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Movement internationalism/s

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Table of contents (pp. i – iv)

Editorial

Peter Waterman, Laurence Cox,
Movement internationalism/s (pp. 1 – 12)

General material

Call for papers (volume 7 issue 2):
Movements in post/socialisms (pp. 13 – 15)

Movement internationalism/s

Cristina Flesher Fominaya,
International solidarity in social movements (research note, pp. 16 - 25) EN

David Landy, Hilary Darcy, José Gutiérrez,
Exploring the problems of solidarity (conference report, pp. 26 – 34) EN

Peter Waterman,
The international labour movement in, against and beyond, the globalized and informatized cage of capitalism and bureaucracy (interview, pp. 35 – 58) EN

Stéphane Le Queux,
Alter-mondialisme, alter-syndicalisme? Revue et regard sur l'Australie (peer-reviewed article, pp. 59 – 75) FR

Jean Somers,
The dynamics of north-south relationships within transnational debt campaigning (peer-reviewed article, pp. 76 – 102) EN

Tomás Mac Sheoin,
Internationalising the campaign for justice in Bhopal: balancing the local, national and transnational (peer-reviewed article, pp. 103 – 129) EN

David Landy,
“We don’t get involved in the internal affairs of Palestinians”: Elisions and tensions in North-South solidarity practices (peer-reviewed article, pp. 130 – 142) EN

Sriram Ananth,
Conceptualizing solidarity and realizing struggle: testing against the Palestinian call for the boycott of Israel (peer-reviewed article, pp. 143 – 163) EN

Priska Daphi,
International solidarity in the global justice movement: coping with national and sectoral affinities (peer-reviewed article, pp. 164 – 179) EN

Melissa Schnyder,
Migrant inclusion organization activity at the supranational level: examining two forms of domestic political opportunity structures (peer-reviewed article, pp. 180 – 215) EN

Mike Aiken, Gregorio Baremlitt, Nicola Bullard, Carine Clément, Ann Deslandes, Sara Koopman, Sander Van Lanen,
Activist experiences of solidarity work (action note, pp. 216 – 223) EN

Ben Trott,
A Spinozist sort of solidarity: from homo-nationalism to queer-internationalism (action note, pp. 224 – 229) EN

General articles

Gloria Novović,
Nonviolent struggle and its application in new social movements: an interview with Srdja Popović (activist interview, pp. 230 – 243) EN

Benedikte Zitouni,
Planetary destruction, ecofeminists and transformative politics in the early 1980s (peer-reviewed article, pp. 244 – 270) EN

Institute for Precarious Consciousness,
Anxiety, affective struggle and precarity consciousness-raising (peer-reviewed article, pp. 271 – 300) EN

Rachel Kulick,
What do you see that I cannot? Peer facilitations of difference and conflict in the collective production of independent youth media (peer-reviewed article, pp. 301 – 327) EN

Dominika V. Polanska,
Cognitive dimension in cross-movement alliances: the case of squatting and tenants’ movements in Warsaw (peer-reviewed article, pp. 328 – 356) EN

Lindsey Lupo,
Democratic uprisings and protest politics: a study of the Occupy San Diego social movement (event analysis, pp. 357 – 370) EN

Reviews [single PDF] (pp. 371 – 403)

Cristina Flesher Fominaya, *Social Movements and Globalization: How Protests and Occupations are Changing the World*. Reviewed by Catherine Eschle.

Brian Doherty and Timothy Doyle, *Environmentalism, Resistance and Solidarity: The Politics of Friends of the Earth International*. Reviewed by Eurig Scandrett.

Francis Dupuis-Déri, *Who's Afraid of the Black Blocs? Anarchy in Action Around the World*. Reviewed by Gary Roth.

Íde Corley, Helen Fallon, Laurence Cox, *Silence would be Treason: Last Writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa*. Reviewed by Amanda Slevin.

B. Keniston, *Choosing to be Free: The Life Story of Rick Turner*. Reviewed by Richard Pithouse.

Dan Hancox, *The Village against the World*. Reviewed by Kenneth Good.

Manfred Steger, James Goodman and Erin Wilson, *Justice Globalism: Ideology, Crises, Policy*. Reviewed by Ariel Salleh.

Gwendolyn Hall, *A black communist in the freedom struggle* AND Joshua Bloom & Waldo Martin, *Black against empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*. Reviewed by Mandisi Majavu.

General material

List of editorial contacts [no PDF]

List of journal participants [no PDF]

Call for new participants [no PDF]

Cover art

Photo credit: This is a photo taken at the Lennon Wall of Hong Kong, during the 2014 protests for democracy. It is based in the occupied area and started with a few post-it notes encouraging the students and participants. It grew rapidly and attracted creative additions to the wall. This photo was taken by Bridget Clancey, a student in Hong Kong, who is also a supporter of the movement and for democratic development of Hong Kong.

About *Interface*

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

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

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

Movement internationalism/s

Peter Waterman, Laurence Cox

Keywords: social movements, internationalisms, globalisation, history, labour, socialist, communication, cyberia, reactionary, emancipatory

The word internationalism originally referred to relationships between nations and states, but came quite early to mean relationships of solidarity between people and peoples across or despite national boundaries, inter-state conflicts and economic competition. Over the past few centuries it has been a constant feature of social movement practice, from the 1649 Leveller mutiny against joining Cromwell's campaign in Ireland to the 1984 – 87 Dublin shopworkers' strike against handling South African produce - or contemporary international solidarity with struggles in Mexico, Kobane or Ferguson.

International solidarity has been hugely important in changing the terms of politics. External supporters often provide crucial sources of legitimacy, publicity, funding or knowledge – but they also tell local activists that they are not alone, that what they do resonates on a world stage and that official attempts to dismiss their issues do not convince everyone. Conversely, supporting struggles abroad can be a tool for educating movement participants, thinking outside the particular state's political discourses and arrangements, and seeing other, more emancipatory possibilities.

It is not only that together we are stronger; as movements make links outside local power arrangements they come to define a different kind of power, spoken more on their own terms than on those of the national state, the local wealthy, the dominant culture, and so on. What is hegemonic locally is often shown to be a provincial peculiarity on a wider scale – and hence contingent, vulnerable to popular pressure. For all of these reasons, social movements regularly think and act in international terms.

At the same time, the practice of internationalism is anything other than straightforward. It exposes participants to particular pressures, from accusations of being foreign agents to isolation from the wider community; it can involve taking sides in often less than transparent internecine struggles of movements elsewhere; when successful, its effects are not always as expected; and the inequalities which often exist between participants can lead to bruising experiences.

Over the years, *Interface* has published several discussions of transnational solidarity as well as many pieces which *arise out of* internationalist activism and research; as a project, of course, it is programmatically international, geared towards “learning from each other's struggles” in different regions of the world – and organised on the basis of autonomous regional groups of editors. This

special issue, we hope, takes the theme further with a thought-provoking selection of pieces.

Dimensions and histories of internationalism(s)

In an important recent book, David Featherstone (2012: 5 – 6) defines solidarity more narrowly, as a relationship forged through political struggle which seeks to challenge forms of oppression. This seems intended to distinguish a “good” solidarity from that of the welfare state, that between bankers, western state aid and so on. This normative sense of international solidarity involves five challenges: it is significant insofar as it constructs and / or transforms relationships between those concerned; is forged from below or from “outside”; surpasses nation-state identities; recognises that it implies uneven power relations / geographies; and is inventive.

Another approach might be to say that there are many kinds of international solidarity. Waterman (2001) distinguished six different kinds of internationalism: *identity* (“Workers of the World, Unite!”), *substitution* (trade union “development cooperation”), *complementarity* (we give you A, you give us B), *reciprocity* (we give you A now, you give us A later), *affinity* (“Labour Ecologists of the World, Unite!”) and *restitution* (solidarity for past injustice).

We might also think the problem in terms of changing internationalisms over time. Before “internationalism”, or at least before most nations had their own states, the eighteenth and in particular the nineteenth century saw religious universalisms – some with very long historical roots, but expressed in new ways in the age of imperial / Christian missionary activity in particular. Consider, for example, the remarkable figure of U Dhammaloka – an Irish-born migrant worker, sailor and activist who became a prominent figure in the pan-Asian and anti-colonial Buddhist revival around the turn of the twentieth century, organising from Ceylon to Singapore and from Burma to Japan against an imperial order conceived of in terms of “the Bible, the Gatling gun and the whiskey bottle” (e.g. Cox 2010).

This period saw the bourgeois liberal cosmopolitanism of elites that communicated and travelled across great distances and understood themselves as members of one and the same world – of polite society, of science, of industry, of literature and so on. It also saw the radical-democratic cosmopolitanisms of those – often but not always defectors from this world - who understood themselves as allied with the ordinary people of other places *against* their own dynasties and empires, priesthoods and officer classes, capitalists and conservative media, whether or not they framed this in terms of “peoples” and “nations”. This is the world of CLR James’ “Black International”, running from the Haitian Revolution to the struggles of the 1930s (Høgsbjerg 2014), of Linebaugh and Rediker’s (2000) plebeian internationalists, and of what we would now call the international solidarity networks in support of nineteenth-century Polish, Italian or Irish nationalism.

Labour and socialist internationalism, from the First International of 1864 onwards, recast these practices in increasingly well-organised and large-scale terms. Alongside unions and parties conceived of on the scale of the nation-state came the organisations of immigrant or ethnic minority workers, diaspora political networks and transnational networks of anarchists, socialists, (Jewish socialist) Bundists and the like. In opposition to racist forms of labour organising and pro-imperial kinds of socialism, the radical left defined itself (up to the victory of Stalin at least) in terms of hostility to a world of empires and slavery; while Pan-African and Third-Worldist internationalisms brought the argument further; and most trade unions today pay at least lip service to the principle of international solidarity. The self-definition of competing lefts in terms of competing internationalisms telling in this respect.

Put another way, this approach to internationalism, frequent in social-historical work, identifies it with early industrial capitalism, nation-state formation and the labour movement. Even in this period, however, there were other forms of organised internationalism. From the French Revolution and Metternich on, in fact, conservatives also organised on an international scale, whether in the nineteenth century through reactionary forms of Catholicism in opposition to modernity and democracy; in the twentieth century through alliances between fascist powers (Mariátegui 1973); or in the present day through fundamentalisms of all (political and religious) varieties which seek to constitute themselves as an international niche in the marketplace of global opinion.

Since the global uprising of 1968, more positively, new forms of social movement internationalism have multiplied – alliances between women’s movements, LGBTQ campaigns, disability rights activists, struggles of indigenous peoples, ecological groups, squatters’ networks or counter-cultural relationships. Between the 1970s and 1990s such processes took many forms: grassroots labour networking; “transnational advocacy networks” campaigning around specific themes; support for specific revolutionary movements such as the Zapatistas; state-sponsored internationalisms such as the Venezuelan state’s *Bolivarismo*; and community-level links between groups such as shanty-town dwellers or populations resisting the energy companies.

These initially distinct internationalisms have increasingly come to encounter one another in the context of the Global Justice and Solidarity Movement, whether this is understood in terms of the networks of resistance sparked by the Zapatistas, the moments of confrontation with the new world order symbolised by the 1999 Seattle protests, the more dialogical processes of the World Social Forum, the 2003 anti-war movement and for that matter the latest movement waves, which are anything but indifferent to each other’s struggles. The 21st century, it seems, is rich in internationalism/s (Waterman 2010).

The various “bearers” of internationalism

Today we encounter many different actors embodying different kinds of internationalism. Within traditional international trade union contexts, we find solidarity between unions in north and south, as well as solidarity *from* north to south and the substitution of northern agency for southern organising. Much of this is dependent – politically, ideologically or financially – on inter/state bodies of various kinds.

Marginal service bodies which reproduce, rely on and / or address traditional unionism also exist: international union support groups such as TIE Amsterdam in the 1980s and international online pro-union services such as LabourStart and Union Solidarity International

There are also autonomous forms of organising: consider, for example, Via Campesina (Braga Vieira 2011), Streetnet (Gallin and Horn 2005), NetworkedLabour (www.networkedlabour.net), the New Unionism Network (2012) or EuroMayDay (Mattoni 2012).

Women's and feminist internationalisms include the feminist dialogues at the World Social Forum (Desai 2013), the World March of Women (www.marchmondiale.org), Encuentros Feministas in Latin America (Alvarez et al. 2003) and others.

Ambiguous relationships connect labour and the global justice and solidarity movement: at the WSF, for example, these include the ITUC and “Decent Work”, the “Labour and Globalisation” network and the Tunis 2013 call for a Global Union Forum (apparently forgotten as soon as it was proposed!) More generally we might mention the European AlterSummit manifesto (www.altersummit.eu), in which unions play a key role.

Movement internationalists

Movement internationalisms cannot exist without movement internationalists, but this opens up another whole set of questions. It is not hard to come up with names for reflection in this area – for example, Flora Tristán, Marx and Engels, Emma Goldman, Tom Mann, Rosa Luxemburg, Marcus Garvey, Tina Modotti, Leopold Trepper, Che Guevara, Conny Braam (e.g. 1992), Rigoberta Menchú (1998), Ben Linder, John Saul (2009) or perhaps you, the reader – but how are we to think about this? What makes an internationalist?

We should certainly not restrict the category to the cosmopolitan, whether in their 18th century version (that we would have universal peace, justice and prosperity if everyone spoke French), or the contemporary version which seeks to export its own politics around the world with no reference to movements on the ground. Nor should we only focus on Tarrow's (2005) transnational activists – insofar as he sees these as *nationally*-rooted and identified, only transnational in their activity, and who think of movements and politics in fundamentally national terms.

Nor, of course, should we focus only on well-known figures. The backroom, backstreet or grassroots internationalists are fundamental to any genuine

movement, along with the international celebrities (whose relationship to movements is not always straightforward, either “at home” or internationally).

We could, for example, include those who recognise a cross-border or global identity or community of the oppressed, discriminated-against, exploited, marginalized or alienated; who are committed to and involved in overcoming these conditions; and whose “imagined communities” are global in extent.

We might also want to consider the disjuncture between globe-trotting activism (necessary for some kinds of practices, but in itself perfectly compatible with a purely national perspective) and the kind of internationalist practice which understands the “local” in terms of the “global” and acts accordingly, building links with people they may never be able to meet on the basis of related understandings of the world and compatible practices.

We are still left with definitional challenges, however. Should we privilege those who we approve of or identify with ideologically (as anarchists, Trotskyists, Maoists, autonomists, social democrats?) Should we include those whose internationalism is fundamentally restricted to a single problem or category (workers, women, blacks, GLTBQ, national independence, indigenous peoples, ecological victims, human rights etc.) – is it possible to be a single-issue internationalist? Or is it possible to be meaningfully internationalist if one’s politics is restricted to a single region or continent?

We favour a broad understanding insofar as it makes room for all of the above – cosmopolitans and liberals, Marxists and social democrats, single-issue and single-region internationalists – and to argue for our preferred practices amongst these. It is, perhaps, also important to note that internationalist *movements* may involve many individuals who are only partly or momentarily international in their thinking and action.

In the present day, internationalists may be anti-imperialists, feminists, pacifists, ecologists, labour solidarity activists, long-distance or virtual religious / ethnic / indigenous activists. In the new world disorder, we might also identify a category-in-formation of global solidarity activists, who might include any of the above but preferentially those recognising themselves as part of a more general movement and who recognise the necessary dialectic between socio-geographic locale, the national, the regional and the global.

Drawing on Eric Hobsbawm (1988), we might distinguish various historical periods: 19th century *agitators*, “changing their countries more often than their shoes”; 20th century institutionalised *agents* – of a state, political party, union or other organisation; to which we might add the 21st century *communicator* – an online or offline networker, cultural or media activist, educator, journalist, performer, musician, film or video-maker?

Of course these different types have often existed contemporaneously or within single individuals and movements; if we suggest a decline of the agitator and the agent, it is because both roles imply a sense of possessing the truth, the right practice, or exemplifying internationalism. However the communicator is faced with a new set of questions - what to communicate, to whom and how? – in a

world in which the objects of internationalism are, perhaps, increasingly likely also to be its subjects, capable of becoming internationalists themselves.

Discussing internationalists as individuals can, perhaps, help to avoid the universalistic ambitions and parochial failures of older internationalisms and contribute in some way to communicating internationalism in popular movements and radical-democratic communities worldwide. If it is possible to avoid hagiography, a critical approach which shows the problematic and ambiguous nature of internationalist lives may be able to humanise what is still commonly seen as exotic and enable those involved to become more self-reflective about their activities.

It is perhaps a small utopia to imagine a growing number of “ordinary activists”, armed with information, disposed to tolerance and flexibility, culturally sensitive and curious about the workings of new contexts, technologically equipped, ethically committed and creating global solidarity communities of their own: people who, rather than incarnating a truth or an organisation, inspire a response of not only “I understand her / him” or “I admire him / her”, but hopefully also “I should do that”, “I could do that” and even “I would enjoy doing that”.

Rethinking movement internationalism/s

How might we think internationalism/s for the present and future, in the light of what has gone before? The idea that there is a single, privileged bearer of social change – whether the industrialised proletariat of the core countries, a more or less arbitrary set of oppressed nationalisms, women as a global category or whatever – has lost credibility in terms of organisational referents just as much as intellectually or politically. So too has the notion of nations, nation-states or states as the inevitable building blocks of social change – although cultural and historical difference remains a basic starting point for any real thinking about politics.

Elsewhere we have suggested speaking in terms of a global justice and solidarity movement (Peter) or a movement of movements (Laurence) in order to highlight not simply the global dimension but also the holistic one: not a monolithic proletariat without women and multiple sexualities, not industrial workers without precarious and rural labour, not a “developed” west as model for an “underdeveloped” east or south, not socialism without environmentalism, feminism, radical democracy, cultural diversity and so on. Of course, the *reality* of past movements (which are always, necessarily, alliances) has routinely been more complex both than their *imagery* and their *organisational practice*; it is past time to bring the latter in line with the scale of the problems we face, both externally and in trying to work together for social transformation.

Contemporary capitalist globalization attempts to impose a single worldview, reducing individuals to employees and consumers – often successfully. But it is also the latest phase of human *social* development, and as such bursts with profound contradictions, both life-threatening and life-enhancing. Once again,

we are condemned to think of surpassing the official reality by supporting the development of unofficial realities, creating “a world in which many worlds can flourish”, - to quote the Zapatistas, those arch-internationalists of the present.

Today, what alienated social category or community is not increasingly globally articulated (in both senses, as joining and as expression)? Within the single space of work, there are global movements for women workers in general, domestic workers in particular, rural labour (workers plus peasants), sex workers, urban inhabitants, precarious workers, street traders, fishworkers...

A new hope?

Of course “new” does not automatically mean “good”, and such movements are just as capable as those of the past of becoming racist, patriarchal, paternalistic / maternalistic, fundamentalist or authoritarian dependent on context. Both the practice of internationalism in general, but in particular the formation of alliances across movements and issues, are crucial as counters to this – as is the shaking up of organisational hierarchies by the new waves of mass mobilisation around the world.

In the best case, radical-democratic movements “infect” each other globally, with each making reference to others (recently, both amongst Latin Americans, European *indignad@s*, Arab uprisings and Occupy and between at least some of these categories, spaces and places). In the nature of things, such movement waves cannot be planned by single organisations; it is a sign of hope that they also often resist the centralisation of power internally.

Any internationalist movement practice is necessarily grounded in the real conditions which shape other forms of global interactions – the relationships of capitalism, the global state order and unequal cultural and social orders – and has to find its way forward through and at the same time against these. This was already true in relation to Linebaugh and Rediker’s 18th century sailing ships and the problem has not changed. Each internationalism, perhaps, can be thought of as searching for *the* emancipatory medium: a free press (liberal and radical democrats), railways and telegraphs (Marx and Engels), the party newspaper and cinema (Bolsheviks), radio (Brecht) and so on. Put another way, the mode of communication and what it implies in terms of human relations can hardly be ignored as a primary reality shaping movement. As Mariátegui (1973) put it, communication is the nervous system of internationalism and solidarity.

If not always at the level of individual movements, the material underpinning of any contemporary global justice and solidarity movement or movement of movements – the practical condition of the kind of networking we are discussing here – is the space that might be called Cyberia. Such networking does not simply *use* the internet; it increasingly *inhabits* it. At the same time, Cyberia is just as much a disputed terrain as any previous creation of class society; if there is a massive emancipatory *potential*, the technology is systematically restricted, exploited, used for commoditisation, capital accumulation, surveillance, manipulation and warfare.

Movements have to struggle on this terrain too: not simply in opposition to these processes, but in opposition to the pressures to adopt these logics – “clicktivism”; control by brilliant individuals or marketing teams rather than us simple users, collectives or communities; control by technocrats speaking to each other; the exclusion, or control, of a dialogue of equals; self-subordination and self-limitation. Each new space for internationalism is at the same time a space of challenges in the attempt to develop emancipatory practices.

Interface, of course, takes its own space within this: if it is laid out like an old-style journal and follows those typographic conventions, it only exists online (Peter once printed a full copy and found that the binding would not hold its 529 pages). If it is determinedly internationalist and cross-regional, it avoids a party “line” and brings together editors and authors from many different movements, political traditions and academic disciplines – or, put another way, the “line” mandates communication between and across these (while avoiding any overly-narrow policing of this mandate so as to enable different kinds of communication). In this sense, it is a creature of 21st century movements, and embodies (we hope) some of the best of their practice while in our own small way contributing to movement reflection and development.

In this issue

Themed items

Our section on movement internationalism/s opens with two items from recent conferences on international solidarity. Cristina Flesher Fominaya’s keynote address on international solidarity in social movements beyond the labour movement discusses the challenge of developing solidarity across difference – of resources, power and culture among others, arguing for a reflexive approach to both similarity and difference. David Landy, Hilary Darcy and José Gutiérrez report on a 2013 Dublin conference on the problems of international solidarity. The report highlights the difference between political and humanitarian understandings of solidarity; the tensions between solidarity activists and those they work with; and the tensions between the universal and the particular.

We follow this with an interview with Peter Waterman, exploring the current crisis of international trade union bodies, how the changing world of work affects labour internationalism, the possibilities for other kinds of international labour solidarity and the importance of solidarity with Palestine in this context. Stéphane Le Queux’s article discusses the crisis of trade union politics, with particular reference to Australia, and asks how unions might learn from the alterglobalisation movement in relation to political alternatives, participatory democracy, cohesion and inclusion, and the renewal of activism.

Jean Somers looks at the tensions between southern and northern groups within the Jubilee 2000 transnational debt campaign. She argues that the struggle to develop and maintain solidarity between the groups concerned was often in tension with the different approaches taken to debt cancellation. Tomás Mac Sheoin’s account of the movement for justice in Bhopal discusses

relationships between local, national and transnational activism, highlighting the importance of *national* advocacy networks in the development of a very complex campaign.

David Landy's article explores tensions between international solidarity groups and those they are in solidarity with in relation to Palestine solidarity. The principle of non-involvement in internal affairs had perverse effects in promoting an uncritical nationalism and leading to a lack of communication and avoidance of transformative politics. Sriram Ananth's piece uses the call for solidarity from Palestinian civil society in relation to boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) to discuss Marxist and feminist approaches to solidarity.

Priska Daphi's article discusses the role of solidarity between movements in different countries and sectors in the global justice movement. Drawing on interviews with German, Italian and Polish activists, she shows the interrelation of international, national and sectoral issues in the construction of the movement. Melissa Schnyder's article explores the impact of domestic political opportunity structures (POS) on migrant inclusion organizations' activity at the supranational level in relation to the EU. She shows how both the general POS and issue-specific POS help to explain supranational-level activities.

The themed section closes with comments from solidarity activists on the concept and its discontents. Mike Aiken, Gregorio Baremlitt, Nicola Bullard, Carine Clément, Ann Deslandes, Sara Koopman and Sander Van Lanen responded to our questions on the meanings of solidarity, how it has changed, tensions arising from difference, the contrasts between local struggles and their international representation, and the differences between movement and other forms of solidarity. Ben Trott's reflections argue for the importance of placing shared political projects at the centre of solidarity practice and notes the trend towards "homonationalism", the incorporation of queers within nationalist projects. He emphasises the importance of joy and a shared desire to live well.

Non-themed items

The general section of this issue opens with Gloria Novović's interview with Serbian nonviolent activist Srdja Popović about the strategies of recent movements globally. This is followed by Benedikte Zitouni's article on ecofeminist politics and women's anti-nuclear activism in the early 1980s. Focussing on actions in the US and UK, the article shows the importance of emotions and organising in constructing transformative and life-affirming events.

The Institute for Precarious Consciousness argue for a periodisation of social movements in which old social movements opposed misery, which they theorise as the dominant affect of early capitalism, more recent movements opposed the boredom of Fordism, and the challenge is to develop an adequate mode for resisting anxiety, as the dominant affect of neoliberalism. Rachel Kulick's article explores peer learning platforms in the independent Youth Media Action outlet

to see how youth explore and at times transform their perspectives about conflict and difference in the process of producing independent media.

Dominika Polanska's article shows the importance of cognitive work in constructing cross-movement alliances in the relationship between squatting and tenants' movements in Warsaw. Lindsey Lupo's event analysis explores the disjuncture in Occupy San Diego between overt support for its organisational strategies and informal discontent, and asks how these difficulties can be resolved.

Finally in this issue we have the following book reviews:

- Cristina Flesher Fominaya, *Social movements and globalisation* (rev. Catherine Eschle)
- Brian Doherty and Timothy Doyle, *Environmentalism, resistance and solidarity* (rev. Eurig Scandrett)
- Francis Dupuis-Déri, *Who's afraid of the Black Blocs?* (rev. Gary Roth)
- Íde Corley, Helen Fallon, Laurence Cox, *Silence would be treason* (rev. Amanda Slevin)
- B. Keniston, *Choosing to be free* (rev. Richard Pithouse)
- Dan Hancox, *The village against the world* (rev. Kenneth Good)
- Manfred Steger, James Goodman and Erin Wilson, *Justice Globalism* (rev. Ariel Salleh)
- Gwendolyn Hall, *A black communist in the freedom struggle AND Joshua Bloom & Waldo Martin, Black against empire* (rev. Mandisi Majavu)

Our next issue (May 2015) will be on the theme of movement practice(s) – we're looking forward to it!

The call for papers for issue 7/2 (November 2015, deadline for submissions May 2015) is on the theme of "movements in post/socialisms".

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Call for papers: Movements in Post/Socialisms

Issue 7/1 (November 2015), deadline May 1 2015

**Theme editors: Jiří Navrátil, Elizabeth Humphrys,
Kevin Lin, Anna Szolucha**

The November 2015 issue of the open-access, online, copyleft academic/activist journal *Interface: a Journal for and about Social Movements* (<http://www.interfacejournal.net/>) invites contributions on the theme of *Movements in Post/Socialisms* as well as general submissions.

The 20th century saw the establishment of, and experimentation within, socialist states across the globe. These efforts were variously lauded, critiqued, condemned and their 'socialist' nature disputed. This call for papers asks about the movements that have come in the wake of the collapse and transformation of these diverse regimes.

A quarter of century ago, a massive wave of political protest shook state socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and Asia. In many countries these events paved the way for far-reaching societal transformation, embedding Western-style capitalist economies and representative democracy. In some locations the existing regimes succeeded in taming the efforts around economic and political liberalisation, in other locations they did not. Social movements were central in these processes and followed different paths, including: they led the transformative events and became part of new elites/regimes/states; they pulled back to the realm of civil society after they initiated regime change; they resisted the efforts for regime change; and they were repressed and demobilised when the regime succeeded in maintaining the status quo.

Not only did movements participate in and resist 'eventful protests' in 1989, but they were also influenced by these events in the following decades. Again, different trajectories were observed in different locations. Eastern Europe became dominated by anti-utopian ideologies, which effectively paralysed any attempt for transgressive critiques of the newly established political economic order. Furthermore, the spread of 'development aid' for 'underdeveloped' post-communist civil societies — provided by United States, European Union and private foundations — contributed to the NGO-isation of civil society organisations and the import and emulation of new forms and agendas of activism. This 'new' or 'proper' civil society activism started to gain political relevance at the expense of grass-root, radical and other dissident movements.

On the other hand, the rapid economic and political transition of a number of Eastern countries provoked mobilisation — from the episodic global justice and anti-war movements, to mass social solidarity mobilisations that had lasting effects on elites' strategies for economic and political transformation.

For Asian socialism, the ruling ‘communist’ regimes in Vietnam and China have presided over a transition to capitalist economies while also resisting social movements for political democratisation. Yet the capitalist transition has thrown up social and political contradictions, such as social inequality, abuse of political power, labour exploitation, land dispossession and environmental degradation — all of which have seen the rise of diverse activism and movements. Fearful of autonomous organising, these regimes have kept a tight grip over civil society and independent organisation. Consequently, social movements have to operate under repressive conditions and adopt clandestine and informal organising methods and strategies. Nonetheless, in Vietnam and China, for example, we have seen some of the highest global concentration of autonomous labour organising and strikes in recent years.

Apart from regions where the 1989 events directly took place, their effects spread well beyond. The fall of the Eastern bloc both directly and indirectly affected the political landscape of Western Europe, with old left movements beginning to orient themselves along different ideological principles. Consequences can also be seen in Latin America, with sites of state socialism, such as Cuba, faced with the transformation of the former Eastern bloc as well as internal movements to transform the national political economy — including the repression of those movements. In Venezuela, the new century has seen Hugo Chávez implement a process of socialist reform in the wake of mass social and political movements that brought him to power, a route he called the ‘Bolivarian process’. Related but distinct processes took place in other countries — Ecuador, Argentina and Bolivia. Many have called this the socialism of the 21st century, following and diverging from the socialism of the 20th century in the Eastern Bloc and Asia. However, others have criticised such regimes as authoritarian or ‘neo-extractivist’.

For this special themed section of *Interface* 7/1 we are interested in articles by researchers and activists on the movements and events of 1989, their impacts and trajectories and other questions of post/socialisms. We are seeking standard refereed articles as well as material in other formats, such as: action notes on organising methods; activist biographies; book reviews; conversational roundtables; analyses of movement events; and more. Submissions should be written in such a way as to be of interest or use also to readers outside Eastern Europe or Asia. Contributions might address such topics as:

- Post/anti/new socialist movements
- New trade unions and labour movements in Asia
- Activism in post/socialist settings
- Memories and visions of socialism/communism in contemporary collective action
- Importing and exporting social movements and activism
- Effects of the fall of state socialisms in Eastern Europe and Asia on other locations

- What is socialism in the 21st century?
- The persistence of social movements during the regime change from state socialism to capitalism
- Movements as regime-builders / movements as regime-breakers
- Comparing Cold War social movements between East and West
- Other questions relevant to the special issue theme

As in every issue, we are also very happy to receive contributions that reflect on other questions for social movement research and practice that fit within the journal's mission statement (<http://www.interfacejournal.net/who-we-are/mission-statement/>).

Submissions should contribute to the journal's mission as a tool to help our movements learn from each other's struggles, by developing analyses from specific movement processes and experiences that can be translated into a form useful for other movements.

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

We can accept material in Afrikaans, Arabic, Catalan, Czech, Danish, English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Maltese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Swedish and Zulu. Please see our editorial contacts page (<http://www.interfacejournal.net/submissions/editorial-contact/>) for details of who to submit to.

Deadline and contact details

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

International Solidarity in Social Movements¹

Cristina Flesher Fominaya

Keywords: Solidarity, internationalism, transnationalism, Marx, Durkheim, culture, politics

Good morning. Thank you so much to the organizers for inviting me here to speak to you on international solidarity and social movements. From the program I can see that much of the focus of this conference will be on international labor solidarity, which is a much needed and important topic of discussion.

However, I am here to talk about international solidarity in social movements beyond the labor movement. Actually it's curious that within social movements studies the term international solidarity *per se* is not really discussed very much in the literature - with some important exceptions. Social movement scholars tend to talk about *transnationalism* not *internationalism*, and while solidarity is certainly something discussed within movements and within social movement scholarship, the international dimension or even the transnational dimension is not developed that much or that consistently.

I was asked to provide some existing definitions of international solidarity, so I will begin with these. One definition in a discussion of international solidarity is that of political altruism. This is defined by Florence Passy in a book called *Political Altruism? Solidarity movements in international perspective* as:

....a form of behavior based on acts performed by a group or/and on behalf of a group and not aimed to meet individual interests; it is directed at a political goal of social change or the redefinition of power relations; and individuals involved in this type of social change do not stand to benefit directly from the success deriving from the accomplishment of those goals. (2001:6)

According to this definition "Volunteer work and charity work does not count as political altruism if it does not engage in political claim making nor in social change."

I think that this definition, while very useful in some ways, is based on quite a rational actor model of human behavior with an instrumental understanding of gain and benefit. While I take the wider point, I believe solidarity practice *can* be tied to individual benefit directly, for example through individual identity work, with deep and meaningful senses of personal satisfaction and with a sense

¹ This article is a slightly modified reprint of a keynote speech delivered to the International Solidarity Reloaded Conference in Göttingen in April 2014. Some parts of it are taken directly from my book, *Social Movements and Globalization*, (Flesher Fominaya 2014). My thanks to the organizers of the conference for inspiring me to think about international solidarity and social movements, and to Dr. Kevin Flesher for sending me the Survival International video.

of working to build a world in which all benefit, not just the victims of the oppression in question.

David Featherstone offers a different definition, which he then develops throughout his book *Solidarity: hidden histories and geographies of internationalism* (2012). He defines solidarity (in part) as

a relation forged through political struggle which seeks to challenge forms of oppression.

Featherstone stresses the idea of solidarity as a transformative relation of practice, that can be forged from below or through pressure from without and in which working-class groups and social movements can play a key role. He also stresses the international dimension of solidarity, as well as the uneven power relations and geographies through which solidarity is constructed. And some of these are themes I also will develop in my talk.

I would like to step away now from these specific definitions in the literature on international solidarity and turn instead to some theoretical roots of solidarity. Marx, of course, was concerned with precisely the international form of solidarity between the working classes that I assume many people will be discussing here and you will all be very familiar with. So I will leave Marx aside and turn to someone who devoted a lot of energy to the concept of solidarity, but who, unlike Marx, was not precisely known for his radical politics, and this is Émile Durkheim.

Durkheim opposed two forms of solidarity, which he correlated with premodern and modern societies, and with two forms of communities: those based on shared characteristics of similarities and those based on heterogeneity or difference. The first type he called mechanical solidarity, found in closely knit traditional societies and based on similarities in experiences, beliefs, values and activities. If we apply this conception of solidarity to social movements we could think about the type of solidarity that arises in closely knit social movement groups based on close affinity where activists share values, goals, worldviews and direct experiences. This type of solidarity is instinctively easier to understand than the second type, which Durkheim called organic solidarity. Indeed, similarity is often thought to confer a sort of automatic solidarity. We hear this type of assumption in theories about working-class solidarity where class position confers solidarity or in feminism, for example, where sisterhood between women does the same thing.

But which similarity should confer the solidarity? We know, for example, that in the United States male solidarity trumped racial solidarity when black men were given the right to vote (1870) 50 years before women of any color (1920). And of course if we trace back discourse on voting rights we can see arguments that demand those rights for white women but did not extend those demands for women of color or conversely for upper class or educated women but not for working-class women and so on.

If solidarity based on similarity is problematic in modern society, with its complex cross-cutting identities and advanced division of labour, organic

solidarity, based on difference, is even more difficult to explain. And here Durkheim's theoretical challenge was to understand how it was that solidarity could be developed between people who no longer shared similar beliefs, similar values, similar activities and shared direct experiences. His solution was that in complex modern societies with a highly developed division of labor individuals became aware of their interdependence and were able to recognize the role that the other played in maintaining and developing the common good or modern society. The individual is sacred and seeks to develop their own unique qualities and skills, which are then complementary to those of others, yet no individual is self-sufficient but rather depends on others to meet their needs. And everyone is aware of that interdependence.

When we think about international solidarity and social movements the sort of challenge that Durkheim raises is still quite relevant and thought provoking. How is it that we develop a sense of solidarity with people with whom we may not have direct contact or share direct experiences, and who may differ from us in significant ways in terms of their belief systems, the types of work they do, or the type of activities they carry out in their daily lives, and even perhaps in their beliefs, and *even* perhaps in their values?

Modern theories of globalization and cosmopolitanism try to answer this question through arguing that increased contact with others brings an attendant reduction in differences, through, for example, processes of travel, migration, flows of goods, information and cultural codes etc. This theoretical trend points towards a world in which global civil society is emerging and becoming denser, and in which the state is diminishing in importance.

Global civil society theories also follow in this vein, with very Durkheimian notions of increased awareness of interdependence, shared global risks, and so on. Central to much work on global civil society is the belief that globalization processes – and, crucially, social movement actors – shape the development of a global consciousness that is aware of humanity's interdependence across complex system and connections.

Yet, when we think about international solidarity between social movements in the world today I think it's fair to say that stark and radical differences between the realities of the activists who are reaching out in solidarity to each other are still frequent.

It seems to me that social movements engaging in international solidarity face some important challenges worth reflecting on. In other words, how to feel and then practice solidarity with those who are geographically distant, whose beliefs and worldviews and life experiences may be quite different from one's own? Indeed, Durkheim has often been critiqued for failing to take account of important differences in power and resources between different sectors of society that are interdependent. The same challenges that he failed to address satisfactorily theoretically are faced in practice by social movement activists wanting to practice solidarity across borders or solidarity with people who *have*

crossed borders (e.g. migrants, immigrants, asylum seekers) into particular national contexts.

What are some of these challenges?

The disparity in resources between different parts of the world introduces a specific set of challenges. One key area of international solidarity, for example, has involved providing donations or other resources to grassroots organizations in countries different from the donor countries. As I argue in my book *Social Movements and Globalization* (2014), transnational–national–local linkages between formally constituted organizations are mediated by power and resource disparities between movements and international NGOs (INGOs), and by the geo-political and national political contexts in which social movements operate.

Evans (2000) highlights Keck and Sikkink's case study of rubber tappers in the Amazon in the 1990s (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: ch. 4) to show how they struggled to make their claims heard, not only because they were resource poor, did not have the access to local politicians that the local landowners did, and were subject to violent repression, but also because transnational environmental groups were seen as 'outsiders' (or even imperialists) interfering with 'national development goals' (Evans, 2000: 232). The accusation of being stooges or tools of Western imperial forces is a common one lobbed at social movement groups in non-Western developing countries, and has important implications for social movements and activists.

Social movement organizations who accept funding from Western organizations, even when they are NGO funding bodies unconnected to any state, run the risk of being tainted by association (as pro-Western); accused of being anti-nationalist, spies or foreign government agents; and/or having their activism delegitimized as being the work of 'foreign hands'. This can happen whether or not social movement groups actually have ties to foreign social movement organizations or NGOs.

In Egypt in 2011, the pro-democracy movement that participated in the January Uprisings with the twin demands of *ash-sha'b yurid isqaat an-nizaam* (the people want the downfall of the regime) and *'aish, horreya, adala igtema'eya* (bread, freedom, social justice) were accused by the military junta's authoritarian regime of engaging in plots propagated by foreigners ('foreign hands'), to destabilize Egypt ---an accusation initially echoed by the old guard leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, despite the participation of their own (mostly younger) members in the revolutionary uprising (Teti and Gervasio, 2012). The regime also repeatedly attacked NGOs in a widely covered (primarily in state-controlled media) 'foreign funding debate', using ultra nationalistic language to accuse NGOs of receiving 'unauthorised foreign funding and/or operating without a licence' (Teti and Gervasio, 2012: 107). Teti and Gervasio point out, though, that a genuine foreign funding debate (as opposed to one fomented by the regime to foster hostility to social movement groups and delegitimize them) has been going on within social movement groups for many years. Activists are well aware of the risks or benefits associated with accepting

foreign or transnational funding.

The issues raised in these internal debates have been well-documented by Kapoor (2005) in his work on NGO partnerships with grassroots organizations in rural India. Kapoor argues that critical self-reflection is needed to avoid INGOs and NGOs from imposing their own agendas on grassroots organizations and abusing the unequal power relations between them.

Drawing on extensive fieldwork, Kapoor (2005: 211) highlights a number of problems with the ways that INGOs operate in India, which primarily stem from the fact that they tend to work through national NGOs rather than directly with grassroots organizations:

When INGOs ‘contract’ large Indian NGOs to implement projects, these NGOs in turn subcontract the project work through the village level NGOs and or CBOs [community-based organizations] ... This relationship is often fraught with problems ranging from petty corruption to outright domination, as ‘activist’ POs [people’s organizations] are disabled, gutted, and tranquilized into a state of apathy and dependence on charity by the lure of temporary goods and services.

National and local NGOs often use funds earmarked for development projects for personal gain and to maintain patronage systems, ‘cooking up’ projects to secure international funding that do not benefit the grassroots supposed beneficiaries of these projects. These NGOs also use their power and funding to silence and de-radicalize grassroots organizations and to co-opt their leadership. Kapoor (2005: 215) argues that INGOs need to work directly with the grassroots if they actually want to benefit them, but he does so with some trepidation, given that such a move generally brings INGOs into direct contact ‘with the vested interests [local power holders] that are often the very cause of problems faced by the marginalized and dispossessed’.

Activists in South Africa’s *Abahlali baseMjondolo* shack dweller’s movement are also continually being accused of being part of the ‘Third Force’, a racist accusation that denies agency to poor black people and constructs them as only being able to mobilize if manipulated by covert white elites. Recently, the movement unleashed a storm of controversy when it abandoned its long held nonpartisan stance (embodied in its slogan “No Land! No House! No Vote!”) to support the Democratic Alliance in upcoming provincial elections, explaining that in the face of violent repression and worsening conditions, it felt that strategic voting was a necessary step (Brown 2014). Such sudden or important changes in political policy throws up another challenge for international solidarity—especially if those changes go against the principles of the groups offering the solidarity across borders. Solidarity groups must then rethink their own relationship with changing circumstances on the ground, which they may not be able to fully grasp or come to grips with due to insufficient information, competing narratives, or emerging factions within the movements they are hoping to support.

Activists in the global North are also affected by geo-political considerations when engaging in international solidarity activism. For example, some groups are accused of collaborating with ‘terrorists’ for engaging with or fundraising for

‘revolutionary’ movements, or movements that use armed struggle in other parts of the world. It is important to recognize that the political construction of what constitutes a terrorist group varies greatly depending on the political interests and/or ideological interests of those doing the defining. In many cases, yesterday’s ‘freedom fighters’ are today’s ‘terrorists’, and vice versa.

For example, the African National Congress (ANC), whose leader Nelson Mandela was imprisoned in South Africa for 27 years, is widely perceived as a movement of freedom fighters against apartheid in South Africa. Yet, their use of armed struggle is glossed over in retrospective discourse about their activities. Seidman (2001) points out that, throughout the 1980s, Amnesty International refused to take on the cause of Nelson Mandela or any South African prisoner belonging to the ANC because of their use of armed struggle. It should be said that movements also engage in great debates about the support of these organizations: a case in point is the debate in Spanish leftist circles as to whether or not the Columbian FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) should be considered a terrorist organization or a revolutionary social movement. Nevertheless, the accusation of supporting terrorism or engaging in it is a very effective means at states’ disposal to repress and silence social movements engaging in international solidarity. As we can see, the practice of international solidarity comes up against very specific geo-political realities and challenges.

Cultural differences both real and discursively constructed raise another set of challenges. On the one hand we have the reality of the need for ideas, practices and demands originating from outside a given context to be culturally translated in order for them to be adopted successfully. This is so whether we are talking about European activists adapting Zapatista discourses to Italy or Spain, for example, or activists appealing to universal human rights discourses in contexts where those narratives are not dominant. Thayer, for example, shows how women in the Brazilian group SOS Corpo (SOS Body) found the gender discourse imported from the transnational networks in which they were involved very inspiring but were unable to use it to full advantage in local organizing until they fused it ‘with home-grown concepts of citizenship’ (Thayer, 2000: 336).

Sometimes, despite the best efforts of social movement actors, diffusion does not take place: Wood (2010), for example, describes how the International Youth Camps developed at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil between 2001 and 2005 did not diffuse successfully to its new site in Caracas, Venezuela. The *horizontalist* (non-hierarchical and deliberative forms of organization) identities and strategies associated with the youth camps were not translated to the new cultural and political context. Wood argues that the ‘new users’ of the horizontalist idea were not given time to deliberate on what was, for them, a new form of practice and to see how it might fit with their own local context. She highlights how aspects of the political field in Caracas, such as centralization and polarization, also made it difficult for this transition to take place. Other instances of diffusion have been more successful, as the spread of

Otpor! strategies for democratic reform to different national contexts shows, although not without contradictions, debate and controversy.

Reflexivity about the political and cultural realities of the people one wants to be in solidarity with therefore is crucial. A common enemy of progressive transformation, for example, are cultural relativism arguments. We hear this frequently when discussing patriarchy, whereby women's inequality or oppression is chalked up to cultural differences that should be respected. Criticism about these discourses enters into tensions with arguments about non-reflexive cultural imperialism.

When the issue is female genital mutilation, bride burning or child marriage, the battle lines seem easier to draw, but what about the recurrent debates over the use of the veil by Muslim women? Is the veil an identity marker or a symbol of oppression? Should it not be women who decide this for themselves? What if they are not allowed to decide this for themselves? Should there then be one set of criteria for women in contexts where they are free to choose and another for contexts in which they can't? Why can women wear a cross but not a veil? Who decides? And so on, and so on. These heated debates are an example of the tensions between respect for individual autonomy and critique of a universal or global patriarchal system that can be difficult to resolve, and around which people have strong opinions. Clearly cultural as well as political narratives play a large role in these debates, debates activists practicing international solidarity have to navigate and which can sometimes feel like a lose/lose situation.

Recently an organization called Survival International (2013) released a video² critiquing the sort of international "solidarity" that should be avoided at all costs, the kind that blindly charges in to help the poor downtrodden other, denying them the right to speak or decide, and forcing on them the solution to their problems, problems diagnosed by others, with solutions also designed from outside affected communities. In the video, helpful development agencies go in to save the rainforest and bring progress to the poor indigenous people, destroying the ecosystem and cultural and social fabric at the same time, rendering them dependent, alienated and bereft. While there is an element of satire and irony to the video, it prompts reflection on the construction of the other who must be helped. Far too often this trope flows in a global North-global South direction. On the other hand, sometimes the subaltern cannot speak, or at least cannot speak openly, and then international solidarity can take the form of giving voice to oppressions that cannot be voiced by those who are oppressed. But speaking "in the name of" inevitably brings a complex set of challenges and pitfalls.

Peter Waterman, who has written extensively about international global solidarity, reminds us of another problem that can arise in the flow of solidarity from the global North to the global South, which is a problem of mythmaking and rendering exotic iconic faraway figures:

² <http://www.survivalinternational.org/thereyougo>

The Western left, which would be cautious, skeptical or downright suspicious of any would-be icon in the north, still seems to need, as in the 19th century, its iconic figures, transformatory and transformed movements, its promised Islands and Highlands. And then to find them in faraway places with strange sounding names. And to endow them with the purity, simplicity, unity, purpose, and capacity that the Metropolitan left feels itself to lack... (2001 :xv)

Waterman reminds us that instead of romanticizing and exoticizing iconic faraway figures we need to understand them as friends, colleagues, comrades or partners. His discussion prompts us to reflect on the need to treat far away others with the same critical perspective and respect we would treat our close-by "similar "others. Another problem is the ease with which some activists recognize forms of oppression elsewhere that they fail to identify and act on in their own contexts, and patriarchy, sexism, elitism and racism are all examples of this.

In the face of these challenges, and many more, international solidarity practitioners adopt a wide range of strategies, which bring us back to this issue of similarity and difference.

On the one hand, activists stress the universality of issues and appeal to universal discourses such as human rights to make their claims. A recognition of shared common problems such as climate change or the threat of nuclear war, and recognizing our interdependence, not just the dependence of the global South on the global North, but crucially also the dependence of the global North on the global South, in terms of labor and resources, culture, etc. In so doing, these kinds of strategies pursue an emphasis on our similarities and our interdependence, which bring together both kinds of solidarity in the Durkheimian sense.

Yet as I hope my discussion so far has made clear, it is also necessary to bring in a discourse of differences, crucially differences in power, differences in resources, and a recognition of the very real differences in the political, social, and cultural contexts in which the international issues that we want to address unfold. For while the core and essence of human rights, for example, is universal, the reality of practicing gay rights in San Francisco or gay rights in Uganda is radically different; the reality of fighting against women's oppression in Germany and fighting against that oppression in Yemen or Saudi Arabia is again very different.

International solidarity, it seems to me, must rest on reflexivity about our similarities and our differences, on the relation and tension between the universal and the particular, on a recognition of the other as different but equal, and on transcending a rational actor rational discourse model to keep an awareness of power relations and resource disparities at the center of our thinking and practice, as well as the ways cultural narratives are used to obscure and challenge those disparities.

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<http://www.palgrave.com/page/detail/social-movements-and-globalization-cristina-flesher-fominaya/?k=9780230360877>.

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Exploring the problems of solidarity

David Landy, Hilary Darcy and José Gutiérrez

What is international solidarity and what are the challenges it faces? In order to explore these issues and to examine the changing world and work of solidarity organisations, a one-day conference was held in Trinity College Dublin last December (2013). The event was sponsored by the Department of Sociology TCD in association with the Institute for International Integration Studies. International solidarity was explored from both an academic and an activist perspective, resulting in lively debate and discussion. A full programme can be found at <http://www.tcd.ie/iis/events/conference-Internationalsolidaritypracticesproblemspossibilities.php>); below is a conference report by the organisers.

Keywords: International solidarity, North-South, alterglobalisation, NGOs, colonialism, activist practices, Palestine, South Africa, Rosspport

The conference took place on December 6th, the day after the death of Nelson Mandela. Several people at the conference had met Nelson Mandela and had worked in solidarity with the ANC; one thing the event did was to concentrate participants' minds on the long tradition of Irish political solidarity with South Africa which has ranged from Irish support given to the Boers in turn-of-the-century South Africa to the somewhat different support shown to the anti-apartheid movement in the 1970s and 1980s. This served as a stark illustration of the different meanings people have ascribed to solidarity in different eras.

While it would be impossible to do full justice to a range of papers that discussed case studies from Palestine solidarity and NATO intervention in Libya to solidarity practices in Rosspport, NW Ireland, certain key oppositions and common problems emerged from the day. These were:

1. The opposition between political and humanitarian understandings of solidarity, in particular how the humanitarian version has been gaining ground, partly due to the professionalization of transnational solidarity organisations and NGOs.
2. The difficult relationship between solidarity activists and those they stand in solidarity with. Cultural and political tensions in this relationship were seen in places as far apart as Rosspport and Palestine.
3. The tensions between the universal and the particular in the practice of solidarity.

The politics of solidarity

The keynote speaker was Peter Waterman, author of the recent *Recovering Internationalism, Creating the New Global Solidarity*. In his paper he sought to answer what we mean by the concept of solidarity by providing a typology of solidarity relationships. He proposed six associated meanings of “solidarity” based on relationships that can move from situations of mutual identification to exchange relationships to unequal relationships. These were solidarity based on: *common identity*; *affinity* (ideological identification); *reciprocity* (exchange between equals); *complementarity* (support exchanged for inspiration); *substitution* (the powerful helping the powerless); and *restitution* (the powerful righting past wrongs).

Waterman pointed out that most practices of solidarity have multiple meanings. For instance, the phrase “workers of the world, unite!” can serve as an expression of identity, affinity and in practical terms, of reciprocal solidarity. This overall typography of solidarity proved useful in understanding and comparing the various solidarity movements discussed at the conference.

One definition of solidarity which Waterman proffered was that “solidarity is a relationship forged through political struggle which seeks to challenge forms of oppression”. This is similar to Chandra Mohanty’s argument that solidarity must be based on a “common context of struggles against specific exploitative structures and systems.” (Mohanty 2003, 49). According to this articulation, what enables solidarity to move beyond expressions of common identity is a sense of common resistance. This means of understanding solidarity opened up a key question of the conference – the relationship of solidarity with other forms of politics, particularly class politics.

The last speaker of the day, David Featherstone, in his talk, “The construction of solidarities and the politicisation of the crisis”, spoke of how the notion of solidarity can be employed in order to repoliticise opposition to the current crisis of neoliberalism. In contrast to a common left-wing narrative of resistance in the crisis as being merely reactive and defensive, a reading of solidarity as a political relationship rather than a humanitarian gesture can be deployed to open up different possibilities and political imaginaries in the current conjuncture.

An example of this reading where international solidarity offers a practical critique of neoliberalism, allowing people to rearticulate opposition and alternatives, can be seen in responses to the Chilean junta takeover in 1973 – a key moment of neoliberalism. Chileans and others could contest the imposition of neoliberalism in a transnational fashion through the practice of solidarity, whether it was the refusal of English workers to work on war material supplied to the newly formed dictatorship or the trade union-orchestrated boycott of “fascist” Chilean produce. This boycott was not articulated as a disembodied humanitarian gesture to the poor people of Chile but rather as a response to fellow workers and their lives under fascism. Such international solidarity was reciprocal; the coup as well as Chilean exiles in Britain helped shape the

political imaginations of British people, with many exiles becoming involved in disputes such as the 1985 miner's strike. One can see a similar process in the recent activities of "IMF refugees" from Latin America in Spain and how their struggle and presence has helped shape and contribute to the political struggles in contemporary Spanish society.

The political nature of solidarity and its contestation was a key theme in Gavin Brown and Helen Yaffe's discussion of the non-stop picket outside the South African embassy, "Practices of solidarity: opposing apartheid in the centre of London". In their paper, Brown and Yaffe reminded us that while on the occasion of Nelson Mandela's death everyone appeared to be against apartheid, yet eulogists of Mandela such as David Cameron were at the time members of the Federation of Conservative Students which sold t-shirts with the slogan "Hang Mandela". It was in that polarised context that a group of young people set up the "City of London Anti-Apartheid Group" or "City Group", whose main political influence was the International Communist Group, and were a separate group from the "official" Anti-Apartheid movement and with no support from the ANC. They sat outside the South African embassy in the heart of London, in a permanent picket from 1986 to 1990.

As opposed to the current attempts of Cameron et al to depoliticise the nature of the anti-apartheid struggle, the non-stop picket was squarely placed in the political narrative of solidarity. The politicisation of this group of young activists (many women, many unemployed, many from migrant backgrounds) in the hardships of Thatcher's era went hand in hand with their approach to international solidarity. Domestic politics loomed large in their stance against apartheid: they opposed Thatcher and *therefore* they opposed apartheid. Class, gender and racial dynamics within the group were also mirroring domestic politics and impacting the community of solidarity activists. This group, in one word, was as much a product of Thatcher's politics as of apartheid.

Nevertheless, the idea of solidarity being a political term remains highly contested. Several speakers talked about how the notion of solidarity has moved from a "third world approach" dominant until the 80s, to a "civil society and human rights approach" dominant today. This was a prominent element in Anna Bernard's exploration of the Palestinian film "Five Broken Cameras" and how this film was used at screenings to create feelings of solidarity with Palestine among Western viewers. Prominent here was the use of the personal element and the process of individual identification in order to create feelings of collective solidarity. This talk indicated the ambiguous way in which new technologies are put to use to facilitate new approaches to solidarity and new ways to provoke mobilisation.

One reason for the shift of solidarity towards a more humanitarian understanding, Peter Waterman argued, was the professionalisation of solidarity practices which has created a continuum between NGOs, social movements and the state and promoted an ideology of engagement as opposed to confrontation. This issue formed a central part of the paper delivered by José Gutiérrez discussing the experience of Grupo Raíces, a small Irish-based

Colombian solidarity group. The talk explored the transition from an identity and affinity modality of solidarity - variants of the “third world approach” - to the current “civil society approach”. The problem with the professionalization of solidarity and the current human rights discourse, José argued, was that it had nothing meaningful to say about or offer to transformative struggles such as that in Colombia.

This was contrasted with the solidarity approach that orients the work of Grupo Raíces, where action is not taken on behalf of an object of solidarity, but through active engagement as equals, from a global justice perspective. He claimed that this approach has contributed to the politicisation of the debate on Colombia in Ireland, moving it away a neutral, technical and detached human rights discourse, and reclaiming a human rights tradition critical of power and supportive of active citizenship. This solidarity approach has led the group towards an understanding of the right to rebellion in its context, as against the dominant human rights approach which equates it to a quasi-criminal activity. This moves the debate beyond the “cult of the victim” (deserving sympathy as long as they are powerless, losing it when fighting back), and away from an exclusive reliance on human rights professionals towards prioritising grassroots movement in Colombia. This was not to deny the problems that remain in the group’s practices, such as an over-reliance on lobbying and advocacy tactics and failure to connect local and global struggles.

International solidarity or biased foreign intervention?

The difficulty of connecting local and global perspectives as well as the problematic nature of solidarity activism was further explored in Ayça Çubukçu’s contribution “On global solidarity: some conceptual problems”. This talk addressed the question of how transnational solidarity relates to foreign intervention, arguing that people label an act “solidarity” or “intervention” depending on who they understand as the proper subject of politics. Taking the 2011 intervention in Libya as a case study, or rather the debates surrounding this intervention, the paper investigated the claims and counterclaims as to whether what took place was humanitarian solidarity or imperialist intervention.

During the Libyan uprising, there were calls for the international community to intervene and protect Libyans from massacres by Colonel Gaddafi, and claims that the Libyans were begging “us” to intervene. Many who opposed intervention accused the other side of hypocritically instrumentalising human rights to pursue their imperialist projects. However, posing the problem as an insincere application of cosmopolitan ideals, while failing to problematize these cosmopolitan ideals is an insufficient response to these calls for military intervention, since different versions of internationalisms come together to support or oppose intervention. The key argument on the interventionist side was that the West needed to intervene in Libya to protect human rights and to forward the autonomous struggle of the people of Libya.

What then does it mean in practice to support the autonomy of a national struggle such as in Libya? While interventionists identified a singular legitimate authority among the Libyan resistance to the government and echoed its desire for intervention, the other side denied the existence of such an authority or viewed this intervention as compromising the autonomy of the Libyan struggle and that of other uprisings too. According to Çubukçu, “the mutable borders of the political communities we imagine, the importance we attach to their autonomy, and who we take to be political subjects within these borders” all affect whether we place the term “solidarity” or “intervention” on such political acts. At the same time she noted that this does not fully deal with the challenge of differentiating acts of transnational solidarity from acts of foreign intervention and there remains a need to examine commonalities as well as differences between the two.

While Ayça Çubukçu addressed the problem of applying universalism in solidarity activities, Richard Irvine and David Landy in their joint paper “Putting the blinkers on: partiality and Palestinian solidarity” dealt with the associated problem of partiality and sectarianism in solidarity activism, and how this picking of sides serves to undercut the original purposes of solidarity, in particular the political effects of this solidarity both domestically and abroad.

In his discussion of Palestinian solidarity, Richard Irvine talked about the effects of supporting one side over another and how this can lead to a dehumanisation and rejection of the other side. The lack of empathy with others can lead in the case of Israel/Palestine to solidarity activists mirroring the exclusivist ideology of Zionism rather than seeking to transcend it. Rather than such blind partiality, Richard argued that solidarity activists should try to counter exclusivism with a meaningfully inclusivist ideology - the sort of universalist ideology which for better or worse leads people to solidarity in the first place, rather than simple identification with one side or the other. The central question here is where the solidarity activist stands in relation to the exclusivist, sectarian statements or the inhuman acts of the oppressed people.

David Landy argued that what one customarily does in relation to the people one is in solidarity with, is to ignore such uncomfortable questions by talking up an primordial unity of the people that one is in solidarity with and seeking to avoid internal politics and divisions. The refusal to get involved in internal politics is a means of declaring a belief in the autonomy of the object of solidarity, of seeing them as political subjects in their own right, and maintaining a level of respect for them. Although done for the best of reasons, this refusal to engage can limit the actions of solidarity groups and lead to a superficial understanding of solidarity. This is something that can limit the political imagination of the solidarity activist and thwart solidarity’s transformative potential and possibility for mutual emancipation.

Confronting colonialism in solidarity activism from Palestine to Rossport

While there is a problem with failing to engage honestly with the object of solidarity, there is perhaps a greater problem when this engagement does happen, due to the colonial attitudes of the solidarity activist and power imbalance between the activist and subjects of solidarity. This key tension in solidarity activism was the topic of Elaine Bradley's autoethnographic discussion "International Solidarity with Palestine and Colonial Oppression Walking the thin line between the two."

It goes without saying that cultural hegemony and orientalism are present in western solidarity with Palestine, and that the colonial relations contained within solidarity activists influence the forms of solidarity practiced. The paper discussed as an example the expectation among some solidarity activists that Palestinians should be grateful to them, and the indignation they displayed when this gratitude was not expressed.

Seeing colonialism, among other things, as a discourse which interpellates the colonised, the way in which solidarity groups talk about the situation and Palestinians can be seen as contributing to their powerlessness. Elaine Bradley noted the disjuncture between Palestinians using the language of resistance, liberation and self-determination, while Western solidarity groups and especially those working in Palestine use a rhetoric of human rights. The enchantment that solidarity activists have with non-violent resistance, she argued was an attempt to dictate forms of resistance by delegitimising and closing off discussion of other types of resistance. Furthermore, this fetishisation of non-violence colludes with the racist narrative of armed resistance as terrorism and Palestinians as violent creatures, since it pathologises this violence rather than seeing it as a natural reaction to oppression.

Thus in order to engage in solidarity activism, we need to try to avoid the risk of continuing the interpellation of Palestinians by imperialist discourses. One way of doing so, Bradley argued is to compile a critical inventory of the self, such as Gramsci enjoined:

The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory. Therefore it is imperative at the outset to compile such an inventory. (quoted in Said 1978, 25)

The importance of compiling such an inventory was amplified by the discussion of the Rossport Solidarity Camp by Donal O'Driscoll and Jerriann Sullivan. They discussed the problems with and the importance of international solidarity for the local campaign to resist the Shell Corrib Gas Project, for both the solidarity activists and locals in resistance. Since the Solidarity Camp was set up in 2005 between 6,000 and 10,000 people have travelled to the Erris peninsula in northwest Ireland to offer solidarity to the resisting community; among them have been a steady stream of activists from the UK. The strategy behind the

solidarity with a resisting community was to offer physical support, organisational experience and knowledge of protest tactics.

Relationships between solidarity activists and community campaigners living in Erris were shaped by the various social and cultural contexts of these different individuals, leading often to tensions. Experiences of solidarity activism differed not only between generations of solidarity activists at the Rosspport Solidarity camp but also between individual activists. This multivocality was illustrated by a short play staged by three Solidarity Camp activists. The play raised numerous issues such as the tension between remaining committed to a community led campaign and the temptation to act independently of that community during periods of low campaign activity; the difficulty in evaluating the success and impact of their actions; the meaning of community and who speaks for that community. Just as there is no perfect community, they resolved, there is also no perfect solidarity.

While long-distance activists may be able to ignore such problems, in the context of Rosspport where campers were living for long periods of time among a small community, these issues needed to be faced. The campers were not separated from the locals – for instance, part of the solidarity activism was working on farms of locals who had been arrested. The difficulty of relating to those they were in solidarity with was not simply a theoretical issue, but was practical and immediate as the solidarity activists from outside the area had to come to terms with their own colonial attitudes and make the Gramscian inventory that Elaine Bradley spoke of.

Donal O Driscoll's presentation dealt with this difficult process, and also how the long discussions served to change the activists. Rosspport happened at the end of the era of counter summit mobilisations and hit-and-run direct actions, with which English campaigners were becoming disillusioned. Rosspport provided them with an alternative way of conducting activism, and has led to direct action campaigners in Britain reshaping their politics around communities rather than simply around their own issues. Thus what Rosspport taught was the difficulty but also the value of exchange and communication in solidarity work, in order to build a culture of meaningful politics.

Final debate

The conference ended with a final workshop session which provided participants – many of whom had been working for years in solidarity organisations – with the space to analyse international solidarity practices and effects. Since we cannot take solidarity, as a word, at face value, it is necessary to analyse its multiple meanings, the need for critical engagement between the various subjects of solidarity. The debate also threw up discussions on how neoliberalism and interventionist doctrines have impacted how solidarity is perceived.

Some questions raised include: how do domestic political dynamics affect the aims and tactics adopted by solidarity movements? How do everyday politics

and prejudices between participants affect solidarity spaces? How do the politics of the people we are in solidarity with affect solidarity practices? How does solidarity manifest itself beyond North-South relationships (North-North, South-South, South-North)? How deep has been the impact of the IT revolution on relation to solidarity practices? How do other political agendas (states, donors, political parties) affect the practice of solidarity?

After the conference, the organisers (Hilary Darcy, José Gutiérrez and David Landy) have established an International Solidarity Research Network (ISRN). If you are interested in exploring these questions whether as an academic or as a practitioner we invite you to get in touch with us at solidarityresearchnetwork@atgmail.com and participate in this ongoing project.

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The international labour movement in, against and beyond, the globalized and informatized cage of capitalism and bureaucracy¹

Peter Waterman

Abstract

Six questions and answers address the present crisis of the hegemonic, Europe-based and Western-centric international trade union organisations, the impact of globalisation, neo-liberalisation, informalisation and informatisation on labour internationalism, the experiences and possibilities of informal/alternative kinds of labour internationalism, and the significance of labour solidarity with Palestine.

Much scepticism is expressed concerning the capacities and possibilities of the traditional trade union internationals. But this is also the case with the union presence within the World Social Forum. Attention is drawn to certain alternative international(ist) labour movement initiatives, mostly marked by networking forms. And the challenges facing a new labour internationalism are considered with respect to the Palestinian case.

Keywords: union, Eurocentrism, restructuring, globalisation, internationalism, World Social Forum, shopfloor, informatisation, networking, solidarity

¹ This piece began as a response to a number of personal questions posed by Indian feminist and labour specialist Amrita Chhachhi. She had been editing a special issue of the journal of the International Institute of Social Studies, *Development and Change* on labour internationally (Chhachhi 2014). When I could not meet the D&C requirements, I decided to expand it for this special issue of *Interface*. Although Amrita can now hardly be considered responsible for it, I do appreciate her original stimulus.

Weber's Iron Cage

There will be an evolution of an iron cage, which will be a technically ordered, rigid, dehumanized society...The iron cage is the one set of rules and laws that we are all subjected and must adhere to. Bureaucracy puts us in an iron cage, which limits individual human freedom and potential instead of a "technological utopia" that should set us free. It is the way of the institution, where we do not have a choice anymore. Once capitalism came about, it was like a machine that you were being pulled into without an alternative option; currently, whether we agree or disagree, if you want to survive you need to have a job and you need to make money².

Widening the Cracks Within Capitalism

In the last twenty or thirty years we find a great many movements that claim something else: it is possible to emancipate human activity from alienated labor by opening up cracks where one is able to do things differently, to do something that seems useful, necessary, and worthwhile to us; an activity that is not subordinated to the logic of profit. [...] We are victims and yet we are not. We seek to improve our living standards as workers, and also to go beyond that, to live differently. In one respect we are, in effect, people who have to sell their labor power in order to survive. But in another, each one of us has dreams, behaviors and projects that don't fit into the capitalist definition of labor. [...] The difficulty ... lies in envisioning the relation between those two types of movements [wage labour and living differently]. How can that relation avoid reproducing the old sectarianism? How can it be a fruitful relation without denying the fundamental differences between the two perspectives?³

1. To what extent has the international trade union movement responded to the challenges of neo-liberal globalization?

The largest union international, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) held its Third Congress, Berlin, May 2014. But the Congress website suggested that the ITUC was still living in or looking back toward the 'kinder, gentler' West European capitalism of the mid-20th Century.⁴ The Congress slogan was 'Building Workers' Power', symbolized by a male worker in a hard hat. Women, the 'Informal Sector' and the Indigenous did not appear on the agenda but only in non-plenary sessions. Although a Draft Statement declared that 'The 20th century model of capitalism has failed, and the 'Washington Consensus' must be buried forever'⁵, its three main themes were:

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_cage

³ <http://roarmag.org/2014/09/john-holloway-cracking-capitalism-vs-the-state-option/>

⁴ <http://congress2014.ituc-csi.org/?lang=en>

⁵ http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/html/index_en_web.html

Union Growth
Realizing Rights
Sustainable Jobs

This might be compared with the World Social Forum's

Another World is Possible!

the Spanish campaign for

Real Democracy Now!

with Occupy's

We Are the 99%!

the Latin American indigenous movements' identification of a

Crisis of Civilisation⁶

and the simple but potent slogan

Capitalism is not in Crisis, Capitalism is the Crisis!⁷

It seems to me that ITUC's slogan and symbol are hardly going to mobilise or reach out beyond the unionized – if even these.⁸ The ITUC's Congress issues suggested, rather, those of what the Dutch unions have long called themselves - 'an interest-representing organization'.

The ITUC is based in Western Europe, is profoundly Eurocentric, and a fundamentally defensive organization. It has long forgotten any history of labour's 'street-fighting days'. It clearly does not believe in the strategy attributed to Clausewitz that the best means of defence is attack. And it cannot publicly confront the fact that the unionized part of the world's wage labour force is only between seven and 15 percent.⁹

Then there is its fear – indeed suppression - of dialogue. When a unique public challenge was made to it by the South African national union centre,¹⁰ it didn't

⁶ <http://transform-network.net/journal/issue-082011/news/detail/Journal/at-the-heart-of-the-crisis-of-civilisation-the-issue-of-living-well.html>.

⁷ It's a movie, it's free and it's on Utube [here](#).

⁸ The ITUC has been producing international surveys on major labour questions. I am no specialist opinion surveys but it does occur to me that the [latest one](#) was intended to confirm rather than challenge the actions and opinions of those who commissioned it. There is here, for example, no question about whether those surveyed know anything about the ITUC, including where it is sited, who its leaders might be, the name of their national ITUC affiliate, or what ITUC policies might be. The survey results, moreover, do not even indicate what percentage of interviewees were union members and whether their attitudes might differ from those of non-members! An expert analysis of these surveys would be welcome.

⁹ I have for some years been using the higher figure, but the lower one has been recently confirmed publicly by the General Secretary of the South African COSATU, and in a personal exchange with a veteran international union leader.

¹⁰ <http://www.unionbook.org/profiles/blogs/cosatu-first-substantial-and>

even bother to publicly respond. At its 2014 Congress it provided *plenary time* to such representatives of ‘the Great and the Good’ as Guy Ryder, the ex-ITUC(!) Director of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Helen Clark of the United Nations Development Programme, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, German Foreign Minister (!) and Gordon Brown, ex-Prime Minister of the UK (representative of yet another *inter-state* organization).¹¹ Why does it exhibit such a clientelist orientation? Where here were the representatives of ‘global civil society’, of the dramatic global social movements that are receiving not only public attention globally but very considerable public approval?

Such concerns may have appeared in Congress *workshops*, the latter paying at least some attention to domestic workers, to the ‘informal economy’, to climate change, migrant workers, violence against women, the retired, and of the unions ‘partnering’ (upwards again?) for ‘development’. All these elements, plus the audio-visual, electronic and TV-presentation elements in a ‘paperless congress’, suggest the ITUC has been pushed by the current crisis and pulled by the newest global social movements to move from obeisance to the international financial institutions towards some kind of critique of neo-liberalism (though not of capitalism).¹²

But why, if this congress represented 176 million workers, in some 161 Countries, and if the ITUC is, as Gordon Brown stated, the largest democratic movement in the world, did it witness such limited resonance in either Germany or internationally, in either the dominant or alternative inter/national labour media? I asked Google to alert me to anything on the ITUC Congress. Over about a week from June 24, I got four alerts, mostly from the ITUC press department itself, with one or two from Deutsche Welle, the international radio/TV service of the German state. Such reports from national union media that I myself found were mostly about their own participation or the speeches of their representatives. So on the basis of the evidence at time of writing, one has to conclude that the ITUC is the largest *invisible* democratic organization in the world. Compare dominant and/or alternative media response to Amnesty International campaigns or Greenpeace actions!

