiders with the Salvadorans.

How do movements deal with diversity challenges while constructing a collective identity? This is the main theme running across the last three chapters. Silke Roth focuses on the organizational structure of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), showing how the CLUW provides space for caucuses and committees dealing with different race, gender, or minority issues. In addition, she illustrates how the leadership of CLUW has been instrumental in promoting roles for officers of different backgrounds. Jane Ward's analysis, on the other hand, shows the failed attempts of two gay and lesbian organizations in building "intersectional" collective identity or "multi-identity work". She argues that models of corporate diversity management and diversity driven by funding structures led to the solidification rather than the disappearance of the existing inequality within the movement. Finally, in explaining the emergence of the white women's liberation movement in the 1960s, Benita Roth shows how female activists of the New Left shifted their resources and reconstructed their collective identity from leftist towards feminist. This reconstruction allowed the feminists to move their boundaries from similarities with leftist men to differences. The afterword is given to Mary Bernstein, in which she develops in further detail her political identity framework, focusing on the three analytical dimensions of identity — identity for empowerment, identity deployment, and identity as a goal — considered critical in the study of social movements.

Identity work, all authors argue, is a complex process fundamental to the success of

social movements. The merits of this book lie, first, in the authors' thorough analysis of detailed cases explaining the strategies and challenges in constructing a collective identity; these case studies are moreover skillfully combined with innovative theoretical contributions. Second, the authors don't only focus on 'best practices', but describe failed cases as well. This is important, as more can often be learned from the failures than from the success stories. Third, the editors, Reger, Myers, and Einwohner, have done an excellent job of tying the chapters together. The notions of "sameness" and "difference," as well as Taylor and Whittier's key elements in identity work – boundaries, consciousness, and negotiation – are recurrent themes throughout the chapters, resulting in a cohesive volume. At the same time, however, I believe this strength can also become a weakness. The reader might feel there is too much repetition, since almost every chapter draws on and expands on the same theoretical framework. Interlinking social movement identity theories with other literature, such as social psychology (Myers' chapter), is therefore a welcome change. In addition, the majority of the chapters cover identity work revolving around feminist or gay and lesbian organizations. Again, there is a danger of redundancy. As a reader I was therefore especially intrigued by the analysis of Jewish resistance fighters "passing" as non-Jewish (Einwohner's chapter), as it represented identity work from a completely different angle.

In conclusion, apart from these minor quibbles, I believe *Identity Work in Social Movements* deeply engages the reader regarding the importance and the challenges of constructing a collective identity in social movements. This book, composed of fascinating cases combined with strong theoretical underpinnings, is highly recommended for both activists and social movement scholars.

About the reviewer

Maite Tapia is currently a PhD Candidate at the Industrial and Labor Relations School, Cornell University. Her main interests revolve around trade unions, community-based organizations and worker centers in the US and Europe. Currently she is focusing on member commitment, organizational structure, and mobilization. Her work also analyzes the diffusion and adaptation of core organizing elements from the US to the UK and Germany and how these processes are moderated by institutional, socio-economic contexts.

Before coming to the US, she graduated in Law (cum laude) at the University of Ghent (Belgium), pursued a Master in European and International Law, and a Master in International and European Relations at the University of Parma (Italy). After her studies she worked at the Institute of Labor in Bologna (Italy), focusing on European labor relations. Email: mt348 AT cornell.edu

Clemencia Rodriguez, Dorothy Kidd, and Laura Stein, eds. (2010).
*Making our media. Global initiatives toward a democratic public
sphere. Volume one: Creating new communication spaces.*
Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. (348pp, $34.50 hbk)

Laura Stein, Dorothy Kidd, and Clemencia Rodriguez (2009).
*Making our media. Global initiatives toward a democratic public
sphere. Volume two: National and global movements for
democratic communication.* **Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press. (280pp,
$29.50 pbk)**

Reviewed by **Stefania Milan,** *European University Institute / McGill
University*