¹¹ This is a marginal improvement over the Second ITUC Congress in Vancouver, 2010, where plenary invitees included Strauss-Kahn, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund. And this whilst a massive anti-globalisation demonstration was occurring (and being violently repressed) elsewhere in Canada!

¹² For forceful critique of capitalism at the ITUC Congress, we have to again turn to the South African COSATU. The problem here, however, is that this alternative orientation not only clearly failed to impact on the congress but to itself reach the media. Whilst the COSATU President’s (overly diplomatic?) address to the congress was at least reported on the [COSATU website](#), Its more radical, substantial and detailed positions on congress issues could, at time of writing, only be found on UnionBook, [here](#) (note its attachments). For a conceptualization of the position of the ITUC in a schema of union responses to *neo-liberalism*, consider that of Gall, Wilkinson and Hurd (2011:9-10): 1) Agreement and Support; 2) Qualification and Conditional Support; 3) Social Democratic Opposition; 4) Socialist Resistance. Whilst it would seem reasonable to put the ITUC somewhere between positions 2 and 3, I am not sure whether a spectrum is sufficient to allow for alternatives to capitalism that do not even use the word ‘socialism’.

The ITUC is, however, the major union international, having merged earlier social democratic and catholic ones (here un-capitalized since their original ideological inspirations have long faded) and absorbing not only the main national union centres of the post-communist world but also major militant centres in the global South, such as those of Brazil, South Africa and South Korea.¹³ But the ITUC, its allied internationals and its members have been severely damaged by a capitalist tsunami that has been not only neo-liberal and globalized but also informatized (though this informatization was hardly recognized by its 2014 congress).

Much of what the ITUC and family do is on the North-Rest Axis (the Global South, the ex-Communist East), operates in a North-Rest direction and is conflated with Northern state-funded 'development cooperation' (consider here again the ITUC Congress workshop on this topic).¹⁴ The ITUC in any case assumes that the Rest is 'developing' or 'emerging', that what it needs is what the West has got or values, and that this is what the Rest desires. In 2013 I attended two international solidarity events of the Dutch trade unions, both cheerfully marked by this 'Solidarity of Substitution' (standing in for the victim) syndrome.¹⁵ I do recognise this as an *aspect* of solidarity, but I certainly reject the *reduction* of solidarity to something so ethically close to 19th century middle-class Christian charity, and inevitably structured on patron-client lines. (More on this later).

Capitalism, red in tooth and claw, within and outside industry, in the media and culture, off and online, has to be understood as revolutionary (if you prefer, *counter*-revolutionary) in carrying out a one-sided and till-now virtually unlimited war in which the traditional working class has been dispersed, restructured, outsourced, and in which its traditional forms (the Union, the Party, the Cooperative, the Newspaper, the Culture) have been reduced in size, and/or their position within the economy the polity, and in their socio-cultural impact.

I have proposed the following parable.

¹³ This is not to ignore exceptions, such as those of the impressively strike- and protest-prone Chinese and South African working classes. But the former are still outside the ITUC, and the ITUC-affiliated South African COSATU was, at time of writing, under an innovatory left challenge from its major industrial affiliate, the Nation Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (Marshall 2014). The possible implications of both phenomena for a post-ITUC labour internationalism have yet to be considered. And we should not forget signs of new union cross-border strike action within Europe (Nowak and Gallas 2014).

¹⁴ For what solidarity activities European ITUC affiliates are carrying out on a primarily West-West axis see the insightful but sobering account of Bieler and Erne (2014).

¹⁵ I was a participant at the launch of a Dutch union-funded (actually Dutch state development cooperation funded) film entitled 'Working Class Heroes'. One of these heroes, present at the launch, and awarded a Dutch Union Rights award, was a prominent and charismatic Indonesian union leader, [Said Iqbal](#). In 2014, [Iqbal identified himself - and his union\(s\)](#) - with the (losing) Presidential candidate – a man with a background in the Suharto military dictatorship! Also present at the launch was the Dutch Labour Party Minister of both development cooperation and foreign trade. Enough said.

The Capitalists and the Unions meet in the traditional World Labour Cup. The Unions arrive, all kitted up, from shirts to boots. But they find, to their horror, that the customary green pitch has been replaced by a shiny white skating rink. They protest loudly but the Capitalists say, 'This is New Football, it's faster, it's more profitable, so get your skates on or go away'. The Unions complain to the Referee but he hoists his shoulders and says, 'What can I do? If I make it an issue, they'll simply move the match somewhere else'.

The analogy is, of course, incomplete: the capitalists are playing not on an ice rink but in cyberspace. And the unions are still primarily orientated to the industrial/office worker identified with grounded workplaces, local living spaces, national politics.

The problem is that the basic form of labour self-articulation, the union, was developed in and against a capitalism that was industrial, national, state-building, centralizing (and, of course, patriarchal, racist, imperial and militaristic). Its colonies and dependencies were expected to 'develop' along this path. Or, conversely, after 1917, to follow the State-Communist path to such.¹⁶ A contradictory and volatile combination of these two paths can be found in China, the new Workshop of the World.

The inter/national 'trade union as we know it' (let's call it the TUWKI), is a pyramidal institution, assumes the archetypical proletarian - male, industrial, waged, condemned to life-time (un- or under-) employment, living in a working-class community, surrounded by a working-class culture. The pyramidal organization is a nominally representative-democratic one, just as are, supposedly, worker's parties, parliaments and the liberal-democratic state. The assumption was that with the growth, spread and deepening of capitalism the worker's numbers, needs and values would permeate society and the state. This aspiration was given its best - but always partial - representation in the capitalist welfare state (Wahl 2011). With the gradual undermining of Welfare Capitalism (and the dramatic destruction of its Communist would-be equivalent), and with the diverse 'global justice and solidarity movements' mostly taking networked and cyberspatial form, the inter/national TUWKI resembles more a monument to the past of emancipatory social movements than a model of a future one.¹⁷

¹⁶ There were other international labour movement traditions that were crushed between these two millstones, such as the anarcho-syndicalist, the council communist and other democratic socialist ones. I am reminded of these by two recent books. One is that of Dan Gallin (2014), one-time Secretary of the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF), who belonged to and reminds us of a particular democratic socialist tradition. The other is edited by Immanuel Ness (2014), which deals with such traditions in both their historical and contemporary manifestations - North and South, East and West. Such tendencies are - in so far as they surpass their own 'labourist' assumptions - making their own contribution to the re-invention of the union movement.

¹⁷ Detailed data and convincing additional reasons for the profound crisis of the international labour movement are provided by Marcel van der Linden (2015).

Finally, at global level, the inter/national unions – North, South, East and West – are incorporated and self-subordinated to the structure, ideology and programmes of the ILO – condemned by a leading former official, Guy Standing, as ‘An Agency for Globalization’ (Standing 2008). Since the ILO’s foundation – with enthusiastic union support – after the First World War and Russian Revolution, this famously ‘tripartite’ organization has been one in which governments and employers (State and Capital in political-economic terms) have 75 percent of the power, Labour 25 percent. ‘Labour’ here means only trade unions recognized by ‘their’ governments, which also actually *pay* for their unions’ presence at ILO conferences! This structure reproduces the Social-Liberal theory of capital and labour as competing interests, requiring a neutral state to preside over them. From here also comes the ideal of ‘free tripartite collective bargaining’, a model worshipped, or at least accepted, by most unions, North, South, East and West.

The contemporary inter/national trade unions can still mount defensive action and organize effective solidarity campaigns (for their affiliates). With their millions of members they cannot be dismissed. But, given the Iron Cage that surrounds their thinking and action, one has to conclude that within this church there is no salvation - or at least no emancipation. The best one can hope for is that the TUWKI will eventually learn from the newest wave of emancipatory social movements. However the Berlin Congress website reveals but a marginal recognition of even the growing number of women workers (headscarved rather than hardhatted?), of the mass of labourers in the petty-commodity sector, of the wave of precarization threatening labour even in its West European fortress, and that capitalism is destroying the environment on which human existence – and therefore inevitably trade unions and collective bargaining - depends.

2. Given the restructuring of work/labour, informalization, migration etc. is there any real basis for international labour solidarity?

Well, first we need to recognize the extent, forms and limits of past labour internationalisms.¹⁸ We also have to recognize the different times and places in, with or from which, internationalisms were expressed or experienced. I pluralize ‘internationalisms’ in order to avoid homogenization. Even in their iconic forms and moments they had their specificities and limitations. One of these lies in the very concept of *internationalism* (or, if you prefer, *internationalism*). There is ambiguity here even in the *Communist Manifesto*, which at one point asserts that workers have no country, and at another that they will first have to take power nationally.¹⁹ Etymologically, as well as

¹⁸ Considerable help here is provided by the work of David Featherstone (2012), reviewed [here](#). Featherstone is all the more important for those working on labour internationalism because of his consideration of multiple kinds of such solidarity, of both historical and contemporary cases, and because of his sensitivity to socio-geographic space and distance.

¹⁹<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch02.htm>

historically, labour internationalism has been a relationship between workers identified by nationality, interpellated (hailed or addressed) by nationalists and identified with various types of nationalism (e.g. American patriotism, left populism in Latin America, 'great nation chauvinism' in Communist - and evidently - post-Communist, Russia and China).

With the development of centralized states, imperialism and inter-state or inter-bloc wars, workers and unions often opted for a state-national or bloc (Western, Eastern, Southern) identity rather than an international class one. We also need to distinguish worker, union, and party/ideological (Labour, Socialist, Communist, Anarchist) internationalisms. Everyone refers to the failure of the call for a general strike against World War One, when, with exceptions, workers identified themselves – at least initially – rather as national subjects/citizens than as an international class. But even the path-breaking 19th to early-20th century international campaign for the eight-hour day, 40-hour week, intimately linked with the establishment of Mayday as International Workers' Day, was never universalized. In other cases it has been reversed. And I observed and photographed an enormous Mexico City Mayday demonstration, some 15 years ago, in which space was provided for the Zapatistas (who are of course Mexican), but in which there was no single sign of or reference to *lo internacional!*

So the period of a globalized, neo-liberalized, informatized capitalism creates new problems and new challenges. It certainly questions any such simple appeal as that of the *Communist Manifesto*, assuming that workers are the *privileged* internationalist subjects; or any assumption that the ITUC, its associated unions and members provide the parameters for, or essence of, labour internationalism.

The challenges are beginning to be met, I would argue, by internationalist labour solidarity initiatives at the base, on the periphery and outside the TUWKI. (More under Point 4 below). But we should here note that they customarily take network form, are more active in cyberspace than in offices or conferences, that they are open to dialogue (both internally and externally), that they are often informed by the emancipatory principles and practices of the newest wave of global solidarity and justice movements.

Finally, and obviously, they do not accept the Iron Cage of Capitalism and Bureaucracy as the parameters of their thought and action. Consider the slogans I quoted above. Weber's Iron Cage was, after all, *his* conceptual one. Traditional national, industrial, colonial, militarist capitalism was actually a mass/mess of contradictions, of which the early labour movement was to various extents conscious of and exploited. The newest global solidarity movements are commonly aware both of the traditional contradictions and of the new ones. As well as of the new terrains of struggle, such as the cyberspatial. And they are customarily aware that the emancipatory struggle is both worldwide (privileging no world area) and 'intersectional'²⁰ – meaning interpenetrated by and

²⁰ See Wikipedia on [intersectionality](#).

interdependent on other alienated beings (including, in Latin American indigenous thinking, the earth itself).

3. What has been the experience of networking on work/labour issues in the World Social Forum – has it led to any concrete international action?

The dominant Brazilian union centre, the Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUTB) played a major role and was a major presence in the early editions of the WSF, most of which took place in Brazil. It later fell out publicly with the WSF and not for any left (as distinct from institutional) reasons I am aware of. The ITUC has had an increasing presence, and sometimes a giant ‘World of Labour’ tent, has provided its family with a focal point. But this was also, of course, a *platform*, and I am aware of no significant effort by the ITUC, or the allied Global Unions, to dialogue with ‘other’ labour movements present (of rural labour, of women). There may have been others but the only ‘cross-movement dialogue’ I recall was sponsored by feminists, not by labour.

An alternative labour initiative, with the impressively (or was it deliberately?) low-profile name ‘Labour and Globalization’, was sponsored by a pro-WSF Italian union officer and a leading left socialist. It certainly attracted some of ‘labour’s others’, but it acted always as ‘His Majesty’s Loyal Opposition’, in the sense of accepting the parameters of the traditional unions, and issuing no alternative programme, charter, or even a discussion document. This effort ran out of steam around 2011, reportedly due to lack or loss of Italian union interest.

But we should not consider the unions or other labour people solely responsible here. The WSF, whilst hosting numerous significant social movements, and representing a significant challenge to the global hegemony, has, I think, been heavily marked by 1) the epoch and discourse of ‘global civil society’, 2) been subject to *ongización* (ngo-ization, for which see Alvarez 1999),²¹ and 3) been inevitably coloured by the 70-80 percent of participants with a university background. For many of these (as well as the new social movements of the later-20th century) ‘work’ was not, as such, an issue (although *jobs* increasingly are!), and the labour movement has been considered more a part of the problem than of the solution.

We can’t write off the WSF, any more than the traditional trade unions – or for that matter national parliaments. But I am convinced that a global movement for the emancipation of labour will have to start elsewhere. A 2014 Cambridge conference on labour protest worldwide²² reinforced my feeling that if ‘power’ comes from the top and the centre, ‘empowerment’ comes from the base and the periphery: the base of the unions, the periphery of the class, and at least the

²¹ See here also Wikipedia on [NGOization](#).

²² “‘Bread, Freedom and Social Justice’: Organised Workers and Mass Mobilizations in the Arab World, Europe and Latin America”, <http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/25028>.

semi-periphery of capitalism (Southern Europe, East Asia, Brazil, South Africa). The appropriate slogan here might have to be ‘In the unions, with the unions, without the unions and – where necessary – against the unions’.

4. How effective are alternative cross-border/transnational worker initiatives in countering the power of global capital?

There was a 1980s wave, in which I was involved and wrote about, known as the ‘New Labour Internationalism’ (NLI) or ‘Shopfloor Internationalism’, itself a result of the labour and social movement radicalism of the 1970s. This was largely based on inter/national and local labour resource centres (LRCs), mostly acting as support groups, providing information and research services, many experimenting with what I called ‘international labour communication by computer’ (ILCC). Operating at the lowest levels of unionism, creating international linkages between workers on the shopfloor, this was rather independent and highly innovative. With the rise and rise of neo-liberal globalization, however, the NLI was trapped by its orientation to the workplace and the union form. It failed to recognize that any new labour internationalism had to go beyond the ‘factory gates and the union office’ (Haworth and Ramsay 1984). Some of its leading activists entered the unions they had previously criticised, others faded away, yet others continued their efforts to create autonomous LRCs for a new kind of labour internationalism.

The devastating impact of an informatized, neo-liberalized capitalist globalization has, however, given rise to a new wave of both action and reflection. International women worker campaigning may have best survived the neo-liberal tsunami (because of the women activists and feminist ideas). There is a significant new rural labour international, Via Campesina (Braga Vieira 2010, Bringel and Braga Vieira 2014), which organizes labourers as well as small farmers, and which could be considered a ‘networked organization’. There is a well-established network of mostly-female street traders, Streetnet. This links not the relevant NGOs in general but ‘membership-based organizations’ in particular. It adapted its constitution from that of an international trade union. Streetnet is autonomous of inter/national unions whilst often collaborating with such. Note that both Via Campesina (VC) and Streetnet were initiatives of the South or are actually initiated and/or inspired thereby.²³

²³ Being autonomous from the traditional inter/national unions, and being a membership-based organization, is no necessary guarantee of an autonomous discourse or strategy. Reading the following from WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing), co-signed by StreetNet and numerous related bodies, I am reminded of the words of feminist [Audre Lourde](#), that ‘the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house’:

A majority of workers worldwide work in the informal economy, and most new jobs are informal jobs. It is assumed that informal work is unlikely to completely disappear, and that many informal economic activities will remain informal or semi-formal in the foreseeable future. There is no single, easy, one-step way to formalize informal employment. Rather, it should be understood as a gradual, ongoing process of

Numerous new labour solidarity initiatives have responded to the dispersion, restructuring and differentiation of working classes or categories, addressing themselves to particular regional or national formations (such as the China solidarity centres in Hong Kong), to the precarized, to the informatized, the petty-production sector, fisherpeople, sex workers, and migrants. One might think of migrant workers as the very embodiment of a globalized labour force and therefore as privileged bearers of a new labour internationalism. But whilst there are numerous networks of such, based on country of origin or country of work, and whilst there are various international NGO or church bodies addressing such workers, they seem to have remained resistant to the global models offered by VC or Streetnet. One simply cannot read off consciousness, organization and action from political-economic or socio-geographic position.

Then there are initiatives on the fringe of the formal inter/national union structures but largely oriented toward such. The union inter/nationals have so far proven generally incapable of doing more than using - *instrumentalising* - the Internet (faster! cheaper! wider-reaching!), as a one-way, one-to-many broadcaster. They have not understood informatization as implying a revolution in work, kinds of workers, the self-empowerment thereof, and for moving toward a constructive, horizontal dialogue and dialectic of equals. This role has been taken on by projects such as the humungous information/solidarity project, LabourStart/UnionBook, by Union Solidarity International (USI)²⁴ and the Global Labour Institute (GLI). These also happen to be heavily, if not solely, UK based. So is one 'industry specific one', Teacher Solidarity.²⁵

But the *China Labour Bulletin*, Hong Kong, is one of several such sophisticated operations there. Then in Australia we can find a Southern Initiative on Globalization and Trade Union Rights (SIGTUR) in Perth, and an Australia-Asia Worker Links (AAWL) in Victoria. And one should not forget the open and internationalist socialist sites such as 'Links International Journal of Socialist

incrementally incorporating informal workers and economic units into the formal economy through strengthening them and extending their rights, protection and benefits. (WIEGO 2014)

The whole ambitious and detailed document surely invites de- and re-construction. To start with, those in the informal economy are not a 'majority' - 50% plus? - but more like 85% - surely 'an overwhelming majority'? To continue, this is not 'the informal economy' (ILO social-liberal discourse): it is the 'petty-capitalist', 'petty-entrepreneurial' or 'real economy' (according to various political-economic discourses). Finally, the declaration represents, surely, a backward-looking utopianism: during an on-going global capitalist economic crisis, and a war on labour in the capitalist 'formal economy', the aim of WIEGO and friends is that of getting (back) into it. And this with the assistance of the ILO, denounced by Guy Standing (2008) in terms already quoted.

²⁴ [See here](#). This page introduces us to an 'Organising Network', whilst, dramatically, reminding us that social networking is not neutral, that every technology bears an ideology, and arguing that it is introducing a new kind of international social networking site for unions. Bearing in mind my early concept of 'International Labour Communication by Computer', I am wondering whether we are now moving to a new stage - ILCC 2.0.

²⁵ [Teacher Solidarity](#).

Renewal' in Australia, 'Debate' in South Africa, 'The Bullet' in Canada, or '[Left-East](#)' (wherever, apart from Cyberia, it might be sited).²⁶ Other projects increasingly come even to my inevitably limited attention. One is 'Forum Worlds of Labour – China and Germany', which is intended to create 'personal encounter and debate' at the shopfloor level. This could be understood as a revival of the shopfloor internationalism of the 1980s, linking as it does both German and China/Hongkong publications and networks largely of that era.²⁷ In Austria there is a new body for the 'Active Unemployed', which is proposing an international network of such.²⁸ Then I note a left metalworkers' union site in Brazil that has an international solidarity page in English, no less!²⁹ And also expressing solidarity in the South-North direction.

Whilst many of the labour-specific sites above are heavily oriented toward and sometimes dependent on inter/national union support - moral or material - their position on the union periphery and their cyberspace awareness and activity means they can obviously do things that the traditionally earth-bound unions cannot. And they show, to varying degrees, an awareness of or sensitivity toward the increasingly networked nature of the latest global social movements. This was, I think, demonstrated by a couple of events that took advantage of the ITUC Congress in Berlin. One was of the Global Labour University which, despite its German social-democratic base and intimate links with the ILO, nonetheless addresses the 21st century world.³⁰

A step beyond a union-fixation was taken by a NetworkedLabour conference, Amsterdam, 2013. It brought together 20-30 autonomous left specialists/activists on the globalization/informatization of work, of products, of workers, and then on the possibilities of emancipatory networking amongst such. One year later, however, it was yet to publish a promised report. My feeling is that it lacked significant reference to the history of ILCC, and the presence of those with practical contemporary experience of such. It is nonetheless an initiative which bears following.³¹ It seems to me to be being challenged (in direct relevance to workers and the labour movement) by a New York event, DigitalLabour.³²

²⁶ LeftEast, <http://www.criticatac.ro/lefteast/>. This is its e-dress. It seems not to have an earth-bound address.

²⁷ See [here](#), so far only in German.

²⁸ [aktive-arbeitslose](#).

²⁹ <http://www.sindmetalsjc.org.br/sindicato/internacional/idioma/english/>.

³⁰ Which is not to exaggerate its radicality, given its focus on labour policies rather than labour politics (in the sense of collective labour self-empowerment). See [here](#) its pre-event paper outlines, which at least permit those not present to make their own sense of sometimes conflicting orientations.

³¹ See here, however, the NetworkedLabour-related work of Senalp and Senalp (forthcoming) and Senalp (2014a, b). And note the hope to hold a following [Networked Labour Seminar](#), May 2015.

³² <http://digitallabor.org/>

As for the general impact of such efforts? I think we have to recognize this remains modest. It also remains to be critically researched. For example the site of the CLB in Hongkong declares,

In addition to promoting workers' initiatives and our own project work in China, CLB informs workers in China of important developments in the international trade movement. We select stories of worker solidarity and courage that will inspire China's workers *and show them what real trade unions do*. Our English-language website conversely gives international readers a comprehensive *introduction to and analysis of the workers' movement in China*. [My emphasis.]

This seems to reproduce the asymmetrical and Westcentric union internationalism previously criticised. Here the paradise to be gained is one the West is losing! Fortunately, other Hong Kong-based sites go beyond this. I have here in mind, for example, the long-established Asia Monitor Resource Centre³³ but there are others.

Taking the longest-established and largest-scale *cyberspace* operation, LabourStart, this provides a remarkable multilingual source of news, and a space in which surfers can declare solidarity with numerous – with *endless* – online campaigns. Here the dangers arise of ritualization and information overload. Of course, those who use LabourStart can themselves select the countries or respond to issues that most concern them. But insofar as solidarity (overwhelmingly West-Rest) requires of surfers only a click, it raises the danger of 'clicktivism'. And then the LabourStart-linked UnionBook, whilst a many-to-many site (with the rather restrained presence of LabourStart's founder-owner, and whilst one I have long used as my own blogsite), comes over so far as a notice-board - or as a sandbox where we surfers can play, with minimal dialogue and with no visible cumulative effect or learning process.³⁴ LabourStart ran one of its in-place conferences immediately following the ITUC Congress in Berlin. Whilst an evaluation of the event (co-authored by LabourStart's initiator/owner) was predictably uncritical³⁵ another report was rather more informative.³⁶

The GLI is an interesting case in so far as it is union supported, has demonstrated some autonomy from the TUWKI complex, runs an annual international school, has a slowly increasing number of affiliates (including

³³ <http://www.amrc.org.hk/>

³⁴ This statement has to be qualified following Israel's third war on Gaza, July-August 2014, when UBook creator, Eric Lee, suspended me without warning for an 'offensive' and 'libelous' posting, then destroyed the evidence thereof and, finally, (after I had circulated widely an-online protest) *de*-suspended me! Clearly this raises more issues than those between two Jews, one who would consider himself Zionist Internationalist, the other a Radical-Democratic one. See further the reaction from UBook user, [Orsan Senalp](#) and a wrap-up on UBook by [myself](#).

³⁵ <http://labournewsnetwork.wordpress.com/2014/05/28/global-solidarity-on-display-in-berlin-as-trade-unionists-meet-at-labourstart-conference/>

³⁶ <http://www.workersliberty.org/story/2014/05/30/labourstart-successful-conference-berlin>.

Russia, but not yet the Global South). At one of its annual summer schools, 2013, GLI founder, Dan Gallin, produced a blistering critique of international unionism, all the more telling in that it came from the former General Secretary of one of the Global Union Federations. He also proposed a re-politicising of the international union movement.³⁷

The GLI has also published, with or for the International Transportworkers Federation (ITF), a path-breaking multilingual handbook on *Organizing Precarious Transport Workers*.³⁸ Striking about this attractive brochure is: its awareness of the multiple forms of precarity; that precarity is a *universal* worker problem; that different kinds of precarious workers have different needs and demands; that they may (or may not) have effective non-union forms of self-organization; and, finally, that we cannot assume unions confronted by precarization are 'fit for purpose'. It urges a positive but critical attitude to NGOs working with the precarious. And it warns against the dangers of external (foreign 'development cooperation'?) funding.

A more unusual case would be the International Domestic Workers Network (IDWN), which managed to finally get an ILO Convention (No.189) on 'Decent Work for Domestic Workers' in 2011. The campaign for this brought together unions of and NGOs for domestic workers from various world regions, the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF), various national union centres, a Manchester-based research-action centre (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, or WIEGO), and others. Also of interest is that this campaign made use of the 'Decent Work' slogan of the ILO-ITUC – a campaign of which I have been critical, not only because of its origin in an interstate organization rather than the labour movement, but because of its reiteration of traditional liberal capitalist notions about, well, what work and decency are (it would allow production of junk food, nuclear weapons and ecologically-destructive extractive industries, as long as working conditions and union rights were 'decent').³⁹

These can only be static shots of how a new kind of labour internationalism is developing, and they are obviously snapshots only from my camera – or 'subject position' as feminists might say. If I have seen and am here recognizing these projects, then there must be dozens of other such occurring in other places, other spaces, in other languages, in other alphabets.

³⁷ One version of this can be found [here](#).

³⁸ <http://global-labour.net/2014/01/itf-launches-new-guide-organising-precarious-transport-workers/>

³⁹ For a movement and a theoretical critique or and alternative to 'Decent Work', see Dinerstein 2014.

5. You have argued for moving beyond trade union internationalism, which remains trapped in the 'iron cage', and see new forms of labour self-articulation going beyond 'the capitalist canon', leading to the emergence of a new labour movement internationalism.

I hope I have given some answers to this question above. So I will here concentrate on the literature that goes beyond the Cage and the Canon.⁴⁰ Some of this literature is reviewed in pieces I have written on the 'new global labour studies'. There was a certain shrinkage of international labour studies in the 1990s, possibly when many leftists lost faith in the proletariat as a socialist vanguard and the incrementalist left in it as a modernizing one! Recently there has been an equally considerable revival of such studies. And not only by these 20th century tendencies. I have indeed been taking issue with such new 'global labour studies' as I consider to be trapped, like the inter/national trade unions, within the Cage. I don't want to repeat the arguments in two recent review articles (Waterman 2012, 2013a).⁴¹ Nor do I want to be too picky about what is or is not emancipatory (in the sense of seeking the surpassing of the alienation of labour by and for capital/state/empire/patriarchy/war). But we do seem to be witnessing a new wave of critical and creative monographs, conferences and compilations that are undermining (or firing at?) the Canon.⁴²

Here I would like to note a substantial new textbook entitled, simply enough, *Globalization and Work* (Williams et. al. 2013). Here are some of its chapter titles: Consumption, Work and Identity; Multinationals; International Labour Standards; Globalization, Labour and Social Movements; Management in Global Factories; Migrant Labour; Transnational Mobility; Gender and Intersectional Inequalities; Labour Conflict. In so far as this work ends up suggesting a Australinavian utopia (pp. 247-8), I consider that it here returns

⁴⁰ It is late, but hopefully not too late. to here introduce the 'Capitalist Canon' and the alternatives to such. Although earlier proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, here is an accessible discussion of such (Serrano and Xhafa 2011).

⁴¹ The second of these (Waterman 2013a) provides a base from which much of the argument of this paper is drawn.

⁴² Which is not to say that these compilations universally surpass the capitalist – or for that matter vulgar Marxist – canon. They each require or even invite critical review. In particular, I think, they need to be tested on their ICT-Awareness – the extent to which they recognize this latest capitalist technological revolution, creating new kinds of work, of workers, of forms of labour self-articulation and of 'disputed terrain'. See Chhachhi 2014, the already-mentioned Ness (2014), Clua-Losada and Horn (2014), WorkingUSA (2014) and Gall, Wilkinson and Hurd (2011), Panitch and Albo (2015). As for 2014 conferences, consider these:

[Forms of Labour in Europe and China, the Case of Foxconn,](#)

[Organised Workers and Mass Mobilizations in the Arab World, Europe and Latin America,](#)

[Social Movements In Global Perspectives: Past - Present – Future](#)

as well as the site of [RC44](#), the labour movements group within the International Sociological Association. Critical accounts of all of these would be welcome.

itself to the Golden Age of the Iron Cage. So I guess it is more the book's varied subject matters – and its extensive discussion of the relevant literature – that it seems to me a provocation to debate, discussion and dialogue on labour (and the newest global social movements!) in the New World Capitalist Disorder.⁴³

A dramatic piece coming out of the prolonged wave of social protest in Greece calls for 'the regeneration of a social-labour movement from the base for emancipation'.⁴⁴ This seems to echo a project I launched that has otherwise had little impact. That was – maybe still is? - the Global Labour Charter Project I initially launched around 2005. It was, on the one hand, provoked by the social-liberal 'Decent Work' campaign of the ILO-ITUC and, on the other hand, encouraged by emancipatory declarations coming out of the newest global social movement and thinking.⁴⁵ And, as I was completing this piece, I received this Italian call for a Europe-wide 'social strike' to take place November 14, 2014.⁴⁶ It is an attempt to combine all social discontents and struggles – including those concerning education and gender:

It is clear to all...that Europe is the minimum space of confrontation, the transnational level is decisive for conflicts that want to be incisive. And it is clear that without the creation of a space of permanent relationship and innovation between struggles and movements, breaking the impasse and subverting the present is unimaginable. A social strike, a strike that should be general and generalized, precarious and metropolitan, wants to be a first step, undoubtedly partial but fundamental, of this experiment. A way to begin to reverse this toxic narrative that replaces merit with equality, fierce competition with common happiness.

⁴³ Another global labour study came to my attention as I was completing this piece. This is Atzeni (2014). It is a compilation of some brilliant papers, many original and thought-provoking. But it is, indeed, concentrated on 'contemporary themes and theoretical issues'. So it does not take us much further in the direction of strategy. Nor does it address the question of internationalism. It is accessible [here](#). The WorkingUSA (2014) compilation, introduced by Kim Scipes, although primarily focused on the North-South axis and the North-South direction, includes a number of novel and sometimes fascinating case studies. [For yet another journal special issue on 'Globalization and International Labor Solidarity'](#) (Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies 2014) see [here](#). And yet another relevant contribution, the piece by North American labour movement and socialist veteran, Sam Gindin (2014), with its list of things to know about organising against capitalism in the USA. Whilst his critique of traditional unionist thinking and most of his alternative understandings are well taken, however, his prioritization of national over - or at least before - international solidarity means a blind eye to the manner in which these are inevitably interdependent, more than ever in a world he recognizes as globalized, neo-liberalised and financialised. Perhaps if he recognized informatization as contemporary capitalism's fourth leg, he would also see that the beast has many bellies and that this requires any emancipatory labour strategy to be simultaneously international and national – not to speak of local and regional.

⁴⁴ See [here](#).

⁴⁵ See [here](#).

⁴⁶ See [here](#).

I commented on this to the effect that whilst I thought a couple of months too short for this to be widely effective, it carried dramatically further the idea of 'social movement unionism' I launched in the later 1980s.

6. What does the 2014 Israel-Gaza war reveal about labour internationalism within or beyond your 'iron cage' and 'capitalist canon'?

This is an on-going and extremely fraught issue, so what I have to say are only some first thoughts. I do, however, think that it is the kind of issue for international labour solidarity that has been historically represented by World Wars One and Two, the Russian Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, Anti-Colonialism, Vietnam, the Cold War (NATO and West/East nuclear 'exterminism'), Czechoslovakia 1968, Chile 1973, Poland's Solidarnosc and Apartheid South Africa in the 1980s. Note that many of these went beyond the limits of any 'trade unions as such' discourse. Now, I have identified with Palestine solidarity and/or the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, particularly in so far as this has involved unions and the wider labour movement. More so since the 2014 Israeli outrage in Gaza that scandalized even liberal Zionists abroad and former IDF intelligence unit soldiers in Israel.⁴⁷ Given the Balkanisation/Ghettoization of Palestine, I have come to consider any UN-type 'two-state' solution as dead in the water (or should one here say 'desert' – including those caused by long-standing and continuing Israeli destruction of Palestine's ecology?). If we are not to continue towards Israel's 'Final Solution of the Arab Problem', then I see a one-state solution as the only democratic one. It may be distant (so is a post-capitalist world!) yet it provides a horizon toward which we must move.

At the same time I have been having difficulty in seeing the different reactions to the Israel/Palestine issue in the international labour movement in other than 20th Century terms. Whilst not identical, the issue itself has clear echoes of that against apartheid South Africa (not to speak of earlier cases of imperial racism, humiliation, militarism, expansionism, repression and massacre). There are even clearer echoes of the South African case in the international labour movement. The Eurocentric trade union internationals of that era (and various of their equally Eurocentric affiliates) were complicit with the white racist unions of South Africa, until they were forced by the rising Anti-Apartheid Movement, national and international, to boycott the latter and recognize the Black South African trade unions (Webster 1984, Southall 1995). And the Palestinian, civil society- and union-endorsed, BDS movement is at least

⁴⁷ This, as well as other reactions can be found amongst multiple postings on Union Book blog [here](#).

implicitly inspired by the successful South African campaign.⁴⁸ I identify various union responses to the latest invasion of Gaza, briefly:

The Labour Zionist. Though not confined to one person, this position is exemplified by the earlier-mentioned Eric Lee (Footnote 29), whose position reminds me of that of Western Communists as Stalinist Russia stagnated and declined. He has been busy with triumphalist celebration of Israel's wars, as well as the successes of the Zionist Histadrut within the TUWKIs in general and the ITUC in particular. He has, however, increasingly shifted, if uncertainly, to sobering reflections on the success of the BDS/Palestine-solidarity movement, though this is not to the point of recognizing any Israeli responsibility. Two pro-Israeli sites he has either created or been connected with, TULIP (Trade Unions Linking Israel and Palestine) and TUFU (Trade Union Friends of Israel) appear to have run out of steam late 2013. Eric (with whom I fruitfully dialogued on ILCC in the 1990s) has also increasingly withdrawn his pro-Israeli/Histadrut news, views and personal attachments from LabourStart and UnionBook, concentrating them on his own blogsite (from which he has also removed his LabourStart/UnionBook affiliations). Unlike many Western Communists (myself amongst them after the Soviet invasion of Communist Czechoslovakia) he has not yet had his '1968 Moment' - that of abandoning a fundamentalist state-nationalism and an inevitably 'particularistic internationalism', in favour of the dialogical/dialectical internationalism that his remarkable and pioneering online creations make possible.⁴⁹

The ITUC/ETC. By this formulation I mean the ITUC itself, the Global Unions (GUs) intimately associated with it, the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD, the European Trade Union Confederation and similar bodies for other regions,⁵⁰ and such national trade union affiliates as identify themselves uncritically with the ITUC, as well as such NGOs as might have been sponsored by, or that consider themselves allies of, the ITUC. The ITUC declared that it was 'horrified by the appalling death toll of civilians in Gaza', and called for ceasefire, a return to the 1967 borders, negotiations and a two-state solution. This identifies it closely with the UN position, to which the ITUC refers and defers. It, somewhat pathetically, organized an international campaign for union peace postcards to be sent to the UN! The International

⁴⁸ There is an important point of distinction between the labour campaign for BDS in South Africa and Palestine. This is precisely the existence of a mass Black working class and autonomous democratic trade unions in the former, the limited size of an Arab working class in Israel, and the party-political domination of the undemocratic [Palestinian unions](#). This implies a greater challenge to the international labour BDS campaign, particularly the need to surpass a narrow labourism. (More on this below).

⁴⁹ Though he continues, after first suspending my account and then restoring it - to tolerate my own anti-Zionist and pro-BDS postings on Union Book.

⁵⁰ An exception must be made for its regional organization for the Americas, CSA/TUCA, which came out with [a clear condemnation of Israel](#), particularly the 'brutal escalation' of its assault. As with previous such deviations from the Brussels line, however, this is unlikely to be reproduced - far less responded to - by the Kremlin/Vatican of TUWKIism. Indeed, I could only find it on the CSA site, in Spanish, not on the TUCA site, in English!

Transportworkers Federation, which condemned the Israeli bombings of Gaza has at least, however, created a humanitarian fund for Gaza. The ITUC has the Histadrut as a member and, at its 2012 Congress actually elected its leader, Ofer Eini, to a leading position within the organisation. Such Histadrut affiliations probably exist for all or most of the GUs.⁵¹ The ITUC/ETC thus appears to be in the position the old ICFTU occupied on South Africa before the South African and international Anti-Apartheid Movement forced it to abandon the racist unions and identify with the Black/anti-racist ones.

However, there are and may be growing differences within this camp. The Irish TUC, which is an ITUC affiliate, identified itself with the BDS movement already in 2007.⁵² And a 2014 congress of the British TUC, whilst not coming out explicitly for BDS, nonetheless took a stand distinctly more radical than that of the ITUC (whose position it nonetheless endorses). The TUC also identified itself with Amnesty and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign in the UK.⁵³ Some of the international labour support bodies, independent from but oriented toward what I have called TUWKI, came out for support to Palestine and/or BDS. At least one preserved 'radio silence' (actually internet silence), considering the matter a 'political' or 'inter-state' issue rather than a 'labour' or 'social' one. Such a position reproduces the hegemonic Western liberal discourse (the infamous Canon) that compartmentalizes the social terrain and does not recognize that an anti-political position is also a political position, at least if we take 'the political' to cover all exercises of power and expressions of powerlessness.

Unsurprisingly, this silence on Israel/Palestine is also reproduced by that US state-funded shill, the Solidarity Centre of the American AFL-CIO.⁵⁴

Palestine Solidarity and/or BDS campaigns. This campaign, launched from Palestine and endorsed by all Palestinian trade unions and the South African COSATU, is, as already suggested, either explicitly or implicitly inspired by the historical Anti-Apartheid Movement. As Israeli outrages have continued, this campaign has had increasing success. It has a considerable variety of expressions, from the passing of resolutions by national trade union centres and individual unions, to demonstrations and then actual labour boycott actions, such as those of South African dockers and those on the West Coast of the

⁵¹ This account is impressionistic, given that neither Wikipedia, the ITUC nor Histadrut websites yield the complete information necessary. Some was gleaned from a booklet on the [Global Labour Movement](#) (a misnomer given that it is limited to the ITUC, GUs and some ITUC friendly/acceptable NGOs), published 2013 by LabourStart. A systematic and critical research effort is necessary also here.

⁵² See [here](#)

⁵³ This all causing considerable misgivings to Labour Zionist, [Eric Lee](#).

⁵⁴ July 2014, it reported that Palestinian unions were '[under fire](#)', without reference to what kind of fire this was and where it was coming from, and giving this item no more importance than a half dozen other more routine collective bargaining matters. Oh, and a shill, in the US, is a person or body who/which publicly supports or publicizes someone or some body without revealing his identification with or dependence on the latter.

US/Canada.⁵⁵ I won't give this position more attention here because it finds explicit and detailed expression in its own media (see Footnote 45). However a question still needs to be raised about the failure or limitations, so far, of any campaign to get the ITUC/ETC to boycott Histadrut. I suspect that, with the exception of COSATU, those to the left of the ITUC confine any criticisms they might have of it to the corridors of powerlessness, and this for diplomatic reasons somewhat out of consonance with even Gorbachov's late-20th century notion/aspiration of *perestroika* and *glasnost* (restructuring and transparency).

Back to the Iron Cage. I said at the beginning of this section that the Palestine labour solidarity campaign seemed to me a typically 20th century one, meaning that it all falls within the solidarity repertoires of the epoch of a national-industrial-colonial capitalism. Consider the parallel between the Right/Left, Nationalist/Internationalist typology, presented above, and that I critiqued in Footnote 10. The problem is revealed if we look at the position of the (Neolithic) Communist World Federation of Trade Unions, which has declared total solidarity with the Palestinian unions, attacked Israel and world imperialism, and condemned the ITUC position on the conflict as 'a hideous joke'.⁵⁶ What WFTU here offers is in terms of Virtue v. Vice - a *Manichean Opposition*. Alternatively we could place this position on a *Spectrum*, leading from the Labour-Zionist one to that of 'Class and Mass', of 'Anti-Imperialism', and 'Revolution'. Indeed, various autonomous leftist solidarity bodies have been reproducing, uncritically, this knee-jerk WFTU reaction. In so far, however, as we now recognize 'revolution' as a problem rather than a solution (look at what happened to the Chinese one!), do we not also need to see solidarity with Palestinian workers and people in dialectical rather than mechanical (yes/no, good/bad, occupation/liberation) terms?

I have earlier proposed that we do need to see 'international solidarity' in more complex ways. I have also suggested we need to consider its axes, its directions, its external reach and local depth. I use the acronym ISCRAR: Identity, Substitution, Complementarity, Reciprocity, Affinity and Restitution.⁵⁷ None of these alone 'represents' solidarity; each of them alone can contradict both itself and a holistic notion of solidarity. Solidarity with Palestine falls largely within the category of a Substitution Solidarity – standing in for a suffering or needful community. But if this is understood as a sufficient understanding of solidarity, it may be, or can easily become a patron-client relation. And in so far as it is unidirectional, in this case from the West to the Rest, it can imply, like trade union 'development cooperation', the export or imposition of Our understanding and values on the Other. If, alternatively, a Substitution Solidarity is motivated by feelings of guilt or obligation, it can lead to 'self-subordination to the victim'. This was a syndrome common to the 'First-World/Third-World' solidarity movements of the last century.

⁵⁵ See [here](#).

⁵⁶ See [here](#)

⁵⁷ Waterman (1998, 2010), Vos (1976).

It seems to me that attempts to understand and surpass these limitations, in the case of solidarity with Palestine (if not of *labour* solidarity with Palestine) are beginning to be made. David Landy (2014/Forthcoming) has Hamas and other problematic/conflicting Palestinian forces in mind when he argues that a

notion of solidarity which seeks to avoid its necessary tensions, leads to a suppression of our political imaginations and activities, rather than to their expansion. This may be the greatest casualty of the doctrine of non-involvement [in the internal relations of the Palestinian movements] – that we may find that in undertaking such blinkered political work we are not engaged in action that is meaningful either for Palestinians, ourselves or our mutual world.

In a theoretical consideration of various identities and differences in relation to global [?] social transformation, which takes on both Marxism and feminism, Sriram Anath (this issue) says that

the BDS call provides an interesting platform to understand that it is in the lived politics of solidarity-based struggle that one is able to determine where greater attention to difference is needed, where commonality of interests lies, and how to engage with the contradictions arising from different forms of solidarity for a transformative political movement...[I]t would be interesting to see how the variegated coalitions/alliances and movements that have spawned from the BDS call engage with these numerous issues surrounding political solidarity.

Such reflections surely take us outside the Cage and beyond the Canon.

There are implications here for those concerned with a project of global social transformation, also in relation to labour and what I call the new global solidarity. This is clearly not the rose garden that we (were) promised in the last century. These roses have prickles. We need to work in this garden, together with our Others, armed less with industrial era steam shovels than with Gramsci's 'pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will'. Our major challenge in creating a new kind of labour internationalism is surely that of doing what Holloway, in my initial quote, says of holding together international struggles within the wage-labour relationship with those that seek to surpass it. And doing this without suppressing the necessity of moving from the first to the second.

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Altermondialisme, alter-syndicalisme? Revue et regard sur l'Australie

Stéphane Le Queux

Résumé

Cet article traite du rapport entre altermondialisme et syndicalisme, soit en quoi la mouvance contestataire interpelle l'acteur syndical ? Après une revue de la littérature sur la question, une grille heuristique est fournie afin de guider la lecture des problématiques en jeu. C'est au moyen d'une telle grille que la thèse d'une « revitalisation » syndicale, c'est-à-dire celle d'un syndicalisme de mouvement social de nouvelle génération, est confrontée empiriquement ; cela afin d'en relativiser la portée. Une attention particulière est consacrée au cas australien, car il fait modèle d'antithèse d'un « alter-syndicalisme ».

Abstract

This paper considers the extent to which the anti-globalisation or global social justice movement could contribute to a revival of trade unions. After an account of the early theoretical corpus that emerged at the turn of the 21st Century and which argued for the need for a revitalisation of trade union politics, it identifies the ways in which the new protest movements represent a challenge for the trade unions and the lessons they might learn in facing up to this challenge. Four fault lines are outlined in relation to key areas of concern: political alternatives; participatory democracy; organic cohesion and inclusion; the renewal of activism. It finally focuses on the Australian context, which lets us conclude on a note of scepticism.

Mots-clés / Keywords : Anti-globalisation; Altermondialisme; Union Revitalization; Social Movement; Australia

La doctrine libérale qui a pris d'assaut l'ensemble des pays anglo-saxons se retrouve scellée dans le fameux « consensus de Washington », début des années 1980. Menée avec vigueur par le couple Reagan et Thatcher aux États-Unis et en Angleterre respectivement, elle s'impose peu après au Canada et va jusqu'à s'étendre en Nouvelle-Zélande, qui fera marche arrière au milieu des années 1990 (ce sera reculer pour mieux sauter), puis en Australie qui, au contraire, l'épousera au point tel de se voir qualifier, dix ans après, de champion du modèle libéral par l'Organisation Mondiale du Commerce (OMC).

Cette offensive, on le sait, a frappé de plein fouet les syndicats dans chacun des pays concernés. Au-delà de l'impact des restructurations – libéralisation des

échanges, privatisation, dérégulation, etc. – on assiste également à une montée au créneau du patronat, y compris de l'État en tant qu'employeur, et à une remise en question profonde des règles du jeu, visant l'un dans l'autre une mise à l'écart de l'acteur syndical. À cela s'ajoute la mise en place d'un dispositif discursif puissant de promotion de l'éthos libéral salinisant un à un l'ensemble des champs du social. Bref, les syndicats sont assiégés sur tous les fronts : sur un plan structurel, sur celui de la régulation et de la représentation collective, sur le plan idéologique et sur celui de la socialisation. Qui s'étonnera dans un tel contexte qu'on ait assisté à un déclin syndical ? On ne s'étonnera pas trop non plus, vu sous cet angle, que les syndicats anglo-saxons aient déployés des réponses plutôt « pragmatiques » que rhétoriques.

La question du déclin syndical s'étend à divers degrés à l'ensemble des mouvements syndicaux traditionnels : la « crise » du syndicalisme fut bel et bien la trame des années 1990¹. Seulement voilà, alors même que les élites syndicales et leurs experts planchent sur les stratégies de sortie de crise, le social n'attend pas et entre en irruption : des émeutes de Seattle 1999 au premier Forum de Porto Alegre, des barricades de Melbourne au gazage de Québec, des Zapatistes au Larzac, de la mort « accidentelle » d'un anarchiste sur les pavés de Gènes à la rébellion des *campesinos* à Quito, de l'AMI à Bolkestein, c'est tout un monde d'indignation, de luttes et d'utopies libertaires qui se soulève contre la mondialisation néolibérale.

Pour certains à l'époque, et c'est la thèse à l'examen, cette insurrection sociale semblait porter en elle les prémices d'une résurrection syndicale. Dans un contexte d'introspection où syndicalistes et experts débattent sur les conditions d'un « renouveau » syndical, ne serait-ce pas à « l'extérieur » que les choses se passent ? D'où l'émergence de thèses réclamant une « revitalisation » du mouvement syndical incluant, entre-autres, une ouverture aux exigences altermondialistes ; cela d'autant plus que dix ans après Seattle la crise financière et les politiques d'austérité dans son sillage ont su raviver la critique qui, des 99% aux *indignados* et *Occupy*, tend aujourd'hui à élargir ses bases sociales et à se radicaliser.

Le problème est que ce nouveau mouvement international, sauf exception, n'est pas syndical ; disons plus justement qu'il n'est ni d'émanation syndicale, ni sous contrôle syndical. Les intersections et les permutations militantes ne sont donc pas évidentes *a priori*. Ensuite, même si la thèse peut séduire, et même s'il existe des cas comme en France où notoirement les altermondialistes se font entendre et trouvent un certain écho dans un syndicalisme de nouvelle génération², il s'agit peut-être d'un trompe-l'œil. Dans quelle mesure la thèse tient-elle de la conjoncture ou du contexte ? Pour y répondre, nous allons nous

¹ Voir GAGNON M.J. (ed.), Un syndicalisme en crise d'identité, *Sociologie et Société*, vol. 30, n° 2, automne 1998 ; ou bien encore, HEGE A. (ed.), La représentativité syndicale, numéro spécial de la *Chronique internationale de l'IRES*, n°66, septembre 2000.

² LE QUEUX S. et SAINDAULIEU I., « Social Movement and Unionism in France: A Case for Revitalization? », *Labor Studies Journal*, vol. 35, n° 4, 2010, p. 503-519.

pencher sur le syndicalisme australien car il est à la fois exemplaire et contradictoire : exemplaire vu l'adversité qu'il dut subir pendant plus de dix ans face à un gouvernement néo-libéral férocement antisyndical³, contradictoire au sens où il demeure à l'antipode d'un alter-syndicalisme. Auparavant, arrêtons-nous un instant sur le corpus de la littérature sur la question, tel qu'il s'est originellement édifié à la croisée de l'examen de la crise du syndicalisme et de l'émergence de la mouvance sociale, afin d'en tirer une grille de lecture du cas australien.

Insurrection sociale, résurrection syndicale?

Le tournant du 21^{ème} siècle a sans conteste été le théâtre d'un sursaut du social qui fera dire à Naomi Klein, militante et observatrice de terrain, qu'il annonçait « la fin de la fin de l'histoire⁴ ». Même si l'on peut douter de sa portée effective – au mieux s'agit-il « d'écueils successifs venant s'abattre sur les rivages des instances de gouverne mondiale⁵ » –, c'est davantage son caractère contre-hégémonique qui retient l'attention. « Un autre monde est possible ! » « Utopiste debout ! » lira-t-on sur les murs de Montréal été 2002 : la doxa libérale se trouve interpellée en ce qu'elle a de plus insidieux, comme l'avait bien anticipé Antonio Gramsci, le fait d'invalider la conception et la réalisation d'alternatives.

Est-ce là l'occasion pour le syndicalisme de reprendre le train de l'histoire ? Des deux côtés de l'Atlantique, des experts de la question, parmi les plus éminents, en appellent les syndicats à prendre acte. L'américain Lowell Turner conçoit l'activation d'un syndicalisme de mouvement social comme la condition d'un contrepoids démocratique dans un contexte en tout point hostile : « (...) *ongoing global liberalization has weighted the odds heavily against organizing, bargaining and legislative success, unless such efforts are part of rank-and-file based mobilizations that attract broad social support in campaigns framed as battles for social justice*⁶ ». Pour le britannique Richard Hyman, les syndicats doivent se réengager dans la bataille des idées et reprendre l'initiative idéologique en embrassant les revendications de justice globale, ou encore, insiste-t-il, cela exige : « *a language of social solidarity able to rekindle unions' moral legitimacy as 'a sword of justice'*⁷ ». La crise

³ PEETZ D., *Brave New Workplace – How individual contracts are changing our jobs*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2006.

⁴ KLEIN N., « Farewell to 'The End of History': Organization and Vision in Anti-Corporate Movements », *Socialist Register – A world of Contradictions*, London, Merlin Press, 2002.

⁵ TARROW S., *The New Transnational Activism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

⁶ TURNER L., « From Transformation to Revitalisation: A New Research Agenda for a Contested Global Economy », *Work and Occupations*, vol. 32, n° 4, pp. 383-399, 2005.

⁷ HYMAN R., « Trade Unions and the Politics of the European Social Model », *Organised Labour – An Agent of EU Democracy? Trade Union Strategies and the EU Integration Process*, European Conference, University College of Dublin, 2004, p. 29.

financière de 2008 et les politiques d'austérité qui s'en suivirent, nous l'avons déjà mentionné, viendra donner un second souffle à la critique anticapitaliste et ce faisant va fournir un point de mire à l'examen des solidarités transnationales⁸, jusqu'à présent.

Les stratégies syndicales en question: vers un changement de cap?

Hormis des cas d'exception, comme en Corée du Sud, au Brésil ou encore en Afrique du Sud, où le syndicalisme s'est recomposé sur un mouvement de classe, les syndicats ont développé des réponses stratégiques – on nous pardonnera d'être caricatural – soit *par le haut*, via le partenariat social à des fins de consolidation institutionnelle (y compris des fusions en vue de rationaliser les ressources), soit *par le bas*, via des efforts d'« *organising* » (recrutement actif de nouvelles composantes et renforcement du militantisme local) à des fins de renouvellement qualitatif sinon quantitatif de leur base. La première est archétypique du contexte continental européen, et plus encore des syndicats internationaux ; la seconde se retrouve davantage dans les pays anglo-saxons, pour des questions de mimétisme et souvent par défaut dans des contextes institutionnels adverses.

Les stratégies de partenariat social recèlent plusieurs défauts : (a) celui d'encourager des replis corporatifs, voire des replis micro-corporatistes, à l'échelle industrielle ; (b) celui d'exacerber les divisions sociales selon les modalités d'inclusion qui, ne l'oublions pas, sont aussi les frontières de l'exclusion, à l'échelle sociétale ; (c) celui d'une mise en compétition des systèmes nationaux de solidarité, à l'échelle internationale. Elles ont aussi l'inconvénient de confiner le syndicalisme dans un rôle de « gestionnaire » du social, à distance des classes populaires ; ce qui est d'autant plus démobilisateur que les partenariats à l'œuvre ont le plus souvent été piégés dans des logiques de concession, avec pour effet d'aliéner les bases militantes. En Europe, on parlera « d'intégration négative ». En Amérique du nord, de *pattern* de « *concession bargaining* », motif premier de la scission de l'internationale des travailleurs américain et canadien de l'automobile. En Australie, le contrat social (*Accord*) noué dans les années 1980 entre le gouvernement et l'*Australian Council of Trade Unions* (ACTU) entrainera la perte des travaillistes et amorcera le déclin syndical. Au bout du compte, le syndicalisme – et c'est encore plus vrai des instances syndicales internationales – se trouve captif de l'institutionnel où il s'enferme dans la logique de l'autre (l'employabilité, la compétitivité, etc.), lorsqu'il n'est pas empêtré dans ses propres logiques bureaucratiques, aussi sûrement qu'il se trouve conscrit à une logique « ouinique », car ne comptant

⁸ BIELER A. et ERNE R., « Transnational Solidarity? The European Working Class in the Eurozone Crisis », à paraître dans *Socialist Register*, n° 51, 2014. Voir aussi le numéro spécial, Vol. 5, n° 2, du *Global Labour Journal*, « Labour and the Crisis: Challenges, Responses and New Avenues », sous la direction de Mònica CLUA-LOSADA et Laura HORN.

plus sur ses capacités propre de mobilisation, il se trouve anémique dans l'échange politique.

Les stratégies d'*organising*, bien qu'exigeant beaucoup de ressources syndicales dans un contexte d'adversité patronale et de restrictions légales, ont du moins l'avantage de ré-oxygéner le mouvement syndical par la base. Le défi démocratique est dès lors d'assurer que le militantisme local puisse trouver échos et support à des échelons supérieurs de la structure syndicale, ce qui n'est pas si évident comme le suggère par exemple l'expérience américaine où l'*American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations* (AFL-CIO) fut bien embarrassée à contenir les brasiers sociaux allumés par ses syndicats locaux⁹, jusqu'à mener à un point de rupture avec les syndicats de nouvelle génération tels le *Union of Needle-trades, Industrial and Textile Employees & Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union* (UNITE-HERE) et le *Service Employees International Union* (SEIU). Quoiqu'il en soit, le problème de fonds inhérent à ce type de stratégie réside dans le fait que les identités collectives se bâtissent, parfois strictement, sur une logique d'intérêts, avec pour résultat une mosaïque d'égoïsmes collectifs. Un problème corollaire est que les campagnes d'*organising*, résolument pragmatiques, mercantilistes sur les bords, éludent la dimension politique. Un « *organising sans doctrine* » déplorait John Buchanan¹⁰ en regard du contexte australien.

En somme, que ressort-il de l'analyse ? D'abord, elle révèle que ces deux directions stratégiques, malgré elles, aboutissent à une hiérarchisation et une fragmentation des solidarités. Il s'agirait donc de désenclaver la solidarité des logiques d'intérêts sur lesquelles se fondent les identités collectives. Ensuite, on relève que les structures de démocratie représentative souffrent d'un problème consubstantiel d'élasticité et de réceptivité ; problème qui s'accroît d'autant que les centres de décision s'éloignent, voire s'internationalisent, et que les leadership se trouvent déconnectés du militantisme local. Enfin, on constate que non seulement il y a une perte d'altérité politique, au sens du développement d'un registre idéologique autonome, mais que le politique, dans sa vocation d'évocation et d'émancipation, est laissé en friche – sans compter que les partis sociaux-démocrates ne semblent plus guère d'un grand support, tout au moins du point de vue des militants.

Altermondialisme, alter-syndicalisme ?

C'est précisément à ces problèmes que les nouveaux mouvements contestataires apportent des réponses intéressantes. Il s'agit du moins d'un point de vue partagé par un certain nombre d'observateurs qui se mirent à postuler, à divers égards, que ces mouvements avaient probablement de quoi insuffler au

⁹ MOODY K., *Workers in a lean world: unions in the international economy*, New York, Verso, 1997.

¹⁰ BUCHANAN J., « New Directions in Union Strategy: Organising for fairness and reduced inequality at work », *Australasian Organising Conference*, Sydney, 2001.

syndicalisme ce grain de passion et d'utopie qui se seraient évanouies, contribuant ainsi à une revitalisation des politiques et des solidarités syndicales. Pour feu Pierre Bourdieu¹¹, le mouvement social européen a pour objectif une utopie, et telle est la condition d'un syndicalisme rénové. Pour Peter Waterman¹², l'édification d'une nouvelle internationale syndicale requiert les motivations d'un utopisme. Pour Léo Panitch¹³, enfin, il s'agit d'une formidable plate-forme de transformation sociale, à supposer que les syndicats embrayent et, réciproquement, que les mouvements créent un espace pour les stratégies syndicales.

Cette dernière question du lien à la mouvance altermondialiste – quelle que soit sa forme : coalition, fusion, assimilation, répudiation – demeure bel et bien une question empirique. Mais l'enjeu, lui, est clair : il s'agit à la fois de relancer la critique sociale et d'en reprendre le flambeau. Il s'agit de se désenbourber des logiques de partenariat socio-économique, d'un corporatisme « élitiste et démobilisateur ¹⁴», de se départir de l'image d'un syndicalisme acculé ou domestiqué¹⁵. L'enjeu est de sortir d'une logique gestionnaire, de sortir le politique du gestionnaire¹⁶ pour renouer avec une logique contestataire. Pour cela, et afin d'éviter de se réduire à un mouvement parmi les mouvements, il faudrait que le syndicalisme parvienne à assurer sa centralité dans les rangs contestataires¹⁷, autrement dit qu'il parvienne à réaffirmer sa centralité dans la transversalité des luttes¹⁸.

Une grille d'analyse

En quoi donc les nouveaux mouvements contestataires apportent-ils des éléments de réponse stratégique ? L'analyse suggère qu'ils interviennent de quatre façons. D'abord, dans le rejet des règles et des meneurs du jeu :

¹¹ BOURDIEU P., *Contre-Feux 2*, Paris, Raisons d'Agir, 2001.

¹² WATERMAN P., « Trade Union Internationalism in the Age of Seattle », in *Place, Space and the New Labour Internationalisms*, P. Waterman and J. Wills (eds.), Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 2001, p. 8-32.

¹³ PANITCH L., « Reflections on Strategy for Labour », *Socialist Register*, London, Merlin Press, 2001, p. 367-392.

¹⁴ BACCARO L., HAMANN K. et TURNER L., « The Politics of Labour Movement Revitalization: The Need for a Revitalized Perspective », *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 9, n° 1, 2003, p. 119-133.

¹⁵ FANTASIA R. et VOSS K., *Des syndicats domestiqués – Répression patronale et résistance syndicale aux Etats-Unis*, Paris, Raisons d'Agir, 2003.

¹⁶ BENASAYAK M. et SZTULWARK D., *Du contre-pouvoir*, Paris, La Découverte, 2001.

¹⁷ HURD R., MILKMAN R. et TURNER L., « Reviving the American Labour Movement: Institutions and Mobilization », *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 9, n° 1, 2003, p. 99-117.

¹⁸ HARMANN C., « Anti-capitalism: theory and practice », *International Socialism*, Autumn 2000, p. 3-59.

contestation plutôt que régulation, avec une exigence de restitution démocratique. Plus finement, davantage que de se soucier du pouvoir des institutions, il s'agit pour eux de déployer un rapport de force qui permette une (ré)institutionnalisation du pouvoir (populaire). Comme l'évoquait si élégamment Jean Jaurès en son temps, « c'est la force de la passion qui fait la force de la règle ». Ensuite, par un élargissement des bases et des revendications sociales en lien avec un renouvellement des modes d'organisation, de coordination et d'action collective, notamment avec le renfort des nouveaux média sociaux. Enfin, comme on vient de le souligner, par une revitalisation de la critique sociale.

Tableau 1 :
La question syndicale dans le miroir de l'altermondialisme

La question syndicale	Principes portés par la mouvance contestataire
Partenariat social démobilisant, hiérarchie et fragmentation des solidarités	Contestation des modèles de gouverne, de la régulation institutionnelle (corporatiste) à la contestation sociale
Élitisme syndical et problème d'élasticité de la démocratie représentative	Pour davantage de démocratie participative, importance d'une horizontalisation du pouvoir et des réseaux
Déclin de la capacité de mobilisation	Renouveau de l'activisme : davantage d'organicité sociale, innovation dans les méthodes d'action, de coordination et de leadership (collectif/féminin)
Perte d'altérité politique	Recours à l'utopie et retour à un humanisme (radical), y inclus un agenda écologique

La réponse portée par les altermondialistes tient ainsi, dans son ensemble, dans un renversement axiologique : sortir des gonds identitaires et prendre la solidarité *sui generis* comme une fin en soi. Vu ainsi, il est moins question de savoir si la solidarité peut résister à la mondialisation¹⁹ que de savoir si la mondialisation peut résister aux solidarités ! Le problème, irrésolu, est alors celui des moyens : faut-il jouer le jeu des institutions pour peser sur les

¹⁹ HYMAN, R., « Imagined Solidarities: Can Trade Unions Resist Globalization? », *Globalization and Labour Relations*, LEISINK P. (ed.), Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 1999, p. 94-115.

instances de gouverne mondiale, au risque d'en naturaliser la légitimité ? Les syndicats internationaux cultivent l'ambiguïté à cet égard²⁰, quoique la Confédération syndicale internationale (CSI) nouvellement établie donne des signes de rapprochement avec la société civile depuis sa participation active au forum social de Nairobi en janvier 2007.

Cela dit, si l'option « syndicalisme de mouvement social » est vue comme une condition de « renaissance » syndicale²¹, cela demeure encore un problème irrésolu de savoir si elle peut permettre au syndicalisme de se (re)construire en tant que pouvoir politique et économique indépendant²². Il n'est pas dit que les mouvements contestataires se livrent si naturellement au leadership syndical²³. Il s'agit également d'aménager le pluralisme syndical au sein du pluralisme de ces mouvements, avec le risque de voir les divisions internes du syndicalisme s'exacerber pour peu de gains au total. Enfin, il n'est pas dit non plus que les syndicats eux-mêmes y voient un impératif particulier. Le dilemme tient du fait que dans « cet autre monde » revendiqué par les altermondialistes, on ne sait trop quelle serait la place de la négociation collective, ni celle du dialogue social au sens large, si difficilement institutionnalisés – sans compter qu'il s'agit d'une nébuleuse hors contrôle. Comme le confiait un porte parole du Congrès du Travail du Canada, « c'est bien beau de s'époumoner contre le marché, mais c'est avec des employeurs qu'on négocie », exprimant ainsi sa crainte d'un détournement du terrain de jeu : au profit de qui ?

Quoi qu'il en soit, les altermondialistes sont vivifiants en cela qu'ils resituent le problème dans le capitalisme lui-même. Vu ainsi, le syndicalisme n'a pas à ployer sous le fardeau de la faute, c'est le capital qui est en rupture de contrat, pour peu que les syndicats ne se fassent complices. La crise financière entrainera cependant le syndicalisme international à prendre des positions plus contestataires. Retournement historique, au sommet spécial sur les marchés financiers et l'économie mondiale du G20 à Washington, novembre 2008, les syndicats, par la voix des *Global Unions*, étaient cette fois au rendez-vous: « Avertissement des syndicats au G20 : les demi-mesures ne suffiront pas à colmater la brèche de l'économie globale²⁴ ».

²⁰ LE QUEUX S., « New Protest movements and the revival of labour politics – A critical examination », *Transfer – European Review of Labour and Research*, vol. 11, n° 4, 2005, p. 569-588.

²¹ BACCARO et al., *ibidem*.

²² TAYLOR G. et MATHERS A., « Social Partner or Social Movements? European Integration and Trade Union Renewal in Europe », *Labor Studies Journal*, Spring 2002, p. 93-108.

²³ NEGRI T., « Introduction », in FISHER W. F. and PONNIAH T. (éd.), *Another World is Possible: Popular Alternatives to Globalization at the World Social Forum*, London, Zed Books, 2003.

²⁴ LE QUEUX S. et PEETZ D., « Between 'Too Big to Fail' and 'Too Small to Matter': The Borderless Financial Crisis and Unions », *International Journal of Manpower*, Vol. 34, n° 3, 2013, p. 198-213.

Le syndicalisme australien essuie la vague libérale

La stabilité est sans doute le qualificatif qui convenait le mieux pour décrire le système australien qui est resté pratiquement à l'identique tout au long du 20^{ème} siècle jusqu'à l'arrivée au pouvoir d'une coalition nationale-libérale en 1996, sous la conduite de John Howard. Le pays, réputé pour ses valeurs sociale-démocrate, un système centralisé de relations professionnelles et une forte densité syndicale, prit alors un tournant radical. Dérégulation, privatisation, rationalisation du secteur public et de l'assistance sociale, bref tout l'arsenal libéral y passe, y inclus une réforme fondamentale du droit du travail et du cadre légal de la représentation collective. Car Howard ne s'en est jamais caché, bien au contraire, débarrasser le pays des syndicats fut son cheval de bataille. Au point tel que la dernière réforme qu'il put faire (*WorkChoices*) fut, de l'avis commun, en grande partie responsable de sa défaite et du retour des travaillistes au pouvoir en novembre 2007.

Il faut dire qu'avec *WorkChoices*, le gouvernement Howard n'y allait pas avec le dos de la cuillère²⁵, de là à créer une vive réaction du syndicalisme international : « Ces lois abjectes représentent une menace directe et extrêmement grave pour la persistance et les droits des travailleurs australiens. Elles constituent les atteintes les plus graves aux normes du travail reconnues à l'échelon international jamais commises dans un pays industrialisé²⁶ (...) ». « Ce gouvernement semble vouloir ramener les relations industrielles à l'âge de la loi de la jungle qui régnait il y a un siècle ou même avant²⁷ ».

Le premier réflexe du mouvement syndical australien, s'inspirant de son homologue américain, fut de lancer une vaste campagne d'*organising* afin d'endiguer son déclin ; la densité syndicale ayant chuté plus que de moitié pour se stabiliser autour des 20%. S'en suivit une campagne nationale *Your Rights At Work*²⁸ d'opposition à *WorkChoices*. Or, même si elle fut particulièrement bien orchestrée, avec une mise à profit efficace des nouvelles technologies de l'information, et même si elle a pesé dans les élections, cette campagne n'a pas suscité de mouvement social à proprement dit, loin de là. Il faut bien comprendre que d'un côté, avec *WorkChoices*, la loi limitait sérieusement le droit à l'action collective, et que de l'autre, susciter un vaste mouvement social n'était sans doute pas, pour différentes raisons stratégique et sociologique, une option jugée viable aux yeux du leadership de l'ACTU, au grand dam de ses composantes militantes et des franges radicales de la société civile, sachant que *WorkChoices* était clairement impopulaire. Plutôt, la décision retenue fut on ne peut plus conventionnelle : tous derrière le parti travailliste qui nous débarrassera du carcan légal une fois au pouvoir. Ce qui fut fait, nous y

²⁵ LE QUEUX S. et PEETZ D., « *WorkChoices* : au nom du libre choix, suppression des libertés collectives », *Chronique Internationale de l'IRES*, n° 104, 2007, p. 31-38.

²⁶ Communiqué de presse de la Confédération syndicale internationale du 16/11/05.

²⁷ Communiqué de presse de la Confédération syndicale internationale du 29/06/06.

²⁸ Voir sur le lien <http://www.rightsatwork.com.au/>

reviendrons. Auparavant, et afin de mettre en perspective les enjeux à venir, revisitons brièvement la trajectoire du syndicalisme australien dans le prisme de la mouvance contestataire.

Regards croisés sur le syndicalisme et l'altermondialisme : une contestation muselée

Le mouvement altermondialiste s'est momentanément fait entendre au tournant des années 2000, avec pour faits saillants le blocage du Forum Économique Mondial (FEM) à Melbourne en septembre 2000, et par une journée d'action nationale le 1^{er} mai suivant. Largement inspiré des émeutes de Seattle, il puise dans des réseaux militants qui se sont constitués dans la décennie précédente : campagnes contre les mines d'uranium de *Jabiluka*, pour la réconciliation avec le peuple aborigène, contre la montée d'un front national populiste et xénophobe (*One Nation*), etc., et subséquemment pour la fermeture des camps de détention de réfugiés : « *Lock Up the Bosses – Free the Refugees*²⁹ ». Mais ce mouvement mourut dans l'œuf, principalement par manque de relais institutionnel et politique et, en particulier, par manque d'arrimage syndical ; mais aussi parce qu'il s'est vu drainer par la cause anti-guerre, sans succès, comme pour toutes les autres campagnes d'ailleurs.

Si la mouvance contestataire a un instant interpellé les syndicats, ce ne fut qu'un feu de paille. Certes oui, cela n'a pas été sans échauffer les cordes militantes. Lors du FEM de Melbourne, alors que le porte-parole d'un syndicat d'industrie s'évertuait à expliquer que sa fédération luttait de son mieux contre le capital international, on entendit « *Bullshit !* » surgir de l'assemblée, avant que les membres, en très grand nombre, se détournent de leur leadership pour rejoindre les barrages des altermondialistes. Mais en règle générale, les centrales ont fait la sourde oreille, prenant bien garde de se distancier des « agitateurs » ; ce qui peut aisément se comprendre dans un contexte où le gouvernement attend de se saisir du premier prétexte pour démoniser le syndicalisme mais aussi lorsqu'on sait que le syndicalisme australien se caractérise par une longue tradition conservatrice : dans bien des secteurs et à bien des niveaux de l'appareil, la droite syndicale est dominante. D'où le bourgeonnement d'initiatives locales tel *Union-Solidarity*, en marge de l'institution syndicale et prenant appui, par défaut et en repli, sur les solidarités communautaires, avec un certain succès il faut le dire. S'il est question d'envisager une revitalisation, il est donc bien plus probable qu'elle se produise à ce niveau, de façon autonome et contingente.

Ce ne furent donc pas les quelques soubresauts du social, vite matés, ni la campagne de communication de l'ACTU la même année qui embarrassèrent le gouvernement Howard de donner libre cours à sa ferveur libérale. Et du

²⁹ Slogan de *Socialist Worker*, 2001.

patronat de se saisir de l'aubaine pour littéralement purger les milieux de travail des tissus militants³⁰.

Un renouvellement du militantisme ?