Making our media tells the multifaceted story of the many struggles for democratic
media and communication flows mushrooming in different parts of the world. It
covers both the creation of new communication spaces, functioning with rules other
than the states' and the markets' (Volume 1), and the emergence of mobilisations for
democratic communication (Volume 2). This ambitious project was born under the
auspices of OURMedia/ Nuestros Medios, an international network of researchers,
practitioners and activists passionate about grassroots media. Created in 2001 by
alternative media scholars Clemencia Rodriguez, John Downing and Nick Couldry,
the network functions as a meeting point for anyone interested in how self-organized
grassroots media can promote social change. Not only do its members seek to
enhance theoretical reflection on alternative media, they are often engaged in
creating such media, and learn from their own practice. The boundaries between
academic and activist are hard to discern, as the network is deliberately a mesh of
different backgrounds and interests. The book therefore seeks to capture, and is
successful in mirroring, the energy condensed in such a diverse network. It gathers
contributions by those scholars that Kidd and Rodriguez call "the second generation"
of alternative media researchers, who for the most past joined the field inspired by
the burgeoning production of literature on alternative media in the first half of the
2000s (among others, Rodriguez 2001, Downing 2001, Atton 2002, Couldry and
Curran 2003.)

Volume 1, 'Creating new communication spaces', focuses on self-organised radio,
video, and web projects. The thirteen contributions are divided in four sections, each
introduced by a commentary that sets out the main questions at stake, and seeks to
make sense of the case studies presented in the chapters. Section I, introduced by
Nick Couldry, deals with the challenge of defining the object of study: is the field of
alternative media defined by a radical political, social, or cultural agenda? If not,
what substance is left to the term 'alternative'? Through the analysis of Mapuche

media in Chile (Juan Salazar), web-based grassroots journalism projects (Chris Anderson), and the South-African Bush Radio (Tanja Bosch), the authors offer, if not a univocal definition, food for thought. Salazar claims that the Mapuche media which mushroomed in Chile after the fall of the Pinochet dictatorship are *alterative*, as they attempt to re-define the same notion of national and cultural participation. In Anderson's contribution we see two cases of 'non-political' alternative media at work, namely a local citizen-sourced newspaper and Wikinews. Drawing from her extensive involvement with Bush Radio, Bosch suggests that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'rhizomatic' structures may be a useful approach to understand how community media construct 'community' from a combination of heterogeneous elements such as varied media forms and diverse audiences.

Section II deals with communication for social change projects. Introduced by Dorothy Kidd, it takes a critical stance towards the meaning and practice of what goes under the name of 'participatory communication'. Vinod Pavarala and Kanchan Malik assess the impact four Indian projects where community radio has been used to promote women's empowerment: the impact was greater on women involved in radio production, whereas those merely listening were not much affected. Rodriguez presents an interesting example on how communicators can participate in the evaluation of their own projects, thanks to ad-hoc "memory workshops". Chido Matewa explores the experience of a Zimbabwean NGO in designing, and ameliorating over time, a participatory video project addressing the exclusion of rural women from mainstream development programming.

Section III, presented by Ellie Rennie, critically addresses the dynamics *internal* to alternative media: issues of organization, internal democracy, power management, self-governance, volunteer recruitment, and funding. Two cases are presented: community radio in Australia (Meadows *et al.)*, and Indymedia (Skinner *et al.*, and Brooten and Hadl). Finally, section IV, introduced by John Downing, illustrates three distinct variations in the relationship between media and the state: indigenous community radio supported by the state, like in Mexico (Antoni Castells Talens), citizen's voices within public service in Wales (Jenny Kidd), and community media in a strong state, namely the Chilean dictatorship (Rosalind Bresnahan).

Volume 2, "National and global movements for democratic communication", edited by Stein, Kidd, and Rodriguez, illustrates how civil society groups organise to promote a more democratic communication sphere. A just communication and media sphere is believed to be conducive to a just society and to the maintenance of vital democracies. Although citizens have yet to embrace communication policy activism, social movements are increasingly mobilising on communication reform issues. Their agenda includes issues of access and speech rights, political economy of the media, and regulation across diverse technologies, from "old" broadcasting media to the internet. At the origins of this policy activism are the expansion of neoliberal regulatory frameworks, calls for reform of global media flows like the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO, which emerged within UNESCO in

the 1970s), and the diffusion of the internet, which facilitated interconnections amongst groups and across national boundaries. The volume is divided into three sections.

Section I, presented by Rodriguez, centres on national democratic initiatives, focusing on Latin America. Dodaro *et al.* illustrate how counterpublics were formed in Argentina around the emergence of independent film-making addressing the resistance during the dictatorship, and how national power relations were substantially altered due to the diffusion of this militant cinema. Rosa Alfaro presents the experience of a Peruvian media reform group, which has been mobilising since 2000 to transform national media into ethical institutions. Finally, José Porras reflects on the value of the internet for democratic processes, analysing the case of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Section II, introduced by Stein, reflects on mobilisations beyond national borders. Three contributions (Bart Cammaerts, Gabriele Hadl and Arne Hintz, Joanna Arevalo and Dalida Benfield) address how civil society groups organised transnationally in the framework of the United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS, Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005). Cammaerts illustrates the procedural difficulties encountered by civil society groups participating in transnational policy arenas: while opening up for participation, transnational organisations tend to contain real participation. Hald and Hintz call for a clear definition of what civil society is (i.e., with the exclusion of state and business actors), and highlight the urgency of developing a common policy discourse. Arevalo and Benfield provide a first-hand account of the participation to the WSIS Tunis phase of the U.S.-based Media Justice Delegation, a coalition of grassroots groups led by women of colour. The authors blame internal organizational barriers, such as the lack of coordination and dialogue amongst the participating groups, for the lack of influence on the process. León *et al.* document the work of *Minga Informativa*, a Latin American social movement information network. Initially created with the aim of facilitating communication amongst groups, over the years its activists have developed a discourse on media and ICT policy reform.

Section III, introduced by Patrick Burkart, gathers four contributions which elaborate on democratic rights applied to communication and media. Both the contributions by Christine Schweidler and Sasha Costanza-Chock, and by Kwang-Suk Lee document the resistance to rigid intellectual property rights regimes. Schweidler and Costanza-Chock explore the variety of ways in which civil society opposes copyright regimes: from ignoring rules to the development of countervailing technologies and participation in policy-making. Lee illustrates grassroots opposition to changes in South Korea's intellectual property right regime. Carolyn Cunningham, as well as Claudia Padovani and Elena Pavan, explore the notion of the right to communicate. Cunningham presents an historical analysis of the development of the right to communicate concept, whereas Padovani and Pavan compare the idealistic notion of communication rights to the actual formulations enshrined in national and

international legislation. Both contributions are optimistic about the emergence of a global movement on communication rights within civil society. According to Padovani and Pavan, what was observed at WSIS can be considered as an 'epiphany' of such global movement.

This collection of essays represents the evolution of a line of thought inaugurated in the early 2000s by the already cited works of Downing etc. Almost ten years later, the book seeks to update and re-assess the concepts and the processes at work in the field of alternative communication. In other words, it contributes to *deepen* the field (Kidd and Rodriguez, introduction, p. 8), which has long suffered from academic marginalization. The book is a 'must read' for anyone interested in grassroots communication, and for those curious to know how social movements organize to change the current media system. Volume II, in particular, represents, alongside with Hackett and Carroll's *'Remaking the media'* (2006), one of the few existing accounts of communication as an object of contention. It is therefore particularly relevant for social movement scholars who, as Mueller put it, do "not [yet] consider 'communications-information' to be a single policy domain capable of mobilizing the public" (Mueller *et al.* 2004: 11).

In my view, the book has five main strengths. Its first asset is to be found in the diverse backgrounds of the contributors, among which are advocates, academics, activists and practitioners. The investigation, albeit methodologically rigorous, is explicitly "pragmatic": never an end in itself, but oriented to learn from past experiences to do better in the future, conscious that "academic research should be *at the service of* praxis" (Kidd and Rodriguez introduction, p.11).