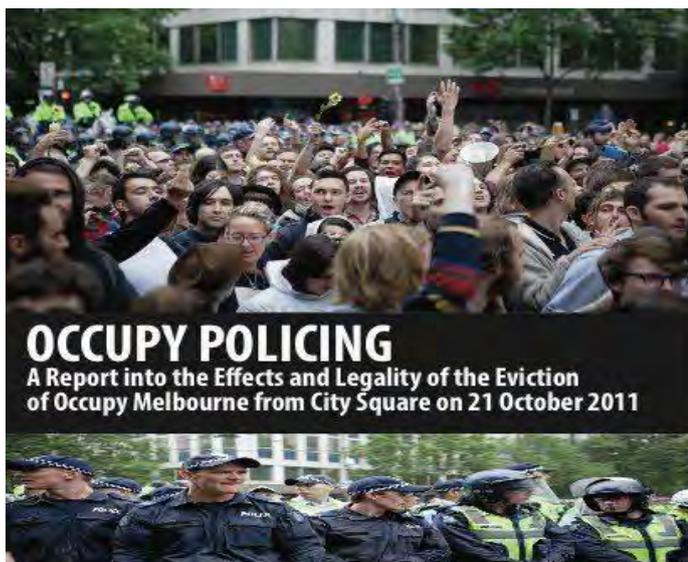
Le suivi de la mobilisation antilibérale, même si elle demeure marginale dans le contexte australien, permet de corroborer la description sociologique des groupes altermondialistes – organicité, multiplicité des causes, internationalisme, fonctionnement en réseaux, exigence démocratique, recours au symbolique et à l'action directe, etc. – constat partagé par les observateurs de terrain³¹. Plusieurs caractéristiques méritent toutefois d'être soulignées.

D'abord, ils partagent une forte préoccupation écologique, ce qui est loin d'être anodin dans une économie vouée à l'exportation maximale de ses vastes richesses naturelles. Il s'agit là d'un point de tension récurrent avec les syndicats ; des syndicats de l'industrie minière, soit les controverses sur l'ouverture de nouveaux sites d'excavation d'uranium au nord du Queensland ou encore sur le charbon « propre », à ceux de l'industrie d'exploitation forestière dont les plans d'expansion en Tasmanie éveillent bien des émois (*Don't Pulp our Future !*), toujours autour de la même question : emplois contre environnement.

Ensuite, ils subissent la violence policière avec, comme pour les syndicats, une tendance inquiétante à criminaliser l'action militante, d'autant plus dans le cadre des lois anti-terroristes ou désormais dans une chasse à la « corruption » syndicale. Le sommet de l'*Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation* (APEC) à Sydney en septembre 2007 se devait être l'occasion d'un nouveau grand rassemblement altermondialiste. Échaudé par l'expérience du FEM de Melbourne, le gouvernement mis sur pied un dispositif sécuritaire hollywoodien, « *over the top* » de l'avis de tous. Ce dispositif couplé d'une campagne d'intimidation explicite firent en sorte que seule une poignée de manifestants osa braver la rue. Résultat, un non événement, du moins du point de vue contestataire. Et de la CSI et de l'ACTU de déplorer que les débats et les accords aient totalement fait l'impasse sur le social. Or la répression persiste, comme en témoignent les évictions illégales des militants d'*Occupy* Melbourne, octobre 2011, ou du campement de protestation aborigène de Mushgrave Park, Brisbane, mai 2012, idem au « campement ambassade » (*Aboriginal Tent Embassy*) la même année (voir encadrés ci-dessous). Le dispositif sécuritaire déployé pour le G-20 à Brisbane, novembre 2014, vient d'être qualifié par les media de « plus grande opération de sécurité de l'histoire australienne en temps de paix ».

³⁰ PEETZ D. et MURRAY G., « Individualisation and Resistance at the Coal Face », *Just Labour*, vol. 6 & 7, 2005, p. 55-71.

³¹ BURGMANN, V., *Power, profit and protest: Australian social movements and globalisation*, Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2003.



Les militants, enfin, et quelles que soient leurs obédiences politiques, sont loin d'être hostiles aux syndicats, au contraire. Mieux, il faudrait dire qu'ils posent un regard critique sur les syndicats qu'ils décrivent très souvent comme conservateurs, frileux, sectaires, élitistes et bureaucratiques mais sont tout à fait favorables au syndicalisme. De même qu'ils ne rechignent pas à s'associer aux luttes syndicales : dans leur enquête, Bramble et Minns ont relevé que 9 militants altermondialistes sur 10 interrogés avaient activement prêté support à des campagnes syndicales³². Et ils étaient nombreux, à Melbourne en mai 2004,

³² BRAMBLE T. et MINNS J., « Whose streets? Our streets! Activist perspectives on the Australian Anti-capitalist Movement », *Social Movement Studies*, vol. 4, n° 2, 2005, p. 105-121.

à se mobiliser en solidarité de Craig Johnston, de l'*Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union* (AMWU). Craig, à l'aile gauche du syndicalisme australien, et en procès pour abus syndical s'est vu désavoué par l'ACTU, créant un tollé interne ; ce qui est révélateur à la fois de la gêne de l'institution syndicale face à la montée d'un syndicalisme d'action directe et de la sympathie que ce type de syndicalisme génère au sein de la nouvelle génération militante. Si le cas de Craig est exemplaire pour l'anecdote, il n'est pas isolé pour autant : les travaillistes en campagne prirent bien soin d'assainir le parti des syndicalistes jugés trop militants – la plupart issus de syndicats de métier solidement ancrés sur leur base – et de le faire savoir au grand public à titre de patte blanche. Il s'agit d'une constante. Il est courant que les élites syndicales, en relation symbiotique avec le parti Travailliste, fassent entrave à l'activité militante³³.

En somme, même si elles existent, les intersections militantes demeurent le plus souvent circonstanciées. Certes, de plus en plus de syndicalistes rejoignent les rangs contestataires, comme le démontre le congrès national de *Socialist Alliance* mais cela demeure, à de rares exceptions, des initiatives individuelles. Il existe bien quelques tentatives syndicales de réseautage tel le *Victorian Youth Trade Union Network*, mais quelle que soit leur degré de pertinence ou de vitalité, elles sont plus spontanées que structurées – la mise sur pied il y a peu d'une alliance de travailleurs précaires dans l'industrie du tourisme, *United Casual Workers Alliance*, alliance proto-syndicale inspirée des actions de UNITE et de la campagne de leurs homologues néo-zélandais en est un autre exemple. Ce sont les militants qui tiennent ces réseaux à bout de bras et lorsqu'ils s'épuisent, le tout s'évanouit. Les commentaires d'une militante impliquée dans l'organisation du mouvement '*Occupy*' Melbourne résume bien le tableau à gros traits :

« Australia mate, don't rock the boat and you'll get your quarter acre. People feel threatened by ideas (...) Not a true international solidarity movement. Unions are the blokes who get you a good pay rise for that flash 'ute'. As much as I respect the 'union-name', most of their members barely tolerate objectives beyond prosperity and safety (...) Most unions were completely cynical and useless. I know 'union name' were trying to be more proactive, but it was real churn and burn with their organisers... » (Témoignage d'une militante anarcho-syndicaliste du mouvement Occupy).

Une revitalisation du politique ?

Bien sûr, lorsqu'ils ne sont pas carrément anticapitalistes, les mouvements contestataires australiens sont clairement antilibéraux. Mêmes slogans, même idéalisme qu'ailleurs – « *This is a fight to enjoy our lives !* » (Camille, leader du *Victorian Youth Trade Union Network*), « *Capitalism Sux, Stop Corporate Greed !* » scandaient les militants de *Resistance* lors des campagnes de 2001. Bien sûr, ils s'attirent la sympathie de certains syndicats, soit de syndicats

³³ Pour un exemple récent, voir <http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/unions-nsw-secretary-mark-lennon-booed-for-blocking-strike-vote-20140612-zs5mm.html>

d'industrie comme le *Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union* (CMFEU) dotés d'une forte culture de classe et en lutte contre de grandes multinationales comme Rio Tinto, soit parmi les militants de terrain des syndicats émergents dans les secteurs des services comme le *Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union* (LHMU), aujourd'hui *United Voice*, ou l'*Australian Services Union* (ASU). Il y a bien quelques exemples où les élites syndicales ont pris des engagements altermondialistes, comme le *Maritime Union of Australia* (MUA) en Australie de l'Ouest mais ce serait une exagération grossière de dire qu'ils sont vecteurs d'une revitalisation des politiques syndicales : l'ACTU reste campé fermement sur le parti travailliste. Leigh Hubbard, Secrétaire du *Victorian Trades Hall Council*, déclarait ainsi publiquement qu'il regrettait que le syndicalisme ait terni, qu'il lui semblait avoir perdu à la fois la passion et le sens des réalités communes : « *We need to get the passion (of social movements) back into the (labour) movement (...) Social wages and broad civil issues need to be addressed, there is a deficit of politics and ideas* ».

En somme, les mouvements contestataires ne sont que très peu enracinés dans le mouvement syndical, lui-même nous l'avons souligné pourvu d'une large composante conservatrice. Le constat d'ensemble est que les syndicats interviennent davantage comme des partenaires « occasionnels » des forces anticapitalistes qu'ils n'en sont la composante organisée³⁴. Ils ne sont pas non plus le vecteur d'un nouvel internationalisme syndical. S'il existe bien des solidarités transnationales, elles sont le plus souvent intersectorielles et comme dans le cas des dockers, elles ne datent pas d'aujourd'hui. L'internationalisme reste, officiellement, dans le cadre des structures syndicales³⁵. L'ACTU se limite pour l'essentiel à souscrire aux politiques de la CSI.

Et on notera, avant de conclure, qu'en plus de ne pas trouver de relais syndical, les mouvements contestataires australiens opèrent dans un contexte médiatique hostile et dans un contexte intellectuel somme toute discret, sinon apathique. S'il existe bien quelques media alternatifs, comme *Green Left*, ils ne débordent que très peu des sphères militantes, sans réelle capacité d'intervenir sur l'opinion publique. Voilà pourquoi, au bout du compte, le 1^{er} mai 2001 à Sydney offrit le tableau de trois solitudes au sein d'un même espace social : des barrages de manifestants violemment matraqués puis, à quelques coins de rues, un défilé syndical, en ordre bien rangé, et entre les deux, dans l'univers aseptisé des centres d'achat, toute une société *Barbecue-Billabong*. Dix ans après rien ne neuf, le mouvement *Occupy* 2011, même s'il a su marquer les esprits, ne trouva guère de support populaire au-delà des sympathisants ni de soutien syndical officiel.

³⁴ BRAMBLE T. et MINNS J., *ibidem*.

³⁵ Également à travers l'humanitaire syndical, cf. APHEDA-Union Aid Abroad.

Conclusion

Les Travailleuses ont tenu promesse, ils ont révoqué *WorkChoices* – pour la petite histoire, la législation a été recyclée en papier toilette – et ont mis en place un nouveau cadre légal (*Fair Work Act*) dans un exercice périlleux qui consiste à ne pas mécontenter les uns sans trop déplaire aux autres.

Conséquence, il s'agit d'un cadre somme toute conservateur qui, pour qui est attentif, pose toujours des restrictions sérieuses à l'action collective, toujours en contravention des normes internationales du travail, et qui donne pratiquement carte blanche au patronat qui, selon le législateur, n'est pas tenu d'avoir un comportement « raisonnable, proportionné ou rationnel ». Et du patronat de s'en saisir comme dans le cas récent du *lockout* de Qantas³⁶ pour casser les actions de grève. Les syndicats ont sans trop de surprise abandonné la scène politique aux Travailleuses et se sont pratiquement retirés de la scène publique pour revenir à leurs affaires courantes. Le Caucus Travailleur étant sous le joug des syndicats de droite, il ne fallait guère s'attendre à des éclats.

Que retenir du cas australien, sinon que la perspective d'un alter-syndicalisme, que l'hypothèse d'une « revitalisation » du syndicalisme, aussi séduisantes soient-elles, ne sont pas évidentes. Les structures et les idéologies syndicales ont du poids, ici comme ailleurs³⁷. Et il n'y a pas de raisons apparentes pour que cela change. Ou, comme le suggérait une jeune porte-parole du *Labor Council of New South Wales*, s'il fallait espérer une alternative, elle tiendrait du passage « d'une stratégie d'*organising* des syndicats à une stratégie d'*organising* du mouvement syndical ».

Il s'agit d'une remarque perspicace. Mais il n'en est rien. Comment l'expliquer ? Tout d'abord, à crainte d'être tautologique, c'est une question de l'œuf et de la poule : pour un syndicalisme de mouvement social, ça prend un mouvement social ; et pour une contestation sociale qui s'affirme, ça prend un syndicalisme d'action sociale. On ne trouve ni l'un ni l'autre en Australie. Or cela a sans doute à voir avec la fabrique du collectivisme en Australie, où l'action collective n'est pas vraiment populaire³⁸. De plus, si l'encadrement du travail est devenu une partie de ping-pong politique, le travail lui ne politise pas : on assiste plutôt à une « dépolitisation institutionnelle³⁹ » des solidarités, qui existent, mais qui tiennent d'un registre pragmatique et non idéologique. Ainsi peut-on créditer l'idée qu'en arrière-plan de l'appareil syndical, c'est bien dans une certaine

³⁶ LE QUEUX S., « Australie: Qantas. Un lock out emblématique des faiblesses de la nouvelle législation du travail », *Chronique internationale de l'IRES*, n° 137, juillet 2012, p. 37-46.

³⁷ FREGE C. M. et KELLY J., « Union Revitalization Strategies in Comparative Perspective », *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, vol. 9, n° 1, 2003, p. 7-24.

³⁸ PEETZ D., « Sympathy with the Devil ? : Australian Unionism and Public Opinion », *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 37, n° 1, 2002, p.57-80.

³⁹ LE QUEUX S., « Au pays de 'mateship', la dépolitisation est institutionnelle », *Sens politiques du travail*, Sainsaulieu I. et Surdez M. (dir.), Armand Colin Recherches, 2012, p. 185-200.

mesure l'entreprenariat social des bases militantes qui est qualitativement responsable de la vitalité du syndicalisme⁴⁰.

On peut consentir de la nécessité pour les syndicats de développer un registre idéologique remanié, ainsi que l'évoquent Charles Tilly⁴¹ et R. Hyman⁴² – un répertoire capable de projeter une voie autonome, non seulement critique mais aussi réflexive des aspirations sociales contemporaines et mobilisatrice au-delà des clivages et des clichés traditionnels. On peut aussi voir avec optimisme la résurgence d'un internationalisme des solidarités⁴³. Cette « autre » vision du monde et cet internationalisme sont bien partagés par les militants australiens, très minoritaires, mais par delà disons que ça mouline dans le vide. Le syndicalisme se satisfait pleinement du *statu quo* et il est notoirement de mauvais goût de parler politique autour d'un barbecue.

Ce qui rend donc le cas australien intéressant, sociologiquement, c'est qu'il fait figure d'antithèse. La question à se poser est bien celle de savoir pourquoi ? En sus des éléments de réponse mentionnés ci-dessus, il y a une raison assez simple : la prospérité. De l'aveu même des libéraux, ils auraient poussé le bouchon trop loin avec *WorkChoices*. En effet, dans cet exercice de réforme à l'américaine, l'élève a surpassé le maître à bien des égards, dans les propres termes de l'éminent juriste Ron McCallum⁴⁴, avec pour conséquence, et c'est là le point de touche, d'inquiéter la classe moyenne. En réponse, le mouvement syndical et les Travaillistes se sont arcbutés sur le vieux principe du « *fair go* ». Ça a marché, au nom du principe lui-même mais aussi probablement parce que c'était le rêve américain à l'australienne qui était remis en cause. Or depuis l'Australie n'a guère peu souffert de la crise financière et son économie, forte de l'abondance de ses ressources naturelles, marche plutôt bien : *So why bother ?* Il y a certes, bien sûr, un renouvellement de la contestation sociale qui suit son cours, soit notamment le mouvement *march Australia*⁴⁵ ou *GetUp* en réaction aux mesures d'austérité imposées par la coalition nationale-libérale revenue au pouvoir depuis 2013 et obsédée par le retour à l'équilibre budgétaire, et bien sûr, une fois les réticences dépassées, trouvant un certain soutien syndical ; mais cela sans véritablement changer la dynamique de fond.

⁴⁰ BRAMBLE T., *Trade Unionism in Australia - A history from flood to ebb tide*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

⁴¹ TILLY C., *Regimes and Repertoires*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2006.

⁴² HYMAN R., « How can trade unions act strategically », *Transfer – European Review of Labour and Research*, vol. 13, n° 2, 2007, p. 193-210.

⁴³ MUNCK R. P., « Globalization and the Labour Movement: Challenges and Responses », *Global Labour Journal*, vol. 1, n° 2, 2010, p. 218-232.

⁴⁴ McCALLUM, R., « Plunder Downunder: transplanting the Anglo-American Labor Law Model to Australia », *Comparative Labor Law & Policy Journal*, vol. 26, n° 3, 2006, p. 381-399.

⁴⁵ Voir par ex. <https://www.facebook.com/marchinsydney>

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The dynamics of south/north relationships within transnational debt campaigning

Jean Somers

Abstract

This article examines power relations within transnational debt campaigns between southern and northern groups, with a particular focus on the high profile Jubilee 2000. It examines various fault-lines between southern and northern campaigns, and explores different explanations for these difficulties. It conceptualises this crucial relationship for the power of transnational campaigns, as a dynamic one driven by the continual interaction of solidarity and conflict, as campaigns struggle to resolve the power inequalities, which are reflected into transnational campaigns by the hierarchical structuring of world order. It concludes that transnational debt campaigning involved two interacting struggles. The struggle to create, and maintain, a strong common cause across transnational debt groups, interacted with the struggle to achieve debt cancellation. This was due to the fact that the different methods and discourses used by debt campaigns generated tensions, particularly along the south/north interface. The article suggests that claims for the emergence of a 'post-sovereign' global civil society are premature, and therefore unitary transnational campaigns are problematic, and likely to be shaped by particular political and cultural contexts, rather than representing a claimed universal agenda.

Keywords: transnational debt campaigns, solidarity, south-north relations, hierarchical world order.

Introduction

While transnational campaigning grew rapidly over the course of the second half of the twentieth century, paralleling the globalisation of the world economy, movements crossing borders have a long history. Among significant transnational movements of the nineteenth century, were the anti-slavery campaigns, and the labour movement which, from its inception, had an international structure and internationalist outlook (Waterman 2001). The women's suffrage movement also had transnational links through the International Woman Suffrage Association, established in 1904 (Keck and Sikkink 1998).

The debt crisis of the last quarter of the 20th century gave rise to one of the most sustained and long-running campaigns of the more recent phase of transnational campaigning, involving people from across six continents. The debt crisis enveloped Latin America and Africa, with the Philippines as the main country affected in Asia. The crisis is officially dated to August 1982 when

Mexico, a major debtor, announced it could no longer service its debt, and many other countries across the south of the globe faced the same situation. This development posed a threat to the international financial system as many international banks were over exposed to southern governments. Debt, however, had already emerged as a major threat to the lives and livelihoods of people in indebted countries. Peru and Jamaica were virtually bankrupt from 1976 (Walton 2001), but as these were not systemically important countries, their debt crises did not pose a similar threat to international banks as did Mexico's crisis. Their governments, however, were forced to follow IMF programmes, in order to be eligible for new loans or debt re-scheduling. These programmes included devaluation leading to higher prices for imported goods, and a reduction in public spending, including slashing subsidies on essential goods, such as food and energy, and also wage reductions. Popular debt protests took place in Peru from 1976 in opposition to these programmes (Walton 2001), and sparked off the first recorded example of transnational solidarity on debt - the US/Peru solidarity group set up in the late 1970s by returned missionaries (Donnelly 2002).

This article is based on research carried out on three decades of debt campaigning from the last quarter of the 1970s up to 2005, focussing in particular on the later period, the Jubilee 2000 campaign. My motivation for undertaking this research was that I had spent twelve years working within transnational debt campaigning. A key question which arose for me during that time was: why did we, as civil society groups scattered across the globe, believe we could force change from the G7, IMF and World Bank; in short, what was our power? The concept of the power of campaigns/ social movements/civil society groups used in this research starts with Lukes' (2005, 69) understanding of power as the potential, to "make or to receive any change, or to resist it". Leveraging power as potential, transnational civil society campaigns/social movements make common cause, based on shared understandings of the nature of the problem, possible solutions, and how to work together to press for these solutions. Common cause, however, is always somewhat fragile with tensions continually emerging, leading to new understandings, and sometimes to reconfiguration of the campaign group, or splits.

While tensions within movements/campaign groups can arise for a range of reasons, a major fault-line within transnational campaigning is between southern and northern groups (Doherty and Doyle 2012, Bendaña 2006, Katz 2006, Scholte 2002, Keet 2000, Keck and Sikkink 1998, Pasha and Blaney 1998). This relationship is, therefore, a key consideration for the power of transnational campaigns. In terms of how to resolve the south/north fault-line within transnational civil society, some suggest that the inequalities can be tackled by action from northern NGOs to 'empower' the south (Katz 2006). I argue, however, that the south/north relationship within transnational debt campaigning was a dynamic one, driven by the continual interaction of solidarity and conflict, as campaigns struggled to resolve the power inequalities, which are reflected back into transnational civil society from a hierarchical world order. Within this process, southern agency is key to challenging the

inequalities within transnational campaigns, and maintaining the tension which drives the relationship towards seeking a more equitable balance.

'Civil society' is used in this article to describe the agency involved in transnational activism. This term has been chosen rather than 'social movement(s)' following Tarrow's (2001) disaggregation of transnational activism into three sets of actors: International NGOs (INGO), Transnational Advocacy Networks (TAN) and Transnational Social Movement (TNSM). The key distinction for Tarrow is what organisations do rather than what they say - engage in 'contentious politics' (transnational social movements) or in 'routine transactions' (TANs and INGOs). Transnational campaigns such as those on debt, included all three sets of actors, and it is for this reason that the broader term 'civil society' is used to cover this wide span of agency. Different terms are also applied to civil society groups operating across a number of countries - transnational, international or global civil society. The term transnational is used in this article, defined as the involvement of groups from two or more countries in joint action to challenge international public policy. Global civil society, used by a range of thinkers, contains stronger claims than does the term 'transnational'. It suggests the emergence of a new global societal force in a 'post-sovereign' era, which can help to bridge the democratic deficit within the globalising world, and is a more contested term than transnational civil society (Amoore and Langley 2004, Munck 2004). The term 'international' is used in this article to refer to the formal inter-governmental realms e.g. the IMF and World Bank, but is not applied to civil society.

Methodology

The study was carried out through documentary analysis (primary and secondary), media searches, and interviews with key informants. In terms of documents, my aim was to access material which related as closely as possible to an organisation's strategic thinking, and decision-making processes, such as annual reports, newsletters, strategic plans, evaluations, funding applications, minutes of relevant meetings, and relevant correspondence. Accessing these materials especially for the earlier periods was difficult, as civil society campaigns have not always maintained historical records, with some NGOs abandoning their libraries and archives due to resource constraints. I was sometimes one step behind an NGO closing down its library with the loss of their primary documents, but fortunately, I was also just one step ahead of other organisations about to make their library staff redundant. Continual 'digging' was needed to acquire sufficient material. Documents were gathered from universities, and NGOs in a number of European countries, which included documents from northern and southern campaigns. For the later period of campaigning, there was more substantial material available on the internet. I also had a range of documents I had collected at transnational events, and from visits to southern countries during my years involved with debt campaigning. Considerable material was also sourced from media archives. As much of this material came through press services, most of it was probably never published

in the mainstream media. For research purposes, however, these news services usefully operate as an archive of press releases and reports, reflecting the public face of civil society groups.

Interviews were carried out, some face to face, but the majority by phone, with people who had played a major role in debt campaigning, from debtor countries and creditor countries. These were semi-structured around the research themes, which included south/north relations. Some interviewees spanned the whole period of the research, others spanned the period from the 1990s, while for some, their involvement related to Jubilee 2000. In terms of selecting debtor country campaigns, the criteria were: availability of key informants for interview, and having access to sufficient documentary/media evidence for that country. Coverage of creditor country campaigns focused on Europe, because the range of political cultures involved and their differential positioning within world order, provided substantial variation. Both G7 and non-G7 creditor countries were covered. Focussing on Europe also helped to avoid capture by the dominant English-speaking world.

The fact that I was an insider researcher had advantages, but also brought a range of challenges. I had substantial knowledge of transnational debt campaigns and a wide network of contacts which were useful in terms of identifying relevant interviewees, and gaining access to internal organisational material. There were, however, a range of possible pitfalls. Any individual participant in a transnational movement will always have only a partial view, no matter how long or deep has been the involvement, and s/he is likely to be biased towards particular understandings. This calls for critical distance to avoid accepting, without scrutiny, taken-for-granted understandings which underpin movements. One such issue for me was to recognise when, and the degree to which, debt groups, particularly in the north, were drawn into participation with national and international decision-makers. Civil society groups' preferred understanding is that they are challenging dominant powers from an autonomous position.

The article first provides a brief overview of three decades of debt campaigning set against the background of the changing world order, within which this took place. The south/north relationship evolved within this context. The next section traces south/north relations within debt campaigning with a particular focus on the Jubilee 2000 campaign, which was the most high profile phase of debt campaigning, had the greatest involvement from groups across the south and the north of the globe, and in which south/north tensions became most acute. The third section looks at explanations of south/north relations within transnational civil society/social movements, and is followed by a concluding section.

1. Overview of three decades of debt campaigning

Transnational debt campaigning began to emerge from the early 1980s, with the development of transnational links covering much of the globe, between civil society groups concerned about the negative impacts of the debt crisis. It is significant that this took place in the absence of the developments in information technology, and cheaper travel, which were available to later transnational civil society groups. Action took place at national and transnational levels, including national protests against the austerity programmes ('structural adjustment') which were a condition for debt relief; contentious mobilisations at international organisation summits such as the IMF and World Bank 1988 AGM in Berlin, and the 1989 G7 Summit in Paris; and the emergence of national campaigns.

As the decade advanced, a web of national and transnational groups, which provided the framework for debt campaigning for the following two decades, began to emerge. This web was woven from a range of regional and transnational events, involving trade union conferences in Latin America and Africa and a number of south-north civil society events, for example in Oxford in 1987 (UN-NGO 1987), and Lima in 1988 (Conferencia 1988). The early 1990s saw the emergence of more coordinated campaigning, involving a shift in emphasis from contentious mobilisations to lobbying national and international decision-makers. The most high profile phase of debt campaigning, Jubilee 2000, was launched in 1997. It was based on linking the biblical concept of a periodic Jubilee, whereby right relations are restored – debt cancelled, land redistributed, and slaves freed - with the upcoming millennium as a new Jubilee moment.

The central campaign call was for the cancellation of unpayable debt of the poorest countries by the year 2000. It involved massive mobilisations across the globe, with a particular focus on G7 Summits. The G7 was identified as the key power broker as it dominated the main international for a, which dealt with the debt of southern countries – the IMF, World Bank and the Paris Club of bilateral creditors. Over 24 million signatures to a Jubilee petition were gathered worldwide; 70,000 people demonstrated at the 1998 G7 Birmingham Summit, and 35,000 at the Cologne G7 Summit the following year. It was originally envisaged by the British campaign, which initiated Jubilee 2000 that the campaign would finish at the end of the year 2000. Due, however, to the level of mobilisation achieved, the limited progress on cancellation, and 'pressure from below' from debt campaigners, Jubilee 2000 continued beyond the year 2000, albeit with a lower profile, and was central to the Global call for Action against Poverty/Make Poverty History campaign 2004-2005. A range of debt deals were introduced by creditors over the 1980s and 1990s, all requiring debtor countries to implement IMF/World Bank structural adjustment programmes, promoting the neoliberal agenda of liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation, but delivering limited cancellation.

Debt campaigning took place against the background of a radically changing world order. Over the course of the 1980s the neoliberal counter-revolution was

underway (Toye 1993), central to which was a de-politicisation of the structural inequalities within the international political economy. During the 1970s, southern governments had pressed for a new international economic order to tackle structural inequalities between the south and north, but these inequalities were now increasingly attributed to failures by southern governments (Mawdsley and Rigg 2003), rather than seen as arising largely from how southern countries were integrated into the world economy. This process was exacerbated by the debt crisis, as it provided a lever whereby debtor states could be restructured in line with the neo-liberal counter-revolution, through policy conditions attached to the receipt of debt relief, aid and loans, increasing the hierarchical structuring of states within world order.

However, although these changes were under way when transnational debt campaigning developed during the 1980s, an alternative world order still seemed a possibility. Many debt activists held on to their counter-discourses of a new international economic order, which they adopted from southern governments, and liberation theology which was particularly strong in Latin America. They also maintained solidarity with revolutionary struggles, and the governments emerging from those struggles, such as the Sandinistas who took power in Nicaragua 1979. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, the space for alternatives appeared to diminish with the triumph of neoliberalism. The concept of 'global governance', referring to the way in which the globalising world was to be governed in the absence of any centralised world authority, gained ground.

Global governance consists of rules, norms and voluntary agreements developed and implemented by a variety of bodies, including inter-governmental organisations, such as the IMF, World Bank, World Trade Organisation (WTO), private bodies such as Credit Rating Agencies and international treaties. This system suffers from a clear democratic deficit, and in order to gain legitimacy for the operation of global governance, the participation of civil society in policy processes became a global norm (Gaynor 2010). Given the limited possibilities to pose alternatives, many debt groups moved towards more direct engagement with the international financial institutions in the early 1990s. To gain the necessary 'credibility' with dominant decision-makers, in order to be able to take advantage of these new participation spaces, many debt campaigns aligned their analyses and proposed solutions with those of the most progressive parts of the inter-governmental organisations dealing with debt.

Triumphant neoliberalism soon began to fracture due to internal strains and external pressures. The liberalisation of finance contributed to a new cycle of debt crises – 1994 Mexico, 1997 East Asia, 1998 Russia, 2001 Argentina, (and later the US and Europe). The unremitting cycle of financial crises dented the claim that there were no alternatives to neoliberal policies. These internal strains were paralleled by external challenges from social movements and civil society networks. In 1994 the Zapatistas emerged in Mexico in opposition to the North American Free Trade Area, and to the neoliberal policies followed by the Mexican government. The Zapatistas played a central role in promoting

transnational resistance to neoliberalism, organising an Intercontinental Encounter for Humanity against Neoliberalism in Chiapas in 1996 (Morton 2002). In 1995, sustained strikes in France were framed as opposition to 'global markets', leading to the emergence of ATTAC in 1998, calling for a tax on financial transactions. ATTAC subsequently played a central role in the establishment of the World Social Forum in 2001 (Ancelevici 2002).

The first major Jubilee 2000 mobilisation took place at the 1998 G7 Summit in Birmingham and, in the same year, the OECD's proposal for a Multilateral Agreement on Investment was defeated by "network guerrillas, a loose coalition of NGOs" (de Jonquiere 1998). In 1999, the 'Battle of Seattle', which can be seen as the start of a new phase of the anti-globalisation movement, took place at the WTO's Ministerial Meeting. This form of active mobilisation continued into the new millennium with further contentious mobilisations against the IMF and the World Bank, and significant protests at G7 Summits between 2000 and 2005. Against this background debt movements took different approaches at different times. They maintained their counter-hegemonic discourses during the 1980s, and leveraged the invited spaces provided by global governance to seek incremental changes in debt policy during the first half of the 1990s. From 1997 onwards, in the Jubilee phase, they used a mixture of social movement mobilisations together with institutional engagement with national and transnational decision-makers.

2. South/north relations within debt campaigning

The importance of south/north relations for effective transnational civil society action, was already under discussion during the 1980s. There were calls from gatherings of southern NGOs for northern NGOs to focus on changing the policies of their governments, and of multilateral organisations, which negatively impacted on southern countries. Rather than engaging directly in development efforts in southern countries, the role of northern NGOs should be to support southern groups to carry out country level projects. Two key declarations raising these issues were the Manila Declaration, June 1989, on People's Participation and Sustainable Development, prepared by 31 Southern NGOs; and the 1990 Arusha Declaration: The African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, proposed by a large group of NGOs and African grassroots organizations, with representatives of northern NGOs, governments, and multilateral organisations also present (de Senillosa 1998).

Discussion also took place at transnational debt events on how southern and northern groups could best work together. An underlying question was how to decide on priority issues, on the solutions to pursue, and on what was the most appropriate division of labour between southern and northern debt groups. While the principled position might be that southern groups should lead, there was recognition that northern groups had their own challenges to face. A southern speaker at a 1987 conference in Oxford, UK, pointed out that northern

groups would need to identify which of the issues raised by southern groups would resonate best with their own publics. Issues which mobilise people in the south, might not be equally effective in the north (UN-NGO 1987). There was also an issue of where solidarity with southern people fitted in with competing national/regional campaign priorities in the north. According to a speaker from the Netherlands at a debt conference in Lima in 1988, the massive campaign against cruise missiles in Europe had diverted attention from solidarity with southern countries, making it difficult to respond to calls from the south for greater action on debt (Rahman 1988). While southern and northern groups were groping towards a modus operandi, issues of leadership, of autonomy of action, and the direction of accountability remained grey areas, as was manifested in tensions, which arose within the first structured south/north network, the Forum on Debt and Development (Fondad). This network was set up in 1987 involving Latin American groups, and a number of major Dutch NGOs, with a secretariat in The Hague, and membership in Brazil, Nicaragua, Peru and Chile. The purpose of the network was to promote debate on debt policies, to work together to influence international decision-makers and to engage with Ministries of Finance, and other key figures at national level, with illegitimate debt as a strong concern in Latin America. Tensions arose within the network over the respective roles of Latin American and European Fondad, including differences over policy, decision-making, and ownership. One issue was whether priority should be given to strengthening the work of individual organisations or developing joint work. As is often the case in south/north joint working, the fact that the northern (Dutch) partner in the network was also the funder, impacted on relationships. Finally, at a meeting in the early 1990s, the network was dissolved, and it was agreed that the European and Latin American organisations would operate independently of each other (Interviewee Netherlands No. 1, Interviewee Coordinator Eurodad).

South/north relations within debt campaigning during the early 1990s were loose and related to specific issues and events. Southern groups provided expert information and legitimacy to northern groups through their contribution to northern conferences and public events. They also introduced their priorities into transnational debt campaigning with the issue of illegitimate debt highlighted by the Philippines Freedom from Debt Coalition, and budget monitoring, responsible lending and borrowing were raised by the Uganda Debt Network. Northern groups became more involved in lobbying their governments, international financial institutions and the G7 for changes in international debt policy, as was envisaged in the various southern declarations referred to above. It is difficult, however, to define an equitable division of labour between groups placed unequally within a hierarchical world order, as any such agreement is likely to reflect those inequalities. The division of labour set out above, while made in good faith, appeared to lock in these inequalities, with northern groups being the access point to creditors, and therefore being in a stronger position to influence the terms of the debate on the causes of, and possible solutions, to the debt problem. While major south/north tensions did

not emerge during this period, the contradictions thrown up by northern groups moving into this role, came to a head in the Jubilee 2000 campaign.

Solidarity between south/north debt groups was the bedrock of Jubilee 2000. The shift from a charity to a justice approach, involving the, over-used, concept of partnership, called for more equitable relationships, as once northern NGOs claimed to reflect the views of their 'southern partners', their legitimacy increasingly depended on those partners. Information exchanges, central to transnational campaigns continued. Providing a platform in northern countries to southern groups by inviting representatives to visit was mutually helpful. It raised the profile of the debt problem of individual countries by giving southern campaigners access to decision-makers, the media, and the public within creditor countries. Southern visitors helped northern groups to mobilise their publics, giving the northern groups greater legitimacy with national decision-makers, and the media, and helping them strengthen their domestic support, key to their fund raising. South/north relations became a major source of tension, however, leading to the emergence of an autonomous movement of southern debt groups - Jubilee South. Tensions arose in relation to leadership, representation, and how the campaign was formulated, framed and funded. The following sections review these tensions in terms of organisational structure, and in relation to debt discourse.

Tensions arising from organisational structures

In spite of its wide geographical span, there were no formal international structures, with Jubilee 2000 operating through sets of interweaving networks. National campaigns, together with a number of regional networks, loosely aggregated up into the transnational campaign. Many members of these national networks were also engaged in their own transnational networks, leading to dense relationships within Jubilee 2000. An NGO, for example, could work on debt within its bilateral relationships with its southern or northern partners, at the same time be a member of the national debt coalition of the country in which it was based, and also be a member of regional networks such as Afrodad, Eurodad, and Latindad. Networking, therefore, took place largely through regional networks and events, with a range of declarations issued by these fora: Accra 19 April 1998, Tegucigalpa 27 January 1999, Gauteng 21 March 1999 and Lusaka 19-21 May 1999. The European Network on Debt and Development (Eurodad), set up in 1989, operated parallel to, and in interaction with, Jubilee 2000. It provided a forum for European organisations, and its annual conferences brought together representatives of northern and southern debt groups. Within this loose structure, the obligations on members of Jubilee 2000 were fairly light – to agree with the principles and aim of the campaign – and beyond that, groups had autonomy in terms of how they campaigned (Cox 2011, Pettifor 2005). The UK Jubilee group which initiated the campaign, operated informally as a transnational hub and catalyst. Only one transnational meeting, bringing together Jubilee groups from across the globe, took place in the run up to the millennium, in Rome in 1998.

The absence of an international structure in Jubilee 2000 provided flexibility, with autonomy for national groups, but it left the door open to the ‘tyranny of structurelessness’, the informal leadership of the best resourced campaigns, which took strategic decisions without proper consultation (Buxton 2004). There was little enthusiasm, however, for formal international structures from those attending the transnational Jubilee meeting in 1998, or from those interviewed for this research. There was a reluctance to use scarce resources setting up international structures, a sense that these processes can be a ‘nightmare’, and could end up demotivating people (Interviewee Germany No. 2). There was also recognition that tensions are endemic between groups differently positioned across the south /north interface, and that patience is needed if this work is to be successful (Interviewee Peru). Jubilee 2000 UK opposed an international steering committee, believing that trying to build a “democratic, accountable global, borderless body, outside framework of the state was delusional and utopian” (Pettifor 2005, 312). What was needed was to coordinate activities internationally, on the basis of agreement by national coalitions (Pettifor 2005).

The value of a loose, decentred networking format is that it can recede and regenerate itself, as involvement in an issue ebbs and flows over time, and it can also absorb tensions, and conflicts. In the case of transnational debt campaigns, its horizontal form was seen as facilitative, enabling people to work together, calling for the same things without having to spend a lot of time making agreements and resolving differences. Loose transnational networking is based on an implied assumption of relatively equally positioned members, but lacks a mechanism to rebalance inequalities of power (Surman and Reilly 2003), especially those which reflect external power structures. This situates the south/north interface as a particular fault-line within transnational campaigning.

In terms of leadership, northern domination in formulating transnational campaigns was expressed starkly by one southern debt campaigner: “Campaign themes and goals are defined in the North and then followers are recruited in the South” (Bendaña 2005, 83). While Jubilee 2000, and the later Make Poverty History/Global Call for Action against Poverty, were seen as good campaigns, southern groups highlighted the fact that the strategies, methods, and slogans, were already decided before southern groups were included. There was also a sense that campaigns followed a formula, which did not always resonate with the varying social and political situations across different countries (Eurodad 2005). This meant that northern exigencies, priorities, and framings came to shape the campaign. A major priority for northern NGOs was seen as short term ‘deliverables’, and this could create tensions with those coming from a social movement perspective (Interviewee Italy). The Jubilee campaign was launched in Britain in October 1997, in Africa in April 1998, in Latin America in January 1999, and, given that the campaign was due to finish at the end of the year 2000, this left a very short campaigning time frame. Many southern campaigns were only getting off the ground by the millennium, and, given the particular resource, physical and communication infrastructure

limitations faced, they needed time to build popular campaigns. Information received by the Uganda Debt Network, for example, had to be translated into at least five languages before being disseminated (Buxton 2002).

There was a 'hullabaloo' in Africa when Jubilee 2000 was moving to close down after the millennium, with campaigners arguing,

No this campaign can't stop, these issues are still here... We strongly protested... Many people would be distrustful of campaigns coming from the north and two years action" (Interviewee Uganda).

While the short time line was meant to leverage the symbolism of the upcoming millennium, this was also in line with northern NGO practice of moving to new campaign issues every couple of years. British campaigners argued, however, that the short time line was central to the dynamic of the campaign, as it enabled organisations to commit to the debt issue for a short period (Pettifor 2005). Competition for profile and funds created 'organisational egotism' in NGOs, as subsuming their individual identities within a high-profile campaign such as Jubilee 2000, meant they didn't get the credit for their individual contributions (Interviewee Sweden). In the case of the British coalition, its NGO members worried that Jubilee 2000 "was taking its campaigners away and overshadowing its work" (Cox 2011, 37). While the short time line may have been seen as central for northern groups, for southern groups, issues were "goal bound not time bound" (Jubilee Zambia 2001). Southern groups argued that the voice of those carrying the debt burden should be central to campaign design, taking on board their particular experience, and understanding, and the time- frame should fit their needs in terms of building support, and their ability to leverage their greater mobilisation potential. Northern campaigners needed to commit for the long haul; it was a marathon not a sprint. As stated above, following pressure from campaigners in the south and north, Jubilee 2000 continued beyond the year 2000, albeit at a lower level of mobilisation, and with a lower international profile.

A further central issue which contributed to the south/north tension was: who spoke for the campaign? The lack of a transnational decision-making process proved to be a serious fault-line, when some northern campaigns gave a qualified positive response to the 1999 Cologne Debt Deal, without discussion with southern campaigns. This deal was announced by the G7 Summit which met in Cologne, surrounded by a human chain of Jubilee 2000 campaigners from across the globe, and to which the millions of signatures to the Jubilee petition were submitted. The Cologne debt deal increased the level of debt cancellation on offer, but kept structural adjustment conditions in place. A new condition was added whereby debtor governments had to adopt a Poverty Reduction Strategy with the participation of civil society. Savings from debt reduction, together with aid and other resources, had to be spent implementing this plan, which first had to be endorsed by the IMF and World Bank. Commenting on the Cologne deal, the Director of Jubilee 2000 UK: "...the package was a significant step which showed the power of the debt-relief movement. 'But we are not there yet,' she added. 'We are at stage one.'"(Elliott

1999). This was seen as northern groups speaking for the south, and evoked serious anger among southern campaigners in Cologne. A spokesperson for Jubilee Zambia articulated these concerns:

“Supporters in the north ...must not be misled by claims made by G7 leaders or officials of the World Bank and IMF that "major breakthroughs" have occurred... Equally urgent is the need to listen to the voices in the south that flatly challenge the HIPC and ESAF approaches as unacceptable” (Henriot 1999).

In addition to the solidarity relationship, there is often a donor relationship between southern and northern campaigning groups. In fact, most southern debt campaigns depended on northern campaigns, and organisations for funding (Buxton 2004). The Uganda Debt Network, for example, had 33 northern NGO funders in 1999, some funding specific projects, others providing core funding (Uganda Debt Network 1999). Funding of southern groups by northern NGOs, while a form of solidarity, can also operate as a form of control. Northern NGO donors may choose to support groups most closely aligned with their own perspectives (Buxton 2004, Keet 2000), and so strengthen the NGOs’ overall power position within transnational networks. The Philippines Freedom from Debt Coalition, however, pointed out that southern campaigns are not solely in a dependent relationship with their northern funders. Although in receipt of northern NGO funding, “the partnerships we forge are not mainly to get assistance. FDC [Freedom from Debt Coalition] is a major player in the global campaign” (Freedom from Debt Coalition 1992). As pointed out above, southern groups also influenced the agenda of transnational networks, inserting their own priorities.

Contested framings of debt

The ability to shape people’s minds is the fundamental source of power in the network society (Sey and Castells 2004). How issues are framed is therefore central to the common cause which underpins the power of transnational civil society campaigning, and reflects the level of change sought, and understandings of the power to be contested.

A major fault-line between the south and north in transnational debt campaigning was how debt should be framed – as unpayable because of the unacceptable human cost, or as illegitimate because of the power relations surrounding the creation, and management of debt. In lobbying creditor governments and institutions, the human development argument was easier to run, as it chimed with the dominant discourse of human development/ poverty reduction. But southern groups pointed out that framing debt purely as a human development problem, implicitly legitimised it. They highlighted the historic, economic, ecological, and social debt owed to them. An historic debt is owed because European colonial powers built their own development on wealth plundered from the south. This historic debt dwarfed the amounts now claimed by northern creditors’ from southern countries. In addition to its historic roots,

debt arises from the current unfair and exploitative international economic and financial systems. The Southern Peoples' Ecological Debt Creditors' Alliance argues that an ecological debt is owed because of the overuse of the resources of the planet by industrialised countries, through their model of production, and consumption. This process, which is accelerated by globalisation, has led to environmental degradation, resource depletion, climate change and other negative effects (Deuda Ecológica 2008). Loans made to past repressive regimes, such as in Argentina, the Philippines and South Africa, have been defined as 'odious'. These loans neither benefited the people who ended up burdened by that debt, nor had they consented to those loans being taken on, and this was known to the creditors at the time of granting the loans (Hanlon 2006). Further, where private loans have been converted to public debt in order to bail out lenders, this has also been declared illegitimate by debt campaigners (Hanlon 2006). Southern groups placed the conventional debtor/creditor relationship on its head, asking 'who owes what to whom', and declared themselves to be the creditors.

The legitimacy of debt had been challenged in the south from the start of the crisis. For the Philippines Freedom from Debt Coalition, set up in 1988 and the longest running debt campaign in the world, freedom from illegitimate debt was always central to their campaign. In the early 1990s they documented the fraudulent nature of some of their loans, and opposed their repayment (Pineda-Ofreneo 1991). Jubilee South Africa delegitimised as 'apartheid debt' both the debt run up by the apartheid regime, and that incurred by neighbouring countries, as a result of aggression from South Africa (Rustomjee 2004). Given the heavy price paid by Zambia, as leader of the front lines states in the struggle against apartheid, Jubilee Zambia asked:

Is it ethically acceptable to expect Zambia to pay back debts entered into because of a moral fight against apartheid?should not some form of reparations be expected from those who profited from investments, trade and political support that maintained the Pretoria regime in power for so many years? (Jubilee Zambia 2003a).

In Argentina a court decision in 2000 recognised the illegitimate nature of much of the debt dating from the brutal military regime 1976 to 1983 (Pettifor, Cisneros and Olmos-Gaona 2001). Nicaraguan and Honduran Jubilee campaigns were fuelled by the odious/illegitimate nature of their debts. This motivated: '...a wider variety of organisations for whom technical issues on debt... normally been something they would've disengaged from; something so complex, with the locus of power around it so far away'. (Interviewee INGO Central America).

Creditor country campaigns also questioned the legitimacy of their respective state's claims. They pointed to the use of export guarantee agencies to promote lending in the interest of the creditor country. The French debt campaign, *Plateforme Dette et Développement*, highlighted that almost half of debt cancelled by France resulted from "irresponsible, if not criminal", export guarantees by COFACE, France's export guarantee agency, to countries at war,

and notorious dictatorships such as Iraq, Nigeria and Zaire (Merckaert 2005). Ninety-five per cent of British debt was also run up through its Export Credit Guarantee Department, and most of these loans “aggressively promoted British exports, particularly arms. This is part of creditors’ instrument in their competition against other OECD countries” (Pettifor 1998, 119).

It was not, therefore, a simple case that southern groups focussed on the illegitimacy of debt, and northern groups focused on its unpayability, but which frame was most centrally promoted. The underlying question was: should the aim be to delegitimise the debt, or to focus on its terrible human impact? Where did the solution to the crisis lie – in debtors repudiating illegitimate debt, or in creditors cancelling unpayable debt? While no Jubilee group rejected the argument that debt had unacceptable human costs, southern campaigners pointed out that the human development argument bypasses the question of how the debts were accumulated, and who benefited (Nacpil no date). To focus solely on unpayable debt could lead campaigns in the north towards a charity approach, while disempowering southern people who would have to plead for cancellation on the basis of their poverty, rather than assert their right to repudiate illegitimate debt (Keet 2000).

As pointed out above, the understandings on which the common cause which holds campaigns together are based, are often fragile, with tensions arising, leading to the need for renegotiation. Such a renegotiation took place at the transnational Jubilee 2000 meeting in Rome 1998, with the meaning of unpayable redefined to include odious debt lent to repressive regimes. This more radical framing can be seen in southern debt declarations:

The debt is illegitimate because, in large measure, it was contracted by dictatorships... as well as by governments which were formally democratic, but corrupt. Most of the money was not used to benefit the people who are now being required to pay it back” (Tegucigalpa Declaration 1999).

Latin American campaigners went on to appeal to northern campaigns not to call for less than southern groups were proposing (Tegucigalpa Declaration 1999).

From an African perspective, the Lusaka Declaration 1999 endorsed “the collective repudiation of illegitimate foreign debt payments”. But there can be a fault-line between agreed discourse and how this is actually operationalised. Keet (2000) points to slippage from more radical frames agreed at the Rome conference, to calls for ‘debt relief’ and ‘debt reduction’, which happened when northern debt groups were ‘grappling’ with their governments (Keet 2000, 462). A particular slippage was privileging ‘unpayable’ over ‘odious’ or ‘illegitimate’ debt. This reflects the move made by many northern debt groups to align their analyses and proposals with those of the most progressive positions of international decision-makers, in order to leverage the participation spaces which opened up in the early 1990s.

Setting up Jubilee South

The outcome of these tensions was the launch of Jubilee South at a south/south summit in Johannesburg in November 1999, involving representatives of southern Jubilee campaigns, and social movements (Jubilee South no date). There had been a proposal to set up a radical world debt movement based on ideological affinity, involving southern and northern groups rather than one based on southern identity, but an autonomous southern network was the preferred strategy of those promoting Jubilee South (Interviewee Belgium No. 2). While some northern campaigns saw the establishment of Jubilee South as a split (Interviewee Belgium No. 1, Interviewee Britain, Interviewee Germany No. 2), Jubilee South aimed to rearticulate south/north relations, rather than to break them.

An outcome of the south-south summit was an invitation to south/north dialogues at regional level. The aim was to explore areas of convergence, strengthen areas of agreement, and identify differences on major issues, where further dialogue would be necessary (Jubilee South no date). Two south/north dialogues were subsequently called by Jubilee South, one in Dakar in 2000, and the other one in Cuba in 2005. A significant innovation was that northern groups were invited to co-convene the latter events, including developing the agenda, and managing conference processes, thus modelling a more equitable form of engagement. This was not a simple south/north ideological division, however, as differences also existed between southern groups, and some northern groups maintained radical positions. Differences in Latin America led to the establishment of Latindadd parallel to Jubilee South America. While Jubilee Zambia made common cause with Jubilee South on apartheid debt and on the role of the IMF and World Bank,

We made it very clear that we would be inside as well, engaging with the IMF and World Bank, we would be engaging in the process of debt reduction (Interviewee Zambia).

Following the establishment of Jubilee South, efforts were made to bridge the gap, which had opened up between southern and northern groups. Part of this involved northern groups placing greater emphasis on the illegitimacy of debt. Influenced by Jubilee South, the Norwegian debt campaign organised a tribunal in 2002, on Norway's illegitimate debt, focusing on a particular government lending programme, which sold defective ships to southern countries. The tribunal, facilitated by a Supreme Court judge, concluded that this debt should be cancelled immediately, and unconditionally (SLUG 2003), and in 2006 a newly elected Norwegian government cancelled this debt unconditionally (Abildsnes 2007). Norway also made funds available to UNCTAD, and the World Bank, to research the concept of odious debt in international law (Jubilee USA 2008), bringing the issue of illegitimate debt to the heart of the international system. Before this, creditor governments and international institutions refused to even hear questions on the legitimacy of debt, with government ministers referring to this as "pulling on a dead horse" (Interviewee Netherlands No. 2) or "shouting in the woods with a high risk of getting one's

mouth filled with cones” (Abildsnes 2007, 6). In 2007, debt campaigns in G7 country debt campaigns published a report, documenting examples of illegitimate debts arising from their respective countries’ lending (Joint NGO Report. 2007). When President Correa set up a debt audit to determine the legitimacy of Ecuador’s debt, he invited experts from southern and northern debt groups to take part. Following completion of this audit, Ecuador repudiated part of its debt in 2008 (Molina Vera 2008).

3. Analysing south/north relations within transnational campaigning

In light of the difficulties, which arose between southern and northern groups within debt campaigning, a liberal view of civil society as a normative, autonomous space, positioned between market and state – a view widely held by civil society groups themselves (Cohen and Arato 1992) - is inadequate. Rather, civil society reflects the existing inequalities within the international system (Munck 2004, Pasha1998). The debt crisis, which created a stark divide between creditor and debtor countries, interacted with the neoliberal counter revolution to create an increasingly unequal world order. These inequalities then impacted on south/north relations within debt campaigning. Tensions arose, not just in relation to northern groups’ dominance within debt campaigning, but also because of the levers of power, which could be operated by northern groups within the international system. Conditionality, promoting liberalisation, de-regulation and privatisation, was a key tool used by the international system to enforce neoliberalism on debtor governments, and became a major area of contention within transnational debt movements.

Some northern groups, while not supporting the neoliberal economic agenda, advocated that ‘positive conditionality’ be attached to debt reduction, aid and concessionary loans (e.g. social conditions laying out how these resources should be spent), in order to pressure southern governments to direct resources towards marginalised people. Southern groups, fearing a further weakening of their fragile sovereignty (Keck and Sikkink 1998), resisted the redirection of state accountability away from citizens, and towards external donors, and creditors, calling rather for ‘conditionality-from-below’ (Jubilee Zambia 2003b, 2001), involving civil society groups in monitoring how money released by debt cancellation would be used. A purely structural explanation of the south/north relationship, however, can only be partial, and runs the risk of suggesting that a north/south divide is inevitable (Doherty 2006). The actual processes through which south/north relationships operate within transnational campaigns, must also be examined.

Transnational civil society groups operate through different organisational forms which may impact differently on south/north linkages. A major distinction can be made between solidarity groups supporting people in struggle, motivated by a common ideological commitment (‘those violated share our cause’), and transnational advocacy networks, which tackle specific issues

from a perspective of principles/rights, regardless of the ideological affinity of those affected (Keck and Sikkink 1998, 15). Relations between southern and northern participants in these respective formats are subject to different degrees of conflict (Bob 2005, Keet 2000). Bob (2005) presents transnational civil society as a marketplace for transnational support, with demand (from southern groups) greatly outweighing supply (from northern groups). While he accepts that northern groups are motivated by altruism and principles, the needs of organisations providing support (INGOs) play a major role in shaping which southern groups get international backing, and how issues are framed, and targeted. Some issues have greater international resonance at different times, such as the environment, or human rights. Northern groups may, therefore, influence how southern groups they are supporting frame issues, so that they will resonate with current international discourses.

In terms of the debt movements, framing the problem within a human development perspective, resonated better with the discourses of international donors and financial institutions, than did the concept of illegitimate debt. The south/north interface is further complicated by the fact that NGOs from the north may set up 'territorial deployments' in southern countries - local offices which may become 'domesticated' over time, employing local people, and establishing locally based management structures (Latham 2001). These local offices maintain strong links back to their parent bodies. Sorj (2005, 23) goes further suggesting that establishing local offices in southern countries, Northern NGOs may be "contracting some of the best local cadres and sometimes even "buying" local NGOs". A range of questions arise in relation to local offices of northern NGOs in southern countries. Are southern chapters of northern NGOs part of local civil society, or are they operating from an externally set agenda? Whose voice is heard – the representatives of northern NGOs, or autonomous southern organisations? A study of IMF engagement with civil society groups in a number of African countries, found that the few IMF contacts have tended to involve the local offices of northern based NGOs, such as Oxfam (Scholte 2012).

Bob (2005) and Keet (2000) argue that solidarity groups are less likely than INGOs to play a role in reshaping the goals and targets of southern groups given the greater degree of shared understandings which underpins the solidarity relationship. It is not surprising, therefore, that tensions can be more acute in advocacy networks than in solidarity groups. According to Keck and Sikkink (1998), it is difficult to sustain advocacy networks made up of both those directly affected by the problem being tackled, and those motivated by altruism. This difference can lead to network breakdown and new networks emerging based on 'communities of fate' (those experiencing the problem being contested). In the context of the south/north tensions which arose within the debt movements, Reitan (2007) describes Jubilee 2000 as a hybrid network, involving both elements of northern 'altruistic solidarity', and directly involved activists from the south, with Jubilee South emerging as an identity based network of those affected by the debt problem.

Relationships within transnational networks do not necessarily operate evenly between members. Regional networks can play a significant role, as they did within debt campaigning, through Eurodad, Afrodad and later Latindadd. At an operational level, however, south/north relations took the form of bilateral relations to a significant extent, with northern groups choosing to work mainly with those with whom they had a fair amount of common ground. Radical groups in France, for example, linked into parallel groups in the south, while Spain's Jubilee campaign worked with faith-based groups in Latin America, rather than with the emerging radical voices of Jubilee South (Interviewee France; Interviewee Germany No. 1; Interviewee Ireland; Interviewee Spain). Differences arising from the disparate positioning of their countries within the international system can be more easily factored into bilateral relationships, as can issues of decision-making and voice. Evidence of this was the absence of reports of significant stresses within these bilateral relations during the course of this research.

It is more difficult to absorb these differences at a wider transnational level. The most acute tensions arose in relation to the international profile of Jubilee, where different experiences of the debt crisis, and differing ideological positions on how to tackle it, came together, and where there were no agreed organisational structures to try to manage differences. While at the level of mobilising, operating through a loose, decentred network of autonomous groups was very effective, when it came to the interface with international decision-makers and the media, Jubilee 2000 became re-centred with the UK, the strongest national campaign and promoter of the transnational Jubilee network, becoming the spokesperson. This poses challenging questions about organising transnational civil society campaigns, when more diffuse, heterogeneous civil society groups as part of 'globalisation-from-below', meet the more united, homogenous 'globalisation-from-above' (Falk 1997), within which the international institutions dealing with debt are situated.

In terms of how the south/north inequalities within transnational civil society can be tackled, some thinkers highlight the need for action from northern NGOs to 'empower' the south, to enable them to operate within global networks (Katz 2006). A range of absences within southern groups which need to be tackled, are highlighted – lack of funds, lack of capacity, lack of access to central decision-makers (Buxton 2004), and lack of the "organisational and political know-how needed to engage successfully in global networks" (Katz 2006, 346). From a southern perspective, however, there are also weaknesses in northern groups' ability to tackle global injustices. The limited political space in the north, with the media dominating politics, leads to an over reliance on marketing, and public relations approaches to campaigning, and the absence of sustained mobilisations. As a result, social movement approaches are stronger in the south, and campaigning is stronger in the north, albeit that social movements occur in the north and campaigning take place in the south (Bendana 2005). Doherty and Doyle (2012, 172) also highlight differences between activism in the south and the north:

“Protest in the north is a temporary coming together of the voice of protest on a particular day.... while in the south, communities protest where they already exist. They do not go home to a non-political space after the protest is over”.

Sorje (2005, 14) relates this weakness in northern mobilisations to the emergence of NGOs in recent times, who, lacking a significant social base from which they can exert political pressure, advance their agendas through ad hoc social mobilisations, aimed at gaining media coverage.

The struggles within the debt movements between south and north, outlined above, can be seen as a contestation of the ‘second face of power’. The first face of power involves the direct operation of power as when one actor induces another to do something s/he would not otherwise have done (Dahl 1986). The second face of power relates to the indirect operation of power through the in-built biases in organisations, in terms of how decisions are made, how agendas are set, including issues being kept off the agenda. Power can be exercised by limiting the scope of decision-making to ‘relatively safe issues’ (e.g. focussing on the human impact of debt, rather than on its illegitimacy), or limiting the agenda to issues which suit dominant groups’ preferences (Bachrach and Baratz 1962). As was outlined in section 2 above, tensions within transnational debt campaigns arose in relation to organisational and agenda setting issues. This contestation of the second face of power within debt campaigning, led to a reconfiguration of south/north relations with the establishment of Jubilee South, resulting in illegitimate debt becoming central to the agenda after 2000, more equitable forms of south/north engagement and dispersed leadership.

The differences between southern and northern contexts, perspectives and practices, together with the struggles to which they gave rise within transnational debt campaigning, suggest that claims that a global civil society is emerging within a ‘post sovereign’ world (Kaldor 2003, Scholte 1999), are premature. Rather, transnational civil society is a process whereby national groups continually aggregate up into transnational civil society, while simultaneously disaggregating back into its constituent parts. Sorj (2005) presents the south/north divide as a key fault-line in the concept of a global civil society. While the diffusion of ideas across national and regional boundaries is a major source of social change, he points out that inequalities between the south/north have a significant impact on the intellectual and material resources needed to create global agendas, with ‘universal validity’ (Sorj, 20). Rather than a universalist agenda forming the basis of transnational civil society, however, there is a tendency for northern networks to claim the global and the universal, while southern networks are defined as local and provincial (Evans 2008, Basu 2000). Southern debt activists, for example, pointed out that European groups tended to define debtor country campaigns as southern, while they defined their own campaigns as international.

Conclusion

Transnational debt campaigning involved two struggles: one was to create and maintain a strong common cause; the other was the struggle for debt cancellation, and to challenge the power relations within which debt was generated, and managed. These were not parallel struggles, but interacted with each other, as the methods of engagement (lobbying or mobilisations), and the different discourse on debt (unpayable debt, or illegitimate debt), generated tensions within the common cause underpinning transnational debt campaigning, particularly along the south/north interface. The south/north relationship within debt movements was, therefore, a dynamic one driven by the continual interaction of solidarity and conflict, in an effort to escape the impact of the inequalities of the hierarchically structured international system. Periodic efforts to establish strong south/north networking, exposed tensions which led, in the case of Fondad, to the dissolution of the south/north link, and in the case of Jubilee 2000, to a reconfiguration of power with the establishment of Jubilee South. This process meant that power differences were continually challenged, and new solidarities were developed in an effort to resolve these, leading to new contradictions.

While the tensions generated within debt campaigning over decades, posed serious difficulties, and were very painful for many, the intensity of the debate about the respective roles of southern and northern groups reflected the success of the campaign in engaging strongly across the south and north, and also across diverging political positions. The fact that these tensions led to a reconfiguration of power within debt movements, rather than disengagement, or a split, can be seen as a commitment to maintaining common cause. This commitment, however, is modified by organisational exigencies and perspectives, particularly of northern groups, whose commitment to particular campaigns ebbs and flows over time, as happened in the case of debt.

The tensions which arise within transnational campaigning along the south/north interface cannot be wished away by cosmopolitan concepts of global civil society, pursuing a universal agenda which resonates across such a global society. This suggests that unitary south/north campaigns, organised around a clear, universal message, and targeted strategy – all considered essential for successful campaigns – may not maximise the strength of the common cause transnationally. Campaigns need to be shaped to take different political, social and cultural contexts into account, and recognise existing power inequalities. South/north relations within transnational networks, however, are not static. It was suggested by a number of interviewees during the course of this research, that the relationship was already changing due to the changes in world power with, for example, India, and Brazil more centrally positioned as members of the G20. It was also suggested that the practice whereby northern groups gathered information from southern groups, and represented these groups to northern decision-makers, is becoming obsolete. Southern groups are no longer as dependent on the north to advocate on their behalf – due to technological diffusion, decreased cost of travel, and a critical mass of southern

groups, they now have greater access to the means to represent themselves. While change is certainly underway, it is important not to exaggerate the extent to which this is reshaping south/north relations, or challenging long established power relationships between southern and northern civil society groups. What is important, however, is to reflect on the diverse experiences of transnational campaigning, such as that on debt, over the past decades, to identify what it is that divides us is, and consider the extent to which these divisions can be overcome.

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Internationalising the struggle for justice in Bhopal: balancing the local, national and transnational

Tomás Mac Sheoin

Abstract:

The concept of transnational advocacy network (TAN) has been of seminal importance in interpretations of the internationalization of social movements and campaigns. This has resulted in the neglect of the national: the national advocacy network (NAN) concept has been proposed to address this and allow for exploration of the neglected 'process of local-national-transnational activism' (Kraemer et al 2013:5). These concepts are considered in a case study of the movement for justice in Bhopal, a movement and campaign which has operated on local, national and transnational scales.

Keywords:

Transnational advocacy network (TAN), national advocacy network (NAN), corporate campaign, movement for justice in Bhopal, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), shareholder transnational advocacy network (STAN), boomerang model, internationalization conflict coalition

Introduction

When we try to describe and explain how campaigns and movements internationalise, one of the concepts most used is transnational advocacy networks (TANs): TANs operate through the boomerang effect, where local movements use transnational allies to place pressure on their allies' governments and inter-governmental organisations (IGOs) to place pressure on the national government that the local movement has been unsuccessfully pressing. As noted by the seminal work on TANs, in the boomerang effect, local movements 'bypass their state and directly search out international allies to try to bring pressure on their states from the outside' (Keck and Sikkink 1998:12). One characteristic of TANs which is often noted is that international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) may have different aims to those of local groups, leading to accusations that INGOs are using local movements for their own ends and care little whether campaign results eventually benefit local communities and groups in struggle. This criticism is seldom levied against small solidarity groups but mainly against large INGOs like Greenpeace, Oxfam or ActionAid. INGOs in TANs are often accused of making local groups dependent on them for financial support, while others suggest local movements have reframed their struggles to satisfy INGOs and possibly moved dangerously away from the actual aims and motivations of local struggles. (Bob 2005, Lerche 2008).

Similarly victories by TANs at the international level may not be to the benefit of the local movement. The classic example here is the struggle over the Narmada dams which 'led to several unintended long-term structural changes in Washington, DC rather than in India' (Randeria 2003:316), while

'Transnational linkages with the campaign against multilateral banks led over time to a shift of agendas and priorities. Mobilization and strategic action came to be focused on the eviction of the World Bank from the valley just as grievances came to be articulated increasingly in terms of an environmental discourse with international legitimacy and translatability. Gradually a radical 'no large dams' agenda, for which there was growing transnational support, eclipsed concerns about appropriate technological safeguards, displacement, equity and justice. The vocabulary of the movement as much as the timing of local action was often determined by demands of the global arena and transnational constituency building instead of seeking to work through regional and national political institutions'. (Randeria 2003:315).

The TAN concept, partly due to its origins in the study of international politics, has mainly been confined to the analysis of campaigns targeting states and IGOs. McAteer and Pulver have adapted the TAN concept to a specific type of corporate campaign: 'a subset of corporate-focused TANs, namely ones in which corporate shareholders play a central role in the network. We call them *shareholder transnational advocacy networks* (STANs)'. (2009:2). STANs resemble TANs in that they emerge when local avenues are blocked: they occur

'when local communities, living at points of production or extraction, are blocked in their efforts to influence the operating practices of a corporate subsidiary...In such situations, local communities engage in the strategy of creating external linkages to other groups in order to drive change via top-down pressure on senior executives in the corporation's headquarters. The subsidiary's parent corporation becomes the target of activism. (McAteer and Pulver 2009 :3).

McAteer and Pulver studied connections between two local movements in Colombia and a growing movement in core countries which attempts to influence transnational corporations (TNCs) through shareholder activism and socially responsible investment. This type of network therefore calls on a very different range of groups: 'central actors in a STAN are large corporate shareholders, such as pension funds, religious communities, and socially responsible investment firms.' (McAteer and Pulver 2009: 5).

As den Hond and de Bakker note, McAteer and Pulver's work involves a valuable extension of the boomerang model to TNCs, but, by concentrating on shareholder activism it 'does not cover all possible pathways the boomerang effect could follow' (den Hond and de Bakker 2012). Having examined a number of cases of anti-sweatshop activism and Free Burma TANs, they conclude: 'the boomerang model is a broader phenomenon than is acknowledged in either the Keck and Sikkink or the McAteer and Pulver models. We therefore propose to refer to 'boomerang politics' as a general model in which NGOs and/or activist groups, on behalf of affected parties, exert pressure on primary targets in order for them to influence the ultimate target'. (den Hond and de Bakker 2012).

This transnational emphasis has resulted in a neglect of the national, a common characteristic of much writing about globalisation and global civil society (Laxer and Halperin 2003). However some recent contributions to the literature have begun to bring the national back in. McAteer and Pulver's work, for example, also pays attention to the national level, including tensions between the different levels of the campaign. In an article on Bhopal and Greenpeace Mac Sheoin (2012) argues that greater victories against Dow Chemical were scored by the Bhopal campaign's supporters and allies in India than were scored by its transnational supporters. Research has also begun to appear on regional and national variations in global campaigns. In a useful article on anti-sweatshop campaigns, Bair and Palpaceur (2012) argue that national political, cultural and economic contexts shape anti-sweatshop campaigns, reporting marked variation in the composition and leadership of these campaigns across Canada, Europe and the United States. Similarly recent research on the anti-globalization movement, originally presented as an almost-unitary, global movement, has begun to look at the existence and history of national anti-globalization movements, though only in the core countries of Europe and North America. (Della Porta 2007; Flesher Fominaya and Cox 2013).

A recent paper by Kraemer et al, based on a case study of opposition to London-listed TNC Vedanta Resources in Nyamgiri, Orissa, India, argues that 'too little attention has been paid to national advocacy networks (NANS) and the heterogeneity of local and national conditions under which domestic movements seek transnational support'. (Kraemer et al 2013:3). Critiquing the core/periphery boomerang model as failing to 'capture the full diversity of conditions under which local social movements transnationalise' (Kraemer et al 2013:5), they suggest the NAN concept can address the domestic gap in these studies and allow for the exploration of the neglected 'process of local-national-transnational activism' (Kraemer et al 2013:5). They outline their concept of NANS as follows

"NANS consist of national activists, NGOs, community organizations, research organizations and independent media groups that are engaged in national-level advocacy on behalf of the numerous local struggles in remote parts of the country. NANS, with their focus on domestic goals, operate alongside internationally oriented actors and, as we will show, this may result in collaboration but also in conflict and disruption. NANS can be conceived of as 'national social movement communities' (Staggenborg 2002) at the often neglected meso level of analysis in social movement studies. (McAdam 2003). Our assertion is that, at the domestic level, NANS operate according to the same principles as TANS –empowering local grassroots activists through the provision of technical and strategic know-how and leveraging local information into broader campaigns to influence national power holders. We argue that, rather than lacking influence at the national level as assumed in the boomerang model, NANS and the grassroots groups they support often do have various pathways of influencing the state and corporations.' (Kraemer et al 2013:5)

Kraemer et al identify four mechanisms of both internationalization and localization: for the former, they are scale shift, brokerage, recruitment and publicity, for the latter, scale shift, recruitment, politicization and strategic

adaptation. They note TANs are presented as static, while they are in fact dynamic and change over time as campaigns respond to changes in circumstances, in some cases transnationalising, in others returning to local struggle. These changes are shown when Kraemer et al proceed to trace the activities of local, national and transnational networks in relation to the struggle against Vedanta, outlining a history of the struggle in four phases: 'local resistance, NAN support and emerging international interest, rapid internationalization, and conflict and relocalization' (Kraemer et al 2013:9). Supplementing the boomerang model, which suggests movements internationalise as a result of political weakness, blockage or failure at the local level, Kraemer et al suggest that NANs internationalise to provide an additional area in which they may contest the TNC. They also suggest counter-organising by state and capital are important factors shaping localization and internationalisation strategies. They report on criticism of the Vedanta TAN by NAN elements, thus positing conflict between TAN and NAN as important to the development of campaigns. Finally, we should note that, while most research on TANs and networks has concentrated on organisations, research also has to take into account initiatives by individuals. Here Kreamer et al concentrate on one person, Jike, who acted as a contact for both NANs and TANs in obtaining access to the affected hill-people and who evolved, over the period, into a symbol of the resistance to Vedanta before switching sides to become a supporter of the Vedanta project.