Second, the extensive understanding of *participation* that permeates the book (a mix of collective design, self-governance, and constant interchange as the foundations of any empowerment process) is particularly welcomed in the times of Web 2.0, with its mirage of participation: in this book participation through media and ICTs is first and foremost a collective process, and never a private individual enterprise. Empowerment and social change are also collective, and change affects communities, and not just individuals.

Third, the cross-regional scope of the book successfully manages to promote a dialogue which is, to some extent, a novelty in the field, where linguistic and geographic barriers have too often prevented English-speaking academics from learning from, say, the Latin American experiences. Surely too many geographic areas are still unexplored, Africa and South-East Asia above all – which perhaps reflects the geographic imbalances of the OURMedia/ Nuestros Medios network. This book has the merit to make accessible to an English-speaking audience a number of Latin American experiences that would otherwise be invisible.

Forth, the editors successfully manage to bring order to an edited collection of considerable size, which risks otherwise being merely an assemblage of disconnected papers. The volumes are structured around sections, each complemented by an

introductory essay which sets the key issues, allowing the book to be more than just a collection of isolated case studies. The result is a choral book that gives the reader the impression of being invited to become part of a collective conversation.

Fifth, the lively mix of diverse theories and approaches (feminist, Freirian, Marxist...), and different disciplines (from policy studies to social movement research), documents an expanding field which, despite its relatively young age, is able to dialogue with other academic traditions and discourses. Furthermore, the book actively engages in the attempt to define the field. Although it does not provide any definite answer, it contributes to raise some critical questions useful for further research.

Among the very few weak points of this project is its scale, which resulted in an exceptionally lengthy publication process (the call for papers was circulated in 2005): the book presents projects and experiences that are already 'history' at the time of publication. In addition, it reflects one of the problems of the field: the case study approach documents particular contexts, but leaves little room to theory building.

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About the reviewer

Stefania Milan is curious about social movements, emancipatory communication practices, empowerment mechanisms, and the interplay between technologies and society. She is looking for ways to bridge research with policy and action, and enjoys experimenting with digital, participatory and action-oriented research. Trained as a journalist, Stefania has been working and volunteering at many alternative/grassroots outlets and NGOs in Italy, Brazil, United Kingdom, Portugal, and at the international level, both online and offline, and on airwaves. In October 2009, she was awarded a PhD in Political and Social Sciences from the European University Institute, Florence, Italy. Her dissertation explores the "emancipatory communication practices" (community radio stations and radical internet infrastructures) which enable contemporary social movements to communicate in their own terms. Stefania is currently working on a co-authored textbook for the U.S.

market, *Media/Society*, to be published by Sage in 2011, and is Visiting Scholar at Media@McGill, McGill University, Montréal. From January 2011 she will be Visiting Professor at the Central European University, Budapest, where she will teach courses on political communication, and digital technologies. Stefania has been an OURMedia member since 2004, contributing to organize the conferences in Porto Alegre (2004), Bangalore (2005), and Sydney (2007).

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Call for papers vol 3 issue 2 (November 2011): Feminism, women's movements and women in movements

Issue editors: Cristina Flesher Fominaya, Sara Motta, Catherine Eschle, Laurence Cox

Feminist theory is a direct product of women's movements, which in turn have been among the most powerful movements of recent decades and have had dramatic effects across societies. Despite this, much contemporary feminist theory avoids questions of collective agency, and is often disconnected from movement activism. Conversely most scholarship on social movements ignores feminist analysis or at best includes it as an add-on question about gendered participation. Arguably, such scholarship is reliant on restrictive conceptual frames that result in the invisibilisation, de-legitimisation and silencing of contemporary forms of feminism, women's movement and women in movement. Both frameworks are therefore weak on understanding and conceptualising the nature of contemporary feminism-as-movement, engaging with women's agency in the construction of new forms of popular politics and opening up productive questions about political strategy.