Complicating the model

Kreamer et al's paper is a welcome addition to the literature on internationalising movements, as it helps complicate our view of how campaigns operate locally, nationally and transnationally and thus brings us closer to the messy reality in which social movements exist. As already noted, their paper is based on a case study of one movement in India. This article, also based on a case study from the same country, intends to support Kreamer's model by showing its applicability to another movement and thus adding to the empirical base supporting their argument. But it also attempts to further complicate things by adding some further observations about local movements, NANs and TANs based on the Bhopal case study.

To begin with, we must add to the reasons for internationalizing anti-corporate struggles the desire to fight the TNC not only in the country in which the project is contested, but also in the TNC's home country. This is based on the reasonably straightforward analysis that TNC decisions are ultimately made in the home and not the host country. Thus internationalising is a way of bringing the struggle home to the TNC and attempting to influence the TNC where its decisions are made. This is the rationale behind TANs attending company AGMs, shareholder activism, etc. As Zavestowski points out, the difference between the Bhopal campaign and the majority of transnational social movement organisations that have been the object of study is that for the Bhopal movement, 'transnational activism is not simply a tool, but rather

necessitated by the origins of a movement's grievance.' (Zavestowski 2009:386). It internationalised because of the nature of (one of) its target(s) –the US-based TNC Union Carbide. Moreover, this internationalisation became more important in the Bhopal case when Union Carbide abandoned the Indian market and the movement no longer had a corporate target locally and nationally. From that stage on, until Union Carbide was taken over by another TNC, Dow Chemical, in 2001, all anti-corporate organizing had to be transnational.

As Kreamer et al also note, TANs are presented as static, while they are in fact dynamic and changing. This is particularly obvious in the Bhopal case, with a wide ranging variety of actors involved at different times. Partly this can be explained by the variety of channels that the campaign used in its search for justice. On the legal front, those involved included Bhopal Action Resource Centre (BARC), the Permanent People's Tribunal, Earthrights, individual lawyers; on the medical front, International Medical Commission on Bhopal, Bhopal Medical Appeal, Medico-Friend Circle, Voluntary Health Association of India, Drug Forum. To further complicate the model, we should note that TAN members and initiators can also be members and initiators of NANs in their home countries. Here the example of BARC is useful: the first activity of the American TAN in 1985 was to hold a conference at which a NAN –the Citizens' Commission on Bhopal- was formed. Later, as well as initiating the International Coalition for Justice in Bhopal in 1986, it also initiated the Campaign for Justice in Bhopal in December 1995 'bringing together numerous American environmental and social justice organisations' in yet another NAN (Morehouse 1997). There are also tensions within TAN organisations themselves, which can result in changes in practice of organisations, leading to changes in campaigns.

However this emphasis on conflict within elements of the campaign must also be extended to conflicts between the NAN and the local movement, conflicts between different elements in the NAN and, finally, conflicts within the local movement itself. While Kreamer et al focus on problems and tensions caused locally by the TAN it should also be noted that NAN interventions in local areas can be problematic and a source of tension for local movements. We can also observe conflicts within the local movement in Bhopal, which are evident from the existence of different local groups: the local movement is fragmented, rather than united. We also need to note that NANs are also dynamic and often fragmented and conflictual. Kreamer et al note the importance of individuals, but confine this to the issue of which local individuals are recruited to represent the movement by the TAN. The Bhopal campaign also shows the importance of individuals, as well as organisations, in keeping campaign NANs and TANs active over a long period.

Finally there is the problematic term advocacy: the origin of the term in research on attempts to influence IGOs is central: TANs were by definition advocating or speaking on behalf of excluded groups in international negotiations and IGO meetings. Similarly Kreamer et al (2013: 5) suggest

“NANs operate according to the same principles as TANs –empowering local grassroots activists through the provision of technical and strategic know-how and leveraging local information into broader campaigns to influence national power holders.” But more than advocacy is going on in NANs: there is also action. Advocacy implies a polite presentation of positions in a rational process of negotiation and deliberation; it ignores the ways in which NANs in particular, but in some case also TANs, confront corporations and states in a most impolite manner through protest, occupation and various types of direct action. In the Bhopal case Greenpeace’s campaign involved not only the production of reports and lobbying of IGOs but also deliveries of barrels of toxic waste to various TNC facilities and locations as well as other protest activities involving action, direct action to be precise.

Bhopal: local, national and transnational networks

The Bhopal campaign is a useful example of such a complicated campaign for a number of reasons

- 1) The campaign has consistently operated across three scales –local, national and transnational
- 2) The campaign has operated at these scales because it has targets at each of these scales -the local state (MP), the national state (GoI) and TNCs (UCC and Dow)
- 3) It provides evidence of a national boomerang effect when the local movement, with support from NAN elements, pressured the national government to influence the behaviour and policies of the Madhya Pradesh state government
- 4) As the movement has been in existence for nearly 30 years we have empirical evidence of various attempts at alliances and coalitions both nationally and transnationally over a long time period.
- 5) This long time period allows us to observe changes in alliances, tactics and targets. As the campaign internationalised before the advent of the internet we can see differences in pre- and post-internet mobilization.
- 6) While TANs are understood to target the state and IGOs, the Bhopal campaign TAN is entrusted with running what is, in essence, a corporate campaign, using the whole range of tactics and allies such campaigns have available in their repertoire. Furthermore the TAN involved not only the mobilisation of transnational solidarity with the Bhopal survivors, but also the expression of solidarity by the survivors with other communities involved in toxic struggles, and also mobilisation of TAN

members to pressurise the national and local state in India. These actions extend our notions of what TANs can do. ¹

- 7) It also allows us to see tensions between various members of the local movement, NAN and TAN.
- 8) Finally the local movement itself is fragmented, consisting of a variety of groups, operating at different scales, in different systems, and choosing different tactics and targets.

Regrettably for space reasons it will not be possible to do for Bhopal what Kraemer et al did for Nyamgiri. Instead a number of individual episodes in the long struggle will be examined. The reasons for this are straightforward. Kraemer et al's study is of a LULU campaign, with a small number of INGOs (ActionAid, Amnesty, Survival) involved in the TAN and a similarly small NAN. In comparison the Bhopal struggle involved a multiplicity of issues and fora and mobilised a multiplicity of communities, groups, organisations and NGOs at different times.

Before turning to these episodes, it's necessary to give a broad outline of the campaign, which has two main bases –livelihood and justice issues. The campaign grew from the public response to a massive leak of toxic gases such as MIC from a Union Carbide pesticides factory in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India in December 1984, and to the failure by both state and TNC to adequately deal with the results of the gas leak, whether through providing treatment for its health effects, adequately compensating the survivors, investigating the causes of the gas leak or punishing the guilty. It's possible to discern two major streams of orientation and activity in the Bhopal campaign: one was concerned with the

¹ While TAN members are generally seen as being mobilised to put pressure on their own governments, corporations and IGOs, the International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (ICJB) also mobilised them to put direct pressure on both the local and national Indian government. Two examples will illustrate this. The campaign called on its supporters in response to state repression and to support specific demands in particular campaigns. For example, in support of the *Jeene Ka Haq* (Right to Life) campaign which began on the 20th Feb 2007 with a *dharna* (sit-down strike), followed by an indefinite fast: over the first 25 days of the campaign, over 2000 faxes were sent by international supporters to the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister's Office and more than 400 telephone calls were made to various officials of the state government. (*Times Of India* 18/3/07). The following year, in support of the 2008 *padyatra* (long march) over 13,400 faxes from 18 countries were sent to the Indian Prime Minister's Office.

The campaign sought also to form alliances not only with INGOs but also with communities in struggle against TNCs and toxics. Most TAN activities are seen as elite-oriented: attendance at AGMs, pressure on investors and regulatory authorities, lobbying of governments and IGOs. However in the Bhopal case this elite orientation was accompanied by a grass-roots orientation, shown in various attempts to form networks of other contaminated communities and victim/survivor groups. Thus, as well as attending meetings or conferences in national capitals, Bhopal delegations spoke at meetings in communities threatened by toxic capital. In Ireland, for example, Bhopal delegations spoke in communities in Cork, Leitrim, Limerick and Mayo campaigning against the pharmaceutical industry, the oil industry, incineration and fracking, while in the US they spoke to communities around Union Carbide and other chemical factories.

material effects of the gas disaster and prioritised a campaign concerning economic and medical rehabilitation of the survivors; the demand of the other stream was for justice, investigation of causes and punishment of culprits. (BSMS 2009: 32-33). The campaign has consistently raised four demands – medical care, compensation, rehabilitation and justice- though some demands were emphasised over others at different times.

For a chronological account, the first period –from 1985 to 1989- involved local struggles over health, treatment and relief and rehabilitation programmes, while the national and transnational campaigns concentrated on the legal struggle against Union Carbide –first in the US, then in the Indian courts. From 1989 to 1991 the campaign centred on a legal and political struggle against the unjust settlement cooked up by Union Carbide and the government of India. After 1991 the campaign relocalized with a struggle over the disbursement of compensation from the settlement which took place in daily grinding attendance at local courts and offices of the Madhya Pradesh state bureaucracy. This was followed by a phase which concentrated on health and treatment issues, first documenting the continued ill-health of the gas-affected, then establishing a movement -controlled health clinic. At the end of the millennium there were major developments in the campaign, with the participation of a major INGO, Greenpeace, and the production of research reports confirming toxic contamination of ground and water by waste abandoned at the factory. The campaign was further reinvigorated when the original culprit corporation Union Carbide was taken over by Dow Chemical in 2001 and a new corporate target became available. The campaign to force Dow to take responsibility for Bhopal continues to today, accompanied by various attempts to force the government of India to discharge its responsibilities to the Bhopal survivors.

The episodes chosen are the two years in the immediate aftermath of the gas leak and the longer period of anti-Dow campaigning after 1999, along with the strategic switch to health campaigning at the beginning of the 1990s. The first period allows us to see what was essentially the take-over of a spontaneous local movement by national (or at least non-local) activists, as well as the autonomous development of a TAN with minimal links to the local campaign. By contrast, the later campaign against Dow shows us a very different pattern of activity, with the locally-controlled campaign mobilising a multitude of TAN organisations, while also mobilising locally and nationally against Dow in cooperation with NAN elements, while other autonomous local movements in India also opposed the TNC. The strategic switch to health issues in the 1990s is chosen in response to Kreamer et al noting the importance of state and corporate counter-organising, which I suggest should be extended to more general state and corporate action, in influencing in particular the internationalising of campaigns: this shows a campaign response to state action in appropriating the medical area as a state-controlled activity.

Targets

The main targets of the campaign were the local (Madhya Pradesh) state, the national state and two TNCs, Union Carbide and Dow. However, as is common in corporate campaigns, a variety of different targets with different connections to the main targets were also subject to action (Manheim 2001; Mac Sheoin 2014). Thus, for example, Dow's position as sponsor of the Olympics made the London Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (LOGOG) a target for TAN activity while various shareholders in the TNC were targeted, some of whom joined the TAN by placing resolutions on the agenda of the TNCs' annual general meetings. However TAN elements were also interested in targeting the international chemical and pesticides industry, as well as various state and international regulatory bodies.

On the state side, the federal structure in India creates fertile ground for a national boomerang model. In the case of Bhopal, the major administrative bureaucracy –the Bhopal Gas Tragedy Relief and Rehabilitation Department (BGTRRD)- responsible for rehabilitation lies at the state level: however, funding and major policy decisions were made by the national state in Delhi. Most of the livelihood struggles targeted the Madhya Pradesh government and BGTRRD. However, when activists fail at the state level, they can turn to the national through petitioning, lobbying and protesting. Following the settlement in 1989, the main target moved from the national state to the local state, as the disbursement of compensation was in the hands of the MP bureaucracy. As Basu (1994) observes, from 1990 the local state became more important, with actions by the local state –some tinged with communal and electoral implications- affecting the movement's base, for example the closing down of the rehabilitation workshops that were the base for the BGPMUS, when compensation from the 1989 settlement was being doled out. Another example was the "anti-encroachment drive" (slum demolition) initiated by the BJP government in 1991 whose victims were overwhelmingly Muslim and gas – affected. ² (PUCL 1991).

Tactics

The full range of tactics used by social movements was used by different groups at different stages of the campaign. On both the local and national scale, the traditional repertoire of tactics inherited from the peasant and Gandhian movements was fully used, including the *dharna* (sit-down strike), the *rasta/rail roko* (road/rail blockade), *jail bharao andolan* (fill the jails movement), *brook hartal* (hunger strike) and *padyatra* (walking tour). (Gadgil and Guha 1994:120-121) Transnationally, corporate campaign tactics such as shareholder activism, resolutions at AGMs and appeals to financial and takeover regulatory authorities were used. Further, bearing out Kremer et al's

² While these demolitions were eventually stopped by a Supreme Court order obtained by the BGPMUS, some 628 families were relocated 11-13 kms from the old city.

contention that publicity is a prime tactic in internationalising campaigns, the campaign brought Bhopal to the world through visits abroad by delegations of survivors and brought the world to Bhopal through welcoming international tribunals, researchers, journalists and other visitors. The movement also responded to the new opportunities provided by the arrival of the Internet by using various online tactics, including the creation of fake and mock websites and engaging in an 'image war' with Dow Chemical. One major tactic involves consistently reframing the campaign, whether as nationalist/anti-imperialist (inside India) or anti-pesticide, anti-toxic, anti-corporate or anti-globalisation at different times and for different audiences.³

After the gas leak

Local level

The immediate aftermath of the gas leak saw spontaneous local organising in the affected communities, with the formation of local neighbourhood committees and groups, one of which filed a case against Union Carbide officials and factory supervisors on December 7th and undertook a survey of deaths, illnesses and losses within its own area. (BSMS 2009: 102) This was followed by the takeover of the local campaign in Bhopal by outside activists, who had come to Bhopal to assist and organise the survivors and who formed a broad front organisation, the Zahreeli Gas Kand Sangharsh Morcha (Poisonous Gas Episode Struggle Front, Morcha from now on), which subsumed the local organisations. In effect, while some local leaders remained, NAN elements took over the local movement. The Morcha began a series of agitations which were militant and strongly supported, including a march to the Chief Minister's house and rally attracting 15,000, with tactics ratcheted up to a *rail roko* in early February.

These protests were met by a variety of state responses and counter-organising, with meetings with protest leaders, concession of some demands, 'buying off of some members' (BSMS 2009: 103) and repression: some Morcha leaders were imprisoned for 20 days at the time of the *rail roko*. Disagreement over these radical tactics led to splits in, and defections from, the Morcha. A further split came with the formation of the NRPC (Nagrik Rahat Aur Punarvas Samiti, the Relief and Rehabilitation Committee), which wished to emphasise relief issues. Thus one dividing line in Bhopal organising was between demanding 'relief' and

³ This is one of the reasons I have problems with the three frames proposed by Scandrett and Mukherjee (2011) for the movement in Bhopal. The historical evidence shows a variety of different frames were used at different stages by different elements in the campaign: they include nationalist/anti-imperialist (Dow Quit India, Carbide Quit India, Mia Zaffir Awards), human rights violations (Amnesty) anti-toxic (Greenpeace) anti-corporate and anti-globalisation (when the movement was searching for allies in the anti-globalisation movement). As Pawas Bisht (n.d.) notes 'The main problem with such an analysis is that it ends up presenting these "abstractions" as stable categories, which explain the actions of groups, rather than viewing them as evolving constructions attempting to seek solutions for problems'.

demanding 'rights' or 'justice', with the 'reformist' NRPC identified with the former and the 'revolutionary' Morcha identified with the latter and each organisation viewing the other with suspicion: 'The NRPC viewed Morcha as doing politics instead of providing help, and the Morcha thought of NRPC as a bunch of reformists with dubious motives' (Sarangi 1996:100).

However these two groups came together in June 1985, with the support of NAN groups (MFC and Drug Action Forum) to set up a People's Health Clinic in the abandoned factory. A police raid later closed the clinic and the doctors and activists there were arrested. Demonstrators were attacked by police in May and June and emergency regulations were brought in to restrict public assembly. Individual activists were charged with murder to encourage them to leave Bhopal and smeared as Union Carbide and CIA dupes. The state strategy appeared to be based on a belief that if the middle class 'outside agitators' were removed, the movement in Bhopal would either wither away or at least become more manageable. The repression eventually wore down the outside activists, most of whom left Bhopal by May 1986, leading to a crisis in the Morcha.

The Morcha was a 'democratic centralist' organisation, with all that implies. It exhibited the usual personality clashes, leadership struggles and left sectarianism that would be expected, with activists expelled for breaking the 'party line'. According to Satinath Sarangi 'a group of out of town activists, all very dedicated workers, were falsely charged with planting bombs within the Union Carbide factory by the leaders and thrown out of the organisation' (BSMS 2009: 117), while he himself was expelled for querying the basis on which AP Singh brought a large number of survivors to the SUCI conference.⁴

Following the defeat of the Morcha, there was a relocalization and a return to grassroots struggles and local organisations with local leadership. These grassroots organisations started out with limited aims –to obtain interim relief, to defend livelihood (when the workshops, set up as employment-generating and rehabilitation projects for survivors, were in danger of closing), to obtain permanent status for stationery workers, but inevitably took on larger issues. State responses again varied from concessions to attacks on their bases (when the workshops were finally closed when compensation disbursement took place and some Muslim supporters moved out to outskirts of city during the 1991 slum clearance drive).

Among the groups that mobilised was the BGPMUS, a mass organisation of women employed in the rehabilitation workshops, Pension Bhogi, an existing pensioners' claimants' union which extended its scope to the gas-affected and the Stationery Union, a small union of women employed to produce stationery for the state. The first two organisations; action repertoire included lobbying, protest and assisting survivors in their interactions with the local courts and bureaucracy, while the union struggled through the court union registration and industrial relations processes. These groups were supported by the Bhopal

⁴ For comparison, A P Singh's account of the same period provides a very different picture, with strong criticism of 'outside activists' (BSMS 2009: 50-56).

Group for Information and Action (BGIA), a group formed by some outside activists who had not left the city and which was central to internationalising the campaign.

Transnational level

To turn to TAN activity, early international action on Bhopal shows how campaigns can be internationalised without the existence of a TAN and without contact with and cooperation from a local network or movement as existing national and international organisations took up the issue of Bhopal.⁵ Many of these groups were taking up the Bhopal case to raise questions about chemical safety in their own countries and in their own countries' chemical industries, both at home and in their foreign operations. The first appeal for international action was released in December 1984 by the Asia Pacific Peoples' Environmental Network (APPEN) while the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) sent out an investigatory team.

Initially the international campaign was not a TAN at all, but a collection of autonomous groups and organisations undertaking work, without any contact with the grassroots struggle in Bhopal, which –in its initial period- was highly suspicious of foreign groups or involvement, or with other groups working on Bhopal issues. In Japan 19 consumer, environmental and womens' groups formed the Bhopal Disaster Monitoring Group which, as well as picketing Union Carbide and the Indian Embassy, began to research the production and use of MIC by Japanese TNCs. In the USA a conference in New Jersey in March 1985 led to the creation of the Citizen's Commission on Bhopal, bringing together as many as 50 organisations. (Morehouse 1997). The first international network was formed in February 1985, when NGOs attending a meeting on environment and development launched the 'No More Bhopals Network'. When the first TAN of Bhopal solidarity groups, the International Coalition for Justice in Bhopal, was eventually founded in December 1986 the initiative came, not from the local movement, but from the BARC in New York.

This solidarity network developed in isolation from the local movement. According to Satinath Sarangi the Morcha 'wary of being vilified by the government for their foreign connections ... failed to make use of [this] spontaneous outpouring of international support' (BSMS 2009: 120).⁶ However some fruitful connections were being made between national and transnational

⁵ Another example of this phenomenon is provided by den Hond and de Bakker (2013) who note in the case of the Free Burma campaign that there was no contact between the TAN groups and any groups in Burma, though there was contact with expatriate groups.

⁶ Allegations of foreign funding and foreign involvement in civil society with malicious intent to undermine Indian national self-determination were a tactic used to attack NGOs in India as 'anti-national' by both the left and right. For example the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA, Save the Narmada Movement) was attacked in 1990, 1999 and again in 2006 for having received foreign funds, an allegation denied by the NBA, while the Mumbai World Social Forum also came under attack on the same grounds.

groups: one example was the cooperation between the Society for Participatory Research in Asia and the Highlander Research and Education Centre in the production of a report in May 1985 that examined both local and global aspects of the Bhopal disaster and Union Carbide: the report drew on information provided by groups in Belgium, Canada, Chile, England, Japan, Puerto Rico and the USA. (Agarwal et al 1985). A later example of similar international cooperation was provided by the connections between BARC in New York and the Other India Press in Mapusa, Goa, in copublishing a range of books on Bhopal. The first serious transnational engagement, at the London November 1985 conference organised by the Transnationals Information Centre London (TICL) and the Bhopal Victims Solidarity Committee took place in an environment of defeat and demobilisation locally in Bhopal. Contacts were initially with the NAN: at the London conference in November 1985 speakers were from Bombay Lawyers Collective and Bombay URG, along with Nishit Vora from the People's Health Clinic, who was also an outside activist.

Some indication of how wide-ranging solidarity work on Bhopal was in the first year can be seen from the list of organisations working on the Bhopal tragedy included in Appendix 15 of the International Organisation of Consumer Unions (IOCU) publication, *The lessons of Bhopal*, published in September 1985. (We may note, as an aside, that IOCU thanked both UNEP and the Japan Bhopal Disaster Monitoring Group for financial assistance: thus their project was financed both by international agencies and social movement groups). The geographical spread of the 69 organisations is as follows.

Australia 1; Denmark 1; Germany 2; Hong Kong 1; Hungary 1; India 26; Indonesia 1; Japan 1; Kenya 1; Malaysia 2; Switzerland 7; England 3; USA 21; Zimbabwe 1.

Subtracting the Indian NAN⁷ we are left with 43 organisations, nearly half of which were based in the USA. The high number of organisations for Switzerland can be almost immediately counted out, as six were international organisations, parts of the UN system headquartered in Geneva. This leaves us with 37 organisations with the majority based in the USA and a further eight in Europe, six in Australasia and two in Africa. Outside the USA, there are four environmental/green organisations, 3 consumer organisations, 3 labour groups, 3 Bhopal solidarity groups, and one each for youth, anti-corporate and research/communication groups. For the USA, discounting the World Bank, IMF and a number of other groups, we have 5 environmental groups, 3 Bhopal solidarity groups, 3 research/communication groups, 2 labour and one each for consumer and legal groups.

⁷ For the Indian NAN, the geographical spread is as follows: Ahmedabad 1; Bangalore 2; Bhopal 4; Bombay 7; Delhi 8; Hyderabad 1; Madras 1; Pune 1; Trivandarum 1, while the sectoral breakdown is 6 environmental groups, 6 research/communication groups, 2 consumer, 2 Bhopal solidarity, 2 health, and one each trade union and peace groups; the Bhopal-based groups were environmental NGO Eklayva, the Morcha, NRPC and the Bhopal National Campaign Committee.

National level

If the TAN to a large extent developed and operated autonomously from the local campaign, on the national levels connections were stronger, particularly given the large number of NAN activists campaigning in Bhopal. Furthermore the local campaign also searched for support, calling a national convention of supporters in February 1985, which resulted in the formation of an impressive-appearing NAN. This NAN suffered from the same sectarianism that affected the Morcha, while the involvement of some of the larger organisations might be described as token. Elements of the NAN also developed their own projects independently, with, for example, the Kerala Sastra Sahitya Parishad calling for a boycott of Everready in 1985.

When we look at the NAN, we must first note those who are conspicuous only in their absence: the communist parties and their mass organisations and trade unions, on the one hand, and the main urban middle-class environmentalists, on the other. The absence of the former is most surprising given the disaster seemed tailor-made for an anti-imperialistic politics and response.⁸ The national support came from two areas, elements of the urban intelligentsia and other people's movements. The latter included the people's science movement, the people's health movement, the women's movement and a number of people's movements, both in Madhya Pradesh and other Indian states. For the NAN we can identify different types of groups that became involved at different stages of the campaign and we can also identify different individuals who, either on their own or through participation in collectives of various types, have assisted in the campaign. One group involved specialised intellectual groups involved not only in knowledge production, but also in action –MFC, Delhi Science Forum (DSF), Centre on Science and the Environment (CSE). A consistent NAN supporter was The Other Media (TOM) in Delhi, which provided logistical and media support for the local movement's protests in Delhi over decades.

Here we may note how, just as in TANs the aims and objectives of involved groups may differ greatly, so also in NANs groups and organisations may hold differing perspectives, leading to disagreement on both objectives and tactics. An early example is provided by the Union Research Group (URG) from Bombay which became involved in Bhopal through providing support to the workers at the UC plant. At least partly inspired by recent examples of workers' plans for alternative production, the URG proposed the decontamination of the Bhopal plant and its use for alternative production under workers' control. URG

⁸ It's worth considering that the explanation for this lack of support in both cases is that the survivors and victims of Bhopal were the wrong kind of people. (Thanks are due to Pauline Conroy for this suggestion). For the various CPs, they were not members of the organised working class beloved of the traditional communists nor members of the peasant class beloved of the Maoists: they were mainly day labourers from the unorganised sector, often recent rural migrants. Nor were they the noble indigenous or tribal groups fighting to preserve their culture and way of life of whom the romantic urban middle-class supporters of environmentalism were so enamoured.

suggested this plan would not only provide continued employment for the UC workers but also for some of the gas-affected, a proposal rejected by other local and NAN groups. In another example, the Delhi Science Forum stopped work on Bhopal, partly in response to criticism of science by the Morcha and disagreement over the prioritising the sodium thiosulphate issue.

If I may be allowed a personal anecdote here, as an illustration of how NAN differences may manifest at the TAN level, following the November 1985 conference in London, I was involved in the hurried organisation of a meeting in Dublin, Ireland, as part of a tour by the Indian speakers at the conference. Casting about for a meeting location and sponsors, I approached trade unions, emphasising the alternative production under workers' control aspect. The meeting was held in Liberty Hall, headquarters of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union and chaired by the chairperson of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions third world committee. The speakers were Nishit Vora from the clinic and Anand Grover from the Lawyers' Collective. Unfortunately for my pitch to the unions, neither speaker mentioned alternative production: given this failure, I raised the issue in the question and answer session and both speakers dismissed the possibility technically and politically.

To summarise, the initial phase of the local movement involved spontaneous community organising which was swiftly taken over by NAN activists who relocated to Bhopal. The defeat and demobilisation of these activists led to a return to local groups and leadership, with support provided by those NAN activists who remained in Bhopal. At the national level a variety of organisations gave ideological, organisational and research support, though the major national opposition –communist parties and trade unions- provided mainly token support. On the international level, organisations mobilised without contact with the local movement, developing their own NANs and a variety of TANs, while initial TAN contact with the movement was through NAN connections.

Responding to state appropriation

Kreamer et al argue that state and corporate counter-organising are influential factors in the evolution of campaigns and movements, including their transnationalization and localization. One state action which resulted in changes to the Bhopal campaign was the state's appropriation of both legal and medical areas and the closing off of survivor access and voice in these areas. The state's appropriation of the legal area, though not unchallenged, led the movement to search for alternative legal arenas. Similarly the state's appropriation of medical research was an impetus for local work done by elements of the NAN. The strategic direction for this phase of the campaign came from the TAN, with the Permanent People's Tribunal initiated by BARC/International Coalition for Justice in Bhopal providing an alternative legal forum and the International Medical Commission on Bhopal (IMCB) resulting from a recommendation of the PPT. This search for an international

hearing resulted from the closing off of national and local spaces for examination of Union Carbide's crimes in an open hearing, on the one hand nationally through the out-of-court settlement which denied the survivors a hearing in open court and locally through the calling off of the judicial inquiry in December 1985 by the MP state government. While a TAN project, it operated both transnationally and locally, with one of the hearings taking place in Bhopal.

One recommendation of the PPT led to the formation of the IMCB, which involved a strategic shift from legal, compensation and rehabilitation to health issues on the part of the BGIA. Here again we can see internationalisation and localization in response to state action closing off domestic areas. Following the politicization of health and treatment in the year after the gas leak, the state took action to control and appropriate medical research through the Indian Council on Medical Research (ICMR), while also impeding local and NAN medical research. In 1991 the Indian government arbitrarily ordered ICMR to end all medical research on Bhopal. (Sathyamala 2009) Furthermore the ICMR has failed to publish results of their research. The campaign responded to the state appropriation of research by initiating its own research project, the IMCB. It involved cooperation between elements of the local campaign, NAN and TAN: organising work involved Satinath Sarangi from the BGIA (local), Deena from The Other Media (NAN) and Rosalie Bertell and Gianni Tognoni (co-convenors IMCB) (TAN). The geographical spread of the IMCB is shown by the countries from which its members came: three commissioners came from the US, two from England and one each from Belarus, Canada, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the People's Republic of China, Poland and Sweden. Elements of the NAN and the local movement also cooperated with the actual research work in Bhopal. 'Members of Medico Friends Circle and others from survivors' and activist organisations helped the IMCB in this work.' (Sarangi 2009:1) The work involved visiting Bhopal in January 1994, examining the gas-affected and looking at the state provision for the gas-affected, issuing a report in Delhi at the end of the visit.

Evaluation of the IMCB found both positive and negative results. It succeeded in its primary aim: 'it effectively countered the corporation and the government's denial that health problems were persisting among the gas victims even 10 years after the disaster' (Sarangi 2009:3) However tensions arose between some Commission members and the local movement. 'Several members of the IMCB distanced themselves from the survivor and activist organizations that were part of the organizing and implementation of the IMCB's work. Opinions of Bhopal based organizations were seen as too political and they were kept away from the planning of the work, which was thought to be the prerogative of the medical professionals' (Sarangi 2009:3). Here again we can see tensions resulting from the aims and perspectives of TAN elements differing from those of the local movement. Disagreements also arose between different members of the IMCB, resulting in the group's dissolution.

The IMCB was one result of a change of strategic focus to health in the 1990s. This internationalisation was accompanied by planning for local medical intervention, with the BGIA formulating plans for a local mobile health and research clinic in 1991 and 1992, with both proposals including detailed costings. This localization was to be eventually successful in setting up a movement-controlled health clinic, the Sambhavna Clinic, with the assistance of a new TAN organisation, the Bhopal Medical Appeal (BMA). In this personal contacts and individual effort were central: the success of the BMA can be traced to the story-telling and copy-writing abilities of Indra Sinha who was mobilised by a personal appeal from the BGIA's Sarangi on a visit to England (for a detailed account, see Sinha 2014), while for managing the funds another member of the TAN –the Pesticides Action Network- was pressed into service.

Here again we can see national differences in TAN activities and strategies: the initial advert for the BMA in the *Guardian* in England which was so successful, when reprinted in the US led to no funds, with the result that this initiative was confined to England and planned expansion of fundraising to the US was abandoned. Locally the clinic provided a local service to the gas-affected and gave BGIA credibility on the ground. It also provided office space and communication and support services in Bhopal to the new International Campaign for Justice in Bhopal (ICJB) set up by the BGIA and other local groups. Additionally the TAN work by the BMA not only provided funding for the clinic but also spread information and awareness, while also providing a flow of foreign volunteers to the Clinic. A further advantage was the impetus it gave to knowledge production by the local movement, with reports from the Clinic providing more data than the BGTRRD did, and providing the basis for articles in the medical literature, including such prestigious journals as the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. This reduced the local movement's dependence on outside experts, whether from the TAN or the NAN.

However the initiative also led to tensions within the local movement, with criticism voiced by various elements. One example is provided by an article by a former BGIA activist Vinod Raina. Having described the setting up of the BGIA as intended to provide professional support to the Bhopal grassroots movement, he continued:

‘The advent of foreign money too upset such arrangements. A typical ‘bleeding heart’ advertisement in the *Guardian*, London, quite contrary to the assertion of rights that the victims were fighting for, brought in an enormous amount of money, which was galvanized by individuals within the BGIA to set up a separate Sambhavna Trust for medical research, effectively severing ties with the victims’ movements. This changed the character of BGIA, deprived the movement of English speaking middle class support at local level, and gradually made them less visible in the English speaking international media. A space essential to sustain such complex struggles was, in effect, more or less appropriated by individuals supported from outside the country and their foreign counterparts like the Greenpeace and Corpwatch.’ (Raina and Kumar 2004).

Other local activists complained that the foreign funds, instead of going to Sambhavna should have gone to local employment generation projects.⁹

Dow: return of the transnational corporate target

In 1999 the Bhopal campaign was reinvigorated by two major and a number of minor causes. First the Greenpeace report on toxic waste and water contamination brought a new issue to the fore and mobilised a new local constituency. Secondly Dow Chemical announced plans to take over Union Carbide. With the takeover of UC by Dow, we have a return of the TNC target, not only internationally, but also nationally, a struggle initiated on February 28 2001 when 33 survivors stormed into the Dow offices in Mumbai and occupied them,. Following a later meeting with Dow's country director in India, the Stationery Union, Pension Bhogi, BGPMS and BGIA on March 12 launched a campaign to hold Dow responsible for the gas leak and Union Carbide's other liabilities at Bhopal. Abdul Jabbar of the BGPMS said

'The Campaign for Justice in Bhopal is now being formed nationally and internationally. Trade unions, student organisations, women's groups and human rights networks in Bombay, Delhi, Bangalore and other cities have already expressed strong support to the struggle to nail the culprits of the disaster in Bhopal: the fight to make Dow accountable for Carbide's crimes in Bhopal will be very much a part of the movement against globalisation in this country.' (CJB 2001).

This period saw major INGO involvement in the TAN, initially by Greenpeace, then Amnesty, but also major local and national activity in the struggle over the proposed toxic waste cleanup, and in relation to Dow expansion plans in India. Here again relocalization of the struggle took place, not only nationally but transnationally, in response to both state and capital's actions. This struggle with Dow extends over a long period, and continues up to the present day. We will begin with an outline of some of the struggles that took place over this period, illustrating various tactics and changes in composition and activities at the local, national and transnational levels, before briefly looking at two aspects of the struggle, the campaign involvement of Greenpeace and the localization of conflict over waste disposal.

The emphasis on toxic waste contamination of local water supplies gave a major impetus to the campaign. Locally it involved the mobilization of a new group of victims and the formation of a new identity, the *pani peedit* (water affected) to join the already mobilised *gas peedit* (gas affected). Given that the damage caused by this contamination was different from the damage caused by the gas

⁹ In another example of tension in the local campaign resulting from foreign funds the awarding of the Goldman prize to BGPMSKS leaders was the cause of criticism, with Jabbar of the BGPMS querying corporate sponsorship of the prize (Raina and Kumar 2004) and rank and file members of stationery unhappy at the leaders' attention being diverted from the stationery struggle resulting in a split in the Stationery union. (BSMS 2009:183).

leak, the inappropriate toxic waste disposal having been both previous to the gas leak and not included in the 1989 settlement, it allowed a new cause and claim for damages against the TNC and ably sidestepped Dow's main argument that all TNC liabilities for Bhopal had been extinguished by the 1989 settlement. The TAN was reinvigorated by the involvement of large INGOs like Greenpeace and Amnesty, as well as student and diaspora organisations, while the NAN was also reinvigorated by the mobilization of new groups and other local movements also became involved in their own local struggles with the TNC. This latter included the involvement of what was then the strongest national movement in India, the anti-SEZ (Special Economic Zone) movement.

Nationally there was a variety of actions, some autonomous, some as a result of local movement or NAN initiatives and some in response to state and corporate actions. Dow became one of the targets of the most recent cycle of struggles against the Indian state's embrace of economic liberalization, when a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), of which Dow was to be an anchor or hub, proposed for Nandigram in West Bengal met with ferocious local opposition (Jones 2009). Further Dow expansion plans also stumbled, when a proposed R&D centre at Shinde, near Pune, Maharashtra, faced a local campaign of opposition in 2008 and 2009. In January 2008 local residents blocked the road to the Dow R&D site and in July invaded the site and set fire to company vehicles and an office. In January 2009 the state's Chief Minister announced the R&D Centre would not go ahead.

Other corporation plans and products faced opposition mobilised by local and NAN groups. In May 1995 a nation-wide boycott of the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) was called after IOC took out a licence agreement for UC monoethylene glycol technology for its new refinery in Haripur: the campaign lasted eight months and resulted in the cancellation of the contract at a cost –according to Dow- of \$1.5 million. An attack was made on attempts by Dow to recruit staff at Indian colleges when a campaign was launched by Indian Institute of Technology alumni and students to block Dow access to college campuses. The local campaign also called for the cancellation of the registration of a Dow product, the pesticide Dursban, and mobilised national and transnational support to oppose an effort by Dow and Dow apologists and proxies to persuade the Indian government to deny Dow's liability for Bhopal.

Transnationally the TAN saw major activity in the Dow campaign, with the addition of new groups, new targets and new tactics. One significant element was the mobilisation in the US of the Indian diaspora (Association for India's Development (AID)) and students (Students for Bhopal, SfB). For the latter, student activists pressed universities to disassociate themselves from Dow in an echo of the 1960s protests against Dow's production of napalm for the American war against Vietnam (Soule 2009:56). Students at the University of Michigan and Wheaton College (Ma) passed resolutions asking the colleges to disassociate from Dow, while in March 2005 the Berkeley Student Assembly called on the university to divest itself of Dow stock and refuse to accept donations from Dow. The student support seemed highest in 2004. According to Ryan Bodanyi of SfB

in 2004 'students from more than 70 colleges, universities and high schools around the world organised and participated in a wide range of protests, demonstrations and educational events to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Bhopal disaster. These events were organised by Students for Bhopal, Association for India's Development (AID) chapters, the Campus Greens and the Environmental Justice Programme of the Sierra Student Coalition (SSC), and represent the first mass student movement Dow has faced since the Vietnam War.' (Bodanyi 2005: 226).

Other TAN elements utilised traditional corporate campaign tactics, targeting shareholders and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives such as the sponsorship of the London Olympics (Botelho and Zavestoski 2014) and Live Earth. There were also interventions made with responsible regulatory and financial authorities. For instance, On 21 January 2000 Green Party Members of the European Parliament lodged an objection to the Dow/Union Carbide merger with the European Union Director-General for Competition, while on April 12 2007 Amnesty USA called for the Securities and Exchanges Commission to investigate Dow's pressurising the Indian government to rid it of liabilities for Bhopal.

There was also independent action by TAN members in advancing their policy aims. Amnesty USA used Bhopal as part of its Share Power project, a project which belied the image of Amnesty as a report- and letter-writing organisation when in April 2007 it organised the largest public demonstration in relation to Bhopal outside India when it mobilised over 1000 people to demonstrate outside the headquarters of J.B. Morgan Chase in New York, calling on the bank to support the shareholders' resolution Amnesty and the NY City Pension Funds had tabled for the Dow AGM the following month. Divestment resolutions were also targeted at city and county authorities. For Dow's annual general meetings, US activists 'filed at least four separate shareholder resolutions regarding Bhopal between 2004 and 2007... in May 2008 another resolution was introduced that charged that Dow has not yet disclosed the potential liabilities of Bhopal' (Soule 2009:122). The 2007 resolution received support from 8.5% of shares voted.

There were also intermittent campaigns targeting Dow advertising, CSR and sponsorship activities. Dow's sponsorship of the Olympic Games provided a target for English TAN members, while its sponsorship of the 2010 Live Earth Run for Water led to pressure being placed on organizing committees in Amsterdam, Atlanta, Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Switzerland and Vancouver, with organisers of events in Berlin, Chennai, London, Milan and Stockholm either cancelling Dow-sponsored events or disassociating themselves from Dow. Attacks on advertising were mainly internet-based, where they formed a central part of an 'image war' between Dow and the ICJB (Erler 2009), though Amnesty also participated in targeting Dow's Human Element campaign. On the publicity front there was involvement by hoaxers the YesMen, while other internet activism included hoax websites.

Greenpeace

The arrival of Greenpeace into the Bhopal struggle led to an intensification and spread of transnational solidarity and protest. Greenpeace's involvement began in 1999 when, as part of their Toxic Free Future Tour, they released a report on toxic waste abandoned at the Bhopal factory and resulting water contamination. Greenpeace subsequently made Bhopal the top focus of its global anti-toxic campaign and invested some half a million US dollars in its work on Bhopal. In its 'Return to sender' campaign it physically delivered toxic waste and contaminated water from Bhopal to Dow premises in Australia, Brazil, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Thailand and the USA. At the 2005 World Economic Forum in Davos Greenpeace mobilised a 60-strong contingent wearing skeleton suits to call on Dow to clean up Bhopal. Thus the geographical spread of action by the TAN was extended due to Greenpeace's global reach. However problems arose over the issue of claiming credit for actions, with ICJB demanding all Bhopal actions in which ICJB members participated be credited to the ICJB, while Greenpeace wished to claim credit for itself. (Mac Sheoin 2012) This resulted in conflict within the TAN, with the local movement attempting to force the INGO to operate according to the agreed code of conduct. These disagreements were at least partly responsible for Greenpeace running down its participation in the Bhopal campaign. However the TAN survived the loss of Greenpeace, with another large INGO, Amnesty International, joining the TAN shortly afterwards.

Clean-up

On the cleanup issue there were conflicts, not only over who should clean up the abandoned waste (and who should pay for it) but also over the method of dealing with the toxic waste, and where the toxic waste should be disposed of. In India this involved the mobilization of previously uninvolved local communities, when communities at proposed landfill and incineration sites at Ankleshwar, Primampur and Vidarbha opposed their use for waste from Bhopal through protests and legal action. A further local target presented itself when Ratan Tata, managing director of the Tata group, volunteered in November 2006 to clean up the Bhopal waste, an offer rejected by local groups who suggested Tata would be better off cleaning up the wastes around his own factories and threatened to call a boycott of Tata products. Similarly plans to transfer the waste for disposal in core country locations also led to mobilization and opposition in these areas... A proposal to incinerate the waste in Germany ran into opposition from Greenpeace Germany and the environmental organisation BUND.

The demand for the cleanup of the factory site and its associated contamination became politicised locally, with understandable differences between those who wanted an immediate cleanup, even if it wasn't to the highest international standards, and even if the cleanup wasn't conducted or funded by Dow, while

other groups would not be satisfied unless the cleanup was to the highest international standards and was both conducted and funded by Dow. AP Singh, for example, contrasted the failure of the application in the US courts in 1999/2000 for Union Carbide/Dow to clean up the site to result in any positive move towards cleanup with his own application in the Jabalpur High Court in June 2004 which resulted in a judgement nine months later, saying while the questions of Dow liability were valid, the priority was to save the people being poisoned: therefore the government of India should pay for the cleanup and later claim the costs from Dow. "According to the order of the High Court the chemical waste should be removed and disposed of appropriately in Ankleshwar in Gujarat state or Pithampur in MP. Interestingly the campaign groups which were fighting to clean up the site in the US courts at the same time opposed the High Court ruling that the Government of India should clean it up'. (BSMS 2009:59). Here again we can see local tensions over the justice issue, with groups demanding Dow should undertake the cleanup on the 'polluter pays' principle, while also arguing that no other Indian community should be victimised in the cleanup.

Conclusion: balancing local, national and transnational

This article has considered some episodes from a campaign which operated locally, nationally and transnationally over a long period. The examples given hopefully extend and complicate our models of what local movements, NANs and TANs are, and what they do. To begin with the TAN, we see at the beginning the development of protest and research on Bhopal and its implications autonomously from the struggle on the ground in Bhopal. While contacts between NAN and TAN elements increased, the first TAN of Bhopal solidarity groups, the International Coalition for Justice in Bhopal, was organised by a TAN organisation in New York (and did not include either NAN or local groups). The health episode shows both a TAN-initiated project (the IMCB) co-organised with NAN and local groups, and also a new NAN organisation (BMA) initiated by the local movement to support a specific local project, the Sambhavna Clinic.

By the time of the Dow phase, as well as autonomous organising by INGOs, the new TAN –ICJB- was initiated locally and decision-making powers rested with the local movement: 'the campaign distinguishes itself in having the Bhopal based survivors' organisations as the final arbiters of all decisions involving their lives and struggles', in the words of Sarangi (BSMS 2009:121). The disputes between Greenpeace and the ICJB about claiming credit for joint actions shows how strongly the power balance has tilted towards the local. If the early TAN networks suffered from slow and expensive communications, the later networks benefitted from the global spread of ICTs and involved the local movement using the internet to document its actions and communicate with (organised and individual) members of the TAN.

We can also see changes to TANs and networks over the period. Attempts to set up a variety of networks foundered partly due to transaction costs. In the pre-internet period, operations of TANs were much more difficult than they are at present. Communications were primarily by post in the form of letters and newsletters, as the prices of international telephone calls were extremely high. The arrival of the internet reduced these costs massively and was a major contribution to the continuation and success of later TANs. Allied to this must be the increasing experience and sophistication of local groups, whose long experience of transnational activism enabled them, to challenge INGO behaviour in the TAN to enforce the primary position of the local struggle, as in the conflict with Greenpeace. INGOs were most involved with the local movement when there was a coincidence of interest between the groups: Amnesty wanted to extend the range of its human rights critique to include TNCs: Bhopal provided detailed and devastating examples of such violations, illustrating the need for the policy proposals advanced by Amnesty. Greenpeace was running a toxics campaign and also wished to establish itself in India: Bhopal provided the perfect vehicle for both. So INGOs used Bhopal and the Bhopal campaign used INGOs: 'the development of a symbiotic relationship with the global anti-toxics movement became a key tactic...On the one hand, the global anti-toxics movement could use the *idea* of Bhopal to push for regulation of industrial hazards and the rights of victims of industrial disasters... the Bhopal movement used the network of the global anti-toxics movement to ensure that the rest of the world would not forget the Bhopal disaster'. (Zavestowski 2009:391).

For NAN involvement in internationalising the struggle, we can see some involvement in the immediate aftermath of the gas leak, strong involvement by a limited number of NAN groups in the IMCB, but by the time of the anti-Dow struggle there was little NAN involvement, as the local movement was well able to deal with TAN elements without NAN mediation, due to its by then extensive international experience. If NAN elements were less important for transnational campaigns, they retained their importance in targeting the Indian state and the TNC in India, and in providing logistical, media and other support for the local movement.

The presentation of the local, national and transnational elements in the long history of the Bhopal struggle has hopefully helped complicate our notions of what local movements, NANs and TANs are and do. This is a useful enough accomplishment in itself, but it's also worth asking can anything useful be learned from all this by movement activists. I'd suggest a number of small lessons can be extracted. The paper has shown the dynamic nature of the TAN but it has also shown the existence of a core group of organisations and individuals who have been constant in their support for Bhopal. Most of these were small groups and often had one person who was central to that group's involvement (Ward Morehouse in BARC, Barbara Dinham and Indra Sinha in the BMA, Deena in TOM). There are a number of other activists who brought their support for Bhopal with them from organisation to organisation (Barbara

Dinham from TICL to BMA; Gary Cohen from the Environmental Health Fund, Healthcare Without Harm, National Toxics Campaign, Military Toxics Project).

Thus Kreamer et al's emphasis on the individual is worthwhile, but it must be extended from the narrow issue of which individuals are recruited to stand for the movement internationally to a general consideration of individuals and individual initiative. This shows the importance of individuals, as well as organisations, in keeping a campaign TAN active over the long term. This is another important lesson for activists, who may become frustrated and burnt out and doubt the effectiveness and usefulness of their activism. Individuals can, and do, make a difference. There is a tactical lesson here also for local groups and movements: identifying and cultivating specific individuals may be as useful as identifying and cultivating organisations while internationalising campaigns. Personal relationships can be an extremely successful method of ensuring continued TAN activity. Furthermore for successful transnational activism that responds to local requirements, a local movement may well do better with smaller, dedicated solidarity groups than with a large INGO. While large INGOs can give campaigns useful actions, analysis and assistance, especially major publicity, smaller solidarity groups can provide the backbone of a transnational campaign consistently over a long period of time, while INGO involvement may be for a short time only.

Secondly, as regards dealing with large INGOs, if INGOs have traditionally been defined as the more powerful element in TANs, the Bhopal case shows it ain't necessarily so. The Bhopal campaign shows that INGOs need not necessarily dominate TANs and local movements may successfully 'NGO shop'. When unhappy with the practices of Greenpeace, the local movement challenged the large INGO and when Greenpeace dropped out of the campaign, allied with another large INGO, while continuing its normal cooperation with those smaller solidarity groups that represented the core of the ICJB. Thus alliance and coalition composition may be changed due to the action of the local movement as well as through the actions of the NGOs. This is an important lesson, that local movements are not helpless in their relations with outside (TAN) supporters, despite the asymmetry of resources. One of the strongest critiques of INGOs, from both the right and the left, has been on the issue of representation and accountability: it is here that local movements are of critical importance to INGOs. If the Bhopal campaign used the medical credibility of the IMCB TAN members locally and nationally in the health struggle, then Greenpeace used the credibility of Bhopal survivors to bolster its own position in advocating its anti-toxic policies. Thus, local movements have their own capital, which could be called struggle capital or credibility capital, which is a not inconsiderable resource in dealing with TAN members while internationalising campaigns and movements.

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"We don't get involved in the internal affairs of Palestinians": elisions and tensions in North-South solidarity practices

David Landy

Abstract

This article explores the tensions between international solidarity groups and those they are in solidarity with. Taking the case of the Palestine Solidarity Movement and in particular the Ireland Palestine Solidarity campaign, the article argues that solidarity groups take the position of 'not intervening in the internal affairs' of the Palestinian people for a variety of reasons. The stance is adopted because of activist awareness of the possibilities of Northern groups causing harm to the people they are in solidarity with (of particular importance for Palestine), as well as serving as a means of declaring a belief in the political autonomy of the Palestinian people. As such, this position is used to differentiate solidarity groups from humanitarian/aid organisations.

The article looks at the difficulties of putting this stance of 'non-involvement' into practice through examining solidarity groups' response to Palestinian infighting in 2007, and to the Palestinian statehood bid of 2011. The article concludes by examining the problems associated with a policy of non-involvement in internal affairs, arguing that such a policy may lead to a superficial understanding of solidarity and a lack of communication, something which in turn can block the transformative potential of solidarity movements.

Keywords: International solidarity, Palestine solidarity, Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign, long-distance nationalism, North-South

The relation between the solidarity activist and those they are in solidarity with is often fraught. While tensions are customarily papered over with platitudes declaring mutual respect, these can quickly give way to expressions of anger, frustration and alienation – precisely, I would argue, because the necessary tensions in the relationship are not seen as an element of solidarity activism, but a problem for it. In this paper, I talk both of the tensions and the silences in solidarity activism, drawing upon my experience in Palestine solidarity in Ireland to discuss strategies of engagement and avoidance in solidarity practices.

The paper is the result of several conversations with fellow solidarity practitioners in Ireland. But it is more the result of conversations that have not been held, the result of perhaps necessary elisions and self-censorship that surrounds the practices of solidarity. I ask what we, as solidarity practitioners,

say when we ignore the complexities, divisions and internal problems of the people we are in solidarity with, and how these practices of avoidance affect our activism.

I argue that solidarity groups, in the case of Palestine deal with problems by 'hiding behind the flag' – that is, they support an uncomplicated Palestinian nationalism which sees 'the Palestinians' as unitary and which refuses to get involved in Palestinian politics. Groups do so for very good reasons. This refusal is a way of understanding Palestinians as autonomous political subjects with whom one is in solidarity rather than objects to be manipulated to serve the political aspirations of activists. It is also a means of avoiding internal splits and breaches with Palestinians. Although this non-engagement in Palestinian politics may be necessary, I argue that there are opportunity costs involved in this approach. This shying away from so-called 'internal politics' often results in a failure to honestly engage with Palestinians. Paradoxically, it can result in a failure to treat them as political subjects rather than distant objects of solidarity - something which can impinge on the solidarity organisation's credibility, motivation and effectiveness, and more long term on the possibility of engaging in politics with a transformative potential.

Introduction - 'do no harm'

While Palestine solidarity is decades old, its current phase can be traced to the outbreak of the Second Intifada in September 2000. The aim of the Palestine solidarity movement has been to support the political and human rights of the Palestinian people, and oppose Israel's oppressive actions against them. The vagueness of these aims is a reflection the fractured nature of the Palestinian polity that people are in solidarity with. Although the movement has become the largest example of international solidarity over the last decade, comparable to the Anti-Apartheid Movement in its heyday, there is a key difference between the two. This difference is expressed by the oft-repeated complaint by solidarity activists that 'there is no Palestinian ANC'. That is, since the eclipsing of the PLO by the Palestinian Authority which is based in the occupied Palestinian territories (and thus excludes Palestinians in Israel and in exile) and because of the fighting among Palestinians over the last decade, there is no unitary representative Palestinian body to stand in solidarity with and take a lead from.

This has ensured that the tactics of the solidarity movement are more often directed against Israel, rather than in support of Palestinian actions. There are immediate reasons for this focus too in that the international movement regularly needs to respond to military crises, with much of its work consisting of mobilising against large scale Israeli attacks on Palestinians, such as Cast Lead in 2008-9 and Protective Edge in 2014. Outside these crises, the main strategy of the movement is to promote Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel. Solidarity groups worldwide, while only loosely associated, have by and large taken a lead on this from the Palestine Boycott National Committee (BNC), an independent group promoting boycott. While the BNC is not a

representative body, this common strategy has afforded a certain amount of unity to the international solidarity movement. It should also be noted that in adopting the boycott strategy and framing Israel as an apartheid country, the movement has self-consciously followed the lead of the anti-Apartheid movement.

Despite the movement's unique features, it shares similar issues with other transnational movements. While Palestine solidarity is truly a global movement, I look at it particularly in terms of issues surrounding North-South solidarity.

A while ago I heard a veteran of the Nicaraguan solidarity movement in Ireland, Molly O'Duffy, talking of what she had learnt from her experiences in a North-South solidarity group. She argued that the first rule for solidarity activists intervening in a foreign country is to 'do no harm'. It seems like a sensible rule which most people involved in such solidarity would agree with; solidarity practitioners in the North are often reacting to their own governments' harmful intervention in the countries concerned and are well aware of their crashing ability to do harm. The damaging effect of development workers on the destination country has been well documented; this is especially the case for those going for short term visits, bringing their colonial baggage with them and reproducing colonial relations through their actions (Baaz 2005; Simpson 2004). Nor are solidarity activists free from such baggage, their actions are often shot through with casual racism and unexamined colonialism – the white saviour complex is alive and well in solidarity practices (Goudge 2003). As Elaine Bradley (2013) has pointed out, such traces of colonial attitudes should not simply be seen as some kind of moral failing among solidarity activists, more importantly it serves to strengthen discursive colonial control over the target population.

This power imbalance in terms of media access, resources and so on between Northern activists and Southern 'recipients' of solidarity increases the likelihood that an unreflective Northern activist will cause harm in any delicate local situations they intrude into. The danger of doing harm is especially relevant in the case of Palestine. The recent history of the Palestinian people is one unending series of destructive international involvement in their affairs. It is not simply the Israeli government and international Zionism that is currently doing harm, there is a growing body of literature describing the (often deliberate) detrimental political effect of aid on Palestinians, and how aid organisations and charities have twisted Palestinian society into an tortured state of dependency, treating Palestinians as mere objects to be helped, rather than political subjects in their own right (Bornstein 2009; Calis 2013; Jad 2007; Merz 2012).

In this context, the dictum of doing no harm has been interpreted as meaning not getting involved in internal Palestinian affairs. There are several reasons for this. Maintaining that there is some inviolability to Palestinian affairs is a way of declaring belief in Palestinian agency – seeing them as the proper subjects of political action, rather than victims and dependent objects. 'Not getting involved in the internal affairs of the Palestinian people' has become a means for solidarity organisations to distinguish themselves from aid and development

organisations. This has meant that this declaration of non-involvement has become a central part of the identity of solidarity groups.

This is not unique to Palestine; a customary distinction between solidarity and humanitarian aid is that solidarity involves a deeper recognition of the political autonomy of the object of solidarity, and an understanding that the role of the solidarity activist is not to serve as guide or even partner, but rather as auxiliary to the central political struggle which the group they are in solidarity with is undertaking. We can speak here of different discursive strategies by Northern groups which constructs different ways of understanding and relating to the global South. If humanitarian groups adopt a discourse which treats Southerners more generally and Palestinians in particular as victims and objects, the solidarity discourse seeks to construct and relate to them not as inert *objects* of solidarity, but rather as creative *subjects* in their own right. They are people whose subjectivity, in particular, whose political subjectivity one stands in solidarity with. At least this is the ideal; as I discuss later, merely declaring a belief in Palestinian political subjectivity does not mean that a group necessarily acts in such a way as to forward that subjectivity – in practice such relations are trickier to maintain.

Returning to the importance of not getting involved, this has a special urgency in the case of Palestine, owing to the deep divisions in Palestinian politics which has led to a situation of near civil war between the two main factions in Palestinian politics – the previously dominant nationalist Fatah party and the conservative religious Hamas party. In this context, it is considered especially important to skirt around internal divisions and not get sucked into the morass of Palestinian infighting. Non-involvement has been something which every Palestinian faction, and especially those not involved in factions, has at least formally requested of Northern solidarity groups.

Involvement in the Fatah coup

However the problem remains: what are the internal politics of a people so interpenetrated by the bureaucratic and violent control of Israel? Where do these 'internal politics' end and 'external politics' begin? Israel is after all, more than happy to leave the 'internal politics' of West Bank Palestinians to the Palestinian Authority (PA), the body set up under the Oslo Accords to administer the autonomous Palestinian areas in the occupied Palestinian territories. Is this injunction about internal politics then reduced to not interfering in bin collections? Or is it expanded so that it encompasses all aspects of Palestinian political life and all strategies of resistance?

Below I discuss one instance when the group I am involved with, the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign (IPSC) felt compelled to intervene and what the results of this intervention were. I then examine the strategies of non-intervention that solidarity groups adopt, again drawing on the experiences of the IPSC.

A word first about the IPSC, which is the main Palestine solidarity organisation in Ireland. It was founded in 2001 as a reaction to the second intifada by a group of people previously involved in the East Timor Solidarity Campaign. It is an independently funded organisation reliant on volunteers to keep going. While small, it is very active and has successfully drawn on two of the three traditional wellsprings of international solidarity in Ireland – left-liberals and republicans – to have an impact beyond its modest size.¹ This is especially evident in its success in organising mass mobilisations during times of crisis, such as the recent (9 August 2014) 10,000-strong march in Dublin against Operation Protective Edge. Outside such times, it focuses on awareness-raising and boycott actions, similar to other solidarity groups internationally. While it has good relations with trade unions, its relationship to the Irish state has been increasingly antagonistic, as the state has strengthened its economic and diplomatic ties with Israel over the last decade.

The particular incident I discuss took place in June 2007, during one of the more serious crises in Palestine. This crisis was occasioned by the faction fighting between Hamas and Fatah, which had reached a new height. The background to this fighting was that Hamas won the January 2006 legislative elections of the PA. After a period of refusing to cooperate with the new government in the expectation it would collapse, Fatah had joined a unity government that the US and Israel were doing their best to unravel by promoting a coup against the government (Rose 2008). They were successful in their attempt and in mid-June 2007, Hamas suppressed an attempted Fatah coup in Gaza, following which Fatah, with the aid of Israel, suppressed Hamas in the West Bank. The fighting claimed the lives of over 100 Palestinians. The EU was also complicit in the overthrow of the elected Hamas government by offering financial supports to Fatah, fully supporting its actions against Hamas and offering recognition to it as the legitimate representative of the PA.

At this time, the IPSC was still very loosely organised through informal ties, and the main method of internal communication was an email list among active members. In these email discussions, members struggled with what they should do, or whether they should do or say anything about the situation. On one hand, we were very aware of the injunction not to take sides, and were certainly not motivated by any great feelings of support for either side, Hamas or Fatah. Nevertheless, we strongly felt that we could not remain silent about such important events – that we had to give guidance to members and supporters, as well as offering an alternative view to the dominant media narrative which unquestionably portrayed Hamas as the 'bad extremists' and Fatah as the 'good moderates'.

The consensus view emerged that what was occurring was a US and Israel supported coup against a democratically elected government. Several members

¹ It has however been less successful at mobilising the third main source of international solidarity in Ireland – the church. The aid and development group, Trócaire, which has a strong focus on Palestine, has however managed to engage this constituency.

had been involved in Nicaraguan solidarity in the 1980s and the conflict between the democratically elected Nicaraguan Sandinista government and the US supported Contras in the 1980s helped frame members' understanding of the situation in Palestine and their own role in it. Key here was that Nicaraguan solidarity activists didn't feel solidarity meant neutrality in the conflict between Contras and Sandinistas.

While this analogy was important, and indicates the centrality of previous experiences of solidarity for movement members, it was understood that – as with all analogies - it was imperfect. Of greater significance in determining that we take a position was the argument that the coup was establishing a politically impotent regime in Ramallah devoid of popular support and dependent on Israel and the US, as well as enabling Israel – through its demonization of Hamas – to deepen the siege of Gaza. In making this fundamentally correct argument, the group was influenced by a variety of Palestinian criticisms of what Fatah was doing, particularly coming from the influential online magazine, *The Electronic Intifada*.

These factors led to the IPSC issuing a press release on the matter. It was framed as a response to the EU and US actions and headlined: *IPSC alarm at EU and US attitude to recent events in Palestine* (IPSC 2007). In this way, we sought to make a case that we were not really interfering with the internal politics of the Palestinians but rather arguing against external interference. This unconvincing sleight of hand did not go down well with the official Palestinian Delegation in Ireland, representatives of Fatah, who were furious about this statement.

Although no media outlet (bar indymedia) carried this press release, it achieved two things. Firstly, it was a key step in the distancing of the IPSC from the Palestinian Delegation, nurturing bad feelings which lasted for years. Secondly, this distancing which led to mounting criticisms on both sides, was a primary cause of a split within the IPSC a couple of years later, as the Delegation successfully hived away several members from the group and were instrumental in the formation of a more compliant solidarity group among these members.²

Other Palestine solidarity groups around the world can record similar bruising experiences with getting involved in internal Palestinian politics, particularly over the Hamas-Fatah fighting, a time when both factions sought to mobilise international support behind them. This indicates that there is an additional reason for solidarity groups to avoid involvement in internal politics: when undertaken, it has led to a reflection within solidarity groups of the infighting and subsequent disillusionment that has characterised Palestinian politics over the past few years. Yet the incident also shows how difficult it is to be engaged by the Palestinian struggle yet avoid the taint of internal involvement. I would

² It is instructive to note that despite their origins, this group, Sadaka has also made the claim of non-involvement – indicating how necessary it is for solidarity groups to do so - declaring that 'We maintain an independent position on internal politics within Palestine, favouring neither Fatah, Hamas nor any other Palestinian political organisation.'

contend that solidarity activists solve this conundrum through focusing on another key issue for Palestinians – the promotion of a unitary Palestinian identity, and the declaration that Palestinians exist not as isolated victims but rather as a people with a common history and identity – in other words, as a nation.

Nationalism and the statehood bid

There is an important reason to promote the collective identity of the Palestinian people, namely that their main struggle has been a fight against disappearance and dismemberment. In this struggle it is essential to use any vehicle that allows the Palestinians to express themselves as unitary and having agency - that they are more than isolated victims of Israeli practices. While Israel has abandoned its earlier attempts – most famously expressed in the slogan that Palestine was a land without a people – to deny the collective existence of Palestinians, they have largely succeeded in their denial of any political personhood to these people. In most international forums Palestinians are disaggregated and treated as either 'Gazans', 'Palestinians in Israel', or 'refugees' – humanitarian cases and voiceless victims who are largely ignored. Only those living in the West Bank are accorded any form of political agency, however limited it is.

Nationalism provides an effective vehicle to counter this process of erasure and division. A nationalism which valorises an elemental unity of all Palestinians is imperative for Palestinians furthering their collective political aims, and is equally important for those in solidarity with these political aims of self-determination and return home. Promoting this Palestinian nationalism can then be seen as a necessary component of solidarity work; in addition, it provides a means to ignore internal Palestinian divisions by talking instead of this ineffable body – 'the Palestinian people'.

Thus we can talk of a process whereby solidarity groups 'hide behind the flag', or rather that we hide Palestinians and their complexities and divisions which we feel unable to approach behind the Palestinian flag. This would help explain the omnipresence of national flags at solidarity demonstrations. It also explains the prevalence of markers of national rather than political identity to be found at Palestine solidarity stalls – the Palestinian colours, the map of Palestine in various forms, the kuffiyah, as well as the increasingly popular Palestinian football shirt which allows sympathisers to literally drape themselves in the colours of the Palestinian flag.

While it is odd to see left and liberal solidarity activists, ordinarily suspicious of nationalism, waving flags with such abandon and dedicating ourselves to the promotion of an unproblematic unitary nation, this is done – I repeat – for good reason. This unproblematised nationalism provides a vehicle through which positive collective representations of Palestine and Palestinians can be carried forward and is an absolutely necessary way of countering their atomisation and demonization in mainstream media and political arenas. In addition, this

nationalism fulfils its traditional role of enabling its promoter to elide over any internal divisions in the imagined nation.

While this elision over internal politics and differences may well be necessary as well as positive, it sets limits to what solidarity groups can say or do and encourages a process of disengagement. A clear example of this disengagement from 'internal' political developments in Palestine can be seen in the IPSC attitude to the PA's statehood bid, which stood in sharp contrast from our attitude to the Fatah-Hamas fighting of four years previously. In September 2011, the PA (controlled by Fatah) went to the General Assembly of the UN and applied for statehood. In response the IPSC issued a statement which said that we were not commenting on the bid (IPSC 2011).

At first glance this refusal to take sides on a major Palestinian attempt to seek legitimacy for their own nation state seems to undercut my contention about the ubiquity of nationalism in solidarity groups. However, there were several good reasons for this refusal to engage. Firstly, there were serious criticisms of the statehood bid – mainly that the PA was replacing the PLO as the official representatives of the Palestinian people and thus 'Palestinians' were being redefined to include only those people under PA control (that is those in the Occupied Territories and in reality, only those in the West Bank) (Abunimah 2011). Secondly, some of these criticisms were being made by our Palestinian partners, with diaspora groups such as the US Palestinian Community Network vehemently opposing what they saw as their potential political dispossession (USPCN 2011). Thirdly, the broad lack of credibility of the PA among Palestine solidarity activists in many countries - owing to complaints about its corruption and collaboration with Israel - meant there was virtually automatic distrust by solidarity groups of anything the PA did.

This explains why the majority of solidarity groups internationally refused to engage with the statehood bid, although there were some outliers who supported and others who opposed the bid.³ This broad consensus among solidarity groups internationally that it was best not to get involved also influenced the IPSC. Thus while there was certainly internal discussion about the statehood bid, there was very little debate over whether the group should publicly take a position or not. In the IPSC's statement on the bid, we noted that the Palestinians were divided on this issue and so we were continuing to concentrate on boycotting Israel, because the IPSC 'does not see our role as intervening in internal Palestinian discussions on statehood' (IPSC 2011).

It may seem intellectually tortuous to reduce the statehood bid to the status of an 'internal Palestinian discussion'. Nevertheless, it was necessary to issue such a statement. This was not in order to gain press coverage, but rather to explain to our supporters in Ireland why we were not throwing parties for the

³ For instance, in Ireland, Sadaka hosted an independence party for Palestinian statehood, while on the other hand, in Holland, the Netherlands Palestine Committee issued a strong statement condemning the bid.

achievement of Palestinian statehood, and why we took this non-position.⁴ We had learned from our honest engaged statement on the Fatah coup not to make the same mistake, and the statement proved successful. There were no splits or angry recriminations, no interruption in our main activities of supporting the boycott of Israel, our relations with the various Palestinian factions did not deteriorate. Indeed we were contacted by the Palestine Boycott National Committee subsequent to this and congratulated for a 'brilliant' statement, for managing to avoid involvement.

Effect of this discourse

However, what does it mean when success is seen as avoiding involvement in the politics of the people we are in solidarity with? How does this affect the solidarity group and their practice of solidarity? While this question needs a lot more discussion, there are three associated problems which this approach can potentially tend to create. The tentativeness of the previous sentence is deliberate. I am unsure whether the first two problems I discuss – superficial solidarity and lack of communication are in fact created by this refusal to get involved, however the last problem – limiting political imaginations – does seem to be a real danger.

1. The problem of superficial solidarity

There is a certain amount of self-censorship involved in 'non-involvement', since virtually the whole of Palestinian politics is made off-bounds for public discussion by solidarity groups. This approach may stifle internal discussion and create a culture of nods-and-winks; that people who have been involved in solidarity for a while know full well about the corruption of Fatah or the intolerance of Hamas but don't talk about such issues to the non-initiated.

Furthermore if solidarity involves no more than a superficial level of understanding and a shying away from complexities, then those who argue that solidarity groups serve no function except as Israel haters or as mindless 'Go Palestine' cheerleaders would be fundamentally correct. This is not to undermine the importance of taking sides in this situation of grotesque injustice, but if solidarity groups appear to the public as offering simplistic ranty solutions, or not even offering any solutions, just hating on Israel – this undermines their efficacy and message.

As opposed to this argument, it is perhaps inevitable that groups talking of far-away issues simplify these issues when talking to domestic publics – some propaganda, some simplification is always necessary in order to interest and engage people.⁵ I would also argue that even though solidarity groups aren't and

⁴ Unsurprisingly there were no press reports on our statement, along the lines of 'Small solidarity group says nothing on Palestinian statehood bid'.

⁵ It is no coincidence that one of the main things Zionists say, in order to deter people from getting involved in Israel/Palestine, is to repeat the slogan 'It's complicated'.

shouldn't be talking shops, I would stand over much of the material produced by say, the IPSC as being nuanced and informative, more than just shouty propaganda (examples available at www.ipsc.ie).

At the same time, the long term results of this non-involvement need to be teased out. It may be that this lack of engagement ensures people don't engage with solidarity on anything more than a superficial level. In addition, by avoiding 'internal politics' and seeking to step around current political transformations, solidarity groups may be putting blinkers on themselves and failing to truly understand the situation in Israel/Palestine, so successfully are they disengaging. That is, the non-discussion of problematic issues would lead to those in solidarity groups becoming ignorant of what is actually happening in Palestine through not honestly facing the issues faced by those we are in solidarity with – by their request, it should be added.

In response to this criticism, while there is always a problem with foreign solidarity groups having an idealised and over-simplified understanding of the complexities of the country or people they are in solidarity with, this may not be due simply to the culture of disengagement. In addition the culture of disengagement may not lead to ignorance - for instance, in the case of the statehood bid discussed above, the IPSC's non-position did not deter members from undertaking extensive internal discussions and readings on the issue. Nor did this position deter us from having a public meeting seeking to tease out the complexities of the statehood bid. Thus, the possibility of non-engagement leading to ignorance is only at most a tendency within solidarity groups, rather than an inevitability.

2. Lack of communication serving to objectify Palestinians.

Nevertheless, even if there is no problem with solidarity practitioners not publicly talking about internal Palestinian politics; more crucial is the fact that we don't talk about them with Palestinians. This means that the principle of non-involvement in internal Palestinian politics often leads to a lack of honest communication and discussion with Palestinians. Such communication can – it is true - all too easily slide into to a neo-imperialistic conversation whereby the solidarity practitioner feels empowered to tell Palestinians how to conduct their struggle (on this: Alsaafin 2012).

However, turning a blind eye to internal Palestinian problems and politics is a poor response. While this may be done for the best of reasons it has, as an effect, a re-placing of Palestinians into the space of the 'other' - as special people who can't really be criticised. There is a certain charade of self-abnegation going on in solidarity, whereby the solidarity activist is enjoined to play the role of the mindless mute accessory to those they stand in solidarity with to ensure that they don't dominate this fragile object. It is a charade which in other words, appears to recapitulate the colonial attitudes that it purportedly challenges.

The objectifying process here bears highlighting. If, as I earlier argued, the aim of not interfering in internal politics is to declare a belief in the political

subjectivity of Palestinians, the actual practice of non-interference - by leading to a lack of open, honest communication and contact - can serve in fact to turn Palestinians into distant objects of solidarity and no more. By rising above Palestinian politics and being in solidarity with this semi-mystical concept - 'the Palestinian people' this tendency freezes Palestinians' identities and enables solidarity practitioners to dispense with actual existing Palestinians in their practices.

As opposed to this criticism, the question must be asked whether Palestinians have time for this wearisome exchange and communication, never mind how it would be conducted. In addition, the absence or attenuation of such communication may occur, but may be due to a number of other factors such as cultural differences, distance and so on, and not just the practice of avoiding internal Palestinian politics. However with all these caveats, and accepting that it is difficult to measure its effects, the lack of such honest open discussion between solidarity practitioners and Palestinians is problematic. While solidarity can't simply be about the solidarity activist feeling good about themselves, it is hardly selfish for solidarity activists to say that they want to get something out of this solidarity - a sense of meaningful communication and common purpose.

3. Avoidance of transformative politics

This leads to my third discussion point - this lack of exchange and discussion may limit more than the strategic or tactical efficacy of solidarity work. By limiting what solidarity can talk about, by limiting its horizons, this may limit its transformative possibilities. Solidarity's basic premise is less that of shared identity, and more of shared resistance to exploitation. That is: your struggle is mine and through what we learn from participating in each other's struggles helps us advance, in some way, our mutual emancipation. Such a principle of mutuality is fairly attenuated when talking about Northern support for the Palestinian struggle, but the mantra of non-involvement seems to have the effect of eliminating it altogether.

Rather than widening the scope of our politics, this approach has the effect of teaching solidarity practitioners to park our politics - for instance distrust of nationalism, opposition to neoliberalism, belief in universalism - at the door of Palestinian solidarity. Whether it results in an inability to criticise suicide bombs in Israel/Palestine or in allying ourselves with conservative forces at home and abroad (so long as they are critical of Israel) this tendency is deeply problematic. Rather than transforming ones understanding of the world, it leads to a position of compromises and alliances with powers and ideas which we would have no intention of allying with otherwise. The political effect of such work, both domestically and internationally is likely to be of, at best, equivocal value.

The worry is that this notion of solidarity which seeks to avoid its necessary tensions, leads to a suppression of our political imaginations and activities,

rather than to their expansion. This may be the greatest casualty of the doctrine of non-involvement – that we may find that in undertaking such blinkered political work we are not engaged in action that is meaningful either for Palestinians, ourselves or our mutual world.

There are no easy answers on how to avoid or at least to minimise these tendencies. Or rather, such answers are to be found in the local politics of each solidarity group and their ongoing decisions on how they relate to those they stand in solidarity with. It is useful – if also dangerous - for solidarity groups to at least acknowledge tensions in this relationship, and the problems as well as the advantages of 'non-involvement', rather than sweeping them under the carpet. For in the end, no simple practice, even one that makes as much sense as 'non-involvement' can ever encompass the messiness and promise of genuine mutual relationships.

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Conceptualizing solidarity and realizing struggle: testing against the Palestinian call for the boycott of Israel

Sriram Ananth

Abstract

The idea of solidarity in transformative political work has been quite fundamental, albeit in very different ways, to both Marxist and Feminist debates. However, despite the widespread implications and applications of these two strands of thought, the scope of solidarity as a liberatory idea has rarely been systematically explored in the context of real-life struggles, which lends greater theoretical rigor to understanding the relationship between solidarity and transformative political work. I take a first step in doing that by putting selections from these two bodies of literature in conversation with each other and juxtaposing them against a brief discursive analysis of a current call for solidarity from Palestinian civil society seeking the boycott, divestment, and sanction (BDS) of the Israeli state until Israel complies with international law and human rights norms as laid out in the demands of the call. I argue that theoretical explorations of solidarity need to be constantly tested against real struggles that occupy different realms of socioeconomic and spatial difference, as displayed by the Palestinian BDS call/movement, because it is in the lived politics of solidarity-based struggle that one is able to determine where greater attention to difference is needed, where commonality of interests lies, and how to engage with the contradictions arising from different forms of solidarity for a transformative (and in this case, transnational) political movement.

Keywords: Solidarity, struggle, Palestine, boycott, Israel, contentious politics, feminism, Marxism.

Introduction

The idea of solidarity is a powerful one. Often symbolized, bodily and illustratively, with the quintessential raised fist, it is an idea that travels across many seas, crosses many borders, results in countless actions and, when realized effectively, can help bring down the most oppressive of forces. It is an idea that has produced inspiring chapters in human history that defy the assumption of individual self-interest capitalism insists we're all motivated by, and instead brings to bear the more sustainable notion of our collective liberation, forcing us to understand that one is not free until all are free.

Of course, there is always an attached romanticism to the idea of solidarity that is rarely realized in actual struggle. Many have explored how and why. This paper seeks to give it a shot as well.

The idea of solidarity and its potential in liberatory struggles has been intensely debated in feminist thought for at least a couple of decades now (Dean, 1996; hooks, 2000; Mohanty, 2003). Feminist debates on solidarity have frequently centered around questions of identity, difference, and location. These debates have derived from understandings of gender and sexuality that reject essentializing notions of a universal feminist identity (Whelehan, 1995; Butler, 1995). Transformative political work infused with an abiding sense of solidarity usually takes place via coalitions and alliances, among other forms of struggle¹. Solidarity and its complexities when realized in struggle has been theorized in much feminist thought, especially those strands which strenuously adhere to understanding gender against multiple contours of oppression like race, class etc.

Prior and unrelated to these debates, a specific notion of solidarity and proletarian internationalism was espoused by Marxist political trends assuming class (i.e. one's relationship to the modes of production) under a universalizing logic of capital as the material basis for the same (Marx and Engels, 1848, 1872). Marxist notions of solidarity/internationalism were perceived under a unitary historical narrative of capital as an ultimately universalizing force producing the two broad subjects of proletariat and bourgeoisie with some complications therein (such as the lumpen proletariat, national bourgeoisie, labor aristocracy and so on). The solidarity espoused thus often subsumed other forms of oppression such as gender, race etc. into class-solidarity, which was theorized as the most important path of struggle under rapidly universalizing capitalist modes of production that was assumed, for the most part, to determine social relations.

The relationship between commonality of experience or material conditions and the politics of solidarity has been quite fundamental, albeit in very different ways, to both Marxist and feminist debates. While the recurrent theme in Marxist examinations on solidarity is its emphasis on class, the recurrent theme in feminist thought (and specifically the texts I examine) has been an emphasis on identity and difference. However, despite the widespread implications and applications of these two strands of thought, the scope of these themes has rarely been systematically explored in the context of real-life struggles², which

¹ To differentiate between the two: coalitions are “built via recognition of one’s own group position in conjunction with one another [where] [e]mpathy, not sympathy, becomes the basis of coalition” (Collins, 2000: 247), while alliances are built on “the *way* we think about race, class, and gender – the political links we choose to make among and between struggles” (Mohanty, 2002: 196).

² I utilize the term “real-life struggles” to denote *conscious willed action*, especially that through which theory or philosophy is transformed into practical social activity; the synthesis of theory and practice seen as a basis for or condition of political and economic change stemming from Marx’s clarion-call at the end of his *Theses on Feuerbach (1969[1845])*, where he states “The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways, the point is to change it.” In

lends greater theoretical rigor to understanding the relationship between solidarity and transformative political work.

I take a first step in doing that by putting selections from two bodies of literature that have specific discussions surrounding solidarity in conversation with each other, along with a few others that provide some helpful additions. The selections of these texts have been made keeping in mind two things. One, they specifically take up the notion of solidarity, and two, they have been written with transformative political work in mind. The texts that I take up have been primarily from writers situated in the Global North. This is in part due to my own position as an activist and writer based in the Global North, which determines the texts that I have primary access to, but also because I believe these texts offer rich explorations on solidarity, in addition to pertinence for the specific case study on the Palestinian BDS call, since they focus on coalitions/alliances across difference resulting from solidarity. Finally and very crucially, as with any selection of literature, they are texts that have, to varying degrees, played a role in influencing my own evolution in political thought and praxis (barring a couple that were suggested as part of the peer-review process for this paper).

I then juxtapose them against a discursive analysis of a current call for solidarity from Palestinian civil society seeking the boycott, divestment, and sanction (BDS) of the Israeli state until Israel complies with international law and human rights norms as laid out in the demands of the call. I do this because of the rich possibilities that this offers for dissecting the notion of solidarity specifically aimed at transformative political work which most of, if not all, the strands of thought I examine have a professed interest in doing. I start with an introduction to this specific political call for solidarity that has spawned a highly heterogeneous response from numerous Palestine-solidarity groups, primarily in the Global North.

This introduction is followed by a section examining certain selections of Marxist literature on solidarity and internationalism, and a similar section examining some key strands of Feminist literature on the same. For the section examining feminist notions of solidarity, I have added a couple of texts specifically examining political solidarity with regard to race, as this lends more richness to the examination. I do this also because race, among other identities, has been one of the crucial factors in the break within feminist thought, rejecting a universal sense of womanhood that tended to be quite colonial and racist. This exercise leads to a specific conclusion juxtaposing these two examinations against the Palestinian BDS call, utilizing it as an empirical focal point, and thereby understanding solidarity as a liberatory idea with multiple possibilities/limitations for a transformative politics.

addition, the term is meant to denote *praxis* as defined by Paulo Freire, i.e. "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it." (Freire, 1970: 51) but in combination with what Hannah Arendt (1958) highlighted wherein she saw praxis as the greatest feature of the human condition and the true path to realizing human freedom.

Finally, in terms of the rationale for picking the Palestinian BDS call, it is, as most rationales tend to be, neither random nor devoid of personal biases and life-situations. The movement that it resulted in is one I have been intimately involved in for many years as an activist, during the time I was completing my doctoral courses at the University of Minnesota's Dept. of Geography in Minneapolis with a group called the Minnesota Break the Bonds Coalition, later on for a couple of years with various groups in Toronto after moving there, and ongoing through volunteer work with the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. The movement also happens to be the empirical foundation for my ongoing doctoral thesis.

The Palestinian call for BDS

On July 9th, 2005, an unprecedented coalition of Palestinian civil-society organizations, activists, academics, intellectuals, and trade-unions called for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) of the state of Israel³. They urgently requested the international community “in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency, and resistance to injustice and oppression” to implement this call “until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people’s inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by: 1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall; 2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and 3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.” (*Palestinian United Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel*, July 2005)

The call for BDS was endorsed by over 170 Palestinian organizations, collectively referred to as “representatives of Palestinian civil society” within the Occupied Territories of West Bank and Gaza as well as the national territory of Israel. This was reminiscent of and derived directly from the solidarity-calls issued by South African anti-apartheid activists calling for the boycott of apartheid-era South Africa, which were in turn derived from Gandhian civil disobedience and strategic non-violence aimed at gaining the moral high ground in resistance to British colonialism. The Palestinian call for BDS was taken up by numerous Palestine-solidarity movements, primarily in the Global North, to implement campaigns that struggled for the boycott of Israel.

What the BDS movement represents, and is calling for, is a transformative political praxis of emancipatory resistance that matches the evolving socio-spatial apparatus of structural oppression. This structural oppression is identified as the Israeli state which is strongly supported by numerous international allies, the United States being the most powerful of them, and a large Israeli lobby outside the national territory of Israel that constantly works on bolstering continued support for Israel, resulting in the ongoing oppression

³ Please visit <http://www.pacbi.org/> and <http://www.bdsmovement.net/> for more information.

of Palestinians. The call understands that the political-economic sources of this oppression exist beyond the specific geographic boundaries of the state of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and thus is an attempt to overcome the particular socio-spatial apparatus of Israeli oppression through emergent solidarities. The call thus represents an urgent attempt, among many others, to create an alternative socio-spatial imaginary that strives to match and struggle against that oppression through a call for solidarity. This alternative socio-spatial imaginary is framed in the three demands shown above that the call clearly states, with the idea that solidarity-based BDS measures must be implemented until the demands are met.

At play in the Palestinian call for BDS are two clear notions of solidarity. One, it defines the Palestinian people as a single cultural-national entity against a tripartite structure of oppression consisting of colonialism, racist apartheid and military occupation that has been suffered by them as a cultural-national entity. This is not unlike, say, frameworks of black liberation struggles in the United States (Shelby, 2005). Two, in lieu of this historic injustice, it makes an emotive call for solidarity from clearly defined “international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world” outside of that cultural-national entity, to boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel until the oppression ends with the implementation of their three demands. This includes a specific invitation to “conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace”. Thus there are three entities - an oppressed people defined, an oppressor institution identified and everyone else called to stand in solidarity with said oppressed people.

Yet it is not without contradictions as it is a movement whose success is primarily predicated on a perceived solidarity emerging from the traditional power-centers of the Global North. The call emerges from Palestine but it is focused on garnering solidarity from those occupying positions of immense socio-economic privilege over Palestinians, i.e. people and institutions that are not directly impacted by that specific form of oppression. Most of the key BDS movements that have emerged out of this call are in places like New York, Toronto, London, San Francisco and other major cities of the Global North⁴, and organized by residents of these areas who do not face the oppression that Palestinians face. Further, there is a homogeneous notion of “Palestinians” themselves in the call that does not take into account the differences of class, gender, and so on among Palestinians.

Both of these points don’t make the call any less viable for a transformative political praxis based on solidarity, but they offer spaces for further examination. Both of the contradictions are strategic for it can certainly be argued that voices from the Global North in solidarity with Palestinians could play a huge role in making interventions in mainstream discourse in the Global North and, furthermore, that it might not make any political sense (at least for now) to explicitly talk about differences among Palestinians in a solidarity-call

⁴ Please visit <http://www.pacbi.org/> and <http://www.bdsmovement.net/> for more information.

that is issued in support of their collective liberation. It is in the spaces of these contradictions that this call offers the richest points for further exploration of the socio-spatial politics of solidarity and the possibilities it offers.

While in-depth research into the BDS collectives/groups that are emerging from this call is beyond the scope of this paper, I discursively utilize the call itself to examine questions of solidarity and transformative political work by juxtaposing it against selected Marxist and Feminist threads on the same.

It is crucial to frame the paper at this stage by acknowledging the existence of potentially problematic binaries here in calls for solidarity. However, the crucial point to derive from this is that solidarity automatically means someone in solidarity *with* someone else (first binary), “over and against a third” (second binary) as Jodi Dean theorizes (Dean, 1996: 3), and the Palestinian BDS call clearly categorizes. These binaries are important to understand and acknowledge. They cannot be negated if one is to understand and practice the idea of solidarity. Solidarity can rarely be realized by hedging. One has to take a stand with the oppressed, against the oppressor, often running counter to popular cultural norms, accepted social practices, and hegemonic political structures. It's not pure, it's never perfect, but it is the hard work of solidarity.

Nowhere are the imperfections of real-life solidarity work more apparent than in orthodox Marxist understandings of the same.

Class-solidarity, labor, and proletarian internationalism

One of the earliest notions of class-solidarity from an organizational standpoint came with the first International Workingmen's Association (IWMA) in 1864, declaring in its General Rules that the need for solidarity was one of the reasons for the founding of the International. G. M. Stekloff (also known as Yuri Steklov) was an accomplished historian, journalist, and former high-ranking communist within the party in the Soviet Union. Writing in 1928 (with likely little foresight that in about 10 years he was going to be killed during the Stalinist purges), he saw solidarity as the driving force for the International, stating that “in its intervention in strikes, the International had two aims: first of all, to prevent the import of foreign strikebreakers, and secondly, to give direct aid to all the strikers by inaugurating collections and sending money.” (Stekloff, 1928) Marx and Engels end the Communist Manifesto they published in 1848 with the now famous slogan “Workers of the World Unite” – a clarion call for class-solidarity many who haven't even seen the manifesto are likely to know about and also one that Marx would repeat 16 years later at the end of the inaugural address to the First International.

Inherent in this Marxist notion of solidarity is a fundamental predication on class, and an assumption that workers across the world share (or will ultimately share) common material conditions/interests (Pasture and Verberckmoes, 1998: 7). This was explicitly promoted by Marx and Engels when confronting forces within the IWMA that were aligned with the more anarchist politics of Bakunin:

Contrary to the sectarian organization, with their vagaries and rivalries, the International is a genuine and militant organization of the proletarian class of all countries, united in their common struggle against the capitalists and the landowners, against their class power organized in the state. The International's Rules, therefore, speak of only simple "workers' societies" all aiming for the same goal and accepting the same program, which presents a general outline of the proletarian movement, while having its theoretical elaboration to be guided by the needs of the practical struggle and the exchange of ideas in the sections, unrestrictedly admitting all shades of socialist convictions in their organs and Congresses. (Marx and Engels, 1872: Part IV)

Indeed Marx and Bakunin stood on the same side when it came to the primacy of class as the basis for revolutionary struggle, but differed in their understanding and organizational implementation⁵. Class-solidarity as espoused by the IWMA (which was to be the foundation for Marxist political trends from then on) was thus based on an assumption of commonality of material interests, interdependence and a larger goal of fighting for better material conditions for workers worldwide (Baldwin, 1990: 24-25, 33; Johns, 1998: 255). Identity outside of (and hence difference within) class-struggles was seen as either reactionary or at best treated from a pragmatic or tactical standpoint. Popular movements based on nationalist sentiments are one such case-in-point, which were "supported when they assisted the socialist cause or were otherwise beneficial to it" especially when they removed essential causes for discord between workers of different nationalities (Pasture and Verberckmoes, 1998: 3). Thus national identity was seen as a form of difference between workers that could lead to potentially pesky class-divisions, and (like other identities) had to be negotiated with purely on strategic terms, with the ultimate aim of erasing it.

⁵ In *The Communist Manifesto*, and in subsequent documents, Marx argued for the revolutionary subject as that agent of history most capable and in need of revolutionary change based on a relationship to the current modes of production that was further honed in his debates with Bakunin (Marx and Engels, 1848; 1872). Marx didn't believe that only material oppression was enough to constitute revolutionary subjectivity. This was one of the crucial foci of his debate with Bakunin. Bakunin (1866) argued that the lumpen proletariat and peasantry "constituted the sectors less exposed to the influence of bourgeois civilization and, consequently, the best equipped with the necessary instincts for rebellion" (Esteban, 2006).

Marx on the other hand was of the firm belief that the lumpen classes, who possibly faced much harsher material conditions than even the industrial proletariat in his time, were more prone to counterrevolution than revolution (ibid.) because of they did not occupy a revolutionary *relationship* to the modes of production. He thus determined that it was primarily the industrial proletariat that occupied a viable position of revolutionary subjectivity, because it wasn't about the degree of exposure to bourgeois culture that determined revolutionary subjectivity (as it was for Bakunin), but to the modes of production that created that cultural superstructure. It was based on a notion of class, primarily defined by Marxists via "some commonality, either structurally or experientially denned" predicated against a relationship to power, property ownership, and exploitation (Gibson-Graham, 2006[1996]: 49). This was naturally consistent with the base-superstructure paradigm that constituted the ontological framework for Marxist thoughts on social relations (which Gramsci would complicate later on).

Though class-solidarity is spoken of as a singular type of solidarity, one can discern broadly two forms of solidarity in practice. The first is worker-to-worker solidarity in the same production site. Here the commonality of material conditions is immediately evident, with workers theoretically sharing largely similar collective interests (despite identity-based differences) with regard to the betterment of their working conditions and their relationship to the holders of capital in that site (Boswell et al, 2006: 4). This type of solidarity might also incorporate other identities such as race or gender, but ultimately is based on collective interests as workers at that site (Penney, 2006: 156-157; Dixon et al, 2004: 23-24; Hodson et al, 1993: 399-402).

The second is proletarian internationalism which assumes, ultimately, a commonality of interests for workers worldwide and thus a common program for emancipation resulting in solidarity that saw, for example, non-striking workers in one nation supporting striking workers in another nation through sending aid and preventing foreign strikebreakers (Stekloff, 1928). However, the collective material interests among those in solidarity with each other are not as immediate but more abstract, because they are based on a narrative of capital expansion, and as a counter to bourgeois nationalism where “the working class and socialism, and indeed internationalism, are effectively presented as being synonymous” (Pasture and Verberckmoes, 1998: 7). This is all the more evident when, as often happens, the immediate material interests of workers in the same site or region trump long-term internationalist solidarity or when such solidarity degenerates to a paternalistic “labor philanthropy” of northern activists which runs afoul of true internationalism (Gill, 2009: 677).

A crucial issue to add when class-solidarity as enacted out organizationally is the fact that “although they intersect and often coincide, the actors who do battle...and [the] social classes in a more general sense are, in fact, two different entities” (Baldwin, 1990: 11-12), with often little attention paid by Marxists to the “organizational and ideological diversity of the labor movement” (Pasture and Verberckmoes, 1998: 7). It is important to ask in this case when class-solidarity is real, when it is manufactured by actors at the organizational helms, and when it possesses both in varying degrees.

Tommie Shelby speaks of how Black Marxists found it difficult “to get orthodox Marxists to take the black experience seriously” and get them “to accept that there can be no interracial working-class until there is racial justice” (Shelby, 2005: 6-8). A sociological study on two union-drives with very similar structural locations and institutional paths had vastly different results, with workers voting overwhelmingly for the union in one location and overwhelmingly against in the other, primarily because “dynamic interplay between the conditions of work, past cultural contexts, discourse, and collective action affected the way potential union supporters understood the meaning of the movement, and whether or not the union made sense as a vehicle of change” (Penney, 2006: 139, 157).

Meredith Tax writes historically about alliances between various women (a “united front”) in the socialist movement periodically occurring in the late

1800s and early 1900s who “knew there was a dialectical relationship between the movement for women’s liberation and the labor movement, and refused to give up on either,” (Tax, 1980: 13-15) while Diane Balser argues that “Feminists and working women’s organizations need to work with the established labor movement...at the same time that they need to maintain a parallel, independent women’s base that will keep the Feminist vision clear and will provide the *external pressure necessary* [emphasis mine] to motivate labor’s organizing of unorganized women” (Balser, 1987: 214-215). While it might seem like the above examples are recreating divisions between the politics of labor and gender, or labor and race, which are certainly not fixed but rather time/space-specific, what I wish to point out here is the well-understood issue of *difference* among workers that a classical Marxist notion of class-solidarity either fails to account for or only does so with the ultimate idea of subsumption under class struggle.

Apart from socioeconomic difference among workers that labor sociologists have dealt with in great detail, there is another crucial difference pertaining to class-solidarity, namely space, which has been taken up by labor geographers. Rebecca Johns in examining class and space writes:

Workers may have class interests that they share with workers across international borders, and spatial interests that divide them. In reality, there is a conflict between these interests that makes building a truly global movement problematic. The conflict between space and class arises because workers in capitalism’s areas of global development have come to expect a standard of living that accompanies their place in the spatial structures of uneven development. (1998: 255)

What all of the above tells us is that an assumption of class-solidarity brings up the question of socioeconomic and spatial difference within the working-class, usually resulting in the effacement of the same, which has deleterious implications both for workers solidarity on the shop floor as well as the internationalism of labor movements. Whether it be upholding xenophobic, and racist attitudes towards migrant workers or aligning with nationalist sentiment, the failure to address real difference drastically reduces the possibility for real solidarity/internationalism and ultimately defeats any movement towards bettering material conditions for workers. It remains consistent with a class-based political analysis, to not only understand that the effacement of difference (which can be done even when difference is acknowledged, but without genuine political engagement) only ultimately weakens the workers movement, but that, crucially, “respecting diversity does not mean uniformity or sameness” (hooks, 2000: 58).

It stands to reason that, while powerful and important, there are many failings in such homogenizing projections of class-solidarity. But where orthodox Marxism (and many other strains of left thought) faltered, transnational feminist thought valiantly endeavored to advance.

Political solidarity, identity, and difference

Feminist thought continues to critically define and call for egalitarian modes of political engagement, especially with regard to understanding the notion of political solidarity while concurrently juxtaposing it against other ideas like sisterhood. Most importantly, this notion of solidarity has crucially brought understandings of differential privilege and power within solidarity-based movements to the fore. This is something that Marxist trends failed to do, as their notions of class-solidarity/internationalism were predicated on a homogeneous class narrative. No matter, because a brief examination of a few feminist thinkers quickly addresses this problem.

Jodi Dean calls for a reflective solidarity that acts as a “bridge between identity and universality” defined as “the mutual expectation of a responsible orientation to relationship” (Dean, 1996: 3). Dean models solidarity as interaction involving three actors in two moments of action, where one is asked to “stand by [another] over and above a third”. This is not unlike calls for workers-solidarity and proletarian internationalism where workers are asked to stand in solidarity with each other over and above the forces of capital. Dean, however, further expands on this by stating that “rather than presuming the exclusion and opposition of the third, the ideal of reflective solidarity thematizes the voice of the third to reconstruct solidarity as an inclusionary ideal for contemporary politics and society.” She goes on to state that reflective solidarity provides for difference “because it upholds the possibility of a universal, communicative ‘we’” rather than one that is “conceived of oppositionally, on the model of ‘us vs. them’” and indeed anchored in a mutual respect for difference (Ibid.: 8. 16). Listing the problems of conventional solidarity as that of time, exclusion, accountability, and questioning critique, she posits reflective solidarity as a step forward, one that “take[s] seriously the historical conditions of value pluralism, the ever present potential for exclusion, the demands of accountability, and the importance of critique” through ties that are “communicative and open” (Ibid.: 21-30).

In calling for reflexivity, the solidarity we see being talked about above has a strong affective moment in it that brings engaging with difference in an open, empathetic manner without ultimately aiming for “sameness” (Gray, 2004: 415, 422-426). Sandra Bartky pointedly asks whether there is some “special affective repertoire necessary for the building of solidarities across lines of race and class that is not necessary when these lines are not crossed?” (Bartky, 1997: 180) It is important here to state that Marxist calls for internationalism have equally affective moments in them, slogans like “workers of the world unite!” for instance, but the emotive aspect of the call is not acknowledged because of an assumption of class homogeneity. There is a difference, however, between an affective call to solidarity (which Marxist calls for internationalism produce), and affect as utilized by feminist calls to solidarity.

I would like to write a couple of lines on this “affective repertoire” in building solidarity, as the importance of it is often unacknowledged, much more so in Marxism than feminism. In Marxist calls, the affective element is rendered to

make the actual call based on common material conditions, rather than one that is meant to (also) work affectively. The assumption is that workers of the world indeed can and should unite based on a fundamentally common material relationship to the modes of production, and hence what is in fact a very affective call, is seen as a universal truth. In other words, affect is used to make the call, but the way in which that call can produce affective results among those the call is being made to is ignored. This is unlike many calls for political solidarity made by feminist thinkers, who see the affective element in them as one of the key ways of engaging with difference. Bernice Johnson Reagon comes to mind here. Chandra Mohanty states that Reagon's notion of coalition, transnational or cross-cultural, "underscores the significance of the traditions of political struggle, what she calls an 'old-age perspective'...forged on the basis of memories and counter narratives, not on an ahistorical universalism" (Mohanty, 2003: 117).

This also shows how the notion of internationalism is not just a Marxist deployment, but a feminist one as well, albeit in very different ways. It is a more heterogeneous internationalism that is being called for rather than a homogeneous one. Feminists do it by acknowledging difference, often through engaged affective moments, rather than subsuming them. In acknowledging that difference, reflexivity is the manner that Dean chooses to address the differences between actors in solidarity with one another, and it can be seen that she writes this specifically for those actors who are in a significantly more privileged socioeconomic position than those they might be in solidarity with.

Similar to Dean, Sally Scholz examines political solidarity through a lens of racial justice and how members of a privileged group can understand institutional injustice. She lays the groundwork for a theory of political solidarity, asking what it means and how it differs fundamentally from other social and political concepts like camaraderie, association, or community. Political solidarity, in contrast to social solidarity and civic solidarity, aims to bring about social change by uniting individuals in their response to particular situations of injustice, oppression, or tyranny. She states that any commitment to solidarity "requires an active acknowledgement of the experience of the oppressed" (Scholz: 2008: 167), which for her requires the overcoming of "false white identity." This can, according to Scholz, be achieved through the renunciation of privilege, understanding historical and experiential oppression, and participation in acts of resistance (Ibid.: 181).

Mohanty on the other hand, in calling for a political solidarity inspired by Dean, states that "class struggle, narrowly defined, can no longer be the only basis for solidarity among women workers" (Mohanty, 2003: 142). Like Dean, diversity and difference are crucial values for Mohanty "to be acknowledged and respected, not erased in the building of alliances" (Ibid.: 7). She brings in political solidarity in critique of a homogenizing notion of sisterhood espoused by Robin Morgan, using a notion of coalition as argued for by Reagon coupled with Dean's idea of reflective solidarity. Mohanty argues for a political solidarity among women workers "defined as a community or collectivity among women

workers across class, race, and national boundaries that is based on shared material interests and identity and common ways of reading the world” (Ibid.: 144-145), with active political struggle being one of the crucial markers for solidarity over sisterhood. For Mohanty, common material conditions under a heterogeneous logic of capital are critical to developing a sense of solidarity. She states that “the logic and operation of capital in the contemporary global arena” is a shared history between Third and First World women (Ibid.: 167). Indeed, what Mohanty calls for is in fact a heterogeneous form of class-solidarity among a global class of “women workers”. She attempts to distance the call from its potential universalizing tendencies by adding, “[T]his does not mean that differences and discontinuities in experience do not exist or that they are insignificant” (Ibid.: 145), but arguing for an ideological definition and redefinition of women’s work, based on a non-unitary logic of capital taking into account other histories/logics, that would lay the political platform for common struggles.

At this point I’d like to take the liberty of briefly engaging with a very non-feminist, but significantly influential, text on solidarity. I do this not just because I arbitrarily can, but because the text has a deep, albeit somewhat paternalistic, engagement with difference and oppression in the realization of solidarity. Paulo Freire (who counted Marx, Althusser, and Satre among others as his greatest influences), in his oft-quoted *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, addresses the “humanist educator and the authentic revolutionary”, i.e. he too writes for those in solidarity with the oppressed, and very emotively calls for love as the best route to greater humanization; not a love that is sentimental but as an act of freedom, a political love that is liberating. In addition he calls for a notion of faith, not a “distorted” view of god leading to fatalism, but a faith in people, specifically in the oppressed. Notwithstanding the dangers of paternalism in Freire’s calls, what we can garner is that there is a fundamental, and for the most part very true, assumption that a transformative politics of solidarity often involves actors occupying positions of vast socioeconomic difference, and hence requiring very critical ways of engaging with that difference. Where Dean chooses to address it by arguing for reflexivity, Scholz by positing the renunciation of privilege with acknowledgement of oppression, and Mohanty with a call for an ever-evolving sense of political solidarity, Friere chooses love and faith. What is common to all of them is an acknowledgement of difference among actors engaged in solidarity-based transformative politics and hence suggested ways to address those differences.

A common thread running through all of the writers cited in this section is a keen attention to socioeconomic difference among actors involved in the act of political solidarity. In addition, there is a challenge from all of them in different ways to universalizing assumptions that can lead to the kind of class-reductionism we see in many Marxist calls for class-solidarity and internationalism. Indeed the very assumption that there is some universal – “the mistaken belief that there is some ultimate word, presence, essence, reality, or truth that can provide a foundation for theory, experience, and expression” (Bartky, 1997: 178) – is challenged by this solidarity-enmeshed “politics of

difference [that] puts into question...the idea of a social totality” (Sawicki, 1986: 23-24). Of interest is that these calls for and constructions of solidarity are done while still maintaining the importance of defining it against material conditions and forms of oppression, either shared or otherwise. Here is where one can find small paradoxes in many of the above theorists; and thereby allowing spaces for critique and further improvement to open up.

Are there traces of utopianism inherent in these calls for solidarity? I, of course, ask such a rhetorical question as a way of suggesting that there are.

Furthermore, can acknowledging difference through variously constructed calls for solidarity ironically play the role of effacing the very difference that is sought to be engaged with? Simply put, stating that one ought to be reflexive (Dean), acknowledge oppression and overcome privilege (Scholz), show love and faith (Freire), or work with a heterogeneous logic of capital for solidarity among women workers (Mohanty), does not mean much if it doesn't take into account real struggles with all the contradictions present in them, and can in fact even do damage if seen as an end in and of themselves.

What is it that constitutes real struggle here? It is that which can test these abstract theoretical constructs, and thereby check the levels of possibility for transformative political work. This is not to say that these calls are inherently utopian or elitist, but that there is the *danger* of them being so, especially if found wanting when tested in real-life struggles. This can result in theoretical calls for attention to identity and difference merely staying in the realm of the individual (more often than not the lefty academic researcher ensconced quite permanently within the ivory tower) who might be making those calls in the production of “collaborative” knowledge that finds great acceptance in conferences and whatnot. Can these very rich constructs of solidarity then stand the test of real struggle? I would like to compare them briefly to the Palestinian call for BDS to try and find out. It must be stated that these are brief juxtapositions against one particular call for solidarity, and by no means an exhaustive analysis of these constructs. However, the BDS call is predicated on a very clear and well-defined understanding of solidarity, which makes it a rich, emerging, real-life struggle to discursively examine these constructs of solidarity against.

There is a danger with Dean's important call for reflexivity for instance, because in correctly calling for reflexivity she runs the risk of negating the oppositional “third” party in her own very lucid framework of solidarity. It is dangerous because solidarity clearly means, however difficult it might be to swallow, that there is opposition to a third actor happening (as Marxist class-solidarity understands, at least theoretically, with regard to the controllers of the instruments of production in a capitalist system). When a real-life call for solidarity is made, it is often against an oppositional third, as the BDS call identifies being the Israeli state. There is a danger in Mohanty, when she talks of “common material interests,” yet paints herself into an ideological corner with the acknowledgement that “differences and discontinuities” are certainly significant. This automatically stands in contradiction against the material

commonality she seeks for women workers across race, class, national boundaries and so on. Real-life calls sometimes seek solidarity from certain people/institutions precisely *because* they occupy positions of material privilege, as the BDS call identifies with the international community it seeks solidarity from. On a contrasting note, there is a danger in Scholz when she calls for an overcoming of privilege by members of a privileged group who seek to stand in solidarity with the oppressed, with the problematic assumption that privilege, historically and structurally manifested, *can* be overcome.

Real-life calls for solidarity often uphold the leadership role of the oppressed group calling for solidarity, and defining the form that it should take (as the BDS call does), to prevent the movement from being led by more privileged groups who might stand in solidarity with the oppressed group in the knowledge that privilege, no matter how well-meaning the person is, cannot be renounced that easily. There is a danger in Freire when he calls for love and faith, without adequate measures to see whether indeed this love and faith is not merely masking structural inequalities between the “oppressed” and those that stand in solidarity with them. Real-life calls for solidarity often have specific guidelines on what that solidarity should look like in order to prevent an assumption of good-heartedness on the part of those showing solidarity as sufficient to uphold it consistently, as shown in the guidelines for boycott laid out by the Palestinian BDS call. None of the above in any way suggests that these constructs of solidarity are not viable or useful. On the contrary, because they acknowledge difference and seek ways to address them, they become all the more important to understand and realize in real-life acts of solidarity conducted across that difference, but need to be taken up with care.

The potential dangers in these constructs of solidarity thus become easier to identify and address only when tested against real-life struggles. To better understand this problem it’s useful to see Tommie Shelby’s examination of the philosophical foundations of black solidarity, which he argues should be rooted in a Du Bois-inspired “common experience of racial injustice and the stigma of being racialized as ‘black’...a specifically *political* mode of blackness” and a Frederick Douglas-inspired “mutual recognition of a common subordinate position and the collective commitment to rise above it” (Shelby, 2005: 244-248). Shelby focuses also on class-differentiation within blacks, and rejects shared ethno-racial identity, a notion of an autonomous black community with collective control over black life, and the notion that a collective identity is required for an effective solidarity. Instead his idea of black solidarity is “based strictly on the shared experience of racial oppression and a joint commitment to resist it” (Ibid.: 11-12). While black solidarity remains the core of his work, he nevertheless puts forward a construct for “those with whom blacks should seek solidarity with” who “are not necessarily those who most exhibit thick black identity, but those who stand firm in resistance to black oppression” (Ibid.: 247). This is in contrast to Scholz who does the same, but approaching it from the other end of the solidarity binary of oppressed and those-in-solidarity-with-the-oppressed. Shelby acknowledges the same socioeconomic difference between oppressed and those in solidarity with the oppressed, but takes into

account both solidarity *within* the oppressed group, and solidarity between that oppressed group and those outside of it.

How, then, can political solidarity that takes into account difference in various ways as shown above become more than identity politics that “serve little purpose beyond an involitional elitist narcissism,” but rather “distinguish between hegemonic and antihegemonic cultural practices as well as between those of the powerful and the powerless” (Dirlik and Prazniak, 2001: 3)?

I’d like to go to bell hooks, who I feel comes closest to addressing some of these dangers. She calls for the rejecting of a false sense of sisterhood “based on shallow notions of bonding” but, unlike Mohanty, argues that the abandonment of sisterhood “as an expression of political solidarity weakens and diminishes Feminist movement” (hooks, 2005: 44-45). hooks calls for a “united front” much akin to the kind of fronts that Meredith Tax studied with the alliances that women in the socialist movement formed in the US in the late 1800s and early 1900s. What hooks puts forward is in many ways a combination of what Mohanty and Dean speak of. It is a solidarity that seeks to be built under certain material commonalities that working women might go through (not unlike the fundamental basis for Marxist class-solidarity), but being also crucially attentive to very important socioeconomic differences. Speaking directly about and to “white women liberationists,” hooks states that a self-identification as victims could result in an abdication of “responsibility for their role in the maintenance and perpetuation of sexism, racism, and classism, which they did by insisting that only men were the enemy”, and that the call for sisterhood was seen by many black women as a call that didn’t address the forms of oppression they went through (Ibid.: 46-51). This can be equally pertinent to a notion of Marxist solidarity that looks only at the holders of capital as the enemy, thereby effacing difference and privilege within the working-class that can work against true class-solidarity. It can be equally pertinent to other constructions of solidarity based on other identities that might efface difference and privilege within the oppressed group by looking only at a single enemy as *the* enemy. hooks remains attentive in an uncomplicated yet profound manner to the contours of race and class that exist within feminist movements, when calling for a political solidarity based on the notion of sisterhood.

Solidarity, whether within Marxist trends or feminist trends or any other, presupposes a people to be in solidarity *with*. However, this has different connotations depending on the different actors involved in the process of solidarity. Solidarity between workers in a trade union on the same production site is different from solidarity in a multi-sited association of labor movements, which is further different from solidarity between activists in the US and labor struggles in Latin America. Similarly solidarity between black and white workers in a trade union on the same production site, is different than the solidarity among black workers in a multi-sited labor association, which is further different from the solidarity showcased between anti-apartheid activists in the US and black workers in South Africa. The direct material commonalities decrease with each subsequent scalar level of solidarity, while socioeconomic

and/or spatial difference increases, requiring the need to address that difference as attempted by many Feminist thinkers.

What all of the above showcases in a sense is that both Marxist notions of class solidarity, and political solidarity as constructed by different strands of Feminist thinkers have very important critiques to offer each other, but more importantly for integration into a transformative politics. One way I argue this can be achieved is by juxtaposing them against real-life struggles, like the Palestinian call for BDS, i.e. *testing* them beyond their theoretical abstractions.

Conclusion

The Sangtin Writers, a collective of feminist activists from a small town in northern India, have a succinct test for what they consider to be "usable" feminist visions. They state that "*a feminist vision that the activists cannot operationalize in their own communities is not a usable feminism for the collective.* [emphasis mine]" (Nagar and Sangtin Writers, 2006: 147). It is a litmus test that holds true for any liberatory praxis, i.e. to be able to *operationalize* any liberatory idea, including the idea of solidarity. David Featherstone, in his useful book *Solidarity*, further explains this as the "constructions of internationalisms [or solidarities] from below" (Featherstone, 2012: 8)⁶, which Nira Yuval-Davis, inspired by Patricia Hill Collins, offers some organizing tools to achieve with her examination of *transversalism* (in contrast to universalism), emphasizing the need for dialogue across difference (as opposed to an assumption of common viewpoints), with difference encompassed by equality, and solidarity emerging from common values reached via that dialogic process (Yuval-Davis, 2012: 50-52).

In other words, the realization of solidarity has to be grounded in, emerge from, and evolve within real-life struggles. It must acknowledge flesh-and-blood people who, despite all their differences, are finding common ground to wage a liberatory struggle.

Done this way, it reveals the multifaceted and chaotic nature of solidarity as a liberatory idea. It's messy work, and the messiness needs to be acknowledged and honored. It becomes increasingly clear that solidarity realized in real-life struggles is never quite as neat and clean as solidarity that is envisioned, and that often frameworks of solidarity fall flat when operationalized. It is those conceptualizations of solidarity that can withstand tests against real-life struggles that interest me more because they're the ones that can be operationalized. As someone who considers himself committed to liberatory

⁶ Also see Featherstone's discussion on "solidarity without guarantees" (Featherstone, 2012: 243-254) where he "draws on Stuart Hall's project of rethinking left politics in open and productive terms as bearing on generative practices of articulation" via one, "an insistence on the terms of solidarity not being given [in order to open] up a sense of the diverse struggles over how solidarities are to be fashioned and constructed" and two, "thinking solidarities in relational terms [in order to allow] an engagement with the diverse relations and connections shaped through solidarities."

politics, I also believe that this notion of solidarity could best be understood in a movement that I'm actively involved in and, in order to stay within the scope of this paper, juxtaposed against the international call for solidarity that spawned that movement.

So, how can all of the above be related to the Palestinian call for BDS? I will start by reverting back to the two moments of solidarity at play in the call. The first is the manner in which the "Palestinian people" are defined, which is at once predicated against the common oppression that Shelby speaks of in his understanding of black solidarity, that Mohanty speaks of when speaking of solidarity among women workers, and crucially also very similar to the basic manner in which class-solidarity as conceived of by Marxist thought is constructed, i.e. based on common material interests. But it is also predicated against a reductionist, homogenized national identity similar to the kind of nationalism that Pasture and Verberckmoes critique in their examination of working-class internationalism. It is important to understand however that this definition is strategic, i.e. deployed by the BDS call specifically in order to construct a notion of solidarity with them as an oppressed whole, based on the fact that all Palestinians, regardless of differences among them, face oppression of varying kinds and intensities at the hands of the Israeli state.

The second moment of solidarity is in the solidarity that the BDS calls for from the international community. Here too, there are resonances with Marxist understandings of class-solidarity, because the Palestinian call for the BDS of Israel that seeks to bring down the structures of oppression that Palestinians suffer, albeit in varied manners, as a *cultural-national* people, will (at least theoretically) undo an "essential cause for discord" (Pasture and Verberckmoes, 1998: 3) between Palestinian and Israeli *workers*, which falls fully within a Marxist notion of class-solidarity, even if that is clearly not the stated aim of the call. However the kind of solidarity that the BDS call seeks from the international community has as much relevance with feminist reflexivity, love, faith, and attention to difference, because it is seeking solidarity from people clearly identified by the call itself as being outside of the immediate realm of oppression that the Palestinians are under.

In other words it seeks to leverage the privilege of Palestine-solidarity activists in the Global North, privilege that is no doubt a result of imperialist and colonial structures of oppression, in order to dismantle a form of apartheid, colonialism, and military occupation that is rooted in those very same structures of oppression.

The BDS call does this because it accounts for the gargantuan apparatus of support the Israeli state enjoys in the Global North in this current day and age. It is an apparatus of support that is consistent with the instrumentality of US imperialism, and hence bolstered politically, economically, socially, and culturally by the same actors and powers-that-be that reproduce US imperialism. The Palestine-solidarity movement cannot ever hope to compete with the vast social, political, and economic resources of the pro-Israel forces in the US. Hence the call and the movement it has borne, warts and all, has

adopted the strategy of intervening in mainstream cultural discourse by strategically occupying the moral high ground, achieved in part by leveraging the privilege of activists in the Global North. It's problematic. It's difficult. It's messy.

It's also real life.

The contradictions are there for anyone to see. It's not immaculate, but no real-life struggle resisting oppression can afford to be lest they risk complete and utter marginalization. Part of the reason why the BDS movement has continued to be a thorn in the side of the enormously powerful pro-Israel forces is precisely because, in addition to being a fundamentally anti-oppressive movement, it is a strategically astute one.

This is why theoretical explorations of solidarity need to be constantly tested against real struggles that occupy different realms of socioeconomic and spatial difference. Workers in the same shop floor have an immediate common material interest in organizing in class-solidarity with each other, as do Palestinians in Ramallah or Jerusalem organizing in national-solidarity with each other against Israeli oppression. When activists outside of those immediate material conditions act in solidarity with them, the commonality of interests becomes more abstract and less immediate. It can be argued that activists organizing in solidarity with workers in a shop floor they don't work in is ultimately in resistance to the machinations of capital that bear down on them as well, but it is not within the immediate realm of the specific material interests of those workers. Similarly it can be argued that by organizing in solidarity with Palestinian struggles for self-determination, activists are organizing in resistance to imperialism and colonialism that has significant implications to them as well. Seen in this way, solidarity can be conceived of as not necessarily being only rooted in a pre-assigned idea of common material *conditions*, but more importantly an investment in an ever evolving idea of common material *politics*.

The BDS call at once occupies different spatial and socioeconomic levels. The socioeconomic conditions inherent in the definition of the Palestinian people, while not accounting for differences within the Palestinian people, is very different than the socioeconomic and spatial conditions of the international community in the Global North that the BDS call is calling for solidarity from. Similarly the spatial aspects of Israelis, themselves members of the Global North, who respond in solidarity to the BDS call is very different than solidarity-activists in other parts of the Global North. This can have important implications for the BDS movement itself. Seen in this manner, the BDS call provides an interesting platform to understand that it is in the lived politics of solidarity-based struggle that one is able to determine where greater attention to difference is needed, where commonality of interests lies, and how to engage with the contradictions arising from different forms of solidarity for a transformative political movement (and the messiness therein).

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International solidarity in the Global Justice Movement: coping with national and sectoral affinities

Priska Daphi

Abstract

The paper examines how relationships of international solidarity cope with sectoral and national affinities in the case of the Global Justice Movement (GJM). Drawing on interviews with activists in Italy, Germany, and Poland the paper shows that national, sectoral, and international solidarities are entwined in several ways – and in some respects depend on each other. While activists identify a variety of national and sectoral differences within the GJM, these differences are not seen to impede international solidarity building. However, national and sectoral affinities are considered to play somewhat different roles in building international solidarity. On the one hand, activists prioritise solidarity building across different sectors – identifying it both as the largest challenge and success of the GJM. On the other hand, solidarity building across countries is perceived as less problematic and believed to be a precondition for cross-sectoral solidarity building. The paper contributes to our understanding of transnational activism and considers ways in which to deal with national and sectoral affinities in transnational activism.

Keywords: International solidarity, internationalism, transitional movements, movement sectors, national affinities, Global Justice Movement

Introduction

The Global Justice Movement (GJM) – a network of left groups active mostly between the mid-1990s and the late 2000s – brought together activists from different countries and movement sectors. Engaged in various actions against neoliberal globalisation, the GJM consisted of geographically dispersed groups with different socio-cultural backgrounds, ideologies, and forms of organisation. Organisational structures ranged from institutionalised organisations such as trade unions, religious associations, and NGOs to grassroots groups and citizens' initiatives. The movement also included both reformist and radical approaches as well groups with different issue interests (e.g. precarious work, environmental protection or peace-building). This diversity posed challenges to building and maintaining international solidarity. This paper analyses how relations of international solidarity cope in particular with national and sectoral affinities in the case of the GJM.

Addressing this question, the paper not only draws on the assumption that international solidarity is essential in transnational mobilisation (as it paves the

way for cooperation and joint action). Its point of departure is also that international solidarity entails solidarity across countries as well as across different movement sectors. This approach differs from large parts of the existing literature on transnational social movement that focus on cooperation across countries and regions rather than sectors.

A transnational social movement is defined as a movement with “constituents in at least two states” (Tarrow 2001: 11), which targets “power-holders in at least one state other than their own or against a transnational institution or a multinational economic actor” (ibid.), and which frames problems and solutions transnationally (cf. Rucht 2001; della Porta et al. 2006). In addition, scholars more recently stressed that transnational movements also base on a series of distinctly local and national characteristics (e.g. Ugglå 2006, Cumbers et al. 2008, della Porta 2005). Sidney Tarrow (2005), for example, stresses the role of rooted cosmopolitanism in transnational activism: while activists physically and cognitively move beyond their country and region, they remain rooted in the social relations, resources, and opportunities of their places of origin. Similarly, Andrew Cumbers and his colleagues (2008) emphasise the role of place-based movements in transnational protests. Hence, examining the interplay of national and transnational dynamics is crucial in order to grasp the phenomenon of transnational movements (e.g. Tarrow 2011; Cumbers et al. 2008).

However, in order to understand transnational movements, it is also important to consider how national and transnational solidarities interact with sectoral affinities. Large transnational movements such as the GJM are characterised by bringing together activists not only from different countries, but also from different (left) movement sectors. Some scholars have considered this a new form of internationalism. For example Massimo de Angelis (2000) argues that new internationalism is characterised by jointly addressing different and previously separate issues such as labour and environment, human and animal rights – which often bring along differences in repertoires and forms of organisation. He argues that in this context, international solidarity is less about helping activists in other parts of the world with their struggle (based on sympathy and compassion) and more about seeing struggles elsewhere connected to one’s own (ibid.) A prominent example of this view is Zapatism, which inspired large parts of the GJM (cf. Juris 2008).

Against this background the paper will explore ways in which national and sectoral affinities interact with international solidarity. In order to do so it will analyse activists’ reflections about the GJM in Italy, Germany, and Poland. This analysis will show that national, sectoral, and international solidarities are considered to be connected in several ways – and in some respects are seen to depend on each other. In the following I will first elaborate the paper’s analytical approach and the data used. In a second part, I will analyse activists’ national affinities and the role they play in international solidarity building. A third part will examine activists’ sectoral affinities and their interaction with

international solidarity building. The fourth part discusses the findings and concludes.

1. Analytical approach and data

Accessing international solidarity

In order to examine how relationships of international solidarity cope with differences in activists' experiences and perspectives at the national as well as the sectoral level, this analysis draws on activists' reflections about the GJM itself – instead of analysing activists' networks or framing of problems. This approach bases on the assumption that activists' relations of solidarity can be accessed through a look at the social boundaries activists draw¹. Solidarity in social movements, as stressed in the introduction, entails the view to fight the same struggle. Hence, interests, world-views, and experiences need to be – at least to some extent – understood as shared.

The analysis below explores such perceived links in terms of the similarities and shared experiences that activists identify across countries and movement sectors. Particular attention will be paid to such perceived links in the context of international protest events. These are events during which activists from different countries and sectors meet. Hence, one can expect that while these events may be perceived as shared experiences, sectoral and national differences are particularly salient in these situations. Analysing recollections of these events promise interesting insights into how relations of international solidarity deal with national and sectoral affinities.

Interviews in Italy, Germany and Poland

The analysis draws on 48 interviews with Italian, Polish, and German GJM activists (15-17 interviews per country)². Analysing activist views from these three countries allows identifying – possibly common – patterns of dealing with national and sectoral affinities in relations of international solidarity across different national constellations of the GJM. In Italy, Germany, and Poland the GJM took very different paths – against the background of different constitutions of civil society, political opportunity structures, and movement legacies (Daphi 2013a; 2013b). In particular, activists' previous experiences of transnational activism differ³, which may lead to differences in how national, sectoral, and international solidarities are reconciled.

¹ While the reflections about the GJM are retrospective, they can provide insights into present social relations since collective memory is constructed in a certain present set of social relations (Halbwachs 1992).

² 16 interviews in Italy, 17 interviews in Germany, 15 interviews in Poland

³ In short, in Italy and Germany activists draw on a long – albeit different – history of transnational activist coordination. In Poland this is more limited due to 40 years of Soviet rule

The interviews were conducted between spring 2011 and spring 2012. All of the activists interviewed were involved in the GJM from its inception in the 1990s until the late 2000s. Their ages range between 30 and 78 years (in 2011). Furthermore, the interviewees belong to different sectors of the GJM. I interviewed activists with different ideological backgrounds, action repertoires and thematic orientation – following the existing distinction between an anti-neoliberal, an eco-pacifist, and an anti-capitalist sector of the GJM (cf. Andretta et al. 2003, della Porta et al. 2006): The anti-neoliberal sector (AN) is composed mostly of reformist groups that aim to control the market through politics; it includes trade unions, political parties, Attac, and other NGOs. The eco-pacifist sector (EP) encompasses environmentalist groups and organisations as well as secular and religious peace and solidarity groups. The anti-capitalist sector (AC) is composed of more radical groups, ranging from squatters to anarchist and Trotskyist groups, which oppose capitalist structures and often refuse negotiations with institutional politics.

The analysis below will proceed in two steps. First, I will examine activists' references to national differences and the ways in which these differences are seen to affect international solidarity building. Second, I will analyse activists' references to sectoral differences and how they are seen to interact with international solidarity as well as national differences.

2. National differences and international solidarity

This part will reveal that while activists identify a variety of national differences within the GJM, they do not consider these affinities detrimental to international solidarity building. In this vein, most international protest events are seen to help overcoming national differences rather than reinforcing them.

Prominent reference to national differences

National differences are very prominent in activists' recollections of the GJM. Most activists primarily focus on the development of the GJM in their respective country (when asked how the GJM developed more generally). But activists also show much awareness about differences in the constellation of the movement in various countries. In this vein, activists frequently compare the movement in their own country with that in others – mostly in form of rather neutral comparisons about different movement traditions as well as political opportunity structures. These comparisons mainly refer to other European countries and only marginally to countries beyond Europe. Polish activists often generalise in this context between Western and Eastern Europe and Italian activists sometimes distinguish between Northern and Southern Europe.

and despite some transnational activist links in the context of Solidarnosc (but limited, see Kaldor 2003).

Many of these references concern differences in the groups involved in the GJM. In this context, activists in all three countries refer to the different role the group Attac played – being very prominent in France and Germany and much less so in Poland and Italy.

In each country different actors employed the critique of globalisation in their own way and developed it further. In France, it [the GJM] was primarily linked with Attac [...]. In Italy, in order to make something like Genoa possible, the social centres and communist groups needed to support it. (Martin⁴, Germany/AC, §11)

Activists also stress the importance of particular types of groups in each country: For example, in Italy trade unions are described as having played a much stronger role than in other countries (in particular France and Germany). In Germany, environmental groups are considered to have been very prominent (in contrast to Italy and especially Poland). In Poland, anarchists are found to be much more central than in other countries, while religious groups were completely absent.

Other points of comparison are the different levels of public support as well as the different political contexts in which the GJM developed in each country – in particular among Polish activists. In this vein, Polish activists emphasise the lack of participation in issues of global justice in Poland (and Central-Eastern Europe more generally) in contrast to other (Western European) countries. They link this to a) the restraints communist rule imposed upon the development of critical citizenship and political opposition more generally and b) the delegitimizing effect communist rule still has on left criticism of (neoliberal) capitalism.

In Poland no mobilisation is really big, [...], you have to know the context of the total passivity of the whole society. [...] And for me it's still a result of this [...] free-market ideology that was put down in people's heads and the fact that they think that standing up for one's rights is not the right way to do it because it sort of smells like communism and it's not right, that you should find individual ways of solving it, and it may be their own fault if they don't manage. (Mateusz, Poland/AC, §11).

The activists interviewed refer to national differences most frequently in the context of recounting international protest events. Some of these references clearly have a negative tone and mirror the frustration of activists with remaining disagreements between activists from different countries – though not the majority. These negative evaluations of national differences refer to difficulties in building international cooperation. In some cases such difficulties in cooperation across countries is discussed self-critically, e.g. with respect to a lack of understanding of Eastern European symbolism in Western Europe.

[...] too many of us don't think at all about the factor that for progressive persons in an Eastern country our red flag are the flags of the dictatorship, of the

⁴ All names are pseudonyms.

oppression and until we are not able to understand it and [...] think about which can be the common flag [...], we will not reach them. (Daniela, Italy/EP, §12)

Mostly, however, negative references to national difference blame activists of other countries for lacking cooperation and understanding. In this vein, several moderate Italian activists (from the party *Rifondazione Comunista* and unions) for example highlight that the black bloc – perceived to disturb the planned peaceful demonstrations in Genoa in 2001 – came from other European countries, in particular France, Greece, Spain, England and Germany.

[...] the so-called black bloc – I saw them, and therefore nobody can say that it isn't so, [...] and I also stopped a couple of them from doing what they were doing and they insulted me in French, they called me 'merde'!" (Mateo, Italy/AN, §6)

In a similar vein, some Polish activists recount that in the context of the mobilisations against the Economic Summit in Warsaw in 2004 activists from Western Europe obstructed cooperation by failing to adapt to the local situation. Generally, the relationship between activists from Poland and from abroad – in particular from Western Europe – is often described as hierarchical. According to some this relationship even had “traces of a colonial kind of coming and basically using whatever they found” (Julia, Poland/EP, §78). Against this background, Jan, a Polish activist from a small socialist organisation, recounts how during the counter-summit in Warsaw Italian activists failed to grasp and respect the local situation. In particular, he accuses these Italian activists of ‘idiocy’ since they stayed at an expensive hotel. Since a common way of delegitimizing left activists in Poland is to refer to them as spoiled rich people, he laments that the activists’ stay at this hotel was quickly used to delegitimise the counter-summit more generally.

Ya Basta from Italy, booking in the Hyatt hotel, half of the hotel [...] you cannot imagine how stupid things they [journalists] could write in the first tables of press, I don't know where they [Ya Basta activists] took it, it's like there's some level of idiocy you can use it's like totally open (Jan, Poland/AC, §21)

Most of the references to differences, however, focus on how the difference in question was overcome in the course of the protest event and have a humorous note – possibly as a way of downplaying initial irritations (cf. Flesher Fominaya 2007). In doing so, activists partly draw on existing national stereotypes – German activists are described as dogmatic and Italians as impulsive. An Italian social centre activist, for example, amusedly recalls differences to US-activists discovered in the context of a workshop in Seattle. She continues, however, that despite the fact that she and her fellow Italian activists made fun of the American activists, this meeting led to a lasting cooperation with activists from New York:

[...] New York had been important from Seattle onwards. There was that positive [connection], I mean, of course [...] we had huge cultural differences. I remember the workshops from US historical activists telling us what a direct action is about and we would attend the workshop but we would also be almost laughing the whole time because for us [...] it was a different approach. But it was an important channel that had been opened [...] (Alice, Italy/AC, §14)

Similarly, another Italian anti-capitalist activist recounts how amusing he found certain differences with German activists discovered in the context of no-border camps in 2002 and 2003. Funny to him in particular was the German activists' somewhat dogmatic insistence on independence from commercial camp-sites. As in the example above, however, this activist also stresses how meeting up helped to overcome and deal with the differences:

A lot of Germans took part in the camp and for them the 'no border camp' is [...] a social experience. It was very funny because for us it was mainly the occasion to piss off the detention centre guards and allow some migrants to run away from it, so we didn't really care about [the social experience]. So, we went there [...] we found a part of an official camping, while, [...] the Germans were shocked about the idea to stay in a camping where just at 100 meters distance there was a guy teaching how to dance the Macarena. But then doing the action together solved all our problems. (Emiliano, Italy/AC, §55)

Finally, a German activist from an anti-fascist group recounts that the (positive) experience during counter-summits centrally built on certain impressions of national particularity – which he described both admiringly and mockingly:

[transnational meetings and protest events] strongly drew on impressions [laughs], [...] for example that the British left is a bit wacky because [they are] either Trotskyist or tree-huggers.[...] I have an[other] image in mind, at the ESF [European Social Forum] in Paris [...] suddenly there were hundreds of Italian comrades and set up their own disco by singing and dancing, what is a very nice thing and remained in my head. Yes, [...] they enacted a countercultural model [...] who enacted a kind of cultural model there. (Stefan, Germany/AC, §80)

International protest events: places of solidarity building

If considered in isolation, the various references to national differences discussed above – and their sometimes very negative connotations – may suggest that national differences are considered to stand in the way of building international solidarity. However, if placed into the context of activists' more general view of international protest events, the picture looks different. Activists consider international protest events as primarily furthering solidarity building across countries rather than reinforcing national differences. This suggests that activists do not consider these differences as impeding international cooperation and solidarity building. In addition, part two will reveal that activists identify sectoral rather than national differences as major lines of division within the GJM.

As the last paragraphs of the section above already suggested, international protest events are understood as places of building cooperation across national differences. Indeed, in most cases activists consider international protest events to have facilitated lasting cooperation between activists from different countries rather than hindering or ending such cooperation. Activists in Italy, Germany, and Poland connect processes of solidarity building across countries to different international events. German activists refer to such growing international cooperation most prominently in the context of the counter-summit in Cologne

in 1999 (see graph 1). In this vein, a German activist from an anti-fascist group recalls:

It was a conscious decision [in preparation of the protests in Cologne 1999] to write hey, let's get to know each other internationally [Stefan, Germany/AC, §66]

Italian activists mostly associate the counter-summit in Seattle in 1999 as well as the protests against the war in Kosovo in the late 1990s with a more global approach to politics.

[...] at the end of the 90s [...] there was the war in Kosovo. [...] And, there was a huge demonstration in Aviano [...], the NATO base where the [...] bombing flights were leaving [from]. And I think [...], we can think about it as a sort of starting point [for] a global approach on Italian politics. (Chiara, Italy/AC, §6)

Polish activists primarily link the counter-summit in Prague in 2000 and early European Social Forums to processes of building solidarity across countries (see graph 1).

I think in Poland they [counter summits in Prague and Genoa] had this effect of recognizing or acknowledging the global context. People would be focused very much on what happens in Poland beforehand, and then they would realize that actually there are some others[...] the most important was actually a really genuine effort to share and communicate and cooperate, and I would say there was a lot of on both sides (Julia, Poland/EP, §78)

In addition to the large international events, solidarity building across countries is mentioned very prominently in the context of international meetings and mobilisations specific to certain movement sectors (see graph 1). Some of these sector specific campaigns, e.g. the Jubilee 2000 campaign, draw on long traditions of internationalism – such as the liberation theology or peace movements. In this vein, moderate activists consider the campaign against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and the Jubilee 2000 campaign as essential steps in building ties of solidarity across countries. Radical left activists frequently mention early no-border camps in building up cooperation across different countries (in the 1990s). For Italian and German activists this also includes meetings inspired by the Zapatista uprising, crucially the 'intercontinental meetings' in the late 1990s (see graph 1). In this vein, a German activist from an autonomous group describes lessons learned from the Zapatista's view on international solidarity during the first 'intercontinental meeting' in 1996:

Well, and subcomandante Marcos talked about how to connect our struggles [...] and that they don't want that [we] are [just] solidary with them, but that we fight our struggles and that people recognize that these struggles belong together [...] And I think this became the basis of the Global Justice Movement. (Olga, Germany/AC, §22)

Solidarity building across countries is not only interpreted as a matter of cooperation with activists in other countries, but also as a global analysis of problems – of seeing issues such as trade deregulation as a global, not a national problem. In this vein, international protest events are often described as places

of mutual learning and as processes of opening up the horizon⁵. In this vein, a German activist from a Catholic organisation recalls the World Social forums as processes of learning:

It is a process of learning, of course, [...] the horizon is broadened, you get an insight into the variety of international problems and how the own problems, for instance the German or European financial system, are the same for friends from Nigeria, Angolan, Brazil or the Philippines. (Christian, Germany/EP, §33)

3. Sectoral differences and international solidarity

This part explores activists' references to sectoral differences and how they are seen to interact with national and international solidarities. It will show that sectoral differences are perceived a larger challenge to international solidarity building than national differences. Furthermore, activists seem to consider cross-sectoral solidarity to depend at least partly on cross-national solidarity building.

Major lines of division: sectoral

Activists do not consider national differences to be major lines of division within the GJM, but sectoral differences are perceived as dividing lines. In particular, they identify divisions with respect to ideology and forms of organisation⁶: First, activists draw a line between moderate and radical approaches. This division is connected to the general issue of whether to oppose the system (of capitalism or representative democracy) altogether or whether to change and adapt it. Activists often connect this division also more concretely with different opinions about the necessity and legitimacy of cooperating with parties and governments, especially in Germany.

Second, activists refer to differences in organisation. German activists in this respect most often mention differences between more institutionalised and hierarchical forms of organisation and less formalised grassroots organisation. This issue is often connected to difficulties in working together with unions since their dependency on formalised structures makes them highly inflexible. Italian activists put more emphasis on the difference between an 'open space' perspective on politics, value exchange, and mutual learning in contrast to the emphasis on making political decisions.

The lines of division identified differ between Italian, German, and Polish activists in two regards. First, while disagreements about methods – especially about the use of violence – are central to German and particularly Italian

⁵ Such references to international solidarity building, however, are less frequent and elaborate among Polish activists, in particular among more moderate Polish activists.

⁶ Activists identify a number of internal lines of division, which vary between movement sector and country. In particular Polish activists identify different lines of division. The lines of division presented here are those found in all sectors and countries.

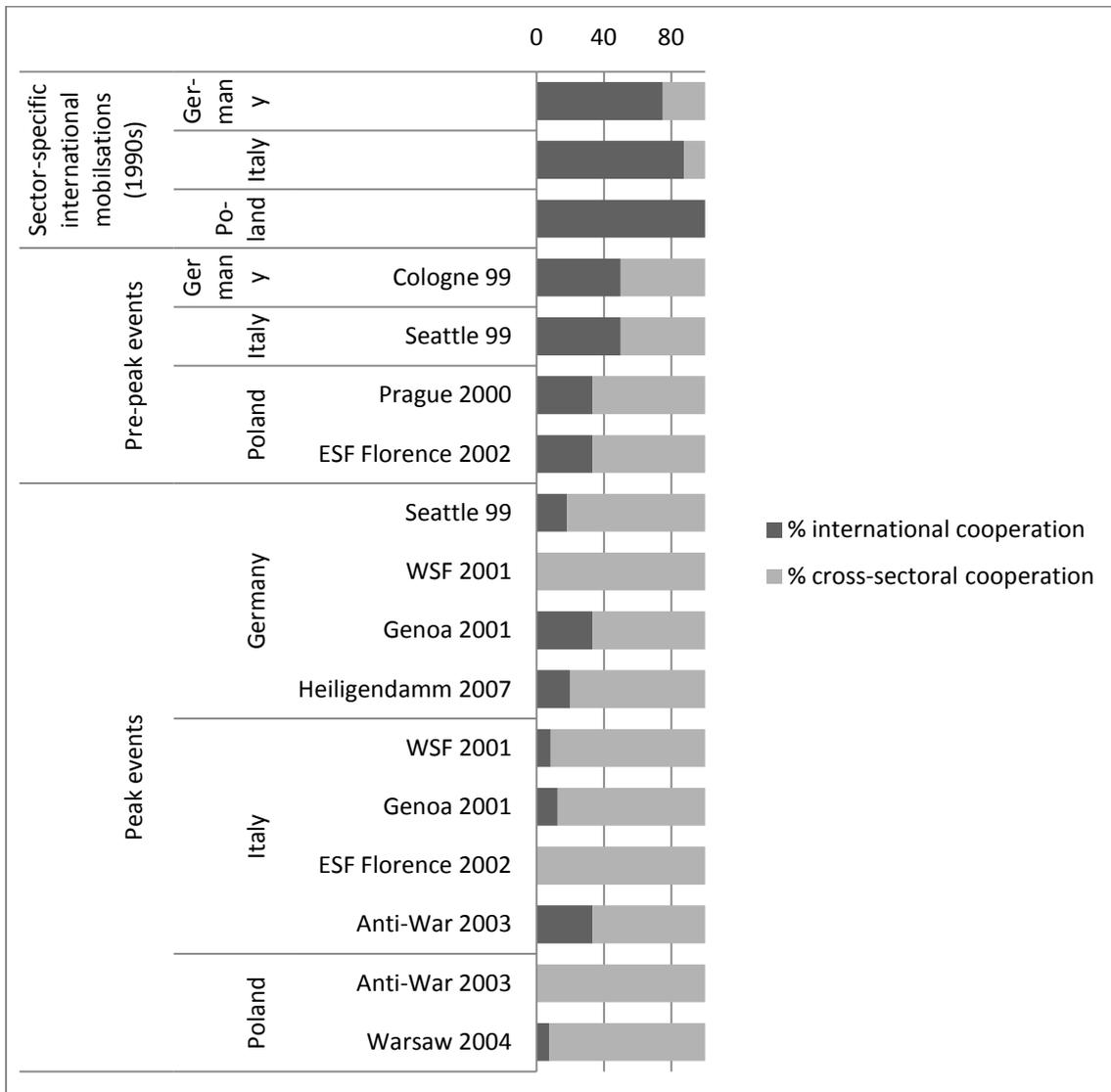
activists, to Polish activists they are not. Second, Polish activists prominently mention a line of division that hardly is mentioned by German and Italian activists, namely differences between local and global approaches. Problems, as Polish activists stress, can either be addressed in a general fashion, or with respect to local and national policies and issues. The latter is often associated with 'hands-on' work and favoured.⁷

Peak international events: building cross-sectoral solidarity

In the previous part I demonstrated that activists consider certain international protest events to be crucial in building solidarity across countries. Activists in Italy connect these processes of building solidarity mainly to the counter-summit in Seattle 1999, in Poland mainly to the counter-summit in Prague 2000, and in Germany mainly to the counter-summit in Cologne in 1999. In building solidarity across sectors, activists also consider international protest events to play a central role. However, the events most prominently associated with building cross-sectoral solidarity differ from those mostly associated with building solidarity across countries. More precisely, cross-sectoral solidarity building is primarily associated with the GJM's peak events, while solidarity building across countries is more prominently associated with events that precede these peak events (see graph 1). In previous research I demonstrated that activists identify specific peak events of the GJM, which differ across countries but are largely shared across sectors (Daphi 2013b). These peak events are described as climaxes with regards to a) succeeding to mobilise large numbers of participants, b) receiving broad and positive media attention, and c) influencing political decisions or public opinion.

⁷ Polish activists' distinction between local and global approaches can be understood to refer to national differences to some extent.

Graph 1: Overview of associations of international GJM events with building cooperation across countries and sectors⁸



According to Italian activists, the peak event of the GJM is clearly the counter-summit in Genoa in 2001. Other key events are the first World Social Forum (WSF) in Porto Alegre in 2001 (especially among the more moderate activists), the European Social Forum in Florence in 2002 and the demonstrations against

⁸ The graph shows the proportions of how often a certain event is associated with building cooperation across countries or sectors. The same event may appear in different categories of events depending on whether activists in Italy, Germany, and Poland define the event as a peak event.

the war in Iraq in 2003 (see graph 1). The counter-summit in Genoa, in particular, is seen as joining different left groups that were unconnected or even in conflict before (despite the fact that this event created considerable tension within the movement about legitimate forms of protests). Activists recount that this was largely due to the realisation that in the end, everyone was fighting for more or less the same thing. Also, activists often connect this to the development of more horizontal forms of organisation.

This spirit of the [first] World Social Forum – because Genoa in reality comes from this spirit of the World Social Forum – [...] produced [...] the feeling that we could overcome these divisions, [...] between the more moderate and the moderate and between the different contents. Porto Alegre spirit gave us the idea that a common front existed (Daniela, Italy/EP, §4).

In Germany, where a large counter-summit only took place in 2007 (the counter-summit in Cologne in 1999 remained comparably small), different international events previous to the counter-summit in Heiligendamm in 2007 are also identified as peaks, most centrally the counter-summits in Seattle and Genoa as well as the WSF in Porto Alegre in 2001 and the. As in Italy, these peak events are predominantly connected with building solidarity across sectors rather than across countries (see graph 1). In this vein, the counter-summit in Seattle is seen to have facilitated a broad coalition of left organisations which continued to exist till the counter-summit in Heiligendamm in 2007. This situation is frequently contrasted with the counter-summit in Cologne taking place just a few weeks previously, which is seen to have failed building cross-sectoral cooperation.