This is particularly strange since women's movements, and movements dominated by women (particularly those described as popular movements, movements of the poor or community movements), play a distinctive and characteristic role in local, national and global politics. They often expand the praxis of popular politics and social change in ways that politicise the subjective and the everyday, and include the spiritual, cultural and affective in their practices of resistance. Furthermore, feminist historical accounts in recent decades have highlighted the importance of women's mobilisation, theories, pedagogies and approaches in everything from anti-imperialist movements, struggles around social reproduction and trade union organising to religious activism and top-down mobilisation in support of conservative regimes.

For this issue, we invite contributions on how feminist theory can help us understand the ways in which participation and collective action are gendered within social movements generally. We are equally interested in the ways in which women's movements, feminist activism and movements strongly marked by women's participation but without a feminist identification have distinct approaches to politics – or operate in similar ways to other movements - and the political and strategic implications of their activities. We are looking for contributions from feminist activists and scholars, participants in and students of women's movements and movements marked by a feminisation of resistance, and social movement researchers with an interest in women's agency, or how agency is gendered, in movements of all kinds.

Questions for discussion:

Some of the questions we are interested in exploring in this issue of Interface are:

- Is there a distinctively feminist mode of analysing social movements and collective agency?

- Can (should) academic forms of feminism be reclaimed as theory-for-movements?

- In what ways and to what extent are social movement actors using feminist categories to develop new forms of collective action?

- Are there specific types of "women's movement/s" in terms of participation, tactics and strategies?

- Has the feminisation of poverty led to the feminisation of resistance among movements of the poor? If so/if not, what are the implications for such resistance?

- Under what conditions does women's participation in movements which are not explicitly feminist or focussed on specifically gendered issues lead to a change in power relations?

- What are the implications of women's participation for collective identity or movement practice, leadership and strategy?

- What constitutes progressive or emancipatory movement practice in relation to gender, and good practice in alliance-building?

- How can social movement scholarship contribute more to the feminist analysis of activism, and how can feminist scholarship help develop a fuller understanding of collective agency?

- Are there specifically gendered themes to the current global wave of movements? Have feminist perspectives anything distinctive to offer the analysis of such movements?

- What can enquiry into contemporary activism learn from historical feminist writing on women's movements and women's role in other movements?

Contributions on other questions related to the theme of this issue are also very much welcomed.

Special section: feminist strategies for change

We aim to include a special themed section within the issue on feminist strategies for change. This will be open to contributions from feminist groups, whether written collectively or by individuals.

Throughout the 1990s feminist politics became increasingly professionalised and arguably de-politicised. Yet neoliberal globalisation has witnessed a feminisation of poverty and sexualisation of public space. The result is a

paradoxical situation of defeats and de-politicisation combined with new forms of re-politicisation. This special section seeks to engage with attempts to re-articulate feminist politics in the current conjuncture, be they liberal, radical, socialist or anarchist in character or taking new forms. Arguably many of these re-articulations are simultaneously localised and transnationalised, articulating a praxis that is often mis-recognised and mis-represented by social movement scholarship.

The questions we hope will be considered in this section include:

- What does feminist strategy mean today?

- What are the challenges and limitations of feminist strategising in the current moment?

- How do contemporary feminist activists and women's movements draw on the practices and experiences of earlier movements?

- Where do they see themselves in terms of movement achievements to date and the road still to be travelled?

- What barriers and possibilities for feminist struggle has neoliberalism created?

- Does the decline of neo-liberalism create openings for feminists?

- And what movements today could be allies for a transition out of patriarchy?

We also invite feminist groups, communities and movements to frame their own questions and problematics for this section.

General submissions

Finally, as in all issues of *Interface,* we will accept submissions on topics that are not related to the special theme of the issue, but that emerge from or focus on movements around the world and the immense amount of knowledge that they generate. Such general 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. 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 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.

Deadline and contact details

The deadline for initial submissions to this issue (Issue 6, to be published November 2011) is May 1st 2011.

For details on how to submit to Interface please consult the "Guidelines for contributors" on our website at www.interfacejournal.net, and send manuscripts to the appropriate regional editor, whether on the special theme of "Feminism, women's movements and women in movements" or general articles.

Potential contributors for the special section on "Feminist strategies for change" are invited to contact Sara Motta at <saracatherinem AT googlemail.com>.