And shortly after this [protests in Cologne] in fact came Seattle and we were laughing up our sleeves because we said “this is exactly what we had in mind”. And we had bad luck with respect to Cologne [...] and we were right nonetheless and this is what Seattle made clear [...]. This circumstance [...] meant that we kept up the communication amongst a broad group ranging from church people, to NGO people and to leftist radicals. This communication did not break down until Heiligendamm. (Michael, Germany/AN, §11)

In Poland activists primarily identify the counter-summit in Warsaw in 2004 as a peak event as well as mobilisations against the war in Iraq in 2003⁹. Similar to the peak events in other countries, the counter-summit in Warsaw is associated more with cooperation between different sectors rather than with building solidarity across countries (see graph 1).

I would say that [the counter-summit in Warsaw] was the biggest moment for this movement in Poland. And that was the only moment when a lot of groups worked together [...] I remember that a lot of groups they went together to protests like anarchists together with some leftists and some communists and so on. (Kasia, Poland/AC, §9-10).

⁹ Moderate and radical activists, however, partly disagree on peak events in Poland. Apart from these two events, moderate and radical activists refer to different peaks. The more radical activists, for example, identify a series of work struggles in 2002 and 2003 as peaks of mobilisation too.

Interplay of solidarity across countries and sectors

As the findings above and in the last part suggest, international protest events are considered as playing central roles in solidarity building across both countries and sectors. Most events are associated with both processes of solidarity building (see graph 1). This implies that activists consider the two processes not only to be connected but also equally important. However, the temporal order of the events associated with these processes suggests that activists consider solidarity building across countries as preceding – and paving the way for – cross-sectoral solidarity building. In this vein, the events primarily associated with cross-sectoral solidarity building in each country succeed the events more strongly associated with solidarity building across countries (see graph 1). This implies that building solidarity across countries became less of an issue over time.

Several activists in addition explicitly argue that international cooperation helped building cross-sectoral solidarity. In this vein, an Italian activist from an NGO argues that ‘scaling up’ to the international level facilitated the cooperation between different sectors of the movement within Italy:

At the beginning the main effect [of the GJM] has been to bring people out of their internal borders. When we work in our countries we were used to have internal borders, each organisation against the other, with competition, prejudices, etc. When you had to scale up and work in a frame which was broader and more complex, you couldn't just rely on your own tradition, you had to change your way of thinking, of acting, of creating relations and so that helped to fluidify the relationship on the national dimension. (Fabio, Italy/AN, §15)

4. Discussion and conclusion

Exploring the interplay of national, sectoral, and international solidarities, the analysis showed that while activists identify a variety of national and sectoral differences within the GJM, these differences are not seen as impeding international solidarity building. In this vein, the first part of the analysis revealed that references to national differences are very prominent in activists' reflections about the GJM. These national differences, however, are not considered detrimental to international solidarity building as a look at the perceived effects of international protest events and activists' views on internal lines of division demonstrated: International protest events are seen as helping overcome national differences rather than reinforcing them. In addition, national differences are not considered major lines of division within the GJM (see part 3).

The second part of the analysis demonstrated that activists consider sectoral differences to be a considerable challenge to international solidarity building. In particular, differences in ideology and forms of organisation are perceived as major lines of the division. However, as in the case of national differences, international protest events are considered central in building solidarity across these differences – in particular with respect to peak events. The association of

peak events with cross-sectoral solidarity building furthermore suggests that in activists' eyes sectoral affinities are not only the largest challenge, but building solidarity across them is also the GJM's major success.

More generally, the analysis exhibited how activists make sense of a complex situation of mobilisation. It showed, on the hand, that activists largely consider national, sectoral, and international affinities to go hand in hand rather than to counteract each other. On the other hand, it demonstrated that activists do differentiate between different levels of solidarity building. In this vein, national and sectoral affinities are assigned somewhat different roles in building international solidarity. In particular, the findings suggest that activists prioritise cross-sectoral solidarity building over building solidarity across countries. This is not only apparent from the fact that sectoral differences are defined as major lines of division, while national differences are not. This prioritisation is also linked to activists' perception that solidarity building across countries preceded and facilitated solidarity building across sectors. This finding is particularly interesting if one considers that in fact cross-sectoral cooperation developed parallel or previous to cooperation across countries in various networks of the GJM.

Conclusion

The paper's point of departure was that transnational movements are not only characterised by activists from different countries but also by groups from different movement sectors. The paper's findings strongly underline this point: the large role of sectoral differences in activists' reflections about the GJM points to the importance sectoral differences have in large transnational movements. Hence in explaining transnational movements more attention needs to be paid to differences and ties across different sectors and how these interact with national and international solidarities. In order to do so, future research should address also other dimensions of solidarity building than this paper's analysis of discursively drawn boundaries.

Furthermore, the findings also emphasise the role national affinities play in transnational social movements. The paper displayed that national categories are very prominent in activists' perceptions of the GJM. First, activists were shown to refer to various national differences – in particular with respect to groups involved and different levels of support (see part 2). During international events, it seems, other activists are centrally categorised in terms of their nationality. Second, the findings reveal that activists' have country specific recollections of the movement's development. In this vein, events taking place in the activist's respective country were shown to be more prominent than others – including the peak events (see part 3). Third, the major lines of division differ between Italian, German and Polish activists (see part 3).

On a more practical level, the paper points to ways in which to deal with national and sectoral affinities in future transnational activism. The paper for example showed how humour and joint action can help in dealing with such

differences. The considerable knowledge of differences between countries and sectors which activists of the GJM demonstrated, probably also facilitates this. Furthermore, the paper revealed that solidarities across sectors and countries are somewhat co-dependent. In building international solidarity both should be addressed jointly.

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Migrant inclusion organization activity at the supranational level: examining two forms of domestic political opportunity structures¹

Melissa Schnyder

Abstract

This analysis focuses on explaining the national-level conditions that prompt migrant inclusion organizations to undertake activity that targets the European Union (EU). It compares broad and issue-specific political opportunity structures (POS) at the national level to help explain the domestic conditions that lead to EU-directed activity. Using data from an original survey of European migrant inclusion organizations, the analyses examine seven types of activity directed toward the EU, ranging from conventional lobbying to protest. The results show that at the national level, the broad POS helps explain the most frequently used EU-directed activities, and that groups are more likely to target the EU when the broad POS is open rather than closed. The results for the issue-specific POS, although mixed, also help to account for a range of supranational-level activities. In addition to demonstrating that the national environment is an important factor in explaining EU-directed activity, the findings can help movement practitioners by specifying which institutions to target, which activities to prioritize, and how to leverage domestic conditions to optimize EU-level influence.

Keywords: social movements, political opportunity structure, NGOs, protest, lobbying, European Union, migrant organizations

Introduction

Organizations in Europe that work on behalf of migrants and refugees have long been active in political activities that target the European Union (EU). For example, in December 1999, the European Commission issued COM(1999)638, its proposal for a Council² directive on the right to family reunification. In this

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² Council refers to the Council of Ministers, the primary decision making body of the European Union. Its functions are described in more detail in the section entitled "Migrant inclusion organizations and supranational activity."

case, migrant inclusion organizations³ “were involved in the directive from the very beginning” (Brummer, 2008: 12), and many such groups, including Caritas, December 18, and GISTI, ultimately lobbied the European Parliament to bring an action requesting the annulment of the revised version of the directive before the Court of Justice of the European Union (Brummer, 2008: 16). In a more recent example, activists from many migrant and refugee rights groups from across Europe participated in the 2014 March for Freedom from Strasbourg to Brussels to promote freedom of movement and protest EU policies. Why did migrant inclusion groups from across Europe lobby and protest EU institutions instead of focusing their efforts on domestic issues with their own governments?

Like other social movement organizations, migrant inclusion organizations have many avenues for action. At the broadest level, groups can take action domestically, or they can choose to target the EU. How might the national political opportunity structure (POS) have influenced these organizations to take their claims to the supranational arena? Although it is clear that the EU itself provides opportunities that structure group action (Geddes, 1998, 2000b; Guiraudon 2000, 2003; Fella and Ruzza, 2012; Ucarer, 2014), it is less well-known which domestic-level factors prompt organizations to go beyond the national arena and target the EU. Accordingly, this study examines the domestic conditions under which migrant inclusion organizations will choose to bypass the national level and instead direct activity supranationally. Will they take their claims to the EU when faced with national constraints that essentially block their institutional access, as in Keck and Sikkink’s (1998, 1999) boomerang model? In this study, I address such questions by examining the domestic opportunity structure, with the goal of comparing the relative explanatory power of two different forms of the POS: broad versus issue-specific. Whereas the *broad* POS is hypothesized to affect all movements in a similar fashion, the *issue-specific* POS represents the policy context as it relates to a specific movement (Berclaz and Giugni, 2005). As Giugni (2009) explains, a focus on issue-specific opportunities stems from criticism of the POS as it has traditionally been conceptualized (Gamson and Meyer, 1996; McAdam, 1996; Goodwin and Jasper, 2004), and has the potential to bring positive developments to the POS research tradition.

Many recent studies examine the European dimensions of migrant inclusion actors. Some research focuses on the connections between the EU and national opportunity structures in explaining movement activity (Fella and Ruzza, 2012), whereas other studies examine how the domestic environment leads to the Europeanization of contention (Monforte, 2014), or differentially impacts the

³ In this paper, I use the phrase “migrant inclusion organization” as a general term that captures diverse elements of a movement working to address a range of issues on behalf of different constituents, including legal migrants, illegal migrants, and asylum seekers. Although these groups work toward different goals, they share the common theme of working to promote inclusion of their constituents within the existing or alternative legal and political frameworks of society. Moreover, they share an orientation toward assisting individuals who are neither from the specific state in which they currently reside, nor from other European Union member states.

type of claim being made (Monforte and Dufour, 2011, 2013). Other work in this area examines how differences in national policy contexts can impact the nature of migration-related policy output at the EU level (Ucarer, 2009), and analyzes EU-level opportunity structures and the conditions under which immigration and asylum organizations successfully impact supranational policy (Ucarer, 2014).

Although studies do examine the role of the national POS in shaping action directed at the EU, the POS is rarely conceptualized in a multidimensional way. For example, many studies tend to focus on a single variable, such as citizenship, even though other factors could potentially play a role (Ireland, 1994; Koopmans and Statham, 1999b, 1999c, 2001). As a result, it is unclear what relative role different dimensions of the national POS play (in both the broad and issue-specific forms) in prompting groups to take action at the EU level. This study attempts to address this shortcoming by cross-nationally and empirically comparing both broad and issue-specific forms of the POS in mobilizing group activity at the EU level across a range of conventional and challenging tactics, as measured by the Survey of European Migrant Inclusion Organizations (an original data source). The goals of this analysis are, therefore, to describe the supranational activity patterns of migrant inclusion groups across the EU in order to establish their activity repertoires at this level, and to analyze how both forms of the domestic POS influence and shape EU-directed activity.

Domestic political opportunity structures

Political opportunity structures can be conceptualized along two dimensions: broad and issue-specific. Most social movement research focuses the broad form, operationalizing it according to four sets of variables: the nature of existing cleavages in society; the formal institutional structure of the state; the information strategies of elites vis-à-vis their challengers; and power relations within the party system, or alliance structures (Kriesi et al., 1995). However, as Meyer and Minkoff (2004) have shown, the domestic POS can also be conceptualized according to its issue-specific form, which represents the national political-institutional environment specific to the movement in question. Thus, we can think of the issue-specific POS as the relevant national policy context in which the organization operates, and the broad POS as the macro institutional backdrop.⁴

Of course, domestic opportunity structures are not entirely independent of the supranational POS; in practice, these two are often interrelated. For instance, Meyer (2003: 22) argues that “[i]nternational and domestic elements of political opportunity are interrelated, exercising differential sway depending

⁴ Although I acknowledge that the broad and issue-specific POS are not completely independent, they tend to be presented as such in the empirical work that seeks to test their impact on political activity. This is typically done in an effort to refine the POS concept to make it more movement-specific.

upon the nature of available openings.” Indeed, the formulation of policy at the European level requires some degree of national policy change in order for member states to comply with the principles laid out (Risse-Kappen, Cowles, and Caporaso, 2001). At the same time, “the common overarching policy framework provided by the EU needs to be set against the backdrop of stark differences in terms of the national policy framework in which the directives have been implemented and in which anti-racist movements operate,” (Fella and Ruzza, 2012: 1). That is, despite supranational policy developments, differences in national contexts do exist and are important to consider in understanding the mobilization of political action directed toward the EU. Different national contexts can influence the use of different strategies toward the EU, including whether it is used as an ally against restrictive national governments, or is itself pressured as part of a multilevel strategy of influence (Monforte, 2014). These approaches offer different interpretations of EU-directed activity, and suggest different processes by which the national POS influences it. Therefore, I argue that drawing an analytical distinction between the domestic and supranational POS enables us to sharpen our understanding of the nature of European-directed collective action by migrant inclusion groups. The following sections discuss both forms of the domestic POS, and put forth the hypotheses to be tested here.

The broad POS

Social movement research has shown that the broad aspects of the POS that Tarrow (1994) describes are important factors to consider in explaining movement activity. Migrant inclusion research often adopts a POS approach to explain political behavior within the movement (e.g., Danese, 1998; Geddes, 1998, 2000b; Guiraudon, 2001; Koopmans and Statham, 1999a, 2000b). The relative openness of the political system and the presence or absence of political allies are two aspects of the broad domestic POS that are likely important determinants of group activity. The following sections discuss each aspect in turn.

The degree of openness of a political system to the tactics and goals of a movement can be expected to influence tactic choice (Eisenger, 1973; Tarrow, 1989, 1994; Kitschelt, 1986). When the national political system is relatively open, groups can be expected to work within the established institutional structure, since more opportunities exist to take advantage of conventional participation channels. With greater access to the polity, we would expect groups to rely on lobbying activities to influence policy processes. In contrast, when a system is relatively closed, we would expect groups to use challenging tactics (Kitschelt, 1986; McAdam, 1982), or bypass the national arena and target the EU (Imig and Tarrow, 2001). Therefore, when conventional channels of influence are less available domestically, we would expect EU-directed activity by migrant inclusion organizations to become more likely.

The presence or absence of elite political allies is another important factor in explaining group behavior (Tilly, 1978; Tarrow, 1994). The structure of political opportunities is relatively more favorable when a group can rely on political allies to help achieve its policy objectives. Therefore, under such conditions, groups may be less likely to turn to the EU, and more likely to rely on conventional activities that target the nation-state. On the other hand, when political allies are absent from the national arena or are simply unresponsive, and avenues to influence become more constrained, groups become more likely to bypass the state entirely in favor of EU-directed action (Poloni-Staudinger, 2008). Previous research suggests that Left-leaning governments tend to be more receptive to social movement issues (Kriesi et. al., 1995; della Porta and Rucht, 1995), and multiparty systems increase the odds that an organization will find political allies in government (Lijphart, 1999; Dalton et. al., 2003).

The issue-specific POS

Gamson and Meyer have stated that “the concept of political opportunity structure is...in danger of becoming a sponge that soaks up every aspect of the social movement environment,” (1996: 275). In part as a result of this criticism, there have been several attempts to refine the POS concept. Meyer and Minkoff (2004) illustrate one such example in their conceptualization of the POS into broader aspects of the political system versus “issue-specific” factors relevant to a particular movement. In essence, the issue-specific POS reflects those elements of the national political-institutional environment most likely to affect the movement in question. National citizenship, employment, asylum, naturalization, and anti-discrimination policies are examples of specific elements of the national policy context likely to affect the migrant inclusion movement, as these are major features of the national political system that have direct relevance to the constituents of migrant inclusion groups.

In essence, Meyer and Minkoff (2004) argue that national institutional openness can vary across social movement issues and constituencies. This idea is reflected in other research as well (Berclaz and Giugni, 2005; Koopmans et. al., 2005; Guigni et. al., 2009). This variance can differentially affect the likelihood of mobilization, depending on the movement. In other words, some movements may mobilize in response to certain aspects of system openness or closure, while these same aspects may be completely irrelevant for other movements. From an analytical standpoint, then, it becomes important to separate the broader aspects of domestic system openness from those specific to the migrant inclusion movement. Because it is more directly relevant to the movement, one would expect the domestic issue-specific POS to constitute a stronger factor in mobilizing activity compared to the broad POS. This brings about the first hypothesis:

H1: The domestic issue-specific POS is a stronger predictor of EU-directed activity by migrant inclusion organizations compared to the broad POS.

The following section will examine the structure of the EU in more detail. In so doing it will explain the domestic conditions under which migrant inclusion groups might be expected to turn their focus beyond the state and toward the EU.

Migrant inclusion organizations and supranational activity

Over the past few decades the migrant inclusion movement has developed and expanded throughout virtually every EU country. Although united under a common theme, migrant and refugee organizations work on a broad range of issues. As Guiraudon (2001) explains, the movement as a whole is extremely divided due to it consisting of many diverse groups with different (and often competing) agendas. Moreover, actors within the movement “do not necessarily have the material resources to operate at the European level,” a factor which could impact their ability to use the EU as an alternative arena when national conditions are unfavorable (Guiraudon, 2001: 166).

The nation-state remains the dominant arena for immigration policy; as such, we would expect most activity to take place in the domestic arena. At the same time, the EU presents a unique and dynamic supranational governance structure that groups can use to influence policy. Among the most significant policymaking institutions are the Council of the European Union (the Council), the European Commission, and the European Parliament (EP) (Marks and McAdam, 1999). The Council comprises representatives of member state governments and, in most areas, it follows the ordinary legislative procedure (i.e., co-decision), whereby it shares legislative powers equally with the EP. As a result of important institutional changes that began with the Maastricht Treaty and continued through the Amsterdam Treaty and the Treaty of Lisbon (see Ucarer, 2013), many migration-related policy areas now fall under this procedure, including anti-discrimination, common immigration policy, and measures concerning a common asylum system (General Secretariat of the Council, 2011). The changing institutional structure of the EU creates incentives that affect how migrant inclusion groups advocate; for example, they can make claims immediately prior to Council negotiations, take part in activities organized by the Council Presidency, or report violations of rights and obligations and make formal requests directly to the Council Presidency. Yet the Council remains one of the most difficult institutions to influence, as it is relatively unreceptive to groups' claims.

The European Commission has also gained competencies as a result of institutional changes. Its role includes proposing and drafting legislation that is then debated within the EP and Council. Because the Commission also researches the feasibility of new migrant inclusion policies, it serves as an access point for groups seeking to provide expertise or engage in direct lobbying efforts. Since the movement represents a broad range of issues, groups have the option of lobbying numerous Directorates General, including Home Affairs; Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion; and Education and Culture. The

Commission regularly consults with civil society groups in the policymaking process (European Commission, 2000), and relies on them to communicate sector-specific information (Niessen, 2002).

Groups may also be expected to turn to the European Parliament. The 2009 Lisbon Treaty increased the legislative powers of the EP such that, in nearly all policy areas, it has the power of co-decision with the Council. As individual members of the European Parliament (MEPs) can champion various causes, the EP is often a willing ally that has called for Europeanized immigration and asylum policies and for legislative action against racist and xenophobic discrimination (European Parliament, 1998). MEPs can influence the Commission in back-and-forth negotiations over drafts of proposed legislation, and garner support for various initiatives. Migrant inclusion groups have opportunities for influence by exercising their right of petition to the EP, and by engaging with members of specific thematic committees, such as the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, and the Employment and Social Affairs Committee.⁵

Overall, many avenues exist for these groups to act at the EU level, but the question remains under what domestic conditions they will do so. Participation in supranational activities can be particularly important when groups lack political opportunities within the nation-state. For example, Keck and Sikkink (1998, 1999) put forth a “boomerang effect” whereby groups that lack access to domestic political processes and institutions can use transnational cooperation as a way to bypass the nation-state. In the context of the EU, the implication is that groups turn to the EU when national opportunities are constrained in order to use it as an ally against unresponsive or restrictive national governments (della Porta and Caiani, 2007) – a strategy that Monforte (2014) terms “externalization.” Some research has found that groups turn to the EU under conditions of a closed domestic political opportunity structure as a way of “out-maneuvring” the state (Poloni-Staudinger, 2008: 546). This brings about the final hypothesis:

H2: A relatively closed national POS, in either broad or issue-specific form, is expected to increase EU-directed activity.

Because targeting the EU requires resources, migrant inclusion groups that lack material resources need to leverage the nonmaterial resources at their disposal, such as personnel, volunteers, expertise, and network connections, in order to direct their claims at a supranational target when national opportunities are blocked (Ucarer 2009; Fella and Ruzza, 2012; Monforte, 2014; Risse-Kappen, 2000). In addition to the relatively more enduring national laws and policies that I examine here, I acknowledge that specific events or instances of mistreatment can trigger changes in the POS that affect the activities of these organizations. For example, the recent series of migrant drowning incidents involving attempts to reach Italy, Greece, Malta, and Spanish territory in part

⁵ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/parliamentary-committees.html;jsessionid=1469BA70B3CDC9005D55C4A87112631C.node1>

prompted the 2014 March for Freedom in which activists protested at the European Council summit to further push migration issues onto the EU's agenda. Although I focus on relatively more enduring national policies in this paper, analyzing more dynamic aspects of the POS is a worthy avenue for research – a theme that I revisit in the conclusion.

Data and methods

The Survey of European Migrant Inclusion Organizations

The Survey of European Migrant Inclusion Organizations is an original data source used to measure the dependent variables in this study (EU-level political activity). The survey questionnaire was completed by the directors of migrant inclusion organizations across Europe. Following the guidelines put forth by Klandermans and Smith (2002), several print and online directories were used to identify the population of relevant organizations across the EU that work on behalf of migrant and refugee issues,⁶ and thus to construct the sample frame. The directories were compiled by actors within the movement itself, and are thus more likely to be both comprehensive and accurate, particularly with regard to smaller or more localized groups (Minkoff, 2002).⁷ Each organization included is an established migrant or refugee organization located in an EU member state, and directly addresses issues specific to migrants and/or refugees from beyond the EU. One of the goals was to construct a diverse sample frame, so organizations working across different elements of the movement were included, as opposed to targeting a particular type of organization. Overall, 832 groups were identified that met the above criteria. Spanning twenty-five EU member states, the sample frame includes smaller and relatively resource-poor organizations, as well as larger groups and those with more resources at their disposal.

Each of these 832 organizations was contacted with a survey questionnaire.⁸ The survey was administered to the directors of these organizations in two waves from September 2006–April 2007.⁹ Of the 832 organizations contacted, a

⁶ I used The European Directory of Migrant and Ethnic Minority Organisations (published for Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants by European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations), the European Address Book against Racism (ENAR; an online database of over 5,000 organizations compiled by United for Intercultural Action, a non-profit organization headquartered in the Netherlands that works for the rights of refugees and migrants), and the national directories compiled by the European Network against Racism (about 20-25% of groups on the ENAR listing were smaller, grassroots efforts which had only a street address. A mail questionnaire was sent to these groups.).

⁷ Nonetheless, very small, short-lived organizations, as well as very radical protest groups, are likely to be underrepresented in these directories (Minkoff, 2002). Therefore, the results of the analysis may not be generalizable to these extreme factions of the movement.

⁸ In other words, I administered a census of the relevant population.

⁹ Wave 1 of the survey was administered by mail from September–December 2006. Wave 2 was administered by email and in person from February–April 2007. The response rate for the survey is about 20%.

completed questionnaire was obtained from 114 groups, and a partially completed questionnaire was obtained from 56 groups.¹⁰ Because survey data captures a “snapshot” in time, it can provide information on which tactics the groups tended to rely on most heavily relative to others, but it cannot capture tactics used in response to a specific sequence of events over the time period in which it was administered. At the same time, survey data are still useful for testing initial hypotheses about general activity patterns during a “snapshot” in time. The data can provide initial evidence about the relative usefulness and influence of the issue-specific POS after controlling for other factors.

The questionnaire covered a variety of topics including the organizational characteristics of the group, resources, issues of primary concern, cooperative actions undertaken by the organization, and participation in a range of conventional and challenging activities that target various levels of governance. The goal of the survey was to determine groups’ *general* patterns of activity, as opposed to tactics used in response to a particular event or as part of a specific campaign. The questions used to construct the dependent variables asked groups to think in general terms about the activities they use to influence policy and to indicate how frequently they use each one.¹¹

Dependent variables

The dependent variables in this analysis capture EU-directed activity that spans both conventional (e.g., lobbying) and more challenging (e.g., protests) types. EU lobbying activity is operationalized as organizational activity that directly targets representatives from the following institutions: *the European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Ministers, European Economic and Social Committee, and Coreper*. That is, I define a conventional activity as EU-directed based on the group’s self-reported direct contact with an official(s) from the given EU institution, regardless of where the contact took place.¹²

The more challenging activities are operationalized as the frequency of bringing *court cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union* and *protesting against the EU*. With regard to protests, again the target is conceptualized independently of the location, such that a group may protest the EU in Brussels or at home, provided that the EU is a direct target of claims-making.¹³ In

¹⁰ The full list of organizations from which complete data have been collected can be found in Table 1 in the Appendix. Missing data were excluded from the analyses.

¹¹ This question wording is consistent with that used in other studies seeking to assess groups’ general activity patterns (e.g., Dalton et. al., 2003; Rohrschneider and Dalton, 2002).

¹² Although I assume that most lobbying takes place in Brussels, it is possible to capture, for example, contacts with EU officials that take place in specific member countries as well.

¹³ The survey questions used to measure both conventional and challenging activities are as follows: “For each of the following activities, please indicate how frequently your organization uses the method.” Groups were shown the following set of activities: (1) Contacts with officials of the European Commission, (2) Contacts with members of the European Parliament, (3) Contacts with officials of the Council of Ministers, (4) Contacts with members of the European

general, my approach focuses mainly on incidents of claims-making in which an EU institution is a direct, rather than indirect, target. As such, the analysis does not include all instances of claims-making involving the EU. For example, it excludes instances in which a group may make a claim against a national target about an issue that has a supranational dimension. Although these instances are part of what we would consider European collective action, due to their complexity, they are much more difficult to measure and capture consistently using a survey methodology. Because the surveys were self-administered by groups, I aimed to capture relatively clear instances in which a claim was directed toward a specific EU institution. This approach also had the benefit of allowing me to separate claims by institution, as opposed to aggregating all claims at the level of the EU.

Overall, this repertoire of activity spans seven types directed at various EU-level actors and institutions. To allow for a clear analytic separation of the factors that encourage substantial usage of an activity (versus activities that may be used only marginally), each dependent variable is coded dichotomously to capture “high” versus “low” participation in that particular activity.¹⁴ The results will show which factors increase the odds of participating substantially in a given activity versus using an activity only infrequently.

Independent variables

The issue-specific POS is one of the primary independent variables of interest in this study, and several sources were used to measure it. Data from the European Civic Citizenship and Inclusion Index are used to measure *the national policy context specific to migrants and refugees*. It compares a range of country-level indicators grouped into five primary policy areas: labor market inclusion, long-term residence, family reunification, naturalization, and anti-discrimination. Within each policy area, each country is rated on the following four criteria: eligibility/scope of policy, conditions/remedies, integration measures, and the extent to which the policy is rights-associated. Higher scores reflect policies that would be considered more favorable to migrants.¹⁵

Giugni (2009) argues that objective opportunities can exist but fail to be perceived as such, or may otherwise be ignored by groups. Therefore, *perceptions* of opportunities can also be important determinants of group activity (Kurzman, 1996; Banaszak, 1996; Gamson and Meyer, 1996; McAdam

Economic and Social Committee, (5) Contacts with members of Coreper, (6) Legal recourse to the European Court of Justice, and (7) Demonstrations or protests that target the EU.

¹⁴ The survey questions that measured participation in the given activities were presented to groups on a 4-point scale: often, sometimes, rarely, and never. To achieve more meaningful separation between these categories, I coded each dependent variable as “High” (often + sometimes) versus “Low” (rarely + never) participation.

¹⁵ I use an index variable composed of each of these five policy areas due to the presence of multicollinearity between policy areas.

et. al., 1996). To account for this, the analyses include a *subjective measure of the issue-specific POS*, measured by survey questions that ask groups to rate their country's relative openness or stringency in terms of its current immigration, citizenship, asylum, and employment laws. Higher scores indicate more open issue-specific policy perceptions.¹⁶

The broad POS is also measured. *System openness to the tactics and goals of a movement* is operationalized as the country's competitiveness of participation (the extent to which non-elites can access institutional channels of political expression, measured by Polity IV data), and whether the country has a federal versus centralized system (measured by Polity III data)¹⁷. In addition, *the presence or absence of political allies* is operationalized as a Leftist chief executive or government,¹⁸ and the number of political parties (measured by the Database of Political Institutions). Finally, data from the survey were used to measure group identity and resources, which are included to control for the possible effects of organizational issue priorities and resources on the decision to engage in supranational activity.¹⁹

Models

The models of group activity will be used to determine how the broad and issue-specific national POS shapes participation in activities directed toward the EU. Given the dichotomous nature of the dependent variables, I estimated a separate binary logistic regression model for each of the EU-directed activities. In total, there are seven separate models of EU activity. This permits an evaluation of how the issue-specific and broad POS may differentially affect each type of EU-directed activity. The unit of analysis is the migrant inclusion

¹⁶ An index variable is employed in the model due to the presence of multicollinearity between these policy areas.

¹⁷ Polity IV data captures country regime trends over time. See the Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2013 (Principal Investigator: Monty G. Marshall; <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>). Polity III data captures indicators on regime type and political authority over time. (Principal Investigators: Keith Jagers and Ted Robert Gurr; <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/studies/6695> or ICPSR 6695).

¹⁸ The multivariate analyses use only the measure of a Leftist government (as opposed to the chief executive) due to the presence of multicollinearity between the variables.

¹⁹ Group identity was measured by the following survey question: "Here is a list of issues that may be affecting migrants and/or refugees throughout the European Union. Could you indicate how important each issue is to the activities and political concerns of your group?" Organizations were presented with a list of 17 issue areas. Subsequent factor analysis of these issue areas revealed three distinct dimensions of organizational identity: service provision focus, political/legal focus, and refugee-specific focus. Each of these variables is included in the statistical analyses to control for the effects of group identity on activity. Resources were measured by survey questions that asked groups to report the following information: annual budget, age of the organization, number of volunteers and full-time staff, and whether or not the organization had received a grant from the European Commission to implement a particular project. These variables are also included in the models to control for the possible effects of resources on the ability to act at the supranational level.

organization; the countries provide the background for the activity of these groups. Robust standard errors are used in each of the models, and regional control variables are included to account for any unobserved regional effects across Europe.²⁰ The following section discusses the results of the analyses.

Results

Organizational characteristics, issue priorities, and repertoires of action

The organizations included in the analytical sample vary on a number of characteristics. Table 1 displays descriptive information on a range of resource and group identity variables.²¹ The average group is approximately 23 years old and has over 4,000 members. The average group has approximately 6 full-time employees and 18 volunteers. There is also variance in terms of the issues that groups focus on. Finally, the mean organization does not focus on any specific ethnicity, gender, or age, reflecting a focus on a broad class of migrants and refugees.²²

²⁰ This helps to guard against omitted variable bias and adds regional fixed effects to the models.

²¹ See Table 2 in the Appendix for national differences in group membership.

²² I use the term “migrant inclusion organization” as a general umbrella term, which captures a great diversity of interests. I acknowledge that the movement is composed of organizations working on behalf of very different interests, such as legal migrants, asylum seekers, and illegal migrants. Although national and EU-level policy contexts and opportunities for influence undoubtedly differ across these different factions of the movement, sample size restrictions preclude a separate analysis of each. Thus, the sample is pooled to capture how different national policy contexts shape action in the aggregate. Nonetheless, to help parse out some of these differences, I have included dummy variables in the models to capture whether the organization works on behalf of the following groups: asylum-seekers, migrants seeking political and/or legal rights, and migrants seeking services or health care. I discuss this in the independent variables section. A worthwhile future project would involve comparing these different factions of the movement to better understand how the national policy context produces different opportunities and constraints among organizations working on behalf of these different constituents.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the analytical sample of European migrant and refugee organizations

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
No. groups	114	57.5	33.05	1	114
Year founded	114	1990	12.46	1932	2004
Membership	114	4,302	27,104	0	250,00
Full-time staff	113	6.07	12.18	1	90
Part-time staff	112	3.63	6.59	0	50
No. volunteers	113	17.87	61.28	0	500
Income (in Euros)	96	1,141.36	3,419.49	0	119,00
Income trend	112	1.68	0.77	1	3
EU grant	114	1.53	0.57	1	3
Service Provision	114	0.52	0.32	0	1
Political/Legal	113	0.39	0.3	0	1
Refugee-Specific	114	0.46	0.4	0	1
Group focus	112	1.68	0.73	1	3
Group target	112	1.31	0.75	1	4

Note: The Income variable is scaled by dividing the group's income by 1000. The Income Trend variable is coded 1 if income increased over the past year, 2 if it decreased, and 3 if it kept pace with inflation. The EU Grant variable is coded 1 if the group received funds from the EU, 2 if it did not, and 3 if future funds are expected. The Group Focus variable is coded as follows: 1=primary focus is migrants/refugees, 2=primary focus is migrants/refugees and other groups, 3=primary focus is other disadvantaged groups but migrants/refugees are included. The Group Target variable is coded as follows: 1=all migrants/refugees, 2=migrants/refugees of a particular nationality/ethnicity, 3=women migrants/refugees, 4=young migrants/refugees.

Table 2 provides details concerning the issue orientation of the groups in the sample. Approximately three-fifths (61%) of groups report improving tolerance and fighting discrimination as their top priority. In addition, over one-third of the sample focuses mainly on improving the general legal rights of migrants, and asylum procedures (35% and 31%, respectively). A sizeable percentage of groups claim education, employment, and health care as their main priorities with regard to the migrants they serve. Among those issues with the lowest priority are voting in national and European elections. Overall, groups focus their efforts on a variety of issues affecting migrants and refugees. Much of their

discourse concerns service provision and care, as well as attempts to secure legal, political, and work-related rights for migrants and/or refugees.

Table 2: Issue orientations

Issue Area	% Highest Priority
Improving society's tolerance/fighting discrimination	61%
Improving general legal rights	35%
Improving asylum procedures	31%
Improving education/access to education	28%
Assistance with finding employment	27%
Health care provision	22%
Access to housing	18%
Facilitating labor market inclusion (visas, work permits)	17%
Psychological/counseling services	16%
Learning the national language and customs	14%
Improving access to citizenship	14%
Facilitating free movement	12%
Voting in local elections	10%
Promotion of European citizenship	10%
Voting in national elections	4%
Voting in European elections	4%

Note: N=114 organizations. Figures sum to greater than 100 due to groups being able to select multiple issue priorities.

In addition to their dominant issue priorities, the survey captured groups' repertoires of political action, as reported in Table 3. These organizations engage in a diverse range of tactics that span different arenas, with most activity taking place domestically. The most commonly used tactic involves using the media (80%) to spread awareness and mobilize support. In addition, groups regularly engage in a variety of national-level lobbying activities, including

contacting the local government (72%), holding formal and informal meetings with national civil servants and ministers (67% and 66%, respectively), contacting national political parties (60%) and parliament (58%), and participating in government commissions and advisory committees (46%). Although most of their reported tactics are conventional in nature, more contentious forms of activity are also routinely employed by a sizeable proportion of groups, including nationally-directed protests (47%) and judicial action (37%).

Table 3: Activity repertoires of migrant inclusion organizations

National Level	% of Organizations
Media contacts	80%
Contacts with local government	72%
Formal meetings with civil servants/ministers	67%
Informal contacts with civil servants/ministers	66%
Contacts with political parties	60%
Contacts with parliament	58%
Protests aimed at national government	47%
Participate in government commissions/advisory committees	46%
Judicial action	37%
Supranational and International Level	
Contact Member(s) of European Parliament	43%
Contact European Commission	40%
Contacts with the United Nations	26%
Protests aimed at EU	15%
Contact European Economic and Social Committee	13%
Contact Council of Ministers	13%
Contact COREPER	5%
Judicial action in ECJ	4%

Note: N=114 organizations. Figures indicate the percentage of organizations using the given activity often or sometimes.

Outside of the national arena, the most common activities involve contacts with some of the main EU institutions, including the European Parliament (43%) and Commission (40%), as well as interactions with the United Nations (26%).²³ The activities of these groups at the supranational level will be investigated in the following section.

Descriptive patterns of supranational activity

Table 4 illustrates the percentage of both conventional and more challenging political activities that target the EU.²⁴ The two most common activities are interacting with the European Commission (40%) and lobbying the European Parliament (43%). When it comes to lobbying the other EU institutions, however, the numbers drop off dramatically. For example, only 13% of all migrant inclusion organizations regularly attempt to influence the Council of Ministers, only 13% regularly interact with the European Economic and Social Committee, and only 5% interact with Coreper.

²³ It should be noted that the EU is not the only target of action on issues relating to migrant and refugee inclusion. International organizations such as the UN and the International Labour Organization are also targets.

²⁴ Table 2 displays rather large standard deviations due to the diversity of organizations in the national-level samples. Within a given country, there is a wide spread in terms of mean membership figures.

Table 4: Supranational-level political activity: frequency of participation by migrant inclusion organizations

Activity	% Often	% Sometimes	% Rarely	% Never
Conventional				
Contact European Commission	15	25	20	40
Contact Member(s) of European Parliament	10	33	25	32
Contact Council of Ministers	2	11	15	72
Contact European Economic and Social Committee	2	11	15	72
Contact COREPER	1	4	11	84
Challenging				
Protests aimed at EU	4	11	16	69
Judicial action in ECJ	1	3	16	80

Note: N=114. Figures are percentages of groups that reported utilizing the given activity to address their primary issues of concern.

Table 4 also shows that 15% of organizations regularly engage in protests against the EU, whether in Brussels or at home.²⁵ This figure may be expected to increase as the EU develops its common immigration policy and asylum system. Although survey data cannot shed light on protest over time, other research has found that protests in response to EU policies and institutions have increased over time (Imig and Tarrow, 2001; Monforte, 2009, 2014). Finally, only 4% of

²⁵ This figure would undoubtedly be greater if we were to include protests for which the EU is the source, but the target is the state. Nonetheless, it still permits an analysis of the impact of the POS.

all groups surveyed regularly seek to bring court cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union.²⁶

Overall, the descriptive data confirm that the majority of EU-directed activities are conventional in nature. This largely affirms the literature that finds the EU policy process more receptive to institutional lobbying than protest (Marks and McAdam, 1999; Imig and Tarrow, 2001), with the Commission and EP being the most active targets. Yet, it would be misleading to say that these groups never protest the EU. Although the nature of their supranational activism leans toward lobbying, there is still a place for more direct actions in their repertoires. At the EU level, migrant inclusion groups' repertoires reflect a combination of tactical lobbying interspersed with instances of confrontational action.

The POS and supranational activity

This section will focus predominantly on the two most widely used EU activities, lobbying the Commission and EP. Hypothesis 1 stated that the domestic issue-specific POS would be a stronger predictor of EU activity compared to the broad POS. Table 5 shows that for many of the most commonly used EU-directed activities it is actually the *broad* POS variables that have the bigger impact, while the issue-specific POS variables perform less well in explaining these activities. For example, the *policy perceptions index* variable – one of the issue-specific POS indicators in Table 5 – shows that when groups assess their national immigration and asylum laws as relatively open, they are 83% more likely to target the Commission ($p < .10$). Yet, the impact is not as strong relative to the broad POS.²⁷ Two indicators of the broad POS – a *Left-leaning government* and a *greater number of political parties* – strongly increase the likelihood that groups will target the Commission. Where Leftist governments are in power, the odds of lobbying the Commission increase by a factor of 2.22 ($p < .10$), and in states where there are more political parties, the odds increase by a factor of 2.17 ($p < .10$). On the other hand, the *policy context index* (an issue-specific POS indicator) is not a significant predictor of Commission-directed action after controlling for the broad POS.

²⁶ The organizations that do report using this tactic are focused almost exclusively on refugee and asylum issues.

²⁷ At the EU level, the issue-specific perceptions findings deserve special mention, as they play a particularly significant role in influencing action directed toward the European Commission, Council, and Economic and Social Committee. Given the lack of influence that the *actual* domestic issue-specific POS displays, an argument can be made in favor of testing what Meyer and Minkoff (2004) refer to as a “signal” model. This will be discussed further in the Conclusions section.

Table 5: Multivariate results: POS and supranational-level activity

Predictor	European Commission	European Parliament	Council of Ministers	EESC	Coreper	Protests	European Court of Justice
Broad POS							
Competitiveness of participation	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Federal system	1.57 (0.86)	0.89 (0.27)	0.83 (0.33)	0.76 (0.21)	0.08** (0.09)	0.77 (0.25)	1.55* (0.46)
Left government	2.22* (1.23)	0.86 (0.34)	0.39** (0.22)	0.77 (0.26)	0.11** (0.14)	0.88 (0.43)	2.40** (1.09)
Number of political parties	2.17* (1.12)	1.99** (0.63)	1.80 (0.86)	2.62*** (0.93)	0.73 (0.45)	1.02 (0.24)	1.46 (0.51)
Issue-Specific POS							
Policy context index	0.22 (0.44)	0.26 (0.43)	1.10 (1.99)	0.05** (0.07)	1.47*** (1.19)	1.54 (2.12)	1.04 (1.58)
Policy perceptions index	1.83* (0.69)	1.18 (0.32)	1.87*** (0.49)	1.82** (0.60)	0.05*** (0.06)	0.95 (0.24)	1.19 (0.40)
Identity							
Service provision	0.96 (0.38)	1.15 (0.37)	1.51 (0.82)	0.57* (0.20)	1.57 (1.06)	1.14 (0.37)	1.23 (0.39)
Political/legal rights	---	---	0.54* (0.21)	1.80* (0.70)	---	1.60** (0.46)	---
Refugee-specific	0.70 (0.22)	1.21 (0.37)	---	---	9.59** (2.61)	---	2.37*** (0.88)
Resources							
EU grant	0.95 (0.43)	0.81 (0.25)	1.53 (0.56)	1.14 (0.38)	---	0.85 (0.26)	0.97 (0.29)
Full-time staff	1.52 (0.69)	0.97 (0.30)	1.36 (0.67)	1.61* (0.51)	3.37* (2.76)	---	---
Volunteers	---	---	---	---	---	0.86 (0.19)	1.31 (0.35)
Age of organization	---	---	---	---	---	0.93 (0.27)	0.84 (0.26)
Budget	0.87 (0.52)	1.05 (0.38)	0.84 (0.32)	---	0.15*** (0.08)	---	---
F=	20.76***	10.37***	16.65***	19.43***	18.15**	12.55***	19.69***

N of organizations=	110	112	111	111	112	111	112
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Note: Table entries are odds ratios from binary logistic regression, where the categories are 0=low participation in the given activity (never + rarely), 1=high participation (often + sometimes). These are interpreted as the degree to which odds of participating "frequently" versus "infrequently" increase or decrease along with changes in the independent variables. Odds ratios greater than 1 represent positive effects, less than 1 represent negative effects. "---" = unable to be calculated. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. ***p<.01, **p<.05, *p<.10.

The role of the broad POS is further highlighted in examining activity targeting the EP. In states with *more political parties*, the odds of contacting the EP increase by a factor of 1.99 (p<.05). In contrast, neither of the issue-specific POS indices in Table 5 are significant predictors of lobbying the EP. As with the Commission, the domestic issue-specific POS does not appear to play a significant role in mobilizing group action targeting MEPs.

In examining the less frequent types of EU activity, the issue-specific POS variables are significant but inconsistent in explaining two types of action: lobbying the Council, and lobbying Coreper, a non-decision making body composed of permanent representatives from each member state that prepares the work of the Council. The *policy perceptions index* (an issue-specific POS indicator) in Table 5 shows that groups are 87% (p<.01) more likely to turn to the Council when they view national immigration and asylum laws as relatively open. Although the strength of this relationship is strong, it is not in the expected direction. On the other hand, groups become approximately 60% (p<.05) less likely to turn to the Council when the *Left is in power* (an indicator of an open broad POS), which one would expect. A similar pattern emerges in examining Coreper. When the broad POS is open in the form of a federal system and a Left-leaning government, groups are 92% (p<.05) and 89% (p<.05) less likely to target Coreper, respectively. This relationship is substantiated by the *policy perceptions index* (an issue-specific POS indicator); where groups perceive migration and asylum policies as more open, they are 95% (p<.01) less likely to target Coreper. Yet, the more objective indicator of the issue-specific POS has the opposite effect. The policy context index variable shows that where national migration and asylum policies are objectively more open, groups are 47% more likely to target Coreper (p<.01). Although the results for the broad POS indicators are consistent across the Council and Coreper, the issue-specific POS appears to play a more mixed role in mobilizing action aimed at these traditionally less accessible institutions, depending upon whether we examine the objective or subjective measure.

A similar pattern can be seen in how the issue-specific indicators predict action aimed at the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), a consultative body that acts as a bridge between civil society and EU institutions by providing

a formal platform for interest groups to share their positions on EU policy issues.²⁸ Where groups perceive the issue-specific POS to be more open, they are 82% ($p < .05$) more likely to contact the EESC. On the other hand, where the more objective policy context index is more open, they become 95% ($p < .05$) less like to do so. Here again, the broad POS offers the strongest predictor, as the odds of contacting the EESC increase by a factor of 2.62 ($p < .01$) where groups are based in states with more political parties (an indicator of an open broad POS).

Finally, in examining the more challenging activities of protest and court action, neither of the issue-specific predictors are significant determinants of EU-directed activity. The broad POS indicators also fail to reach statistical significance in predicting EU-directed protest, but they perform better at explaining court cases. For example, the odds of bringing cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union increase by factor of 1.55 ($p < .10$) and 2.40 ($p < .05$) where groups are based in a federal system and where the Left is in power, respectively.

On the whole, the issue-specific POS indicators are either weaker compared to the broad POS in terms of magnitude of effect or statistical significance, or their effects are inconsistent within a given EU institution when it comes to mobilizing action. Overall, the broad POS indicators better explain EU-directed action. Although the issue-specific POS has been shown to play a significant role in structuring migration-related claims making at the domestic level (Berclaz and Giugni, 2005; Koopmans et. al., 2005; Meyer and Minkoff, 2004), it appears to explain supranational activity less well.

Hypothesis 2 stated that groups would be more likely to engage in EU-directed activity when the national broad or issue-specific POS is relatively closed, in an attempt to use the EU as an alternative arena under unfavorable national conditions. When it comes to lobbying the Commission and EP, the results suggest the opposite. In other words, when the national broad POS is *open*, the odds of lobbying these institutions *increase*. More specifically, where groups have access to national political allies in the form of a Left leaning government, and where there are a greater number of political parties, the odds of contacting the Commission increase by a factor of 2.22 ($p < .10$), and 2.17 ($p < .10$), respectively. Similarly, groups based in countries with a greater number of political parties are 99% ($p < .05$) more likely to lobby the EP. This positive relationship between an open POS and EU-directed action also holds when we examine the issue-specific POS, as perceptions of more favorable national migrant- and refugee-specific policies increase the odds of lobbying the Commission by 83% ($p < .10$).

When we examine the lesser-used EU activities, the results are slightly more mixed. In examining activity that targets the Council, for example, groups are 61% ($p < .05$) *less* likely to do so when the Left is in power (an indicator of an open broad POS), but they are also 87% ($p < .01$) *more* likely to do so when they

²⁸ See <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.about-the-committee>.

perceive national migrant- and refugee-related policies as relatively favorable (an indicator of an open issue-specific POS). Although an open broad POS depresses this activity, an open issue-specific POS encourages it. In this case, the broad aspects of the POS are “relativized or to some extent even counteracted by the more specific opportunity structures of the migration and ethnic relations field...,” (Koopmans et. al., 2005: 20). Importantly, the importance of field-specific opportunities in prompting Council-directed action would be overlooked by limiting the conceptual lens to the broad POS. This finding verifies claims to conceptualize the POS by taking into account the characteristics of specific issue sectors.

Similar to lobbying the Commission and EP, groups are more likely to turn to the EESC under conditions of national openness, rather than when the broad POS is closed. They are over twice as likely to target this particular EU body where there are a greater number of political parties at the national level (2.62, $p < .01$). The issue-specific results are mixed, but there is some support for the argument that groups are more likely to turn to the EESC when national issue-specific policies are perceived as relatively open (1.82, $p < .05$).

When we look at the more challenging act of bringing court cases before the Court of Justice of the European Union, again it is an open broad POS at the national level that encourages this activity. Groups in a federal versus centralized system are 55% ($p < .10$) more likely to bring a court case, and where there is a Left-leaning government, groups are over twice as likely to do so (2.40, $p < .05$). The issue-specific POS is not a statistically significant predictor in attempting to bring court cases to the European level.

Overall, in looking across all types of EU-directed activity, the results show that migrant and refugee groups are generally more active at the EU level when the national issue-specific POS is relatively *open*. This finding also holds for the broad POS when we look at the most commonly used activities of targeting the Commission and EP, as well as certain less frequent targets of action such as the EESC and Court of Justice. Further, it applies across both conventional and more challenging tactics. This suggests that, when domestic conditions are favorable, these groups are better able to access the necessary support and resources to take their claims to the EU. Taken together, the evidence does not lend strong support for processes that would be consistent with a purported boomerang effect. If groups were using these supranational institutions as alternative arenas under unfavorable national-level conditions, one would expect to see more negative relationships between the POS predictors in Table 5 and EU-directed activity. We would also expect to see a negative correlation between overall national and supranational activity levels, yet in examining this relationship, the Pearson's r is positive at 0.37 ($p < .001$).²⁹ Further, only 1% of groups in the sample simultaneously demonstrate low participation in national

²⁹ That is, if we combine all forms of national activity from the survey into an additive index and do the same with supranational activity, the correlation is positive. The correlations between the national activity index and lobbying the European Commission and the European Parliament, the two most frequently used EU activities, are also positive (0.26 and 0.36, respectively).

activities and high participation in EU-directed activities; one would expect this figure to be greater if they were indeed using the EU to bypass the nation-state.

When it comes to EU-directed activity (and particularly activity that targets the Commission and EP), the results are more consistent with the argument that migrant and refugee groups appear to use the EU as a *supplemental*, rather than *alternative*, arena to the national level. The survey data show that almost one half (47%) of the sample engages in activity across both levels. What can we make of this? First, it underscores the multilevel policy space that increasingly characterizes immigration and asylum policymaking in the EU (Buckel, 2007). As others have argued, this process is both multilevel and polycentric (Monforte, 2014: 6), as it involves both the European and national levels, and it involves various actors across these levels that do not necessarily have the same interests.

Secondly, it shows that taking claims to the EU level may actually be easier for groups based in an *open* national POS, “where social movements tend to rely on more formalized repertoires of collective actions and have more resources,” (Monforte, 2014: 16). The fact that migrant inclusion groups do not appear to consistently mobilize and target the EU when national opportunities are closed may also be a reflection of the fragmented nature of the movement (Guiraudon, 2001). Some studies have demonstrated that well-organized movements Europeanize their actions according to different processes compared to more fragmented movements (Imig and Tarrow, 2001; Guiraudon, 2001; della Porta and Caiani, 2007). Organizations operating in well-organized movements, for example, are better able to pool their resources; as a result, they are better able to take their claims to the EU level (Monforte, 2014). As migrant inclusion organizations operate within a fragmented movement, they may tend to rely more on transnational organizations, or European organizations based in Brussels, to facilitate EU-directed action (Ucarer, 2009). To the extent that they connect national organizations with EU institutions, Brussels-based umbrella groups, such as the European Network against Racism, facilitate the lobbying process for their members (Monforte, 2014; Geddes, 2000b; Guiraudon, 2001). Groups may be more likely to take advantage of this in the context of an open domestic POS, when the focus on national policy change is less pressing. Rather than targeting the EU when the domestic POS is closed as a means of triggering a “boomerang effect” to influence national policies (a strategy which would suggest that groups see the EU as a more powerful ally that can be used against national governments), groups in an open POS may target the EU for different reasons, perhaps attempting to influence the emerging supranational immigration regime as such, as part of a multilevel strategy. This strategy reflects Monforte’s (2014: 9) idea of “multilevel social movements,” which seek to pressure “both European and national institutions through the construction of multilevel campaigns,” typically coordinated by a Brussels-based umbrella organization.

As Tarrow (1998) has suggested, the factors that prompt groups to be active in local and national politics can also extend to international activity. Moreover,

the findings underscore the continued strength of national politics relative to the EU in this policy sector. An open domestic POS may provide strength to a relatively weak movement, as groups that win concessions at the national level under an open POS are perhaps more encouraged to influence EU policymaking. Under an open POS, groups may believe that they have the necessary domestic support to take their claims to the EU, increasing their chances of success. In this regard, groups may be attempting to transmit favorable national conditions to the EU level. As discussed further in the Conclusions section, the specific mechanisms that lead these organizations to increase EU-directed activity when the national POS is open should be investigated further.

Conclusions

The purpose of this analysis was to shed greater light on how the domestic POS— in both its broad and issue-specific form – shapes the political activity choices of European migrant inclusion organizations at the supranational level. The results showed that an *open broad* domestic POS is a strong determinant of the most widely used EU activities, while the domestic issue-specific POS is a weaker predictor in these cases. At the same, in examining the full range of EU-directed activities, the domestic issue-specific POS becomes an important factor to consider in explaining overall movement activity at the EU level. Placing more conceptual attention on issue-specific opportunities can help create a better understanding of the range of factors that mobilize action within the migrant inclusion movement.

This study did not find strong evidence to suggest that these groups use the EU as an alternative arena to the nation-state, as studies of other social movements have found (Poloni-Staudinger, 2008; della Porta and Caiani, 2007). Rather, they appear to turn to the EU when the national POS is relatively *open* and, hence, more *favorable* to their goals. This may indicate that they use the EU as part of a multilevel strategy, consistent with Monforte's (2014) idea of multilevel social movements. Under a closed POS, groups may turn more attention and effort to the domestic level, or it may simply be too difficult and costly to act at the EU level when the national environment is unfavorable. Under such circumstances, activists can take advantage of transnational organizations (such as PICUM, the Platform for Undocumented Migrants) to help them overcome resource or political constraints. These transnational "brokers" that help connect national and supranational spaces can be particularly important for practitioners working in the "highest profile" policy sectors that are most threatening to the state (Kriesi et. al., 1995), including those working on behalf of refugees and undocumented populations. Studying the ways in which these transnational organizations represent the interests of their national member organizations is an important line of research in this area, particularly in the context of a fragmented movement reflecting diverse issue priorities and competing agendas.

The processes that lead groups to turn to the EU should be analyzed over time, as groups can be expected to build on concessions they win at home, perhaps choosing to target the EU after they have achieved some degree of success. Although this question cannot be answered with this study's research design, an important topic of future research would be to further analyze the dynamic processes that prompt groups to turn to the EU when domestic conditions are favorable, and how their repertoires of action change over time with changes in the national POS.

This study focused on how well the national POS can explain activity choices at the EU level, but the EU itself presents multiple avenues for influence (Geddes 1995, 1998, 2000b; Guiraudon 2003). A worthy avenue for future research would be to conceptualize and model the issue-specific POS of the EU as it compares to that of the nation-state in explaining repertoires of action. In addition to assessing their relative independent influence on activity, future research should examine how the POS of these two levels interact, since in many ways national and EU opportunity structures are related. Finally, it would be worthwhile to undertake a more explicit cross-national comparison of movement organizations to better understand how different types of organizations respond differently to both the national and supranational POS, which would require a larger sample size than that of this study.

These findings can help movement practitioners in several ways. First, they shed light on where practitioners are likely to find cooperative political allies outside of their own nation-states. The institutional environment of the EU is such that it encourages active participation by organizations in the policymaking process (Imig and Tarrow, 2001). For practitioners with expertise in a particular movement sector, this can translate into the ability to forge important alliances within the Commission or EP.

Perhaps more importantly, the results highlight how practitioners can strategically use the EU as part of a broad and multilevel repertoire of action. The results showed that movement activists (at least in part) focus their efforts across both levels of governance. Given the cost of acting beyond the state, the fragmented nature of the movement, and heavy workloads, practitioners may be better positioned to influence EU policy when they work cooperatively with similar organizations across borders and divide key functions among different segments of the movement, which can be facilitated by a centralized umbrella organization based in Brussels. In sum, the results can help shed light on how to overcome some of the difficulties of operating within a divided movement.

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Appendix 1

European Migrant and Refugee Groups, by Country

Group	Year Founded	Membership	Approximate 2004 Budget (in thousands of Euros)
Austria			
Interkulturelles Zentrum	1987	60	810
Verein für Zivilcourage und Anti-Rassismus-Arbeit	1999	70	400
Caritas Refugee Service Vienna	2003	15	-
Fair Play VIDC	1997	7	200
Bruno Kreisky Foundation for Human Rights	1976	N.A.	17,500
Megaphon	1995	120	200
Ausländer Integrationsbeirat	1996	12	-
N=7			
Belgium			
Le Monde des Possibles	2001	563	40
Mentor Escale	1997	10	250
Migration Policy Group	1995	N.A.	1,000
L'Olivier	1996	30	48
Anti-Poverty Network	1990	26	1,100
Universal Embassy	2001	30	-
Vluchtelingenwerk Vlaanderen	1987	15	19,000
Jesuit Refugee Services	1980	80	250
CRACPE	1997	70	3
Caritas	1974	48	1,000
Church's Commission for Migrants in Europe	1964	21	340
N=11			
Denmark			
Akelin	1995	69	0
Euro-Mediterranean Network for Human Rights	1997	80	800
N=2			
Finland			
EU Migrant Artists' Network	1997	195	20
Refugee Advice Centre	1988	-	-
Finnish League for Human Rights	1979	500	300
N=3			
France			
-	1982	8	-
Femmes de la Terre	1992	-	-
Forum Réfugiés	1982	100	9,575.06
Centre d'Information et d'Etudes sur les Migrations Internationales (CIEMI)	1973	45	200

Reseau pour l'Autonomie Juridique des Femmes Immigrees (RAJFIR)	1998	50	0
Service National de la Pastorale des Migrants	1972	1,000	70
N=6			
Germany			
Initiative Schwarze Menschen in Deutschland	1999	60	3.6
ARIC Berlin	1993	20	90
Forum Menschenrechte	1994	45	56
Aktion Courage	1992	200	-
Informationsverbund Asyl	1998	8	-
Anti-Fascist League	1946	150	5
Internationale Liga fur Menschenrechte	1997	400	-
SOS Rassismus	1983	250	50
N=8			
Greece			
Research and Support Center for Victims of Maltreatment and Social Exclusion (CVME)	1994	22	60
Antigone Center	1995	8	80
Neolaia Synaspismou	1994	2,000	200
N=3			
Ireland			
African Refugee Network	1997	263	63
Anti-Poverty Network	1990	300	200
National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism (NCCRI)	1998	-	-
Mercy Justice Office	2000	1,000	170
Union of Students in Ireland	1959	250,000	400
Refugee Information Service	1998	-	300
Nasc: Irish Immigrant Support Centre	2000	200	50
Irish Refugee Council	1992	200	500
Vincentian Refugee Centre	1999	620	177.78
N=9			
Italy			
-	1990	200	-
I Nostri Diritti	1997	20	-
European Coordination for Foreigners' Right to Family Life	1994	50	25
Comitato per I Diritti Civili	1982	9	-
Trama di Terre	1997	150	130
N=5			
Luxembourg			
Service Refuge Caritas	1932	15	-
Commission Luxembourgeoise Justice et Paix	1971	16	5
Centre de Documentation sue les Migrations Humaines	1996	18	100
N=3			

Netherlands

Discriminatie Meldpunt Tumba	2000	N.A.	-
Steunpunt Minderheden Overijssel (SMO)	1995	26	1,700
Stichting Train	1990	N.A.	170
Bureau Discriminatiezaken Utrecht	1985	N.A.	160
Stichting Alleenstaande Minderjarige Asielzoekers Humanitas (SAMAH)	1999	N.A.	350
RADAR Rotterdam	1983	-	300
Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam	1996	N.A.	280
Stichting Vluchtelingen in de Knel	1996	N.A.	162.5
Stichting Vluchtelingenwerk Utrecht	1976	750	-
Landelijk Bureau ter Bestreiding van Rassendiscriminatie (LBR)	1985	28	1,300
Dutch Refugee Foundation	1976	130,000	12,000
Stichting Vluchtelingenwerk Midden Gelderland	1985	450	1,000
Palet	1997	N.A.	2,800

N=13

Portugal

Associacao dos Emigrantes de Tame	1999	340	13.88
Liga de Amizade Internacional	1984	4,000	29.226
Intercooperacao e Desenvolvimento (INDE)	1988	29	-

N=3

Spain

Caritas Diocesana	1985	5	135
Medicos del Mundo	1990	75,125	16,623.48

N=2

Sweden

Immigrantinstitutet	1973	5	1,653.49
FARR	1988	750	33.276
Afrikagrupperna	1974	2,300	-
Svenska Fredskommitten	1949	1,500	44.355
Filmdays against Racism	1993	80	85.858

N=5

UK

North of England Refugee Service Limited	1989	45	2,836.17
Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants	1967	1,000	1,205.37
-	1995	100	-
Minorities of Europe (MOE)	1995	200	28.362
European Multicultural Foundation	1996	170	11.323
Manchester Refugee Support Network	1996	13	194.278
National Association of British Arabs	2001	120	-
No One is Illegal	2003	10	-
Student Action for Refugees (STAR)	1994	4,000	142.625
Asylum Aid	1997	60	128.337
Racial Equality Council	1994	80	87.523

Birmingham Race Action Partnership	1999	N.A.	707.662
Refugee Survival Trust	1996	25	101.709
The Runnymede Trust	1968	N.A.	424.675
Positive Action in Housing (PAIH)	1997	250	4,370.31
Bar Human Rights Committee of England and Wales	1991	80	-
The Voice of Congo	2004	12	-
COMPAS-ESRC Centre on Migration, Policy and Society	2003	800	1,017.24
Scottish Human Rights Centre	1970	600	103.372
<i>N=19</i>			
Hungary			
International Law Research and Human Rights Monitoring Centre	2003	16	61.619
Utilapu Halozat	1993	80	32.863
Unity Movement Foundation	1998	6	11.175
Roma Participation Program	1997	N.A.	1028.594
<i>N=4</i>			
Czech Republic			
Dzeno Association	1994	125	0
Ecumenical Network for Youth Action	1995	4,000	300
MKC	1999	-	245.862
<i>N=3</i>			
Estonia			
Non-Estonians' Integration Foundation	1998	N.A.	1,597.79
People to People Estonia	1993	100	0.12782
Estonian Refugee Council	2000	12	38.347
Legal Information Centre for Human Rights (LICHR)	1994	16	0.0975
NGO Youth Union	2001	431	1.917
<i>N=5</i>			
Cyprus			
Apanemi Information and Support Centre	2004	150	80.413
<i>N=1</i>			
Malta			
Euro-Mediterranean Youth Platform	2003	3,100	200
Jesuit Refugee Service	1980	N.A.	-
<i>N=2</i>			

Note: “-“ denotes missing data. Missing data were excluded from the analyses. “N.A.” denotes “not applicable.”

Appendix 2**National Differences in Membership of Migrant and Refugee Groups**

Country	Membership	No. Groups	Mean membership	Std. Dev.
Austria	284	7	40.6	44.3
Belgium	893	11	81.2	161.7
Denmark	149	2	74.5	7.8
Finland	695	3	231.7	252
France	1,203	6	200.5	393.3
Germany	1,133	8	141.6	136.6
Greece	2,030	3	676.7	1146.1
Ireland	252,583	9	28064.8	83226.3
Italy	429	5	85.8	84.7
Luxembourg	49	3	16.3	1.5
Netherlands	131,254	13	10096.5	36027.3
Portugal	4,369	3	1456.3	2208.4
Spain	75,130	2	37565	53117.9
Sweden	4,635	5	927	976.3
UK	7,565	19	398.2	917.8
Hungary	102	4	25.5	36.9
Czech Rep.	4,125	3	1375	2274.2
Estonia	559	5	111.8	182.8
Cyprus	150	1	150	.
Malta	3,100	2	1550	2192

Activist experiences of solidarity work

**Mike Aiken, Gregorio Franklin Baremlitt, Nicola Bullard,
Carine Clément, Ann Deslandes, Sara Koopman, Sander Van
Lanen**

In the runup to Mayday 2014 the special issue editors invited activists to comment on a range of questions about their experience of solidarity work and its practical challenges. We've edited the responses together into a single piece which we hope will provoke reflection!

The contributors were:

Mike Aiken, independent researcher, UK.

Gregory Franklin Baremlitt. Doctor in Psychiatry. Founding member of the Felix Guattari Institute of Belo Horizonte. Minas Gerais, Brazil. Specializing in self-analysis and self-management groups, networks and social movements.

Nicola Bullard, activist, day labourer (at my computer). Have worked with trade unions, women's organisations, human rights groups and development agencies for more than 30 years, in Australia, Thailand and Cambodia.

Carine Clément, sociologist, activist in Russian grassroots groups, Assistant Professor at St.Petersburg State university, head of the Russian NGO Institute for Collective Action (IKD).

Ann Deslandes, researcher and writer in Australia. (2009 PhD thesis, 'From fetishism to friendship: Ethics and politics of solidarity in the global justice movement', Gender & Cultural Studies, University of Sydney).

Sara Koopman, activist-academic geographer, Canada.

Sander Van Lanen, geography PhD student, Ireland.

Keywords: solidarity, activism, allies, social movements

What does international solidarity mean to you?

Sara: people working together, across distance and difference, to build peace and justice

Gregorio: It means any support that can be given to any initiatives, groups, organizations and networks in efforts for survival, freedom and equality of all peoples of the world, regardless of their division by nations.

Ann: Multi-identified alliance work for a world that works in our interests!

Nicola: Building relationships of respect and equality to support struggles through concrete actions

Mike: 'Standing with and for'so actions and activities which (a) seek to understand and support progressive causes in other states; (b) develop an understanding of interlinkages of issues with actions closer to home; (c) are characterised by taking those issues on the terms understood by those most affected by them but (d) also engaging creatively on 'domestic' terms to relate those issues to local concerns and understandings.

The actions and activities are therefore two way and entail political education as well as action, at their best would seek to dispute the separation between a 'them' and 'us', they would acknowledge power differentials between economically and politically more powerful countries, they would dispute the notion of nations, they would assert a sense of peoples oppressed and would include positive work to combat oppressions such as sexism, racism, disablism, and discrimination against indigenous people.

Int Solid also needs to contain an understanding of debate and complexity - any particular issue will throw up contradictions across and between countries and peoples - these arise from different economic systems and political regimes. These are an essential part of our navigation not a reason for giving up on international solidarity.

We also need to see Int Solid as a continual 'work in progress' - to achieve all of the above even some of the time would be very hard - so it should point to a direction of travel to aim for rather than an 'qualification boundary' by which to exclude many noble and brave actions because 'they are not really Inter Solid'.

Hope this quick brainstorm helps!!

Carine: Solidarity in acts, more than words

Sander: For me, international solidarity means understanding that a struggle occurring elsewhere has a relationship with your own struggle, this connection marking the difference from charity. Coming from West Europe certainly does not imply carrying out struggle on behalf of people from other world areas, but we can certainly support them by recognising the relationship between our struggles. I support the quotation credited to Lilla Watson: "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting our time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together"

How do you think international solidarity has changed in recent decades? And / or: what is your personal experience of this change?

Nicola: North-South relationships are changing, slowly. “Solidarity” is (hopefully) becoming more horizontal and is based on a recognition of common sources of oppression and a common desire for justice/alternatives/freedom, etc.

Carine: Solidarity increased as a whole, but limited to 'fashion' themes or countries or places. Very dependant on the trend in 'alternative discourses'

Sander: I am not too old, so I cannot see a lot of changes. One of the things I think I notice is a growing popularity of doing volunteer work abroad among western students/young people. Although with good intentions, this is not always unproblematic, as it exoticises others and once again portrays the well educated westerner as the “do-gooder” for the African/Asian that needs help.

Sara: in the 25 years I've been doing int solidarity (US/Canada with El Salv, Mexico and Colombian justice groups) it has become much easier to share stories and build connections thanks to ICTs. It's amazing how much faster and farther a story or action alert can travel on social media compared to our early faxing and mail outs. but at the same time we used to have a much better sense of the relationships of our members in CISPES when I was an organizer in the early 90s - so for example we knew who went to church with the staff member of the local member of Congress and whose kids were on a team with the kids of a key reporter who would cover our issues, etc. It seems like the groups I'm involved with now just have a list of emails and don't know how to strategically work them.

Gregorio: Global solidarity has gained much in recent decades because of world globalization and advances in communications and transportation. Its limitation is due to globalization being predominantly reduced to economic transactions for profit and agreements/disagreements with hegemonic outcomes. I try to support the ideas and actions that serve a genuine spirit of solidarity.

Ann: Economic globalisation and its re-routing of the nation-state has changed the nature of 'international' to some extent. We've also seen new expressions of nationality and sovereignty that bypass the nation-state - such as congresses of Indigenous people from different countries, transnational feminist activism online and of course Occupy. We've tried different models like the World Social Forum, convergences like the summit protests and Occupy. We've become more anarchistic as Nathan Schneider and others have observed.

There are obvious differences (in funding, power, resources, historical experiences etc) between organisations in the West and those in the global South and post-communist world. Also between and among trade unions / political parties / NGOs and grassroots groups / popular movements. International solidarity commonly has to cross these divides. How do you deal with this, either practically or in your thinking about the subject?

Sara: I spend a lot of time thinking about how paternalism and colonial patterns sneak in to our solidarity relationships, even when we are trying hard to work with care and respect across divides of privilege. I wrote [this article](#)¹ about how it has shaped US solidarity work with Latin America, and it is a regular topic on [my blog](#)².

Carine: Practically I rely less and less on international solidarity, which don't bring much for the increasing of mobilization potential here in Russia and for the resolving of problems, with the exception of very 'political' and most known topics in international activist milieu.

Sander: When I think of international solidarity I like to understand where struggles for liberation intertwine and act on these. I do not think there is a necessity for westerners to go to third world countries to 'help' local struggles, although there might be ways in which this is legitimate. I would prefer to investigate the responsibilities my place/country of residence has in the conflict elsewhere, which companies and what parts of the government in my place are involved and target them in my location. In this way I hope to prevent the idea of the enlightened westerner that travels to faraway places to liberate others, while not falling for a 'it's their struggle, not mine' argument.

Ann: I try to keep in mind this great quote from Nicole Burrowes, Morgan Cousins, Paula X. Rojas, & Ije Ude in their chapter of the book *The revolution will not be funded*, edited by INCITE! Women of Colour Against Violence, in the US:

Truth be told, the relationships between NGOs and the communities in which they work are not always negative; nor do they always work in the same way. Some are strategically linked, and even directed by the revolutionary movements themselves. Others serve as a mechanism through which resources may be funneled to autonomous organisations of tens of thousands... and while many of these NGOs were started at the request of the movements, usually to provide specific skills or resources, ultimately they are not essential. If these NGOs collapsed tomorrow, the movements would remain intact. Their members are connected to each other through participation in the movement, not through NGO trainings. (Burrowes et al. 2006: 227 – 235)

¹ https://www.academia.edu/951916/Imperialism_Within_Can_the_Masters_Tools_Bring_Down_Empire

² <http://decolonizingsolidarity.blogspot.ca/>

That is - power and resource imbalances are part of what we have to work out. And as long as our organising and movement building is effective, then the questions of historical dominance or NGOs or whatever will be worked out.

Nicola: For me, it's the political orientation that counts, rather than the organisational form or geographic provenance.

Gregorio: The objectives stated in Question 2 are valid for all people, the need for their realization must overcome other differences. Seeking alliances with any initiative which partly or fully intends to address the fundamental problems of humanity: exploitation, domination and mystification, taking into account political, cultural and ethical differences. But I try to make sure these are the most important among the various objectives that such initiatives can pursue. I have tried to inform myself extensively about the honesty of these potential allies. I do not claim that I ally myself simply with extremely 'pure' initiatives: this is obviously because they do not exist, but also because a fundamentalist attitude has proven to be neither efficient nor feasible. My international experience is limited to joint movements between Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil.

How do you experience or understand the tensions between local / national struggles and the ways in which they are represented or projected in international social movements, Left and / or religious contexts?

Sander: A particular topic of interest to me, where I definitely need to do more research, is the relation between anti-colonial struggles and nationalism. This interest triggered with my move to Ireland, where I wondered how the left related to the issue of Northern Ireland, which easily can fall into nationalism. This made me wonder about national liberation struggles of the 20th century as well. A lot of representation of social movements is done in national contexts, while of course these have an influence, but the root of the problem crosses borders, which is sometimes/often not present in the representations of movements.

Carine: Too weak interest in Russian grassroots initiatives and in workplace struggles on the part of the West, their delegitimation at the eye of Russian establishment. The official Russian 'liberal' opposition ignore them (and it's maybe a good thing).

Sara: As a long time Spanish interpreter for the movement I have often interpreted for speakers on tour in the US and Canada who want to give WAY more local specifics on their struggles than makes sense to or is of interest for their audiences, but don't often know what background context is needed for their local issues to make sense to and matter more to their audience. it's often frustrating for me that tour organizers don't offer more support to speakers to help them find this balance.

At the same time I've struggled to see some US groups in Colombia ignore or whitewash in their publications some pretty serious shit going down in some of the communities they do solidarity with because they didn't want to overwhelm people with the blow by blow dramas of their organizing dynamics - but this can then also lead to some romanticizing and naivete

Ann: I tend to explain it as a kind of fetishism - we seem to need the example of a local, situated movement to project/extrapolate from/build a global movement. I think this fetishism is necessary, but we need to be careful about appropriating movement that is not ours.

Nicola: Not sure I know how to answer this: suffice to say, local/national struggles are always more grounded and concrete and therefore amenable to more grounded and concrete actions and demands and results. It is always difficult to "balance" the immediate and real needs of movements and struggles on the ground with the more abstract and often more general demands of international movements. For example, specific reforms might resolve land/agrarian issues in one locality but that doesn't deal with the global power of agribusiness. The point is to try to make all these small local struggles and victories coherent with a broader strategy.

Gregorio: My opinion is that solidarity movements and actions always have a more or less given conventional, racial, political, religious, etc, orientation. The international solidarity movements rarely ever completely escape the weight of the orientations they represent, embody or sponsor. Some are 'acceptable', others are untenable, even if they have positive results in their explicit propositions.

There are obvious differences between international movement solidarity and other actors who claim to act out of solidarity such as nation-states, the UN, the ILO, Amnesty and even international financial institutions etc. Have you experienced such differences, and if so how do you understand or respond to them?

Sara: ...or, say, the church. lately I've been [fascinated with](#) how frequently even [the popes](#) have used the term solidarity. I think it means such wildly different things to people, so I'm looking forward to reading your report!

Nicola: These institutions have their role and can sometime mobilise and speak to different audiences. The sterling work of the UN rapporteur on the right to food, Olivier de Schutter, is a case in point: he has done amazing advocacy for food sovereignty in very institutional settings.

Sander: I have no real experiences with this, except the experience that actual migrants in Europe do not seem to like the UNHCR.

Gregorio: I have had little opportunity to work directly with organizations of this size. I've hardly even worked with partial or secondary initiatives of these

entities. I think the solidarity efforts of such institutions have an undeniable value. But they rarely have sufficient autonomy to address the structural causes of the scourges they fight, thus being limited to 'harm reduction'. Note, however, that they often achieve more than purely critical organizations, even if these are more militant.

Ann: Grand narratives of nation or organisation never quite work, which suggests to me that sustainable solidarity comes from somewhere else. Going back to the quote from Burrowes et al. above - as long as we have a strong grassroots movement, the other claimants to solidarity can come and go as we need them!

Are we missing anything out or would you like to add anything?

Gregorio: I believe that, independent of national, institutional, political and economic (and especially religious or racial) frameworks, solidarity initiatives will become more frequent and powerful over time. The capacity of the people for a peaceful, just and fair, fraternal living is much greater than that which has the power to suppress them or control them. However, the future is never assured and all militancy that takes place, is always a gamble ... and often dangerous.

Sara: lately I've been feeling annoyed with how easily and often the Galeano solidarity is horizontal quote gets tossed around. I know it's well intentioned, and yes, my solidarity comes out of a deep belief in our equality, but solidarity in my mind is not about ignoring our differences and pretending we're all on the same plane, but instead recognizing our different positions and strengths and using them strategically together to build justice. I have more access to the US Congress, a campesina in the peace community of San Jose has more experience building nonviolent resistance while surrounded by armed actors - together we can more powerfully build peace.

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A Spinozist sort of solidarity: from homo-nationalism to queer internationalism

Ben Trott

Keywords: international social movements; solidarity; identity; LGBT; queer theory; homonormativity; homonationalism; Haraway; Puar; Spinoza

Solidarity is usually understood as something expressed by one group or individual in relation to another. There is an argument to be made though that, both conceptually and politically, it might be more useful to think of solidarity in terms of *a consciously shared and affirmed identity or political project*.

Indeed, the affirmation of your own identity – whether this is “minoritarian” or “majoritarian”, in the qualitative rather than quantitative sense Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (2004, 518-519) used these terms – has in fact often meant an expression of solidarity with others who share this identity with you.¹ Take for example early gay liberation movements, where the act of “coming out” was supposed among other things to make life easier for other gays, lesbians and queers, even if it made your own life more difficult in some ways.

There are of course plenty of examples of shared identities being affirmed in the name of solidarity that have quite reactionary intentions or effects, however. In Britain, there is a trade union that calls itself “Solidarity – The Union for British Workers” and which “rejects the internationalism of existing trade unions”. It is “a nationalist union with the protection of British workers’ interests as the core of its agenda”.² Clearly, the idea of *international* solidarity was always meant to oppose initiatives like this. But it is worth noting that many critical or leftwing expressions of solidarity also entail certain dangers or at least ambivalences.

One of these is the reification of the identities they affirm, which can obscure their contingency – how, in other words, these identities are historically, culturally, socially and discursively constructed and specific – and involve a policing of boundaries. In order for gay, black, women’s and other liberation movements to be brought into being, there was often a clear need for solidarity to be expressed among those who shared these respective identities – all of which formed (and largely continue to form) the basis on which a subordinated position was established within a social hierarchy. But each of these movements

¹ “Majority”, for Deleuze and Guattari (2004, 116-117), “assumes a state of power and domination, not the other way around. It assumes the standard measure, not the other way around... A determination different from that of the constant will therefore be considered minoritarian, by nature and regardless of number”. As such, “the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking a standard language (Joyce’s or Ezra Pound’s Ulysses)” often serves as such a “constant or standard”, despite the fact that “he is less numerous than mosquitoes, children, women... etc.” Likewise, “[w]omen, regardless of their numbers, are a minority” (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, 117).

² <http://www.solidaritytradeunion.org/about.html>

subsequently, and necessarily, became animated by their own internal debates around “essentialism”; not only in terms of the degree to which they “naturalised” categories that are socially produced, but also the extent to which they each – in different ways and to different degrees – tended to assume a white and/or male and/or middle class subject.³

Solidarity beyond identity

One of the most prominent feminist debates in the global North currently surrounds the politics of trans* and also touches on this question of essentialism.⁴ There is also often a tension that exists, particularly in international campaigns or research around trans* issues, about which identities become, or should be, “conflated” with one another – becoming commonly defined as “transgender”, for instance. What has already become subsumed beneath this signifier in some national, cultural, social or political contexts has not in others. In some cases there is a resistance to this subsumption; and in some, alternative terms are used, often with slightly different meanings.

The international dimension to solidarity, then, does not necessarily eliminate the dangers or ambivalences often at stake – indeed, it can further complicate things. Nor does a minoritarian subject position inoculate against reproducing modes of exclusion and subordination, or obstacles to solidarity. One of the dangers with recognising the difficulties involved in affirming common – class, gender, sexual or other – identities as a basis for solidarity, though, is falling back onto a liberal account of the subject, with a reticence towards any sort of “construction” of collective identity. The amenability of this to a neoliberal politics, and to an elimination of solidarity among those who certainly share a subjection to identity-based domination and violence, is clear.

This is where the question of a shared political project comes in. Donna

³ See for example the Combahee River Collective’s (1983 [1977]) “A Black Feminist Statement”.

⁴ The term “trans*” (with an asterisk) is used by some activists and theorists today to denote a greater range of gender variation than is often associated with “trans” (without an asterisk) or “transgender”, the latter of which in particular, as Avery Tompkins (2014, 27) has explained, “is now understood in some circles to represent only binary notions of transness and to refer only to trans men and trans women rather than those who contest the gender binary”. Although its use has not been without its critics, the asterisk has a number of different (even if often related) functions. Firstly, it sometimes stands in for any potential combination of characters that might follow the trans- prefix (transsexual, trans woman, trans man, and so on), similarly to how the asterisk functions as a so-called “wildcard character” in telecommunications and computing (Tompkins 2014, 26). Secondly, it can be used to “[draw] attention to the word” trans (Tompkins 2014, 27), particularly where it *requires* such attention (indicating something more complex than might initially be assumed), and also to resist its reduction to an afterthought in projects and initiatives that describe themselves as LGBT. Thirdly, it can sometimes “act as a footnote indicator,” similarly “implying a complication or suggesting further investigation” (Tompkins 2014, 27); although an actual footnote is in fact rarely appended, in effect allowing the asterisk to operate as a floating signifier.

Haraway (1991, 155-156) has been among those to have argued – quite convincingly, in my opinion – that it is entirely possible to construct shared identities “out of otherness, difference, and specificity” on the basis of what Chela Sandoval called “oppositional consciousness”: identities that mark out “a self-consciously constructed space that cannot affirm the capacity to act on the basis of natural identification, but only on the basis of conscious coalition, of affinity, of political kinship”, and, I would add, *solidarity*. Sandoval’s example of such an affinity- as opposed to identity-based category was “women of colour”, but the signifier “queer” has clearly long been used along these lines too, as more recently has “trans*” (with an asterisk).

Solidarity despite homo-nationalism

Particularly since September 11 2001, there has been an increasing attention among queer theorists and activists to what Jasbir Puar and others have called “homonationalism”. In her book, *Terrorist Assemblages*, Puar (2007, 2) describes this as a “form of national homonormativity”, which can refer to two things and is of course intended as a corollary to the notion of “hetero-normativity”: the generalised presumption and valorisation of heterosexuality. You are presumed heterosexual until – deliberately, accidentally, or even wrongly – you indicate otherwise.

The first sense in which *homo*-normativity has been used, by scholars like Jack/Judith Halberstam (1998, e.g. 139) and Susan Stryker (2008), is to name the ways many gay and lesbian contexts disparage, exclude or obscure what have been called “non-normative” gender expressions: a perceived “excessive” femininity in men or masculinity in women; or the articulation of trans*, gender-queer or other identities. The second sense is what Lisa Duggan (2003, 50) famously called “the new homonormativity”, namely, “a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them, while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption”.

Homonationalism could be understood as combining, within a nationalist project, these two: a veneration or at least toleration of certain queer subjectivities (and an exclusion of others) as well as their deployment as a means of reinforcing or reproducing dominant institutions and mechanisms of power, while seeking to drain queer politics of its own transformatory potential. Puar theorises homonationalism in relation to Michel Foucault’s (e.g. 1978) account of biopolitics. It is not a top-down process, directed through policy or more traditional sovereign modes of power. Rather, it is enacted horizontally and bottom-up, through networks of institutions, actors, discourses, and from *within* disparate social subjects – including many queer subjects. Discussions of homonationalism have generally occurred in contexts not only defined by a veneration of heteronormative coupling and the subjugation of queer sexualities – although these still certainly take place – but also a simultaneous

“propagation”, in Puar’s (2007, 39) words, “of sexualities that mimic, parallel, contradict, or resist this normativity”. She describes an orientalism at work that disaggregates *some* queer subjects “from a racial and sexual other” in a way that feeds in to nationalist discourses of inclusion and exceptionalism (Puar 2007, 39).

“For contemporary forms of U.S. nationalism and patriotism,” she argues – and certainly similar arguments can and have been made in relation to homonationalism emerging from other contexts – “the production of gay and queer bodies is crucial to the deployment of nationalism, insofar as these perverse bodies reiterate heterosexuality as the norm but also because certain domesticated homosexual bodies provide ammunition to reinforce nationalist projects” (Puar 2007, 39).

Puar cites the post-9/11 proliferation of American flags in gay spaces, support for US military intervention by some conservative gays, as well as the ways certain “progressive and liberal discourses of LGBTIQ identity might unwittingly use, rely upon, or reinscribe U.S. nationalisms” (Puar 2007, 46). The response of some LGBTIQ movements and organisations to recent legislation in Russia criminalising so-called “gay propaganda”, however, has also included clear elements of homonationalism. In Berlin, one large demonstration in August 2013, intended as an articulation of queer international solidarity, prominently featured a banner that read, “*Deutschland gegen Homophobie*”, or “Germany Against Homophobia”. The national unit, in other words, was (at least discursively) mobilised in a way that both incorporated (certain) queer identities within German national identity while obscuring the very real existence of homophobia in Germany itself. The demonstration took place around the same time as Chancellor Angela Merkel’s own party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), along with their Bavarian partner the CSU, were actively obstructing legislation that would allow same-sex couples to adopt.⁵

This kind of nationalist homonormativity, or the incorporation of queers within nationalist projects – and the *active* feeding into this process by queer subjects, movements and organisations themselves – is a real phenomenon, and it deserves the critical attention it is receiving by queer theorists and activists. But it poses a challenge to thinking and practicing queer international solidarity. There is certainly a danger of some crude approaches to homo-nationalism creating obstacles to queer-internationalism: wanting to avoid reproducing narratives that stress the lack of rights and experience of violence elsewhere, and concentrate instead on homo- and trans*phobia “at home”. This need not *necessarily* be the case, however. Avoiding incorporation within a homonationalist project, in the way people like Puar have described, and advancing a queer-internationalism requires careful political and intellectual work; and certainly, it should avoid retreat from the difficult, messy world of

⁵ <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/vorab/adoptionsrechte-fuer-homosexuelle-spd-kritisiert-merkels-nein-a-943029.html>

practice and politics and into that of critique.

Spinozist solidarity

It also seems to me that some of the dangers of falling into a homonationalist trap derive from a particular approach to thinking and doing solidarity. If the focus is on the misery of others, and you extrapolate an imperative to act out of your own (perhaps) relatively privileged situation, there is a greater likelihood of forgetting the (again *perhaps* less immediately violent) ways your own life is subjected to operations of power that inhibit your ability to shape and realise your desires, or live together with others in the ways you choose. We need a Spinozist sort of solidarity. Not a solidarity based on pity – i.e. “sadness which has arisen from injury to another” (Spinoza 1996 [1677], 166)⁶ – or compassion (which is just the habitual disposition towards pity [Spinoza 1996 [1677], 191]),⁷ but solidarity as a joyful affirmation of our own desire to live well, which is inextricably bound up (and quite rationally so) with a desire for others to live well too (Spinoza 1996 [1677], 209).⁸ Sadness, for Spinoza, is ultimately a relatively debilitating affection, with less political potential than the joy that can come from overcoming our solitude and deciding to embark on a common project that can benefit us all.

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⁶ Spinoza’s *Ethics*, IIP22S.

⁷ *Ethics*, DefAffXVIIIExp.

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Nonviolent struggle and its application in new social movements: an interview with Srdja Popović

Gloria Novović

Abstract

In a personal interview conducted on February 12 2014, Srdja Popović, a co-founder of the Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies and one of the founding members of the Serbian resistance movement Otpor, offered his assessment of the different nonviolent strategies of the most recent movements. He talked about the achievements and challenges of the Arab Spring, European anti-austerity movements and Occupy Wall Street. Furthermore, he examined the growing role that social media, the occupation tactic as well as horizontal organizing play in new social movements.

Keywords: nonviolent action, Serbia, Gene Sharp, CANVAS, Otpor

Srdja Popović — from Otpor to Canvas

With the eruption of the Arab Spring, the Slovenian anti-austerity protests and Occupy Wall Street, global media rushed to link the uprisings with Otpor, the Serbian movement of national resistance that helped oust Slobodan Milošević in 2000 (see, e.g.: Cartalucci 2011, Sacher 2012, Stahel 2012, Chossudovsky 2011). The famous image of a closed fist, popular slogans as well as the rhetoric used by many movements of color¹ and Arab Spring protests were remarkably similar to those of Otpor, whose members formed a non-government organization – CANVAS (Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies). This Belgrade-based organization, which dates back to 2004, has guided activists from all over the world through the theory of nonviolent resistance. It has organized educational workshops for activists in the Philippines, Georgia, Bahrain, Egypt and many other countries as well as produced approachable booklets that take the activists, step by step, through the most important notions of power, civil disobedience and social movement framing. The organization addresses also various theoretical approaches to the nonviolent struggle, and offers lectures in many U.S. universities and an entire graduate program at Faculty of Political Science at Belgrade University. Practical work of the organization focuses on workshops and trainings for activists. The Center has worked with activists from Ukraine, Georgia, Kuwait and, recently, from Egypt and Tunisia.

¹ *Color revolutions* describe a series of revolutions that took place in the countries of the former Soviet bloc in the process of a transition toward a more democratic society. They are called ‘color’ as most revolutions are associated with a color or a flower representing a revolutionary movement (eg. Ukrainian ‘Orange Revolution’, Georgia’s ‘Rose Revolution’ etc.).

Their teachings are based not only on their own experience in Serbia but also on teachings of many academics, primarily those of Gene Sharp, the founder of Albert Einstein Institute, whose book *From Dictatorship to Democracy* represents a true cornerstone for studies of nonviolent struggle. Gene Sharp, however, does not consider himself an activist. Instead, he perceives himself as a theorist, and his work is focused on theoretical aspects of power and oppositional strategies. Sharp's theory is focused not only on mechanisms of power and strategies of its disintegration, but also on an analysis of the instruments required for a peaceful transition towards democracy and national unity. The Serbian revolution became a successful case study that followed Sharp's teachings, and Otpor quickly turned into the Serbian brand. Since its founding, CANVAS has collaborated with activists from over 46 countries, organizing more than 200 workshops (canvasopedia.org). Due to its support of various countries from the ex-Soviet bloc as well as several nations of the Arab Spring, its members have repeatedly been accused of serving foreign interests and private agendas of NGOs such as the International Republican Institute which is closely linked to the U.S. Department of State.

However, despite CANVAS' undeniably strong contribution to the diffusion of ideas and strategies of nonviolent action, it soon became evident that no single organization could be the cause of the most recent popular upsurges around the globe. Otpor deployed interesting strategies, efficient and unique media and field campaigns, and the language of nonviolent yet offensive approach. CANVAS also studied many revolutions and protests as well as helping educate activists from all over the world. This makes this organization and, consequently, its co-founder – Srdja Popović, an interesting interlocutor in the analysis of the most recent popular protests. While CANVAS helped educate some Egyptian groups and their collaborators, Marović spoke to the General Assembly in New York, the organization has not had close or direct contacts with most anti-austerity movements in Europe (with the exception of Slovenia where Popović gave speeches only after the protests were well underway), nor was it involved in the planning of the Occupy Wall Street protests. Still, Popović's reflections concern these latter movements as well and he offers a historical and a methodical analysis of their strategies and dynamics. Furthermore, he also addresses possible mistakes that activists made and the lessons future activists could learn from these experiences.

During the interview, this Otpor veteran offered his take on horizontalism, democratic and inclusive movements as well as the most appropriate tactics and instruments a movement should apply in order to exercise more pressure on society and bring about change. Just like CANVAS books, many of which Popović wrote or co-wrote, my interlocutor's outlook on theory tends to be rather practical. For example, he dismisses my predominantly symbolic interpretation of Otpor's horizontal structure which highlights the importance of individual ideas and inclusive attitude towards marginalized groups and/or persons. He sees horizontalism as only one of many possible movement structures alongside those that focus on charismatic leaders. Charismatic leaders may be symbolic figures (for example, Gandhi) or effective organizers or "general managers", to

use Popović's term (for example Martin Luther King). He believes that every movement structure serves specific purposes and under any given circumstances, it may be the best structure possible. The key is, as he argues, to choose the structure congruent with the movement's needs and purposes. Horizontal structure is only one of the options that movements have at their disposal:

A movement should choose the structure, organization and the command system that suits the movement best, or that helps its approach to the identified enemy – like Otpor did; it worked on the level of its founders and local branches top-down in the student protests of 1996 and 1997 and then the general mobilization worked from the bottom up. [The movement] worked based on the program and also on symbols – creating unity – both to ensure the right connection with general public as well as the enemy. Some [members] were more active but there were no top decision makers.

He is proud of Otpor's local branches that were independent and self-organized, yet completely compatible with the national movement. The overall structure and tactics applied by the movement were an outcome of the student protests that started in 1992 and ended in 1997, following a 100-days-long protest in over thirty towns that Popović himself describes as "massive and serious" while Antić, a historian and a participant, defined as "morally correct, moderate, wise and peace-loving"(2006). This student protest quickly turned into popular protests that did not, however, reap the same success due to the overall incoherence among the protesting groups and strong police repression. Popović argues that he and his friends from Otpor tried to overcome these weaknesses and find ways to unify the dissenting crowds but also to keep the movement protected from severe police repression.

Disappointed with the lack of organised opposition on the part of political elites and recognizing the lack of "unity" that Sharp himself declared one of the three keys to success (the other two being careful planning and, of course, nonviolent techniques), the movement chose non-political affiliation and addressed the general public in a direct way. This is when the horizontal structure helped. Popović claims that Serbia of 2000s was experiencing the same "deficit of trust" in the political elites that is currently present across the Middle East, Europe and the United States. It is in these places now that "groups of outsiders gathered with an idea, energy and strategies and started mobilizing people who were just as unhappy with politics as we were." He stresses the importance of a correct mentality-evaluation when deciding on different movement structures and organizational mechanisms. Individualism and self-interest of the Serbian people worked well with a horizontal movement in Milošević's Serbia where youth, in particular, embraced the idea that there is a movement they can help to shape. "Serbians are big teenagers who don't like to be told what to do," Popović jokes, "to motivate people (...) it is better to create a movement where everyone can be a leader." In fact, Otpor members often introduced themselves with their names, followed by the famous phrase "I am one of 70 000 leaders of Otpor." This created a sense of protagonism as well as national-based solidarity. This Otpor leader believes that linguistic innovations of new social structures and social dynamics motivated people and created

strong connections among activists, even among those from different local branches. Also, dealing with a repressive regime, horizontalism and the independence of local branches helped the movement's resistance to police repression since arrests in one city did not automatically undermine the movement's activity in other parts of the country and it was very difficult to identify the "leaders" when all the members could claim to be leaders.

The second reason for choosing horizontalism was linked to Otpor's direct political opponent. While Milošević had no problems with publicly prosecuting some opposition leaders, it was difficult to do that with single members of Otpor for many reasons. Not only was it difficult to identify one person in charge of the movement or at least the face of the movement, but also the general public reacted negatively to movement repression. Many Otpor leaders were young people, in some cases minors, whom community perceived as weak and optimistic youth that were getting crushed by armed and aggressive police officers. Police brutality made older generations to immediately side with young Otpor activists. As Popović remarked with a smile:

These grandparents, who were generally voting for Milošević, started changing their minds when they had to spend hours on the phone with the police officers, demanding the immediate release of their grandchildren, imprisoned for organizing silly street actions or putting up a few posters.

In fact, it was these "silly" strategies that had a great impact on the public appeal of Otpor but also on diminishing respect for the authorities. Popović refers to the technique of organizing humoristic and symbolic skits and street actions for movement promotion and raising awareness as "laughtivism."² Otpor used symbols and thought-provoking campaigns that were catchy, thus attracting people's attention and making any aggressive reactions from the authorities seem exaggerated and unjustified. Additionally, many campaigns involved celebrities and artists, which helped raise the movement's visibility and overall popularity.

Overwhelming support of the general public strengthened the movement, allowing it to adapt a more aggressive approach to the established opposition. The latter, lacking political strength and citizens' support, had to accept Otpor's ideas about inter-party unity in fighting Milošević, that involved creating a single opposition campaign that all opposition parties would support. The credibility and integrity that Otpor used as its main weapon came from the trust it earned from the people or as Popović put it: "Otpor was the only hope of overturning Milošević and the voters recognized Otpor as [the movement that] can say what is right and wrong." He talks about an unofficial campaign when the opposition was "conditioned" to work together, supporting a single opposition block and attacking Milošević. "We needed to turn the elections into a referendum – for or against Milošević, that was the only way to defeat him." In fact, the political coalition created in 2000 was peculiar because it combined parties with very

² Activism based on laughter and comic relief, used as a political strategy to undermine dictator's power and ridicule him/her.

different ideological convictions and programs. Those who refused to listen, like one politician - Vuk Drašković - learned the lesson the hard way – his election results were at an all-time low. This particular aspect of the Serbian revolution and of most color revolutions (i.e. exerting influence on the opposition parties) was severely criticized. First of all, it questions the democratic values of the revolutionary movements; second, it feeds the fears of foreign influences on the political development in weaker countries; and finally, it contributes to the fact that most color revolutions never saw the emergence of new political leaders; the power-holders who replaced dictators ousted by these movements were no dilettantes. On the contrary, they were politicians with prior political engagement and personal interests. In fact, it is important to understand that Popović does not propose a cultural or structural change such as Occupy Wall Street or *Indignados*. He proposes political action that is strong enough to affect economic and social change through reforms and other political activities. People's empowerment should help guarantee the duration of a democratic state.

When I mention the unions, Popović reminds me that under Milošević, most unions were very closely connected to the government and, therefore, reacted late when their members were already applying non-cooperation tactics. This made them realize that “the workers would go on strike one way or another because the entire vibe in the society was – ‘He is finished’.” Their biggest contribution was the final general strike following the rigged elections when a national total strike sent a very clear message to the president announcing popular riots.

During the bombings of 1999, the entire territory of Serbia and now-independent republic of Montenegro were bombed by the NATO allies as a response to Milošević's action in Kosovo, thus causing numerous civilian victims and great material damage. Popović remarks that people united under Milošević's leadership, fomenting nationalism, and giving credit to the regime's propaganda that there were foreign plots against the Serbian nation. In fact, when fighting against Otpor, the government used the “foreign plot card,” which was also often seen in the Arab Spring revolutions and the most recent Turkish uprising. Otpor members were described as traitors who had sold out their country to foreign interests. Otpor, however, fought against nationalist forces by organizing often-criticized³ patriotic campaigns such as “Otpor – because I love Serbia,” street actions and media propaganda that insisted on civic participation and patriotic values. This shows us that nonviolent action is always about understanding the opponent and crafting collective actions based on these lessons, which is also the core of Sharp's teachings.

Popović's Zeitgeist speeches⁴ focus on promoting non-violent struggle. He

³ See Naumović 2007.

⁴ Zeitgeist Speeches are organized by Google as a part of the Zeitgest project, aimed at exploring socio-political, economic and cultural problems. Most speakers are well-known leaders or thinkers. Popovic gave two Zeitgeist speeches: in 2012 and 2013.

suggests that movements should start fighting their enemies on a more theoretical level and avoid armed conflicts where authorities have incomparable advantage. To put it bluntly, do not try to fight with Mike Tyson, try playing chess with him instead (Zeitgeist Americas 2013). In this way, he strongly advises against the use of force against any type of political or social opponent not only for ideological but for primarily practical reasons, namely because it doesn't work. Popović also eagerly cites Maria Stephan and Erica Chenoweth's study *Why Civil Resistance Works*. He quotes their findings which show that up to 7% of the population actively participates in nonviolent protests and that 53% of nonviolent struggles are successful, as opposed to 26% in case of violent conflicts, which also show a lower number of involved participants (2011). He insists on the "social education" that many Argentinian activists talk about when describing their social movements that sprang up a year after Otpor: "The effect of participation is very important. In nonviolent struggle the elites are not active so it is very difficult to put the genie back in the bottle (...) it is a mental change that occurs in people." In this sense, Popović seems to refuse the dichotomy between a movement's success or failure, crediting many movements with an important role of awareness-raising. He also emphasizes his organization's own focus on the promotion of the concept of people's power rather than the ideas of anti-regime protests. Even faced with criticism that most color revolutions seem to be rather hasty and bring instability rather than structural change, Popović stresses their role in raising consciousness about people's power and power mechanisms in general.

A movement with a vision

When talking about more recent movements and comparing their strategies and techniques, Popović has mixed feelings. He acknowledges their function of responding to the popular need for social justice and reformative if not radical changes, yet he finds that these movements made many "wrong moves." They were very different from the color revolutions and although they self-organized and displayed people's power, they also perpetuated many misconceptions. First and foremost, Popović insists on the need to have a general vision for the movement, which, according to him both Arab Spring uprisings and Occupy Wall Street lacked.

It is important to build around a vision, not around a person...when it comes to Otpor we talked about freedom, political direction of Serbia that involves the United Nations, European integrations, improvement of relations with neighboring countries – our struggle wasn't merely about toppling Milošević; it was about living in Serbia where the media is free and human rights are respected, where we have good relations with Bosnians, Croatians and others – and when you are fighting for a vision and not for individuals [you avoid outcomes such as those] in Egypt where they declared 'game over' too soon because no one planned a transition, a vision and focused on a leader. You have to ask yourself – What about tomorrow, what about next Friday, once the dictator has fled?

My interviewee insists on the need for looking beyond challenges and working

on new solutions to a current problem. This idea is not limited to repressive regimes only – it does not matter if the opponent is political, economic or social – it is always about having an exit, just like an entrance, strategy. In this sense, a question emerges of why CANVAS doesn't deal with the process of long-term planning that these movements obviously lack? To my question whether social movements have the responsibility to form a sort of a watchdog organization following the insurgency, as Otpor did, and if that played an important role in the Serbian transition, he points to the facilitating factors Serbia had such as: some degree of political liberty the opposition did enjoy under Milošević, describing his regime as “half-dictatorship” and recognizing the pro-UN political program that included abrogation of 10 repressive laws etc. as viable political programs developed by the opposition as well. Serbia, according to him, had minimal yet crucial predispositions that helped its people create a political and, to some extent, an economic plan that went beyond toppling Milošević's regime.

He did take part of the credit, reminding me of Otpor's watchdog campaign directed at the newly-formed government following Milošević's ousting that was called “We are watching you closely” (*Samo vas gledamo* in Serbian). The message of the campaign was “Serbia counts 4723 bulldozers and about 6 million registered drivers,” alluding at the final mass riot where people all across Serbia went to the national parliament in Belgrade, some even entering with bulldozers, (quite literally) clearing the roads towards a new democracy. Popović says about this message:

The campaign's message was – this was not for you, this was about the emperor's shoes, so don't even try and find out how comfortable Milošević's shoes really were. And this is not a Serbian trait; in Ukraine we got that – an elite that replaced an elite. But it is not about the elites; it is about a system. In Serbia, Otpor pressured new elites to “behave” and also help them make people “swallow some bitter pills.” The society wasn't for Milošević's extradition to the court in Hague, which was important for the transitioning phase.

He partly agrees with the criticism directed at color revolutions by Haring and Cecire who claim that “successful revolutions also embrace the rule of law” and imply that the protests in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan do not represent successful uprisings (2013). According to them, these revolutions did not go through the hard process of building of civil society and therefore lack appropriate tools to form democratic state. Popović admits this last function is the most challenging one, since “it is very difficult to make ten thousand people without political experience involved in democracy building: “[The question we asked was] how to include these people? When you steal people's voice, they become political activists because it is something personal that goes beyond politics.” Popović identifies transitional mistakes activists in Egypt made: “The ‘goose egg’ (...) was toppling Mubarak and not democracy-building and this is why people went home when Mubarak was down and it gave the military and Muslim Brotherhood space to get power. Otpor, on the other hand played a watchdog role when the revolution was over and it was not a trivial role. A movement needs to have a vision that most color revolutions, for example, lacked.” The CANVAS co-founder, however, does not completely reject these

revolutions as complete failures, insisting on the importance of awareness raising. He also warns me against a Cold War perspective that is based on geopolitical interests: “People tend to ask me if a country is now more aligned with Russia or America and I tell them I’m interested in [a nation’s] development of human rights, finding out if people lead better lives according to some realistic standards, is there more democracy?”

A social revolution

Popović recognizes the strong political orientation of color revolutions. Hence, he sees them very differently from the Arab Spring, anti-austerity and Occupy Wall Street protests that were important because of the “social reason behind it.” He argues:

protests were not led by political elites because Egypt didn’t have any while Slovenian and American ones, for example, lacked popular trust. This is why we can recognize they had different tipping points but the background was social and not political. In Tunisia, social outrage was transformed into a political one because the former was not allowed, but still, it was the social outrage that moved people. Looking at the Bosnian protests the rebels are the starved, not the enchained and this is what unites these movements.

While Popović shows enthusiasm for the bottom-up movements we have seen recently, he criticizes some implementations of horizontalism as well as the “shallow media-coverage” that helped create some dire misconceptions of these protests:

What is leaderless – not having a charismatic leader or creating a Facebook movement and then saying you had nothing to do with its actions? Before, you needed an organization to get to high numbers [of participants] – that is no longer necessary with the new media but the dangerous things can happen when people, for example, set Tuzla [Bosnia] on fire. There is not a list of demands...all we have is rage and that is a big problem because it is difficult to channel it. Nothing good comes out of rage alone. Movements need to mix rage with hope. Otherwise all you get is destruction.

He warns against media misconceptions that presented these upsurges as spontaneous, instant revolutions greatly aided by technology and practices of occupation, which Popović finds very harmful for the organization of these movements that, in reality, require long and patient planning and organizing:

A lively association of human rights fighters and Muslim Brotherhood had been working on the revolution since 2008 when Mubarak was going to pass his power to his son. We talked to them in 2009 and they thought it was a good moment to react and let the elite know that [Egyptian] people are not sheep you have to look after... plus, the military was against him because of his business cronies etc. This is why it is important to know that Tunis was a spark and not a cause for Cairo because it was going to happen anyway. Tunis just speeded everything up. Since no one did a complete research, then the media painted a wrong picture – as if people occupied a square for long enough, the regime would fall. But it does not work that way! You should never use only one tactic, and besides, an occupation is

the worst one, because you lose numbers easily, you need a lot of people and the enemy has time and all the other conditions on their side (rain, snow, low temperatures...). And it is difficult to keep going. It is an exclusive tactic, not a lot of people can join you all the time. If I have to go to work, that's what I'll be doing, and even if I want to, I cannot leave everything behind and join you at the park. This is where Occupy made a mistake. The nature of nonviolent struggle is to attract people — and people join because they want to be active so you have to find something for everyone, a tactic that can keep many people involved. You need to be creative — to lower the bar so that everyone can join and get away with it — that is very important too, considering how to keep your members safe from repression. It is difficult to keep the momentum going with an occupation because you lose numbers. So your tactics need to be changing and they need to be fun and have 'low participation entry', for example putting stickers everywhere, wearing badges — the tactics that keep your numbers up...you can't focus on the tactics global media is transmitting.

New social movements and their relation with the new media

When talking about new media, Popović recognizes their importance, quoting Dr. Shirky and his three key benefits of the new media: (1) cheaper struggle that requires less time and less people, (2) a possibility to record, and in this way discourage, direct repression, (3) easier trainings for new activists. Popović tells me that in 2009, CANVAS had 17 000 downloads of their booklets from Iran only...

I don't like to say that something is impossible but that it is almost impossible, and it is the future of the organization. If you can train people online, you have greater participation and lower risk. There are no airline fees, no visas to neighboring, more friendly countries, and no one is risking their lives trying to cross a border or smuggle forbidden books into a highly repressive state.

On the other hand, this fast learning, he warns, can be harmful because people simply copy strategies instead of trying to understand the idea of a nonviolent struggle:

I went to talk to some people from Occupy Wall Street (...) and asked them — why occupying a park? The banks love that idea because you're out of their way. Why not answering their business reply mail⁵ with a brick — if 70 000 people sent a brick to a bank, banks would lose more than 70 000 dollars. You need to choose tactics that work well against your [specific] enemy...it would have made the 99% stronger and more people would have joined.

Also, as many others, he agrees with the statement that Facebook and other social networks facilitated police hacking and using social media to target protesters but also facilitated the phenomenon of clicktivism:

⁵ Popović is talking about business reply mail in the United States, which is entirely covered by the sender. These commercial offers are sent to potential clients and the response to this mail is automatically covered by the banks who sent the letters in the first place, should the clients decide to mail their reply. In this way, sending heavy objects would force the banks to lose money covering post fees of this mail.

We all have Kony 2012 T-shirts and we 'liked' so many posts but Kony is still out there in Africa and he is not threatened by our T-shirts in any way. It's good to have the numbers and educate them online but it cannot end online because you will lose the numbers quickly and it will not bring you effective results.

Lessons learned

Apart from these issues, Popović still finds lack of a clear vision the biggest mistake of all recent movements, including Occupy Wall Street, which according to him "couldn't say what kind of America they wanted:"

Is it a consensus until the end? This insisting on a lack of strategy and that everyone has the same right to decide no matter how much they'd put into the movement [doesn't work]. Democracy is great in the decision-making processes [but] in decision-implementation, it turns to anarchy. We cannot all agree on everything. That's not how movements work. How are you going to coordinate 11 000 people with no organization and with people not knowing what you [as a group] want and with that answer depending on what entrance of the park you choose? Slovenians, on the other hand, were very different when it comes to these problems. They had clear ideas: 'we don't want Kangler, we don't want Janša, and Janković is not good either'. Are they happier now than before? I can't tell but they had more chances for success because they had various techniques [organized] on different levels, no top-down organization but there was more organization than in Occupy...they mobilized different groups of people.

In the end, Popović makes his own three points to indicate possible mistakes of these movements: lack of vision, inability to move forward due to their emphasis on consensus, and sticking to one tactic "they saw on television." He does not share a vision of *agora* and collaborative definition of a movement. This is how he elaborates on the problems with occupation as a single technique:

That is a concentration strategy and it doesn't work all the time. Dispersion works better because that is how you use movement's resources better and for longer periods of time. Concentration is your last step. That's the endgame – something you do when everything else is achieved, then you occupy the parliament with two million people⁶, once all pillars of power have been taken down and everyone knows what is going on. You don't occupy and then decide how to proceed. Half of the time you are building, and the other half keeping the momentum going. [Occupy Wall Street] is a historical chance with a lot of people, which failed like Tiananmen. (...) They really had a chance to organize a good movement in America, all they needed to do was to formulate their demands better and move towards negotiation. But there is still a lot of space for protests, they recognized the need for social justice, they just weren't able to do something real with it.

Despite these mistakes, Popović describes the movement as successful since it "opened a dialogue about issues that were not discussed at the time and showed there is space for social justice in developed democracies." Still, he adds, they need to learn about how to organize better:

⁶ He is referring to Otpor and the occupation of Serbian parliament on Oct. 5th, 2000.

We can't all drive the bus at the same time. We need to know who is doing what and even in participative democracy, you need to answer the question when you're asked what you want. What makes a movement? A set of values. You cannot have a successful movement without the planning, the unity and the vision. That is what history teaches us.

The game of sanctions

While most participants of Occupy Wall Street and anti-austerity protests insist on the dual value of horizontalism, understood not only as an instrument of struggle but also a value that helps the group connect and create alternative forms of power, Popović's horizontalism is instrumental. He believes in shifting power to the hands of the people, not in redefining the concept. When talking about assemblies that operate on the basis of consensus and informal gatherings of the most recent movements in the U.S. and Europe, Popović defends the modern notion of representative democracy and underlines the importance of a strategic organization and effective resistance mechanisms. This CANVAS leader doesn't seem to be completely convinced by deliberative democracy or direct action leading to the creation of parallel institutions of power. To my question whether the future still lies in electoral revolutions, he shrugs and adds

The world has not found a replacement for democracy – the one where the majority makes decisions and the minority obeys. It may not be perfect but it's the best one we've got. However, we need to know who is making the decisions on behalf of the citizens and fight against the corruption. When you wake that genie up, it is difficult to keep the people from demanding their rights and controlling every little step their government makes; this is what is going on in Turkey and I am very optimistic about it. (...) If there is a possibility of organizing free elections that would be the best option. If we are talking about Russia, then we probably need to find a different system. But we need to ask ourselves if the values are clear and move from there. For example in South Africa, they almost bankrupted the government to get equal rights. There is a historical example when someone was in a situation similar to yours so you can study what is it that they did and work from there. Indignados got some of it right – taking the money from the two worst banks, fighting capitalism with money, that's where the strategies need to focus. The game of sanctions – can I take away from you more than what you can take away from me? And if you can, you will always win.

Popović's career as a street activist is over and now he focuses on theory and education. However, his activist background needs to be taken into account when considering these remarks since his vast on-the-ground experience, and perhaps even his educational background in natural sciences, leads him to rather practical and very concrete conclusions about how a social movement, or a political movement for that matter, should be framed. He disregards new attempts of redefining the concept of power and creating a system of parallel institutions as something difficult to achieve and not well delineated. However, easily adaptable both to more democratic and open societies as well as authoritarian regimes with higher repression dangers, his ideas amount to a rich practical guide for nonviolent activists as well as researchers. Turning

sophisticated and valuable theoretical lessons into approachable and organized trainings and educational material, CANVAS has contributed to the education and organization of many movements in the past and their booklets still represent useful sources of information for activists around the world. While Popović's approach to deliberative democracy and strictly-horizontal organization represent a part of a debate on most recent social movements, his practical strategy on defeating the enemy with wit and innovation represent an interesting and perhaps useful point of reference for both activists and academics.

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About the author

Gloria Novović is an M.A. student of International Relations at Roma III University in Rome. Her dissertation is focused on anti-austerity and Occupy Wall Street movements and their comparison and collocation in the general context of social movements, as well as their differentiation from those of color or Arab Spring movements. While she is interested in bottom-up and solidarity oriented movements and their relations with the established power-holders, her field research is particularly focused on anti-austerity protests in Slovenia. She can be contacted at [glooriaa AT gmail.com](mailto:glooriaa@gmail.com)

Planetary destruction, ecofeminists and transformative politics in the early 1980s

Benedikte Zitouni¹

Abstract

This paper aims to bring back a piece of history. It tells the story of thousands of women who gathered in peace camps and parades in the early 1980s in order to stake a feminist claim against nuclear warfare and the capitalist economics of destruction. It takes a close look at the first ecofeminist gathering in Amherst (1979) and the ensuing Three Mile Island Parades ('80), Pentagon Actions in Washington DC ('80 & '81) and San Francisco ('81). It also examines women's peace camps, in particular those of Greenham Common near Newbury, England ('81-'87), of Puget Sound, Washington and of Seneca, New York (1983). Rather than arguing the importance of these protests, the paper describes them. The paper draws on the protestors' testimonies using their own published writings and archival data to show how ecofeminism is above all an innovative, transformative and life-affirming way of doing politics. The paper emphasizes emotions, not only of anger and fear but also of joy, and shows how these emotions fueled the protests. It revives the enthusiasm of crowds and small groups resisting together while paying attention to the clever organizing that allowed these women to gather in the first place. In sum, the paper excavates and details the story of the ecofeminist camps and parades so that we may learn from them for political action today.

Keywords

Ecofeminism, activism, peace camps, nuclear power, Cold War, 1980s, ecology, anti-capitalism, anti-patriarchy.

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To affirm life in dark times (a deed rather than a theory)

[W]e are not weak, we are not meek, we are very, very angry people, angry on our own behalf and on behalf of the entire planet Earth. (GTU St 13-15a)

Our success should be measured by whether or not we are stronger when the action is over. (GTU St 16-15a)

The beginning of the 1980s was depressing. Recession hit the West, unemployment was high and national deficits went skyrocketing. Ecological disasters kept piling up: acid rains, massive deforestations, ozone depletion, animal extinctions, industrial wastes and oil leaks had all become part of the big picture, and this only very recently. Moreover, as if the Rome report and the oil crisis of the early seventies hadn't been enough to bring the message home that consumerist progress and Keynesian politics wouldn't hold the key to humanity's salvation, the first signs of the terrible African famines started trickling in. Soon the images of starving Ethiopians and of the hundreds of thousands of hunger dead were on everyone's retina, depressing beyond telling. These were structural problems, most knew. There was a growing sense that the entire system was based on the wrong fundamentals, both ecologically and ethically.

The beginning of the 1980s were also frightening. A new generation of nuclear weapons - NATO's Cruise and Pershing II missiles - was deployed all over Europe (Blackwood 1984, 101, 114-117; Cook & Kirk 1983; Coll 1985, 13-15). Authoritarian and belligerent leadership was proclaimed by the 1979-elected British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and by the 1981-elected American President Ronald Reagan. Nuclear war was no longer presented as a remote risk but was taken on the government's agenda. For instance, in the UK, local councils were drilled and in 1980, the 'Protect and Survive' Campaign instructed each household - through leaflets first, then through radio and television - how to get organized in the event of a nuclear attack: how to whitewash windows, unhinge doors, and retreat in confined spaces with tinned food, a lot of water and a transistor radio, before re-emerging in some post-nuclear wasteland (Cook & Kirk 1983, 21; Roseneil 2000, 40-41).

An activist recalls how she became aware of the nuclear threat: "Rather than making us all sleep easier in our beds, assured that the government had our security interest at heart, 'Protect and Survive' served to bring home how seriously the government was taking the possibility of nuclear war." (Roseneil 2000, 41) At the time, activists also wrote that "National polls show that Americans now believe that a nuclear war will occur within their lifetime. [...] Many of us feel there is little hope that the world will survive into the 21st Century unless there is a drastic reversal of present trends." (White & Van Soest 1984, p. i) Then and now, reporters have stressed the worrisome nature of the eighties' political rhetorics such as "Reagan's announcement that he believes that Armageddon will come in his generation" or his use of *Star Wars*' phrasing

(Blackwood 1984, 41; Kramer 1999).

The beginning of the 1980s were definitely apocalyptic times. Popular culture obsessed about nuclear war. Television drama such as *Threads* or *The War Game*, BBC docudramas on nuclear war and its horrific aftermath, were hardly felt to be science-fiction. Local groups and schools watched *If You Love this Planet*, Helen Caldicott's video on the impact of nuclear war as suffered by Hiroshima and Nagasaki survivors (Cook & Kirk 1983; Giosseffi 1988; Koen & Swaim 1980; Roseneil 2000; White & Van Soest 1984). Other apocalyptic icons of the era include films such as *Mad Max* and *A Day After* - stories of nuclear war and post-apocalyptic times - and protest songs aimed at the Cold War or at nuclear warfare such as Nena's *99 luftballons*, Orchestral Manoeuvre in the Dark's *Enola Gay* and Sting's *Russians*, to mention but few of today's popular reminiscences of the then felt fear. These were dark times. The end of the planet was palpable.

Amidst the threats and fears, because of them, in order to resist the end of the world and start working at civilizational change, i.e. change of the states of minds and ways of doing across the continents, ecofeminism was born. It all started in Amherst, Massachusetts, where a dozen women who called themselves *Women and Life on Earth* convened a meeting which was attended by six hundred women: "Ecofeminism in the Eighties" (Caldecott & Leland 1983, 6). The Three Mile Island nuclear meltdown - the forerunner of the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters - was the trigger. The conference's scope, however, was much larger than that. It was concerned with militarism, nuclear tests, chemical dumping, toxic wastes, industrial food, strained agriculture, selective health care and women's oppression. Unlike many other movements of the time, it presented unusual tools for change including - besides lobbying and factual knowledge-making - collaborative art projects, collective reappraisals of nurturers' values, and expressions of women's experiences as well as mythic story-telling, womanly rituals and earth-based spirituality (Caldecott & Leland, 1983; GTU Sp 1-1a and b).

Some of these tools were enacted during the three-days' meeting. They seem to have been quite successful. A participant reported: "[The art project] was essential, a divergence from the ultra-logocentric dullness of politically-oriented gathering; a validation of the integrity and tenderness women are trying to bring to all the work we do." (GTU Sp 1-1a) Indeed, ecofeminists did not only connect the oppression of women and nature by pointing to the common roots in the logics of capitalism and modern science - which is still a powerful premise (Thompson 2006) - but they also emphasized more joyful and transformative ways of doing politics. They've called it a political "style" (Roseneil 1995, 101; see also Blackwood 1984; Dejanikus & Dawson 1981; Laware 2004; Liddington 1989) which, many of them seem to agree, was "life-affirming" (Cataldo & co. 1987, p. 53; Kirk 1989, 121; see also King 1989; UTA FF 1).

The contents and effects of this "style" is what I would like to investigate further. What kind of politics did the ecofeminists invent? How different were their political ways from other movements? What can we learn from them,

practically, that will help us to shape our states of minds and means of action as we face planetary peril today? In sum, how can we take on their legacy?

Actually, the focus on “style” and the questions on practical legacy already hint at the stance taken by this paper. I am following the approach of two ecofeminists, Ynestra King and Gwyn Kirk, for whom ecofeminism was foremost a means of action, a way of engaging in politics. For them, in order to remain relevant, ecofeminism had to avoid becoming a nicely abstract idea (Kirk 1989, p. 274; Cook & Kirk 1983; King 1983; King 1989). King and Kirk admired the ecofeminist protests of the early 1980s in which they took part. They tried to keep ecofeminism practical even when ecofeminism increasingly became an academic and theoretical endeavor, especially after *Ecofeminist Perspectives* - the seminal conference organized by the University of Southern California in Los Angeles in 1987 (Diamond & Orenstein 1990; Plant 1989). For instance, at the end of the eighties, King and Kirk attempted to establish the *WomanEarth Institute* with other ecofeminists such as Charlene Spretnak and Starhawk, (GTU St 3-13a, 13-15b, 13-21, 14-14). The institute was meant to work as a clearinghouse for women who wanted to go against the destructive nature of patriarchal capitalism by setting up social and ecological projects that fostered self-reliant communities. Such projects included permaculture, squatting empty lots, cleaning toxic dumps, etc. Although it received an enthusiastic response, *WomanEarth*, in part for lack of funds, never got off the ground. To the great regret of its founders.

I think history has proved King and Kirk right. They were right to fear nicely abstract ideas. Today, books on ecofeminism leave us with many moral insights, ethical claims and self-righteous arguments, but with very few tools for actually engaging in our lives and starting to change things. One of the exceptions is Vandana Shiva whose books reveal, and remain connected to, ecological struggles led by women all over the world. But she's quite unique in this. Another exception, of a different kind, are the precursors of ecofeminist literature. Griffin's *Women and Nature*, Daly's *Gyn/ecology* and Merchant's *Death of Nature*, are books that inspired women to act. They were all published at the time of Amherst and they are all now classics (Daly 1978, Griffin 1978, Merchant 1980). Those books avoid ethical claims and self-righteous arguments in favour of stories and history. They present empirical investigations into memory and modern myth-making. They are *part* of the transformative politics because they allow women to draw uncommon practical genealogies and subversive sisterhood alliances.

In other words, the writings of activists, amongst them King and Kirk, and more generally archival research have led me to believe that ecofeminism, perhaps in contrast to other subversive ideologies, doesn't lend itself well to programmatic outlines and theoretical considerations that are merely prescriptive. That it's often weakened by non-empirical ethical papers. Ecofeminism, if we want to take it on, needs description and story-telling.

To offer such detail, I'll describe key ecofeminist actions. I'll tell their story and investigate their life-affirming style. In particular, I'll look at the Three Mile

Island Parades ('80), the Pentagon Actions in Washington DC ('80 & '81), the West Coast Pentagon Action in San Francisco ('81) and the Women's peace camps of Greenham Common near Newbury, England ('81-'87), of Puget Sound, near Kent, Washington ('83) and of Seneca, near Romulus, New York ('83). Although few protesters felt the need to call themselves ecofeminists, they all claimed the crucial role of women and of alternative caring ways of doing politics in order to address the destruction of humanity and the Planet. They wrote letters, visited and traveled from one protest to the other and they proudly commented on these protests as being part of a new movement (Cataldo & co 1987; Coll. 1985; Linton 1989; UTA FF 2; White & Van Soest 1984). Some of them called this movement ecofeminist (Caldecott & Leland 1983; GTU St 13-13b; King 1983); others didn't; but all of them felt they were part of a new beginning.

To sum up: examining the ecofeminist protests of the early 1980s means that I'll dive into the period before ecofeminism grew into an academic and theoretical body, i.e. before *Ecofeminist Perspectives* established ecofeminism for good. In a way, one could say that this paper tries to unearth the roots of ecofeminism when the term stood for political action, but that's too easy. The emphasis rather lies on the powers of life-celebration. Indeed, choosing such an empirical and historical focus means that I'll dive into dark times, when an apocalyptic civilizational mood triggered a lot of fear and also much anger, feelings without which many of these women would not have acted. I'll dive into the protestors' accounts who've told us, then and now, what life celebration meant in face of such darkness and why these actions were, therefore, so special. For, and let's not forget that crucial point, it is the darkness of those times that triggered the life-affirming style of ecofeminist protests.

To enact and dramatize (not a nicety but a necessity)

We must plead, harangue, protest, demand - all kinds of things! [...] make (oh, horrors! oh, embarrassment!) a fuss, then a bigger fuss; then a bigger fuss again. (Carter 1983, 155)

The way we went about it spoke to the word "Future". (Paley 1998[1983], 155)

At the first gathering in Amherst, future actions and strategies were discussed. There was much talk about "creative protests" (GTU Sp 1-1a; Gyorgy 2007) a term which loosely referred to the unusual tactics taken up by anti-nuclear demonstrators such as the Vermont Spinster who had woven a web of life at the gates of the Yankee Nuclear Plant, or Women Strike for Peace who, in the sixties, had sent their baby's teeth to the Senate and circled the Pentagon while chanting their disgust with radioactive politics (Caldecott & Leland 1983; Liddington 1989). It was also quite clear from the outset that the actions and strategies were to involve a large dose of stubbornness, of intractability, of trust

in one's sense of fear and one's emotions for pointing out the political issues. This had been convincingly argued by speakers who had taken part in Women Strike for Peace but also in the ongoing struggle of Love Canal, a struggle involving toxic dumps, miscarriages and the authorities' refusal to relocate the, by then, furious inhabitants (Gibbs 1982; GTU Sp 1-1a; Swerdlow 1993).

To be intractable, fussy and unreasonable, meant that official talk had to be translated into tangible reality: words such as 'cost-benefit ratios' or 'acceptable risks' were to be replaced by material descriptions of deformity, loss and disease (Caldecott and Leland 1983; see also Cook and Kirk 1983; UTA FF 1; Mies and Shiva 1993). It also meant that no expert's contempt would any longer deter any woman from learning her science and, at the same time, from trusting her intuition when she felt that something was going terribly wrong - the Love Canal mothers had taught the ecofeminists that much (Paley 1998[1984]; see also Hamilton 1990). Finally, it meant the refusal of trade-offs. All causes were connected.

One of the most heartening things about the gathering was the assumption that all this was, of course, about a huge transformation. No one was particularly interested in working toward a world free of nuclear reactors but full of violent men; or free of male brutality at the expense of the third world people; or free of racism, but full of the same old poverty and unshared opportunity. (GTU Sp 1-1a)

In other words, at Amherst, the 'governmental' version of reality was countered by a more bodily and connective version of reality. This was well put by the organizers themselves:

We're here to say the word ECOLOGY and announce that for us feminists it's a political word - that it stands against the economics of the destroyers and the pathology of racist hatred. It's a way of being, which understands that there are connections between all living things and that indeed we women are the fact and the flesh of connectedness. (Caldecott & Leland 1983, 6)

It was this other version of reality, this fleshy and ecological way of being, that lent its creative edge to the ecofeminists' protests. The idea was to "speak [our] truth to power", a Quaker slogan which here meant that the protests were to enact ecofeminist practice (Paley, 1998 [1984], 159; Starhawk 1982, 169). And so they did. The parades of the first anniversary of Three Mile Island, just some weeks after Amherst, and the Pentagon Action in November 1980 - both planned for at Amherst - were connective and celebratory.

The Three Mile Island Memorial Parade of San Francisco - the only one I found any trace of - was a street theater performance within which 5,000 participants took part (Starhawk 1982, 169-72). The first act presented survivors of Hiroshima, Native Americans against uranium mining, and mourning women; all chanting and wailing. They were followed by nuclear experts, a life-devouring cooling tower (baby dolls were thrown into it), and a medieval plague cart that called out the future dead. In contrast, the second act was uplifting. It was introduced by a rainbow colored banner with drawings of landscapes and ecological connections. This was followed by contingents of people representing water, air, fire and earth, using puppets and sketches, dragons and goddesses.

At the end of the parade, the cooling tower was destroyed. While some people stomped on the remains, others chanted for a new era to begin.

No speeches were made. Only a booklet with data on nuclear power was handed out. As one organizer recalled: "The Parade was designed to speak the language of things - to convey its message in sensual, creative and funny ways" (Starhawk 1982, 170). A similar approach was used in November when activists at the Pentagon Action purposefully avoided speeches and merely allowed the declamation of a collectively elaborated Unity Statement. Phrasing was dramatic. The women expressed the desperation felt at the bellicose US policies and summoned their Government: "We have come to mourn and rage and defy the Pentagon"! They stated their agony as well as the desires they carried for a better world. But besides that, they hardly spoke. Instead they staged "a two-thousand women theater of sorrow, rage and defiance" (Paley 1998, 127).

First, the women walked silently through the military burying ground, after which, at the Pentagon, they raised a second cemetery for other victims of oppression. All participants could place a tomb stone. One remembered:

The most memorable tombstone was brought by a California housewife who had never been in a political action in her life. She traveled alone from California with her tombstone on which she had written, *'For the three Vietnamese women my son killed'*. (King 1989, 288)

Then, four processions were held, each led by a giant puppet and its corresponding score: a black puppet for mourning, with women keening and wailing; a red one for rage, with women shouting and beating drums; a golden one for empowerment, with women waving scarves and encircling the building; a last one for defiance, with women singing, pushing and weaving the Pentagon doors shut.

The Pentagon Action reverberated. Left and feminist journals discussed the new political aesthetics (Dejanikus & Dawson 1981; Linton & Whitman 1982). Protesters recounted their experience - even of jail (139 women were arrested) - with fondness: "Some of our most moving moments came when we re-energized our group by singing songs of wimmin [sic] love and protest." (Dejanikus & Dawson 1982, 29) Soon, the Unity Statement was translated into Spanish, French, German, Italian and Dutch, attracting many Europeans the next time round (King 1989, 287; Gyorgy 2007). The following year the Pentagon Action doubled its numbers - from 2,000 to 4,000 participants - and was echoed on the West Coast where, the same day, in San Francisco, three hundred women wove a web and placed tombstones at the façade of an exclusive male club that was involved in military decision-making (GTU St 16-15b; Starhawk 1982). There also, the atmosphere was invigorating, remembered a protester: "Chanting and drums created a powerful background to the weaving of the web" (GTU St 16-15b).



West Pentagon Action 1981. Press clipping from It's About Times - Abalone Alliance newspaper, December 1981 - January 1982, p. 14. Source: Graduate Theological Union Archives, Berkeley. Starhawk collection. Box 16 "Political Activism", folder file 15 "Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant Protests 1981 (and other)".

What's the legacy? What's so fascinating? These protests show the powers of enactment. They show that politics can happen through performance and play. Indeed, in all of them, iconography was meant to bring women back to life. Grief and anger, but also elation and thrill, were to invade the public realm "thereby subverting the false tidiness of business as usual" (King 1989). All these emotions were part of the liveliness that was played out in the face of a deadly place. Protestors evolved in a drama where they could bodily, collectively, affirm

their desire for life and confront the darkness of their time. This is to say that life-affirmation was not just a theme. Rather, for these women, it was a necessity. They had to overcome a despair that was overwhelming. As one who'd just been arrested, explained: "It is like living on the edge of a precipice. I feel threatened at a very basic level." (Dejanikus & Dawson 1981, 3). The presence of despair and the need of a vitalist iconography as well as the inkling that resuscitation requires both chanting and raging, both celebration and critique, forged the common ground for all ecofeminist protests of the early eighties. "Fear is the starting point" women said at Greenham (Cook & Kirk 1983, 11). "We confront our fears" said others at Seneca (Cataldo & co. 1987, 65).

This is why, when the media finally covered ecofeminism and benevolently portrayed these activists as cheerful puppeteers and kind goddess-lovers, they couldn't have been more wrong. For they had missed the necessity. "We're here for survival, not the niceties of things!" (GTU St 3-13c) retorted an activist to the press. In other words, ecofeminists used puppets and goddesses as powers of enactment, i.e. in order to help them bring about a change of mind, their change of mind, in a hostile civilizational mood. They were channeling their fears into action, releasing their anger, and thereby performing their own revitalization.

In England, Greenham was no different. The peace camp started from a fit of anger. The woman who was to become the initiator of the march was home, putting newspaper clippings in files but;

That day, after the umpteenth 'Minister rejects inquiry findings' and 'radioactive leak denied' I sort of literally blew a fuse, and I think I started shouting. And I went to the under stairs cupboards and got out these rolls of old white wallpaper and unrolled them along that kitchen floor, got out a black felt tip. I wrote something like 'Nuclear power - poisoning our environment - nuclear weapons - more and more built every year', and something like 'This cannot go on. This must stop' - in great big letters, like a Chinese wall newspaper. And I made several rolls of this. (Ann Pettitt in Liddington 1989, 222)

She then put the banner up at the local shop of her Welsh village and with the shop owner they agreed to call a meeting. The ball started rolling.

From 1981 onwards, in the Women's peace camps, of Greenham Common, Seneca, Puget Sound and others, many more banners were made, puppets were carried, webs woven, keening done, gates shut and fences cut. Women simulated nuclear "die-ins": they fell dead onto nearby streets and obstructed traffic for several minutes. Or, in the manner of collaborative art projects, they transformed the military barriers into memorials for the living by placing belongings of their beloved in the iron mesh, or by weaving colorful landscapes into the mesh. Or they contained the aggression with mirrors, by reflecting the dark mood back into the military bases. Or they organized happy burials of missiles, laundromat sit-ins, etc. The ways of resuscitation were manifold, ... and they were effective.

Many women felt joy at finally cutting through numbness, at not putting up any longer with men's nuclear folly (Cook & Kirk 1983; UTA FF 2). They were invigorated by the powers of theatricality, as one of them - who had been at the

Pentagon and later went to Greenham - testified by telling this anecdote:

A woman walked up carrying a large puppet; an enormous woman's head with long red hair and brightly colored hand-painted robes. 'This is the Goddess,' she said. 'Right,' said [another woman], 'let's walk to Newbury.' We [all] set off, the Goddess in the lead, bright against snow-laden branches and clear sky. (Lynne Jones' anecdote in Liddington 1989, 236)

This is to say that puppets, goddesses, mirrors, and other so-called symbols brought the optimism of action. Women felt joy at getting out of the cerebral realm of words and arguments, and into the more corporeal realm of grief, anger and celebration: "It's a means of expression without words, without having to get tied up in various arguments, facts and figures, whys and wherefores. You can just show how you feel." (Jayne Burton in Cook & Kirk 1983, 65)

To put it concisely, rehearsing the above in just a few words, ecofeminist protests of the early eighties were special because they were places of drama where women could reclaim their sense of joy and hope for the future when all, in fact, seemed lost to them.

Raising womanly powers, or how to undo the nuclear twists of mind

[The dreams] make me feel as if I should be listening to them in some way and I just don't know in what way. (Wendy in Cook & Kirk 1983, 21)

All [our] actions recognize the validity of personal experience, feelings and ideas. They involve starting where we are now and building on what we can do. (Cook & Kirk 1983, 63)

When running through the records, one feature cannot fail to draw the attention: the nuclear flashes and nightmares. Many women who got involved in the life-affirming actions of the early eighties had suffered from daytime flashes and recurring dreams of total annihilation. They had felt either paralyzed or obsessed by them, and at any case ridiculed when voicing their concern to fellow men. More even, some women had started having flashes and nightmares when they became pregnant - incidentally, this launched the group *Babies against the Bomb* (Cook & Kirk 1983, 44). A Greenham woman confirmed: "This sounds exaggerated; it is only as exaggerated as th[is] imag[e]: a mother crying alone in a room because she is suddenly intensely aware that she might not be able to protect her child from a hideous nuclear death" (Liz Knight in Cook & Kirk 1983, 86). And this image draws from many wells at once, of zeitgeist darkness of course, but also of housewife-blues and motherly worry. This is to say that the motives of ecofeminist protests also laid in - at the time - mostly womanly concerns of care, fostering and emancipation.

Greenham Common started in motherly fussy fashion. Late summer 1981, some thirty women who called themselves *Women for Life on Earth* (Caldecott & Leland 1983, 6-7; Cook & Kirk 1983, 84; GA DWLE 8; Liddington 1989, 226; Spretnak 1991) - soon to merge with the American-English network *Women and Life on Earth* (GA DWLE 5-2) - walked, with children and strollers and a handful of male supporters, for nine days from Cardiff to Newbury to protest against nuclear war. They took the lead from the other, more attended, peace march that had gone from Copenhagen to Paris that same year. They handed out leaflets and made speeches. Their rallying cry caught local attention: "Women invest their work in people - and feel a special responsibility to offer them a future - not a wasteland of a world and a lingering death!" (Roseneil 2000, 44-5; see also GA DWLE 1-92) But the national press didn't cover the march, not even as it arrived. Some women, inspired by the suffragettes, then decided to chain themselves to the fence of the military base and demanded an interview with the State Secretary of Defense. When the latter failed to arrive, the women stayed.

What was meant to be a short-lived march became the mother of all peace camps. Greenham Common inspired people all over Europe and the US to raise dozens of camps (Cook & Kirk 1983, 33; Kirk 1989, 276). It remained large until the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987 and then continued with fewer campers until the base of Newbury was finally dismantled in 2000 (Cox 2000; Laware 2000). Of course, the longevity of the camp cannot be attributed to the initial WLOE only. Word had spread quickly. The hikers had been joined by many other women, some of whom had been at the Pentagon Action, others who had been part of the peace movement and others still who - without previous political experience - had felt attracted by the commonsensical, motherly and rebellious nature of the camp (Cook & Kirk 1983; Kirk 1989b; Liddington 1989, 219). Participants themselves said that their different horizons met by ways of "gut reactions" (Lesley Boulton in Cook and Kirk 1983, 84). These women shared a sense of foreboding. Ecological devastation, social injustice and warfare, just to name their prime concerns, worried and angered them greatly. They had no ready-made answers, but they knew two things.



March to Greenham 1981. Photo. Source: Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff. Women for life on earth records, 1981-2002. Photographs of the march from Cardiff to Greenham Common, and of marchers at Greenham Common. DWLE/7/22. Copyright owner unknown.

First, women of Greenham, Seneca, Puget and other camps, knew that change had to involve the entire system and that it could happen by fostering powers of care, regeneration and nurture. As one explained, when stating her reasons for being at the camp: “[Before coming] I sensed this sick mentality all around me that was motivated not by the sacredness of life but by fear that was feeding the arms race.” (Sarah van Veen in Cook & Kirk 1983, 29) Secondly, these women knew that other ways of doing politics were required, ways that were more attentive to the involvement of small groups, to the stimulation of local initiatives, to letting everyone take the floor and to accounting for women’s experiences. This is why camps put up deliberative methods, rotating leadership structures and “feeling checks”. Fears and hopes were shared. So too were flashes, nightmares and obsessions. One such nightmare, recorded in a camp’s logbook, is intriguing:

I was in a jeep driving through a very wasted landscape. It looked like a desert but I knew it was a long time after a nuclear war. I was going away from one area to somewhere safer. [...] There was some trouble with the jeep, and it seemed fairly unlikely that we would get to our destination [...] My friend was driving, and I was holding between my knees a giant piece of ice. Inside the block there was a fish, and this was the last fish, which I had to get to London, which was the last place where there was still some clean water where the fish could survive. [...] The heat from the engine was starting to melt the ice, and I had to keep shifting it, and try to steer by non-existent stars. When I woke up - still on the journey - I felt quite calm. Noa. (Cook & Kirk 1983, 17).

There’s a good chance that Noa felt calm *because* she was at the camp, actually doing something about the nuclear problem. In more general terms, women’s camps undid the nuclear twists of mind. The camps loosened fear’s grip. They broke the apocalyptic spell. This is one of the big achievements of the ecofeminist protests of the early eighties: women got out of the end-of-time paralysis; they stopped running against time and started working at change for the long run.

How did they do this? How did they break the spell? It’s hard to tell, as collective causality meanders, but the rituals definitely played a major role. Indeed, at the camps, all kinds of rituals were set up, all meant to raise constructive womanly powers against the powers of planetary destruction. This was no easy feat. Rituals are demanding. They require a consecrated place, a cosmology and a community of their own, if not authentic ones, at least effective ones. Only when those requisites were met, could the rituals truly take hold and the spell be broken.

The requisites’ value was well understood by the Seneca women. In the summer of 1983, following Greenham Common, they opened the camp with these words: “We pledge allegiance to the earth, And to the life which she provides, One planet interconnected, With beauty and peace for all.” (Cataldo & co. 1987, 21). They then reclaimed the land around the nuclear arms depot by planting rose bushes and by decorating the fence with tokens of life’s beauty. Last, they

declared their connection to the Iroquois women who in 1590 had assembled in Seneca Falls in order to stop warfare, and to the women of the Declaration of Sentiments who in 1848 had gathered there to demand equal rights and the end of slavery. The camp's song said no different: "We are the old wimmyn, We are the new wimmyn, We are the same wimmyn, Stronger than before." (Linton 1989, 242) As one participant and former organizer of Amherst recalled: the camp was, from the start, embedded in "Herstory" (Paley 1998[1983], 149).

The same was true for other camps. At Greenham Common, women took much time and effort to construct collective pasts (Roseneil 2000, 13-37). The suffragettes were often called upon. Woolf's *Three Guineas* - a 1938 feminist essay on women facing the upcoming World War II - allowed for further connections between the young and the old. Many campers also read feminist historical accounts such as Daly's *Gyn/ecology* or Eihrenreich and English's *Witches, Midwives and Nurses*. Through this, they connected to the Diggers of the 17th Century - agrarian communists before their time - and to the prosecuted witches of Early Modern Europe. This, in turn, led them to take interest in pagan earth-based religions. And let's not forget that the Greenham women had socialist and Marxist roots too; that they explicitly linked their struggle to the civil rights movement, the gay movement and the women's liberation front, amongst others. Their genealogies were plural. Women's camps were multi-faceted. And this was not considered a flaw.

In making pledges, consecrating spaces and telling stories, women didn't aim at taking a univocal stance but they aimed at sustaining the camps. They opened up another civilizational time-frame, away from the planetary apocalypse and into *herstory* or history-making. As one put it: "We cannot alter the course of the world if we are paralyzed by fear." (Julia Park in Coll. 1985, 112) In such a civilizational time-frame, all kinds of rituals could then be held. Pagan and seasonal celebrations, witches' and dead's commemorations, women blockades and lesbian rallies, spiral dances and chain-making, Halloween and 4th of July parties, night-watches and anger rites, ... all fitted in, and all raised womanly powers. As a camper said about the Puget women stomping their feet and dancing circles until one of Reagan's Seattle meetings was over: "The energy we raise is phenomenal" (Cynthia Nelson in Coll. 1985, 79; see also GTU St 14-31)

Many rituals could be described that way. But two stand out. Two raised powers so phenomenal that they gained world-wide acclaim. Both happened at Greenham Common during the winter of 1982-'83. One is known as "Embrace the Base"; the other as "Silo Dance".

On December 12th 1982, 30.000 women encircled the base's nine miles' perimeter. They decorated the fence with belongings of the living, of children and grandchildren, and, at set times, while holding hands, sang songs which they had learned by heart. "It felt like a reclamation of life." (Liz Knight in Cook & Kirk 1983, 86) Another woman recalled how the ritual went beyond the given:

I'll never forget that feeling; it'll live with me for ever. The lovely feeling of pinning the things on; and the feeling, as we walked around, and we clasped hands. It was even better than holding your baby for the first time, after giving

birth - and that is one of the loveliest feelings you can ever have. When your babe's put in your arms and you give it a cuddle. Because that is a self-thing - selfish thing really, between you and your husband, isn't it? The baby. Whereas Greenham - it was for women; it was for peace; it was for the world; it was for Britain; it was for us; it was for more. (Mary Brewer in Liddington 1989, 244).



Embrace the Base 1982. Postcard with printing: "USAF Greenham Common, 12 December 1982. Photo (c) John Sturrock/ Network. ACME Cards".

Source: Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff. Women for life on earth records, 1981-2002, Correspondence, draft articles, and news-cuttings relating to activities at Greenham Common peace camp 1982-1984. DWLE/6/10. With permission from John Sturrock.

Three weeks later, on New Year's Eve, at midnight, forty-four women climbed onto a missiles-sheltering silo. They danced for more than an hour. Police was slow to react and the secretly invited press had plenty of time to take pictures. Those pictures went around the world. People were impressed. Women had dared to challenge the military power in what seemed an almost suicidal act at the time. One recalled:

"In my mind I saw [the silos] as revolting man-made boils on the earth's surface, full of evil. I wanted to let out the feelings I have about the threat of nuclear war - the fear and the dread. And I wanted to concentrate on the future, to feel optimistic and get strength and hope that we can stop it. I kept thinking about celebrating life. What actually happened was that I did just that. When we got on the silos, even though we were so excited, I stood quietly for a few minutes, with

my eyes closed, and let it all drain out of me. After that I just kept thinking about being alive!"(Juliet Nelson in Cook & Kirk 1983, 54-55)

Greenham women and other campers made history. Thatcher cursed them many times over. Gorbachev hailed their influence. They strained international relations when some of them even visited the USSR. They had succeeded in being a nuisance. In the UK, after the Newbury base was dismantled, land was returned to the commons - a rare victory indeed. In the US, the anti-nuclear protests - of which some were ecofeminist - that followed the Three Miles Island meltdown led the country to stop building domestic nuclear plants for many years. In retrospect, it seems that these victories are based on the understanding that extraordinary times call for extraordinary means, rituals included, and that the end of time has to be replaced by the long run. As one ecofeminist stated: "We need no new [post-apocalyptic] heaven and Earth. We have this Earth, this sky, this water, to renew." (Keller 1990, 263)

To sum up: the ecofeminist protests of the early eighties were places of tales and rituals where women gained a sense of power, where they knew that they could and would make a difference.

Leaps of faith and tiny circles, or why the women kept coming (back)

"[F]or those of us who are trying to create these new politics, it is like a continual seeking of grace" (King 1989, 282).

"I'm looking for a group of people ready to jump into the void, into the unknown, to struggle for new ways to create reality, to be in the universe" (GTU St 3-13d)

It should be clear by now that the ecofeminist protestors of the early '80s were not martyrs, nor fools. They didn't sacrifice themselves but got joy and power. They countered the real possibility of planetary warfare and helped slacken the grip of nuclear energy. Their camps and parades should therefore, at the very least, be defined as a meeting-place of Cassandra's (while not forgetting that the mythical Cassandra was right!) Protestors connected because they felt relief at finally being understood. A woman conveyed this feeling quite well as she recalled her arrival at the camp:

Just talking to women that day and listening to the way they talked, I understood it because they were talking with the same passion that I was feeling, and nobody had understood it where I had been for the last nine months. They just understood it, and you weren't considered a lunatic if you gave voice to the despair that you were feeling. And women said, yeah, I know what that feels like. And that was such a relief. And things were never the same again. (Simone in Roseneil 2000, 57; see also GTU St 5-8)

Furthermore, camps and parades should be defined as places of "self-transformation" (Roseneil 2000, 55). Most women participated because it

changed them. They came back, over and over, not only to stop worldwide destruction but also to keep getting more confident. They felt stronger as they got to know and appreciate other women more. This is to say that lesbian politics and womanly love had a great impact (Krasniewicz 1992; Roseneil 1995; Roseneil 2000). Protestors reclaimed a transformed - sometimes ritually liberated - sense of sensual self. About a spiral dance performed in jail after one of the anti-nuclear Diablo Canyon Blockades in 1981, Starhawk says: "We dance, because this is, after all, what we are fighting for: this life, these bodies, breasts, wombs, this smell of flesh; this joy; this freedom - that it continue, that it prevail." (Starhawk 1982, 153). In other words, following King's and Kirk's conclusions, the ecofeminist protests of the early eighties were part of a new "transformative politics" (Kirk 1989b, 274), a "libidinal politics" (King 1989, 282).

These observations bring us back to the beginning of the paper, to the bodily and connective version of reality, to the fleshy and ecological ways of being, all claimed at Amherst. But the circle isn't closed yet. One element is missing: how was it possible? How was it possible for 30.000 women to embrace a base? For thousands to stage plays? For hundreds to stay at camps when they had lives to tend to? The easy answer is to list demographical facts: many protestors were either retired or jobless, or students with long breaks, or housewives who could shortly be missed at home, or mothers who brought their children along for the holidays. The dynamic answer, then, is that action is forever relayed. Degrees of involvement varied greatly, from writing an elaborate statement to placing a cardboard tombstone at the Pentagon, from walking nine days to giving shelter at one of the stops to Newbury, from filling logbooks to organizing full-fledged rituals, etc. The effort was spread over a crowd, and the crowd was never exactly the same.

Still, the answer eludes us. How did women get involved and actually start changing their lives? We must look at the connective media such as chain-letters, address books and press releases, and the simple call carried by these tools. For instance, one of the teenage founders of Greenham got involved after reading an advert in the *Cosmopolitan*: all that was asked of her was that she should walk with others who, like her, were fed up with the arms' race and the violent ways of society (GA DWLE 8-7). The same happened for "Embrace the Base" which resulted from a chain-letter sent by Women For Life on Earth, just some weeks before, that in substance said this: "Believe it will work and it will" (Cook & Kirk 1983, 107). At Puget, they found another formula for it: "We don't have options in how we live our lives until we behave like we do." (Coll. 1985, 86) In other words, women were not shy in circulating information widely, in calling for simple things, on modest common ground, and in inviting others to join them in a leap of faith.

Such leaping calls raised the prospect, not of endless meetings, polemical debates and membership dilemmas, but of action there and then. They allowed for easy involvement: women didn't need legitimacy other than wanting to do something about the darkness of their time; they didn't need more common

ground other than believing that nurturing, non-violent and caring ways made sense in such a time. There were many easy beginnings. Many women responded gladly to such straightforward invitations.

But there's more. The records also testify to responses made by affinity groups, i.e. small, local and non-hierarchical groups that meet regularly in order to plan action together (Cataldo et al., 1987, 65). These groups had various purposes of their own and were, in their turn, often triggered by simple calls. Just to name a few who took part in Greenham Common: *Babies against the Bomb* was raised by a woman who placed an advert in a newsagent's window asking for others to contact her if they also dreaded the arms' race; *Isle of Wight Women* was initially a branch of the National Housewives Register who organised discussions at home to keep updated and involved in societal matters (they became very involved indeed after inviting over a nuclear expert who blatantly lied to them!); *Chester Women for Peace* was born from an invitation of one mother to others, of the same school and neighborhood, in order to discuss their children's future; other groups were established in living-rooms or local clubs after seeing Caldicott's video; etc (Cook & Kirk 1983, 44, 99). In other words, the effort was spread over a crowd, and that crowd had many tiny crowds in it.

Affinity groups, as Liddington argues, were crucial to the success of camps and parades. They prepared the ground. Not only did they pre-exist but they offered ways of organizing protest. This organizational element will round off the answer given to the question of "how this was possible". It will complete the picture of how such exceptional protests were *made* possible.

Affinity groups were a legacy of the 1970s. In Britain, they were bequeathed by the women's movement who had advocated "small women-only consciousness-raising groups [that stood] in stark contrast to the formal structures of the political parties" (Liddington 1989, 198). In the US, they were bequeathed by the civil disobedience movement and, as a working method, had been adopted by peace groups, self-help groups, anti-nuclear groups, environmental groups, etc., ultimately becoming a favored means of organizing action in democratic fashion. By the early 1980s, affinity groups were available as a model for women who wanted to organize, to set out and to go about their protests.

For instance, the *Unity Statement*, or Pentagon call, was written collaboratively (King 1989, 287; Paley 1998, 127). For weeks, at meetings that were held in person or by phone, the text kept changing. Penholder and Amherst-organizer Grace Paley submitted dozens of versions to women who, for most, lived on the northern East Coast. Many women belonged to political organizations, often competing ones, but as a writing-group through collaborating they were able to shape a new coherence. Or stated inversely, all of their presences were required in order to tackle the several issues at stake: connections were made between ecology, patriarchy, militarism and racism while the group saw to it that the understanding of the connections kept its feminist groundings; the traditional lives and work of women was valued while drawing on feminist analysis and politics for doing so. The result was spectacular. As a reporter at the Pentagon observed, after talking to the protestors; "Many women said how the Statement

had inspired them to join the Action. “*It was like a light bulb flashing on.*”
(Dejanikus & Dawson 1981, 3)

Already existing or ad hoc affinity groups were useful at the Seneca Peace Camp too. Seneca was to be a place of “ongoing protest” (Linton 1989, 248). General meetings planned regular activities, such as workshops, and one-time activities, such as rituals or blockades, for the entire camp to take part in. Affinity groups facilitated the success of these activities. For example, during blockades, the groups split into activists and supporters: activists blockaded while supporters kept the cause before the media, handled contacts with police and lawyers and, in case of detainment, kept the activists’ homes and jobs running (Cook & Kirk 1983, 46; GTU 14-31, ii, 20). The rest of the camp life, beyond the general meeting’s purview, was left to the full initiative of the groups. “Part of the plan was to provide time and space for the unplanned.” (Linton 1989, 248) Lots of actions, more or less spontaneous, were taken by sometimes tiny groups: painting the tarmac, talking to passers-by, learning defense techniques, facing the military, etc. Together, all these actions turned the camp into a worthwhile experience.

Two letters testify to the importance of the affinity group. One is of a Seneca protestor, the other of a Puget Sound protestor, a camp which was similarly run by affinity groups:

I just came back from the [camp] over the weekend and am still feeling strong. I wanted to write just to let you know about my feelings about the future of the camp. I am 33, married 12 years, 3 kids, have been a feminist for 8 years. I came to the encampment with that background. I came home loving women, alienated from the culture in which I exist, empowered, depressed, struggling. Re-entry into my previous life is impossible so I struggle to find my own culture. It has been painful, lonely and strangely challenging. I have a close group of women friends, many of whom went to camp also this summer. My affinity group. They are my survival, my hope. (Krasniewicz 1992, 230).

I want to thank you all for all the spirituality I experienced here - positive energy, visualization. [...] I got burned out with my peace-work in Germany. We always ‘organize’ and ‘refuse’ and ‘resist’ and ... IT’S EXHAUSTING! With your ‘living community’ all these ‘little’ things are so important! The hugs, sharing, the tears, the conflicts, circles, check-ins... I found my way back to my roots, to my positive energy - to our positive energy, to our roots. I absorbed it deeply! And I don’t know how to bring it back to my country, back in my everyday life. I hope that I have it in me, and I can call it by circles, check-ins... with my people at home! (Sonja in Coll. 1985, 51).



Greenham women climbing fence. Photo. Source: Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff. Women's archives of Wales. Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp Jill Stallard Papers. DWAW 13/04/02. Copyright owner unknown.

How difficult it was for women to leave the camps and return home isn't an issue for this paper. Suffice to say that a recent website into the lives and memories of Greenham Women suggests that these women did take it home and that they didn't forsake their camp experience (www.yourgreenham.co.uk). But what needs to be emphasized is that all the ecofeminist protests of the early eighties, camps and parades alike, were run by big, small and sometimes tiny circles. All relied on affinity groups which, without exaggeration, can be said to have provided the liveliness that was so typical of the early 1980s ecofeminist protests. Affinity groups kept the optimism of action going. They punctuated each action with a shared sense of, at least partial, accomplishment. This is probably why, as a practical support group, because effectiveness was part of the deal, they were able to avoid the typical activists' burn-out. And there's more.

The affinity groups cracked the holster of the nuclear family and provided close-knit of another, perhaps more existential, at least more worldly, kind. In and through the affinity groups, women did not only connect to other women, but they also connected to a larger movement. The visitors from other camps and protests, the media and letters of support or criticism reminded them of this. Perhaps, this is what can be called grace: a sense of connection to a changing world. Perhaps this is why women kept coming back, over and over again. They had found some part of politics, a graceful part, that they didn't want to let go of.

To draw a conclusion, then, ecofeminist protests of the early eighties are fascinating because they were places of self-transformation that understood the self to be an extension of the others, an expansion of the world and its changes. They can teach us many things, all connected to life-affirming politics: the importance of joy and power, of play and rituals, of existential close-knit and reclaiming the long run. They can also teach us to be wary of essentialist accusations. Any facet of our experience - that of motherhood, of housewife, or other - can be reconstructed and expanded in formidable ways. What of herstories, carer's revolts?! If this paper ended with an organizational element, it's not for the sake of managing revolt but for the sake of allowing us to grasp what it could mean to prepare the ground. Then. Now. The daily workings, the tiny groups, are part of what we can pay attention to if we want to start being, becoming, receptive to simple calls.

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Anxiety, affective struggle, and precarity consciousness-raising

The Institute for Precarious Consciousness

Abstract

This article theorises the affective structure of neoliberal capitalism as involving a dominant reactive affect of anxiety. This differentiates neoliberalism from earlier periods, based on the dominant reactive affects of misery and boredom. Anxiety is theorised as an effect of social mechanisms, including precarity. It is suggested that current social movement strategies and pedagogical approaches are inadequate to respond to this context, as they are designed mainly to combat earlier forms of reactive affect. A method of precarity consciousness-raising is theorised as a means to overcome the political disempowerment caused by anxiety, and create a machine for fighting anxiety. The later parts of the article explore the affective and discursive effects involved in feminist consciousness-raising, and explore the possibility for using this approach as a model for a similar response to precarity and anxiety.

Keywords

Precariousness, consciousness raising, feminist practice, anxiety, emotions, resilience, Deleuze, neoliberalism

Introduction

This article will advance a possible pedagogical approach to revitalise movements of resistance, particularly in the global North. The article works from an assumption that Northern activism is in crisis. Anecdotally, evidence suggests that activists, at least in the UK, are suffering widespread disarray, trauma and burnout. This is both compounded by and contributing to a lack of numbers at major mobilisations. However, the point is not only to increase the effectiveness of existing forms of activism. It is also to extend transformation into the politics of everyday life. The basic hypothesis of this article is that there is an emergent disconnection between the focus of activism and the current structure of oppression in everyday life, which is at the heart of current problems. The article has two sections. Firstly, it expounds a theory that activism in each conjuncture is a machine for promoting active force by defeating the dominant reactive affect. It is suggested that a change in the dominant reactive affect is impeding activism. Secondly, the model of feminist consciousness-raising will be explored as providing an alternative which could also be applied to the dominant reactive affect today.

Active and reactive force

A first central claim here is that affect (feeling, emotion, and existential orientation) is crucial to activism. This is not a particularly contentious claim, although it runs against the mainstream of social movement studies. Studies suggest that the underpinnings of activism are partly affective. Autonomous movements have cohered around communities of action which provide emotional 'highs' of excitement and conflict (Peterson, 2001; Juris, 2008; Karatzogianni, 2012). Activist Pauline Bradley, for example, describes a social struggle as 'better than Prozac', 'emotionally momentous' and able to bring about life-changes which drugs, labels and hospitalisation could not (Bradley, 1997). However, the state seems to have undermined these emotionally reinforcing effects of activism by making the experience of protest feel increasingly disempowering and traumatic. This article will deploy a Deleuzian approach to affect (in which affects of active becoming are contrasted with those of reactive blockage), to understand transformations in the dominant regime and theorise the next step for activism.

Autonomous action has its roots in active force. This can be seen across a range of radical theories. For instance, Marx wrote of the goal of liberation as 'the fulfilment of the personality... governed by immediate enjoyment and personal needs' (Marx, 1975: 269). Revolutionaries in many traditions have similarly called for a return to immediacy and intensity (e.g. Vaneigem, 1967: 236; Faun, 1999; Bey, 1994). Where active force is the driving force, subjects arrive immanently at dissident positions. Reactive force, in contrast, has its origins in statism and capitalism (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984: 214-17). It aims to make social space 'neat and orderly' (Perez, 18-19), creating governable subjects conducive to top-down quantification and control (Escobar, 2001: 133-4), and providing the work-discipline and speed which capitalism demands (Berardi, 2009: 43). It relies on bodily, emotional and sexual repression (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984: 350-1) and operates 'through a restriction, a blockage, a reduction' (1984: 293). When reactive force is prominent in the social field, impasses of social movements begin to appear.

Reactive force should be theorised in continuity with alienation and decomposition. Ultimately, reactive force is active force turned against itself, through being disempowered and segmented (Deleuze, 2006: 57). Processes of alienation convert active into reactive force, attacking the field of abundance and creating a situation of scarcity (Baudrillard, 1975: 58; Guattari, 1996: 89-90). Hence one ends up with a world which denies life, but keeps 'force-feeding survival to saturation-point' (Vaneigem, 1967: 98). Scarcity has to be continually reproduced, as all systems tend back to abundance, requiring new ways to eat up the surplus (Savage, n.d.). The system also has to carry out a continual work of decomposition or anti-production, to keep connections inactive and forces blocked, enclosing new 'commons' as they appear and 'disjunct[ing]' workers and consumers from one another (Guattari, 1984: 20). In reactive systems, active forces are trapped so as to prevent their flourishing, budding, or connecting to one another.

This antagonism of social forces is central to most radical perspectives in one way or another. We can think of active and reactive force as social and political principles (Kropotkin, 1896), affinity and hegemony (Day, 2005), constitutive and constituted power (Negri, 1999), power-to and power-over (Holloway, 2002), instituting and instituted imaginaries (Castoriadis, 1998), in the Marxist terms of labour and its alienation, the eco-anarchist terms of wildness (abundance) and civilisation (scarcity), the poststructuralist terms of productive textuality and the closed text, or even the Buddhist and Taoist terms of life-energy and its illusory forms. Readers are invited to read this article through their own theoretical reference-points, seeing how the same structural forces can be conceived in various different perspectives.

So why are reactive forces prevalent today? To answer this question, the mutations of active and reactive force need to be studied. This paper theorises that each phase of capitalism has a *dominant reactive affect*, which is particularly induced by its dominant forms of power (at least in the core regions). In the nineteenth century, the dominant reactive affect was *misery*; in the Fordist period, *boredom*; in the neoliberal period, *anxiety*. Each dominant reactive affect persists only for as long as effective resistances to it have not been formulated. Each phase personalises the dominant reactive affect, blaming the oppressed for their oppression. This is reinforced by social isolation, and by systems of distraction (self-help, consumerism, the 'emotional orgy', and so on). Each dominant reactive affect is a *public secret*, in the Situationist sense (also known as a sanctioned ignorance in Spivak [1999], a social symptom in Žižek [1999: 138-40], and a culture of silence or submersion in Freire [1970]). A public secret is something which is generally visible, which is either known or so visible that it appears it should be known, but which is not discussed or declared – like the Emperor's nakedness or the elephant in the living room.

The theory of dominant reactive affects is partly conceived as an alternative to theories which celebrate the rise of immaterial labour as a path to eventual liberation through the unleashing of human creative power (e.g. Virno, 2004; Hardt and Negri, 2000; Holmes, 2004). Such theories are limited in assuming that capitalism releases human creative potential, and that the main problem is the privatisation of its product. This paper suggests that capitalism *does not* release human creativity in these new forms, but traps it in anxiety through the compulsion to communicate and the management of performance (with "communication" here conceived in terms of artificial social performances within the dominant system's terms – what Crisso and Odoteo [n.d.] term 'conjugating the imperial verb'). Alienation is *internal* to the functioning of immaterial capitalism, not simply exploitation of its production (c.f. Dyer-Witford, 2005; Federici, 2006). The resultant political strategy seeks to resist these new forms of power. It is similar to the autonomist theory in which social movement crises follow from altered social compositions which interfere with effectiveness (Malo, 2004).

Boredom and Fordism

The “first wave”, or “old” social movements, were directed against a context in which misery was the dominant reactive affect. Concealed by capitalism, this misery was revealed by theorists such as Marx (1867: Chapter 25), who saw immiseration as central to the proletarian experience. The movements of this era were a *machine for fighting misery*, through wage and welfare struggles and mutual aid. The defeat of misery by the first wave of social movements caused capital to switch to a new strategy based on boredom. Fordism, based on secure, decently paid but monotonous work, created an experience of a “flat” world with no outside (Marcuse, 1964). While it was unavailable to everyone, the “B-worker deal” of boredom for security (P.M., 1983: 10-27) underpinned this phase. Crucially, boredom was a public secret in this period, and was not recognised as a problem except by radical theorists (c.f. Adorno, 1974: 207, 1991: 207; Benjamin, 1999: 101-4). It was only in the 1960s that discourses emerged which showed the public secret. The inadequacy of existing social movements tactics (such as forming Leninist parties, staging A-to-B marches, and calling public meetings) – sometimes denounced as “boring” or simply recuperated – is linked to their operation mainly as machines against misery.

For instance, the Situationists advanced the claim that '[w]e do not want a world in which the guarantee that we will not die of starvation is bought by accepting the risk of dying of boredom' (Vaneigem, 1967: 18). In feminist theory, Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* revealed the existential root of feelings of malaise and depression among housewives: 'I do not accept the answer that there is no problem... it cannot be understood in terms of age-old problems of... poverty, sickness, hunger, cold. The women who suffer this problem have a hunger that food cannot fill' (Friedan, 1963: 37). In its context, feminist consciousness-raising served to challenge the public secret of boredom. In many ways, it can be seen as one of a series of similar approaches – Freirean critical pedagogy, militant inquiry, Theatre of the Oppressed, Situationism, the mass line, autonomist practices of 'slacking off' or 'dropping out' (Shukaitis, 2006), high-risk protest repertoires (Peterson, 2001: chapter 2) – which similarly articulated grievances based on the blockages of the era. Autonomists have analysed such processes as a general exodus from the dominant forms of (boring) work and social roles (Brophy and de Peuter, 2007: 180-1). Most of today's tactics (for example, sit-downs, sit-ins, carnivalesque protest, Black Blocs, protest camps) come from this era, and can be seen as a *machine for fighting boredom*.

While this resistance to Fordism partly succeeded, capitalism has recomposed with an altered affective structure, chasing the exodus¹ by subsuming the social field (Tsianos and Papadopoulos, 2006; Lorey, 2010; Mitropoulos, 2005; Neilson and Rossiter, n.d.; Federici, 2006; Frassanito Network, 2005). In other words, capitalism has either taken away the extra-work spaces to which the exodus fled, or enclosed and recuperated them as sources of value. At the same

¹ Exodus is a type of resistance characterised by fleeing or escaping those spaces which are controlled by capital or the state – for example, work refusal, squatting, dropping-out, and creating countercultural spaces such as free festivals and social centres.

time, as Dirlik (1994) argues, the 1960s wave has been partially recuperated through practices such as flattened hierarchies and niche markets. Hence, a new wave of tactics and strategies is needed. The idea of three dominant reactive affects parallels Day's three-way split into old, new and newest social movements (Day, 2005), with the newest paralleling the movements elsewhere termed autonomous (Zibechi, 2010; Katsiaficas, 2007). I would suggest that existing autonomous movements are in many ways the interregnum between the anti-boredom wave and an emergent machine for fighting anxiety. Movements from the 1980s onwards are faced with the new, neoliberal composition of reactive affect, but this composition has only gained coherence over time. Movements from the 1980s to the present day continue to use many of the modalities of the 1960s-70s wave, which have remained effective against the residues of Fordism which have only gradually been demolished, while also beginning to develop challenges to the neoliberal composition of affect.

Anxiety as the dominant reactive affect of precarious neoliberal capitalism

This paper hypothesises that there is now a dominant reactive affect of anxiety, which also corresponds to a public secret (and corresponding personalisation) of anxiety and over-stress. This is prefigured by previous accounts. The Invisible Committee suggest that we are kept in a 'chronic state of near-collapse' which is a public secret (2009: 31), while Berardi suggests that multiple anxieties are fuelling a 'global panic' (2009: 43). Crucially, anxiety is *generalised* – even to the excluded and self-excluded. This weakens the strategies of exodus which undermined the regime of boredom. McMarvill and Los Ricos (n.d.) astutely analyse the three kinds of anxiety: for the included, fear of loss of status; for the marginal, fear of exclusion and loss of subsistence; for the autonomous and excluded, fear of state violence and repression. The situation creates a feeling of powerlessness, when people are not in fact powerless. Studies of unemployed youths suggest that they are often hopeless both about getting work and rebelling; the desire for 'something more' has been corroded (Berardi, 2009). Hence, it can be concluded that anxiety and resultant feelings of powerlessness contain resistance to capitalism.

Anxiety is not a new affect within capitalism. For instance, Wilhelm Reich theorises anxiety as a result of conflict between the libido (or active force) and the outer world, and as the source of character-armour and reactive formations (Reich, 1980: 48, 342, 347; Brinton, 1972: 29). It has been argued that such anxiety now invests the whole of the social and emotional field, rather than being concentrated mainly on sexuality (Karatzogianni and Robinson, 2010: 41). There are various mechanisms for inducing anxiety. Firstly, people are compelled to communicate, or commanded to be communicable and 'networked' within neoliberal systems (Lazzarato, 1996; c.f. Berardi, 2009: 108-12). In fact this requires that people be communicable on dominant terms. Reactive force in neoliberalism functions through an *obligation to be communicable*, distinct from the prohibition on speaking of the earlier period.

However, it permits communication only along systemically mediated paths. The threat facing the incommunicable is systematic exclusion, or the destruction of social connections. This process is often reinforced by performance management mechanisms which keep people constantly running on the spot, so as to meet performance targets which are often unrealistic or require excessive labour. The subjective internalisation of these mechanisms leads to self-surveillance and an association of the self with quality metrics. Required performances of subjectivity also produce a constant veneer of artificiality.

Another set of mechanisms arise from 'telepresence' (Virilio, 1994), or the immediate presence of different spaces to one another. Telepresence causes generalised vulnerability to the gaze of others. Consumerism has been alleged to require particular social performances which, rather than being hedonistic *stricto sensu*, compel people to keep up an appearance of simulated happiness and participation (Baudrillard, 1998: 141-2, 148-50). Research confirms that security measures such as CCTV and gating increase anxiety (Minton, 2012). So does the current regime of credit-financed consumption (Gill, 1995; Escalate Collective, 2012).

Then there is the bureaucratisation of everyday life under regimes of risk-management and securitisation. Public spaces are subject to surveillance and regulation. Risk-management and securitisation impede alternative practices. Laws have proliferated which seek to manage "behaviour" in ever more intricate ways, often backed by punishment-by-process and summary powers. When people lack control of their own lives, they compensate by over-controlling whatever they *can* control (Bruley, 1976: 13). We thus see such phenomena as the micro-management of families ("parental management"), an intensified pursuit of thinness, fashions for time-management and emotional management, and petty intolerance fuelling moral panics and crackdowns. Another example is the prison system. Changes since the 1990s have led to securitisation and intensified panopticism, combined with a system of psychological control based on a graded system of 'privileges'. These measures have succeeded in creating a situation in which prisoners are 'cowed, alienated from each other, and placated', allowing the rollback of previously-won rights and a growth of prison numbers (Barnsley, 2000). In the field of activism, corresponding problems are connected to the use of punishment-by-process, pre-emptive control techniques (such as kettling), mass surveillance, and practices of disposability such as dawn raids and police brutality.²

The work situation is often summarised in terms of management by stress, based on disposability (Moody, 1997). Often, the criteria are such as to keep

² People are deemed disposable in neoliberalism in that traumatic and violent tactics can be used against anyone (even privileged subjects) without entailing systemic illegitimacy. A person deemed indispensable, or valuable in her/himself, can expect corresponding social rights not to suffer systematic violence, dispossession, or trauma, whereas disposable people can be discarded and violated at will. While earlier regimes, such as Fordism, rendered certain groups disposable, neoliberalism extends disposability into a general social condition.

people running unsustainably on the spot, or even so as to require failure. People are expected to undergo continual retraining and assessment to keep them 'employable' (Moore, 2007). Kolinko's militant inquiry into service centres suggests a general ethos of performance management through computerised metrics, self-surveillance, constant re-testing, and the denial of stability (Kolinko, 2002). Economically, anxiety is linked to global outsourcing, lean production and financialisation (Berardi, 2009: 75-7; Virno, 2004: 56-9). Indeed, there is a structural isomorphism between generalised anxiety directed towards the future, and an economy with 'an explosion in the quantity of "fictitious" capital in circulation lacking any prospect of redemption' in the real economy (Harvey, 2003: 61).

Anxiety is closely associated with precarity (though there are also other sources). The focus on precarity in this article is an attempt to suggest that anxiety is a socially manufactured affect, rather than a personal deficit or individual difference. Precarity is 'non-self-determined insecurity' across work and life (Raunig, 2004), with insecure access to means to survive or flourish (Precarias, 2004). It uses insecurity to impose normalisation (Lorey, 2010; Bourdieu, 1998: 85), and treats people as disposable (Mitropoulos, 2005). It operates by rendering people's lives 'contingent on capital' (Mitropoulos, 2005). Precarity leads to 'yo-yo hours and days' which interfere with human contact (Tari and Vanni, 2005) and eliminate the sense of a distinct future, due to time-space compression (Neilson and Rossiter, n.d.) or 'present shock' (Rushkoff, 2013). It corrodes one's ability to distinguish life from work (Fantone, 2006). The affective effects of this situation contribute to anxiety. Berardi argues that precarity leads to constant bodily excitation without means of release (Berardi, 2009: 90-1), and with a socially-imposed impossibility of relaxation (2009: 119). People are constantly over-stimulated by information and sensory input which over-engages attention (2009: 97, 115), leading to a 'constant attentive stress' (2009: 42). We are here thinking both of the impact of precarity on workers and poor people – possibly preventing them from becoming radicals or activists – and also the impact on existing activists, undermining mobilisation. Young people are particularly affected, as precarity is concentrated both among young workers, and in emerging mechanisms in the education and benefit systems.

However, this situation of generalised anxiety and stress is a public secret, not widely recognised in official or tolerated discourses. Research by sociologist Elisabeth Katschnig-Fasch suggests that most precarious workers are unhappy, yet reluctant to admit it because of social taboos (Weber, 2004). Anxiety, depression, attentive stress and so on are recognised, but only as *personal* problems, explained away as neurological problems, faulty cognitive schemas or a lack of coping strategies. Indeed, the public transcript suggests that we need *more* stress and anxiety, so as to keep us "safe" and/or "competitive". Part of the public secret is related to the fact that dominant discourses continue to assume the normality of Fordist life-courses and expectations, against which precarians necessarily fail. Often, today's crackdowns (such as moral panics and anti-immigration ideology) seek to uphold the superstructure of Fordism (nationalism, community integration, "respect") in a context where the

infrastructure is long-gone. They blame precarians for precarity, seek to force people into communication within neoliberalism, and reinforce the personalisation of precarity as irresponsibility or deviance. Gramsci argues that there is a time-lag between economic change and corresponding ideological changes (Gramsci, 1971: 426). Today, this time-lag is keeping the precariat in conditions of affective deficit.

Just as capitalism earlier used national growth as a vicarious substitute for real welfare, and foreign wars as a channel for boredom-induced frustration (Marcuse, 1968), so today, real insecurity is channelled into support for securitisation, or security for spooks such as the nation and state. In particular, Appadurai (2006) argues that the intolerance of in-groups is a way of acting-out anxiety over the collapse of boundaries in the era of globalisation. This is a vicious circle, as securitisation intensifies the real sources of insecurity (surveillance, performance management and so on). Just as more people die in a normal week than a month of revolution, so more insecurity is caused in a normal week of securitised harassment and disposability than a month of “terrorism” or “rioting”.³

The experience of consciousness raising

So how might social movements formulate a pedagogy targeting anxiety? This paper proposes to get back to the base level of experience to unfold new theories and strategies to address the current context. There is a need to formulate autonomous social movement epistemologies which construct knowledge from the bottom up, avoiding the hegemonic status of vanguard intellectuals while also transforming affect (Motta, 2011). This paper proposes to revive such forms of knowledge-production in the global North, where they are currently weak. It is here important to reject a rush to action without understanding, which leads to action which is less radical (Sarachild, 1975a: 149) or premature (Levine, 1979). The proposal is for *precarity consciousness-raising*, focusing on personal problems in the lives of activists and oppressed people so as to unfold awareness of the structuring role of precarity and anxiety, while also creating spaces which begin to challenge anxiety. The aim is a 'reversal of perspective', seeing from the perspective of life rather than power. This requires making the public secret visible and speakable.

This article focuses on feminist consciousness raising as a model for the new method. This is not the only process which could have been used as a model. Other, similar methods include critical pedagogy in Latin America, *autocoscienza* in Italy (de Lauretis, 1990: 6), 'testifying' in the civil rights movement (Steinem, 1995: 21), and 'speaking bitterness' in revolutionary China. In China, the process has been analysed as a way of breaking habitual dependency and deference on the part of peasants (Solomon, 1971: 160-70). An account of feminist consciousness-raising will now be given, to provide a basis

³ For example, there were five deaths during the unrest of 2011, averaging 1 a day; more than 6000 people committed suicide the same year.

for comparison for possible ways of challenging precarity.

Consciousness raising (CR) combines a reclamation of voice regarding everyday experience with the formulation of forms of grounded theory closely linked to such narratives. Part of the idea of consciousness raising is that grounded theory should emerge from the experience and interests of those it aims to liberate (MacKinnon, 1989: 83; MacKinnon, 1982: 520). However, it is not *simply* about speaking from experience – which, after all, is encouraged and even commanded within neoliberalism (as reality TV, vox pops, Facebook statuses, focus groups, and so on). The intersection of narratives of experience, firstly with others' narratives, secondly with a space encouraging the emergence of the 'public secret', and thirdly with a structural analytical framework, effectively re-frame experiences so they are lived and *felt* in transformed ways.

In Gramscian fashion, good sense is not simply recounted, but also *elaborated* into a new conception of the world which is felt as well as thought. This passage from “personal” to “political” is, however, carried out without vanguard intellectuals or parties to mediate the transition. It emerges immanently, within the everyday. Participation in analysis as thinkers is validating, while also revealing and challenging a widespread inability to think conceptually (Allen, 1970: 28). The new knowledges coming from consciousness-raising were also unfolded in a range of texts.

Speaking from experience

From a survey of the related literature, seven aspects of the process have been identified. The first of these is the act of speaking from experience. According to participants, CR was a 'conscious attempt to speak in words born of grassroots insight, including the resulting passion and anger' (Hanisch, 2010), to 'emphasise our own feelings and experiences and women' and test generalisations against this experience (Sarachild, 1975a: 145), 'studying the whole gamut of women's lives, starting with the full reality of one's own' (1975a: 145). Sarachild terms it 'going to the people – women themselves, and going to experience for theory and strategy' (1975a: 148).

The idea of a public secret or silenced knowledge was crucial. It was assumed that women's perceptions are 'cramped, darkened, frustrated, undeveloped, misguided or even seemingly replaced by a false consciousness', so that 'their own true individual awareness is somehow not really operative', either being 'blocked or stymied or repressed or just overloaded with so much shit' (Forer, 1975: 151). From a Gramscian point of view, it might be termed an elaboration of forms of good sense which are otherwise kept hidden for fear of common sense (Gramsci, 1995: 557). Similarly, Morales argues that consciousness raising 'is a permanent struggle against an ever impinging bourgeois ideology that attacks us not only in the form of political doctrine but also as fears, ambitions, resentments, feelings: the stuff of everyday political practice' (Morales, 1975: 199).

Validation: Recognising submerged realities

A second important aspect was *validation*. It was seen as crucial to validate the reality, and the political nature, of one's own feelings and experiences. Women struggled with their own reality and pain, with recognising 'that the pain is pain, that it is also one's own, that women are real' (MacKinnon, 1989: 91). The acknowledgement of validity is important in breaking down personalisation (Allen, 1970: 24-5). Validation also provides the underpinnings for political conclusions. As one account argues: '[w]e assume that our feelings... mean something worth analyzing... that our feelings are saying something *political*... Our feelings will lead us to ideas and then to actions' (Hole and Levine, 1971: 131). In research on the process, interviewees have suggested that it helps women to affirm that what they see is real (Reger, 2004: 218).

Crucially, through such a process of validation, the public secret ceased to be a secret. One of Shreve's interviewees described it as an 'eye-popping experience... I didn't know that there were all these other women out there feeling just like me. I thought everybody was home, baking, and being happy about it' (Shreve, 1989: 42). Levine suggests that consciousness-raising breaks down the repressive character-structure which acts as a 'moral policeman' or 'cop in the head' within each person, which causes personalisation (Levine, 1979: 7). In some cases, memories which had been repressed or pushed out of awareness were able to return, as in the case in Dreifus's group with experiences of rape, memories of which 'worked their way into our awareness' in the week before the meeting. Without CR, she suggests, 'it would have been another one of the invisible issues women never see, feel, or know – yet suffer' (1973: 213-14). Validation also challenges the internal attribution of blame which otherwise sustains conformity (Weitz, 1982: 233), undermining personalisation. It has a healing effect in 'momentarily relieving the individual of responsibility for her situation does occur and is necessary if women are to be free to act' (Allen, 1970: 30-1).

Constructing voice

Another purpose of the groups, where everyone was heard seriously, was to 'give to women what they did not have – a voice' (Cornell, 2000: 1033). They were organised as a way of sharing experiences through personal testimony (Sowards and Renegar, 2004: 535). Metaphors of hearing and speaking expressed a feeling of transition from silence to voice, with women often finding part of their own voice in others' experiences (MacKinnon, 1989: 86). The exercise of voice 'moved the reference point for truth and thereby the definition of reality as such... through a process that redefines what counts as verification' (MacKinnon, 1989: 87). Ruth Rosen argues: 'Having learned to see the world through men's eyes, one suddenly began to view life through the eyes of a woman' (cited Dean, 2013).

The construction of voice is related to depersonalisation of oppression. Through the construction of voice, the naturalisation of experiences and performativities

could be challenged (MacKinnon, 1989: 95; Cornell, 2000: 1034). The groups also created a climate in which the ability to reconstruct language is explored (Kalcik, 1975: 4). Crucially, this type of voice is dissimilar from the neoliberal obligation to communicate. It involves a more intimate, interpersonal, and slower-pace relationship. According to one account, the construction of voice in this sense takes time, as it requires overcoming habits of superficial communication (Bruley, 1976: 8). The slower pace of the process, compared to other forms of politics and everyday life, arguably allows the processes of community-building and analytical integration. As Susan Griffin observes, 'We do not rush to speech. We allow ourselves to be moved' (1978: 197). This seems to have had radical affective impacts. Surveys suggest that sharing experiences and feelings was the most noticeable group process for participants (Kravetz, 1978: 168). The effect is often one of 'speaking the "unspoken"', a process extended into the public domain (Dubriwny, 2005: 413), effectively exposing the public secret and rupturing the silence around it.

Studies of the rhetoric, or speaking style, of the groups show a particular style of social weaving which helps to explain how the groups were able to articulate collective experiences. The discussions involve a style of speech irreducible to traditional theories of rhetoric (Campbell, 2002: 51). Kalcik suggests that particular types of narrative arose in consciousness-raising which reinforced the goal of linking experiences to structures, and which followed an 'underlying aesthetic or organising principle' of harmonising accounts (1975: 6). In particular, this was enabled by the 'kernel story' or brief references to previous accounts, which allowed the weaving-together of experiences (1975: 3, 9; c.f. Shreve, 1989: 21). Kernel stories are used to weave together experiences and attribute similar meanings, even when experiences are different (Dubriwny, 2005: 406, 417; c.f. Allen, 1970: 26). Bruley also refers to the kernel story as a kind of 'shorthand form of communication which seemed to give the group a terminology of its own', allowing rapid reference back to earlier conclusions (Bruley, 1976: 8). Dubriwny analyses the process as a 'collective development of experiential knowledge' (2005: 395) involving a 'collaborative interaction of many voices' to give new meanings to experiences (2005: 398). New public vocabularies emerge 'as the product of the collective articulation of multiple, overlapping individual experiences', and persuade not by changing opinions, but through 'the creation of situations in which the telling of individual experiences makes possible a reframing of one's understanding of the world' (2005: 396). In such a context, recounting experiences allows their meaning to be reshaped (2005: 416). The process has also been termed re-socialisation (Eastman, 1973).

Creating a safe space

The creation of safe space seems to have been both a goal in itself and a means to construct a certain type of communication. Safety in this context is not so much risk-management as disalienation. According to Mackinnon, '[b]y providing room for women to be close, these groups demonstrated how far

women were separated' (MacKinnon, 1989: 87). It clears a 'space in the world' in which women can move (MacKinnon, 1989: 101). Each participant had as much "free space" as she needed to talk without interruption, encouraging less vocal members to participate in depth (Shreve, 1989: 13). When groups operated with rules (which varied), these were constructed so as to create this kind of space. Aspects such as confidentiality, the discouragement of judgement, and the absence of men contributed to creating optimal conditions for intimate speech. Crucially, the *mediation* of relationships was largely removed, as the usual mediation was via men.

The process is basically disalienating, breaking down horizontal separations. Arnold suggests that participants 'had been glued to our men and separated from each other all our lives' (1970: 160). Similarly, Bruley suggests that 'CR teaches women to relate to each other without the mediation of men' (1976: 21). Reger suggests that the groups fostered 'emotional expressiveness and caring, nurturing and personal relationships' (Reger, 2004: 212). Group members who started as strangers built up a great feeling of closeness (Dreifus, 1973: 52), described by interviewees as unconditional solidarity, an extended family (Shreve, 1989: 197) or actualised sisterhood (cited Dreifus, 1973: 259). The reorientation to immediacy is a form of reactivation of active desire, which follows from the removal of forces creating decomposition through alienation.

Affective or emotional transformation

Another recurring feature of accounts of the groups is their operation as a means to redefine and therefore transform particular emotions arising from oppression. The groups intervene in a context where reactive emotions are dominant, and personal affective expression is denied or invalidated. Women are seen as 'paralyzed... by emotions which have no corresponding terms in language' (Milan Women's Bookstore Collective 1990: 26), or by 'feelings of personal shittiness that tyrannize each and every one of us' (Levine, 1979: 8). Solitude leads to a 'feeling that we are misfits, antisocial, neurotic, hysterical, crazy', and to think of problems as 'personal defects' (cited Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, 1979: 41). A major task of the groups is to transform these affects in more positive directions.

This is clear in the literature, particularly through the reworking of anger. Reger's study suggests that such groups redefine certain emotions, including anger, frustration, hopelessness and alienation. They 'help transform personal emotions into a collectively defined sense of injustice' (Reger, 2004: 205). Faced with an experience which is oppressive, constant, and frustrating, the groups transform the anger and alienation resulting from the experience into a more positive, focused kind of discontent (2004: 214), by providing a constructive context in which anger can be felt (2004: 218). The group's 'permission' to feel anger can overcome earlier prohibitions, making anger an 'energizing force for change, increasing confidence, and enhancing relationships' (Randolph and Ross-Valliere, 1979: 924). One interviewee gives an example of responding with

anger instead of depression to sexism at work (Shreve, 1989: 102).

Bruley suggests that consciousness-raising challenges guilt about and suppression of anger. Instead, anger is recognised as a necessary response to oppression, and channelled into the women's movement and into intolerance of sexism (Bruley, 1976: 13). 'Through CR we learn that it is *good* and *positive* to be angry and to express that anger every time we face sexism and male chauvinism' (1976: 22). Levine suggests that the process is a way to 'turn... personal anger into constructive energy' and undo 'ancient shackles' (Levine, 1979: 6). The WMST-L guide, based on the Cape Cod Women's Liberation pamphlet, advises that anger should be used to 'confront... those who have actually hurt us' rather than turned inwards (WMST-L, n.d.). One interviewee recalls that discussions would 'touch on nerves that we didn't even know existed', in very emotional ways (Shreve, 1989: 49), effectively de-repressing sanctioned ignorances. In a related study, Taylor (1996) suggests that activist postpartum depression groups have handled depression, and related feelings of shame and fear, by transforming them into movement-connected anger.

The focus on anger gives a misleading impression of a mainly reactive process. However, some accounts suggest that this involves a switch from reactive to active affect. Allen suggests there is a distinction between 'resentment', based on 'feeling inferior', to other kinds of anger, and that participants become less resentful (Allen, 1970: 12), partly by initially venting this resentment (1970: 61). She also suggests there are needs both to affirm one's social worth and relieve anger at oppressors (1970: 46). Women's accounts suggest that emotions were expressed rather than programmed in the groups (Brownmiller, 1970: 152).

Other, more affirmative emotions were also constructed. Allen writes of a recognition of being 'individuals with emotional needs and fears' (Allen, 1970: 14). Opening up about one's feelings is a central need which is met by the CR process, and which disalienates emotional alienation (1970: 24). She also suggests that building trust is a central goal (1970: 59). The groups were also said to relieve feelings of shittiness (Levine, 1979: 8) and dissolve fears (Brownmiller, 1970: 151). Experiences often turn out to be similar, leading to a feeling of closeness (Dreifus, 1973: 52). Lee suggests that, in her case, 'to come to a class that addressed these issues directly and gave me the words for all those pent-up feelings and frustrations was a tremendously affirming and empowering experience' (2001: 68). Whereas isolation turns frustration into self-doubt, collectivity turns it into perspectives which can produce action (Allen, 1970: 27). The groups also provided a 'safety net' of solidarity which provided a backdrop to take risks and shed old ideas and performances (Shreve, 1989: 199), and a powerful feeling of being "okay" (1989: 240). The groups are also described as allowing withdrawal and respite from daily struggles (Allen, 1970: 60).

The "click"

Part of the purpose of groups is to experience what is termed the "click" (Reger,

2004: 211; Shreve, 1989: 53; Dubriwny, 2005: 418). Reger describes this as 'the moment of an individual's realization of societal inequities' (2004: 214), and Shreve as a moment of 'eye-popping realization... the sudden comprehension, in one powerful instant, of what sexism exactly meant, how it had colored one's own life' (1989: 53). It is a moment at which experiences and feelings suddenly make sense in relation to patriarchal structures – which is quite different from simply seeing sexism in the abstract. Afterwards participants feel they *know* the impact of male supremacy (Allen, 1970: 27), and that they have a 'personal “why?” of rebellion' (Dreifus, 1973: 6) or a more radical understanding (Sarachild, 1975a: 146). This is crucial to emotional transformations towards active force. According to Reger, 'the “click” brought about validation and focus to the women's anger, different from the sense of anger, mixed with hopelessness and frustration' which they experienced before (2004: 215).

Integrating and analysing – rather than simply presenting – experiences

Perhaps the aspect of the groups which sets them most aside from current academic views of reflexivity and experiential speech is the emphasis on a function of transformation, integration, and analysis of narratives of experiences. For radicals, the aim was not to recount each experience for its own sake, for psychological benefits, or to counter generalisations as such, but to provide a wider pool of knowledge and better generalisations (Sarachild, 1975a: 148). The addition of non-commonsensual propositions about oppression transforms narratives of experience, creating space for analytical reintegration. The main proposition added to narratives were that 'the personal is political', in the sense that personal experiences have structural, collective roots related to a common struggle, and not open to personal adjustive strategies (Sarachild, 1975: 147; Brownmiller, 1970: 146; Allen, 1970: 28; CWLU, 1971; WMSL-L, n.d.; Kalcik, 1975: 3). In discovering that the 'personal narrative is political', participants 'transform the dominant meaning of experience by bringing a different set of assumptions to bear on it' (Langellier, 1989: 269), effectively overcoming the personalisation of oppression (Bruley, 1976: 22; Bond and Lieberman, 1980: 268).

It also provides a sense of the commonality or coherence of narratives (MacKinnon, 1989: 85; Bruley, 1976: 21; Shreve, 1989: 244). Sometimes the process involved the emergence of *similar* experiences – for instance, the awareness that most women are unhappy with their body-image (WMSL-L: n.d.; Shreve, 1989: 39; Forer, 1975: 151; Bruley, 1976: 10). In other cases, it is the *weaving together* of experiences which creates commonality. A transcript of one discussion is provided by Firestone (1968), where recounting experiences reveals that the entire group have relationships with men they can't stand. In this case, the relationship situations of the participants are very different, but a similar structural nexus is identified. Hence, the pooling can relate to *common experiences* or to *common sources of distinct experiences* – the latter arguably important in thinking about the diverse, segmented field of precarity. In many

ways, the proposal that women are politically oppressed is *added to* the personal experiences in a way which alters their meaning.

This task was particularly carried out during the summing-up, after the personal contributions, when participants sought to draw out similar elements and conclusions (Shreve, 1989: 45; 220). Bond and Lieberman say that 'participants are encouraged to look at relatively small injustices as symbolic of larger issues' (1980: 289). This involved a transformation in perspective which 'implies viewing one's life in an entirely new way' (Bruley, 1976: 21). The process creates an 'operative theoretical horizon' (Malo, 2004). Participants learn to fit experiences (including psychological difficulties) into patterns of oppression (Arnold, 1970: 159; Shreve, 1989: 59; Dreifus, 1973: 5). Green suggests that the groups supply a 'vocabulary of motives' with group support, which alter perceptions and interpretations of everyday life (Green, 1979: 359). The process often had a generalising effect, articulating the local with the structurally global. Bartky refers to the process as understanding 'where we are in light of where we are not yet' (Bartky, 1977: 26). It provides meanings as to why one's life is in turmoil (Shreve, 1989: 40), giving a 'vantage point' on everyday life (Allen, 1970: 20-1; c.g. Shreve, 1989: 198). The means to establish such transformations is not political manipulation, nor explanation by those who are already conscious, but a kind of self-transformation arising from thinking structurally about experiences, culminating in a "click".

Psychological effects

Particularly relevant to the situation of anxiety as dominant affect is the impact such a process can have on affective configurations. Consciousness raising is psychologically positive in untying knots and releasing active force, even though it is not therapeutic in a conventional sense. There was a strong rejection in the CR movement of the label of therapy, which was often used by opponents (Sarachild, 1975a: 145). The main difference is that CR rejects the internal attribution of blame and the social adjustment orientation of therapy, instead emphasising social oppression and collective responses (Reger, 2004: 215; Dreifus, 1973: 7; Hanisch, in Brownmiller, 1970: 152; Shreve, 1989: 11, 200; WMST-L, n.d.). 'Wellness was not the point, because women already were well – it was the society that was ill... Rather, the collective was the point. The "click" was the point. The commonality was the point' (Shreve, 1989: 200-1). In addition, consciousness-raising differs from many forms of group therapy in that it does not confront people or seek to analyse their faults, with conflict discouraged rather than encouraged (Randolph and Ross-Valliere, 1979: 922).

This rejection of the label "therapeutic" should not suggest that psychological effects are irrelevant. Psychological benefits and personal transformations *do happen* in CR. Indeed, CR groups have also been described as alternative mental health resources (Kravetz, 1976), Surveys suggest that '[n]early all women [who took part] were highly satisfied with CR' (Kravitz et al., 1986: 257; c.f. Dreifus, 1973: 34, 36; Kravetz, 1978). The groups have a validating effect,

rejecting spoiled identity (see MacKinnon, 1989: 100) and providing a 'comforting realization that they were all in this together' (Shreve, 1989: 14) and a liberating opportunity to vent anger (Dreifus, 1973: 2). Realising a problem is political and social, rather than individual, tends to 'lift the problem off your shoulders', as the dominant construction yields its power over oneself (Forer, 1975: 151). The moment of the 'click' is recalled in interviews as 'one of enormous relief' (Shreve, 1989: 55). Many accounts suggest that the groups were a growing-up or life-changing experience (Bruley, 1976: 17, 21; Shreve, 1989: 203). They have also been termed 'an organized life-support system that is largely unavailable to women in our society today' (1989: 36).

Quantitative research suggested that CR did not reduce anxiety or depression, but it did raise self-esteem, awareness of one's potential, and awareness of social oppression (Bond and Lieberman, 1980: 300-1). Research by Rose Weitz concludes that 'consciousness raising may help women to increase their sense of control and externalize their attributions of blame, and may consequently increase self-esteem and reduce depression among participants' (1982: 231). In a review of empirical studies, Nassi and Abramowitz (1978) suggest that CR is globally effective in 'fostering personal development as well as political awareness', including 'pro-feminist attitudes', but empirical evidence for personal growth and self-esteem outcomes are ambiguous (1978: 139). Follingstad et al (1977) attempted to reproduce consciousness-raising groups in experimental sessions, and found both increased pro-feminist attitudes and increased self-esteem. Similar results emerged from school-based variants of CR (Abernathy et al., 1977). However, it is also widely noted that a raised consciousness without political change can be painful (Butterwick, 1978: 46; Dreifus, 1973: 73; Allen, 1970: 60), so the positive effects in question may depend on a combination of consciousness-raising with other forms of political action.

Given the positive psychological effects, it is possible that anxiety and related problems could provide a pathway into the political process, if groups are framed in a particular way. Research suggests that self-help or psychological support was a common motive for joining such groups (Home, 1980; Bond and Lieberman, 1980: 281), along with understanding one's experiences (Kravetz et al., 1986: 257), and emotional responses to either a pre-group "click" or a general sense of alienation (Reger, 2004: 212). Political motivation was less common as a motive (Bond and Lieberman, 1980: 281) Hence, it might also be worth promoting precarity-focused groups as a type of psychological support or "self-help", albeit of a non-adaptive kind. It is necessary to insist that precarians are not "failing to adapt" to neoliberalism because they're neurotic, anti-social, and so on – that the problem is with the anxiety-inducing social roles precarity imposes, and the constant (failed) struggle to conform to these (often impossible) roles. However, recognising that the problem is social roles and not our own maladaptiveness is itself a psychological shift, a self-transformation.

It has been widely observed that consciousness raising does not always lead to political activation (Shreve, 1989: 217; Dreifus, 1973: 34; Gutierrez, 1995; La

Belle, 1987: 204). However, the groups were also said to provide 'a constant supply of recruits to the movement's social activist core' (Carden, 1974: 73), and Reger's research suggests that between a third and a quarter of participants became politically active (Reger, 2004: 208, 217).

There have also been political debates about the use of consciousness-raising. Most famously, Freeman (1972-3) argues that consciousness-raising provides an inappropriate model for political organisation, and is vulnerable to informal hierarchies (see Levine, 1979 for a response). The group is said to have converged with group therapy as it was adopted by liberal organisations (Rosenthal, 1984:309; Sarachild, 1975b:168). Some groups became focused mainly on personal "venting", or were subject to disputes over whether they should have a political dimension (Shreve, 1989:218-19; Allen, 1970:14; Dean, 2013), and some participants reportedly arrived at pessimistic conclusions that they can rely only on themselves in a hostile world (Shreve, 1989:60-1; Dean, 2013). While such problems are likely to recur in some groups, they are not necessarily fatal. We would suggest that an autonomous social movement approach provides an alternative both to processes which begin *and end* with the development of critical capabilities, and to approaches which funnel critical development into traditional organisations. In principle, consciousness-raising groups could mutate into affinity groups within a wide network of autonomous groups, with the networked context providing the capacity to move beyond critique to transformation (and in many cases, even enacting or prefiguring this transformation within emergent networks).

Applying consciousness raising to precarity

Given the discussions in the first section above, this paper will now attempt to show how precarity differs from and is similar to the context of consciousness raising in the 1960s/70s, so as to suggest its usefulness as a pedagogical strategy to combat anxiety as the dominant reactive affect. This paper does not deny that women's oppression has a specific reality – both in its Fordist incarnation and today. It does not deny that renewed feminist consciousness-raising on similar issues, some of which are unchanged today, would be a valuable process. It also does not argue that precarians have *the same experiences* as women had under Fordism. However, the focus of this paper is on breaking the public secret of anxiety, and hence with applying a similar method from a precarian subject-position.

Given the hypothesis that the dominant reactive affect of the Fordist era was boredom, it is not to be expected that the same social problems will emerge today, either among women or more generally among precarians. However, similarities exist. The combination of frantic activity with underlying dissatisfaction is reminiscent of housewife malaise. Another similarity is the existence of a constant, oppressive, frustrating situation which feels inescapable. The personalisation of problems which actually stem from structural sources is widespread. The immense spread of self-esteem and self-help discourses is

testament to this. The precariat is also privatised in a different way, through the economic “privatisation” of social functions and the associated discourse of individual responsibility. Precarians tend to fall for the offer of personalised solutions, in terms of a 'less-bad' life (Berlant, 2007: 291; Neilson and Rossiter, 2008: 57). This is distinct from the public-private split, but similar in denying the political nature of social structures, and hence possibly open to similar responses. The absence of a structural or “political” framing of issues is another similarity. Precarians are faced with difficulties acknowledging their own reality and their own pain in a world in which something must be counted (by 'quality' regimes) or mediated (on the television or Internet) to be validated as real. Many precarians are unaware of belonging to an oppressed group, because neoliberal mechanisms of control have become normalised, and psychological effects are personalised. The status of anxiety as a 'public secret', and its submersion within dominant discourses, are further similarities.

Running through the seven functions of consciousness-raising outlined above, each is potentially important in challenging precarity and reconstructing anxiety. Speaking from experience is useful in overcoming personalisation and showing the social nature of the problem. Validation is important in overcoming accounts which personalise responsibility and deny the reality of precarity, and in breaking the silence around the public secret. The construction of voice is important to combat the widespread discourses blaming the precariat for precarity, as well as to reveal the public secret. A safe space is needed to allow people to speak about emotionally stressful and personalised (hence sometimes shameful) experiences, and to prevent anxiety from undermining the space itself. Affective transformation is crucial in transforming anxiety, a source of paralysis, into affective forms which enable recomposition, such as love, courage and focused anger. The click in this case would entail a recognition of anxiety as a social effect and a matter of power, which would in turn shift perceptions of the social field from a game of competitive success to a conflict scenario and a narrative of oppression and liberation. Integration and analysis are important in depersonalising anxiety, relating it to structural sources, and finding and combating the deep sources of reactive affect, thus discursively converting apparently insoluble surface problems into effects of politically tractable underlying issues.

However, certain difficulties problematise a too-easy extrapolation of methods. A first major difference is that precarity will probably turn out to be more mediated, layered and segmentary than Fordist-era gender oppression. Authors on precarity generally emphasise the diversity of the group, which is one reason why traditional political mobilisations fail (Sarrantonio, 2008; Tsianos and Papadopoulos, 2006; Neilson and Rossiter, 2008: 58, 64; Berardi, 2009: 93). Theorists of precarity recognise that the precariat is not a single subject, and that working across diversity is necessary (Shukaitis, 2006; Sarrantonio, 2008; Lorey, 2010; Raunig, 2007; Precarias, 2004). This means that, in precarity consciousness-raising, similar experiences will probably be less important than the similar structural nexus of diverse experiences. This renders the analysis-integration stage particularly crucial. Previous precarity movements have had to

focus on creating a 'context of experience and articulation' (Nowotny, 2004), rather than simply the pooling of similar experiences. However, precarity organising is concentrated among educated youths in countries where the loss of Fordism is recent (Fantone, 2006; Neilson and Rossiter, 2008: 54). Consciousness-raising might be crucial to expanding the movement to other sub-groups within the precariat, and to countries without a strong, recent Fordist history. In addition, whereas 'women' is a general social category, the precariat is not. This is arguably problematic if seeking to reach people who are not already radical, and alternatives such as 'creative workers' and 'socially excluded' might be considered.

A second difference is that, whereas women in Fordism were often literally separated, precarians are also connected in mediated forms, such as social media. However, this connectedness is limited by the compulsion to perform, self-censorship, and quasi-publicity (precluding intimacy). It happens in a form which allows contact only between ego-projections which typically mimic neoliberal subjectivity, and which thus impedes the meaningful sharing of experiences and the construction of common narratives. 1960s/70s consciousness-raising focused on obtaining voice and space. Today, the modality of providing space for voice runs up against the compulsion to speak (Berardi, 2009: 108, 112) and the surface level of neoliberal personalities which are the ones most immediately expressed (Amsler, 2008, 2011). This complicates the process of constructing voice. We would suggest that the most important aspects today are learning to speak with an inner voice (rather than a neoliberal performance), learning to take time-off from the obligation to perform, learning to listen (to self as well as others), and learning to reconstruct elements of fragmented lives into structural patterns.

One major barrier to this type of intervention is the structure of time for the precariat. Time pressure is a major barrier to this type of intensive group activity, especially given that time commitments are central to consciousness-raising (Allen, 1970: 18; WMST-L, n.d.; Shreve, 1989: 19, 226) and trust-building takes time (Shreve, 1989: 13). Yet as we have seen, precarians are subject to yo-yo hours, telepresence, and present shock. In response to this problem, it may be necessary to articulate a specific strategy of reclaiming the 'time of life' from work (Neilson and Rossiter, n.d.; c.f. Tsianos and Papadopoulos, 2006), or to partially secede from high-speed flows (Berardi, 2009: 43). In addition, a respite from daily struggles is itself a motivation to attend such groups (Shreve, 1989: 75). Another problem is the feeling of powerlessness. As Hanisch argues, '[r]egular meetings take a high degree of commitment that is hard to motivate when activity and the belief that big changes are possible are at low ebb' (Hanisch, 2010). The problem is a vicious circle, because low politicisation and powerlessness condition one another. However, this may be less of a problem if an initial framing of the groups as psychological support is used.

Latin American movements are in many ways ahead of those in the North in addressing the current conjuncture (Motta, 2012). One existing parallel is the

work of *La Ruta Pacifica*. This group theorise 'vital energy', similar to active force, as under attack (Cockburn, 2005: 21), and respond with a participatory, dialogical approach with a slower pace (Cockburn 2005: 17). Processes of 'social weaving', healing and mourning are central (Colorado, 2003), and talking through fear is an important aspect (Cockburn, 2005: 10). The aim is to create new configurations of affect sufficiently powerful to interrupt the dominant construction (Cockburn 2005: 14). It is recounted by participants as helping individual healing and the recovery of inner strength (Brouwer, 2008: 85). It is described by participants as repairing social ties and weaving love knots, and it creates 'invisible threads' and has 'restorative effects'. Being 'bound' by social weaving is a way to control fear (Colorado, 2003). Such activities sometimes lead onto activities which reclaim public space (Colorado, 2003; Cockburn, 2005: 15). Such actions are 'painstakingly prepared' through a participatory process (Cockburn, 2005: 11) which seeks to deal with underlying fears. The situation in Colombia is distinct from that in the UK as the situation of fear relates to a sharper, but also more localised type of trauma connected to militarisation. However, the model is indicative of possible responses to widespread anxiety.

Examining the specific functions of consciousness raising listed above, there are some which would be similar, and others distinct. Speaking from experience, and validation, might proceed much as in the 1970s. The "click" is still similar, and is an important goal in a context where awareness of structural origins of problems is increasingly denied. In relation to voice and safe space, the main forms of separation within precarity operate via mediated (pseudo-)communication, and a central mechanism of consciousness-raising is thus to exclude these particular forms of separation. Rhetorics of performance management and behavioural classification, social media, and micro (as well as macro) discriminations are all relevant here. The most important question, however, is persuading people not to offer the neoliberal performance which has become, for many people, the automatic response to a request to "be oneself" or exercise voice. In relation to affective transformation, anxiety and related emotions (depression, frustration, trauma, excessive stress, and so on) provide a clear focus. The transformation of reactive affects into movement-focused anger of courage might still be viable, but the "binding" or transformation of anxiety also requires reconfigurations of horizontal connections which provide a kind of groundedness for life, warding off both meaninglessness and isolation. The affective "safety net" or "respite" function of groups is here particularly appropriate in reactivating active force. Since people are suffering 'constant attentive stress' (Berardi, 2009: 42), it is important that groups provide a relief from social pressure and the need to engage one's attention intensely. A quieter, more meditative modality should be encouraged.

Consciousness raising might ameliorate anxiety in several ways – through political awareness of the origins of affects, through the supportive forms of the groups themselves, and through political reactivation to create a less anxious context. This could activate the 'frightening' instead of the 'frightened' face of the precariat. Tsianos and Papadopoulou (2006) argue that the precariat is a

frightening force only when it does not succumb to anxiety. The psychoanalytic (Freudian-Lacanian) theory that anxiety is related to the lack of a symbolic dimension is largely incompatible with this approach, although it has a grain of truth (the capitalist demand to 'succeed' or 'enjoy' lacks a substantive script), and consciousness-raising groups clearly provide a 'symbolic' of sorts, in the form of what authors term a perspective, standpoint, or ideology.

Conclusion

We have suggested that a new wave of consciousness-raising may be useful to fight the current public secret of anxiety. These claims were offered as strategic suggestions to revive political struggle in the present conjuncture, particularly in those settings in the North where it is in remission. How far are these claims true? They are supported by the evidence cited here, when integrated by the theoretical propositions put forward. But there is no guarantee that the strategy will work. It is only by experimenting with the approaches put forward here that the analysis can ultimately be confirmed, modified, or denied. The approach is put forward as a hopeful possibility for effective transformation in a context where movement forces seem largely blocked, but ultimately, the process of formulating new strategies is experimental and unpredictable. Still, we have to start somewhere⁴.

⁴ Two articles related to this one have appeared on the Internet. A piece titled "Eight Theses on the Affective Structure of the Present Conjuncture" appeared in the 2014 issue of *Anarchy: Journal of Desire Armed*. A shorter piece, entitled "We Are All Very Anxious", appeared on the website of Plan C, at the address <http://www.weareplanc.org/we-are-all-very-anxious/>. An abbreviated version of precarity consciousness-raising was trialled at Plan C's annual gathering in September 2014, and largely confirmed the hypotheses (with the notable addition that most participants were more inwardly affected in their own identities and desires than the IPC formulation allowed). This latter piece went viral on social media and was republished as a pamphlet by CrimethInc in the US, translated and published in German by Analyse & Kritik, in Spanish by the Anarchist Library, and in Greek at Criticalepsy. We would like to clarify that the IPC and Plan C are separate groups, that Plan C has not collectively endorsed the theses on anxiety. Nevertheless, we are grateful to Plan C, and also to Anarchy journal, CrimethInc, Interface and others, for circulating our work. Sadly we are not much further with the practical side of the intervention than we were. Anyone interested in trialling or developing the approach is invited to contact us on precariousconsciousness@email.biz.

Two criticisms have emerged frequently in discussions and responses. Firstly, some of those we have spoken to seek to reduce the issue of anxiety to either capitalism or industrial society, suggesting that people were *always* anxious and we're saying nothing new. We would argue that this conflates the particular neoliberal regime of generalised anxiety with a much broader category of precariousness or potential vulnerability. Of course previous periods involved vulnerabilities which might provoke anxiety. Our point is precisely that social movements have strategies to defeat many of those older forms of vulnerability. These strategies are not as effective in the present period, which we hypothesise is due to the changed affective structure. If there's nothing new in this, why aren't the old strategies working?

Secondly, the periodisation, and the emphasis on boredom in the Fordist era, are perhaps the most contentious aspects of the article, and we would like to emphasise that these hypotheses are tentative. The crucial issue is that the strategies which worked against Fordism are no longer working; whether this is because boredom has been transcended by anxiety, because boredom

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has mutated through attentive stress, or because of a different kind of affective shift unrelated to boredom, is a matter for empirical and experiential investigation.

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What do you see that I cannot? Peer facilitations of difference and conflict in the collective production of independent youth media

Rachel Kulick

Abstract

This paper focuses on independent youth media outlets, one sector of the broader media democracy movement. These outlets operate as non-commercial spaces for youth to challenge the norms of mainstream media through the prefigurative work of enacting an alternative media system centered on the production and distribution of activist media and content. Collective production platforms and peer education play a significant role in modeling an alternative system. The key research question is: how do peer educators manage difference and contentious conversations in the prefigurative process of collectively producing activist media.

This paper draws out a case study of one urban independent media outlet, Youth Media Action (YMA), in the northeastern part of the United States to trace the interactive dynamics of how peer learning platforms facilitate and impede collective identity work for a changing cast of participating youth groups. Using ethnographic and participatory action research methods, I examine the conversational strategies that peer media educators in the youth media trainings engage (interpersonal openness and legitimization of conflict) in attempts – some successful, some failed - to leverage contentious conversations as a platform for building a shared identity. I found that although the conversational strategies did not always yield the intended results of a shared sense of identity, the interactions carry rich information about how youth actively debate and sometimes transform their beliefs in these media production spaces.

Keywords

Media democracy, media activism, independent media outlets, prefiguration, intramovement conflict, social movements, youth culture

Introduction

Since the start of the new millennium, there has been an increase in independent youth media outlets¹ within the US and around the world. These outlets are part of a larger movement that seeks to ensure communication rights and power for everyone regardless of age, social class, race, ethnicity, gender,

¹ The term “outlet” is used within the media democracy movement by groups that produce independent content/media as part of their everyday work.

sexual orientation, and other social forces. Networks, groups, and individuals participating in the movement share a collective critique of the mainstream media system, including the vast corporate consolidation and commercialization of media as well as the multiple forms of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination embedded in mainstream media structures, practices, and content (Hackett & Carroll, 2006; Kidd & Rodriguez, 2010). Participation is grounded in the belief that these media injustices significantly undermine the open communication of diverse cultural perspectives about important social issues and concerns. The larger movement for media justice and communication rights can be understood as a dynamic, multi-organizational field that strives for media change through the deployment of multiple collective action strategies in the realms of policy, education, and culture. Though it is difficult to draw definitive boundaries between these strategic fronts, there appear to be four fairly defined areas of collective action – (1) democratization of mainstream media content and practices from within; (2) media literacy and the development of critical audiences, (3) media reform and advocacy, and (4) the cultivation of independent media outlets (Hackett and Carroll 2006).

Many independent youth media outlets engage in *prefigurative work* as they attempt to prefigure or model more democratic communications through the development of alternative media structures, practices, and content. Prefigurative work refers to individuals and groups involved in social, cultural, political, and/or economic efforts of direct action in which they are modeling or realizing an alternative vision for themselves and their communities. These spaces lend themselves to the incubation of new ideas and visions where people focus on the development of alternative structures, practices, and experiences that begin to prefigure and enact what is possible (Maeckelbergh 2011). Akin to Maeckelbergh's definition of prefiguration, independent media spaces are "actively setting up alternative structures so that people can experience for themselves what is possible and get actively involved in ensuring through practice and continuous transformation that these new structures are and will remain more inclusive" (2011:17).² The prefigurative work of modeling an alternative media relations and culture occurs through attempting to build a noncommercial media system - that is, media that are distributed without advertising dollars supporting them, framing them, or determining their value or content – with a focus on shared ownership, inclusivity, and collective production practices. A central aspect of the prefigurative work of "being the media change" for participating youth actors involves carving out time for discussions about social issues from multiple and often contradicting perspectives.

² Francesca Polletta also uses the term "prefigurative" groups to characterize groups in which individuals with explicit oppositional ideas join together "to prefigure the society the movement is seeking to build by modeling relationships that differ from those characterizing mainstream society" (1999:11).

Yet, like many organizational principles, it is one thing to say that we value shared ownership, inclusivity, and diverse perspectives in the collective process of making independent media. But it is much more complex when we consider how youth manage and negotiate conversations that veer off in directions that do not necessarily generate agreement or comfort for everyone at the table. Charles Tilly uses the term “contentious conversations” to represent conversations that embody both mutual and contradictory claims. These conversations can impel actors to negotiate and renegotiate who they are, adjust the boundaries they inhabit, and alter their beliefs and actions based on the talk of others (1998:497). I would add that contentious conversations can be highly generative for actors to unpack assumptions that undergird differing meanings, values, and identities, which might otherwise remain implicit (Tilly 1998, Ghaziani 2008). While this term is useful in providing a general sense of how actors interact with differing views in the formation and negotiation of collective identity and action, there is very little understanding of how social movement organizations engaged in prefigurative work manage difference and conflict in the collective process of modeling an alternative system.

It is my assertion that the discussion of differing and contradicting perspectives takes on more traction in prefigurative work as these actors need to examine and deconstruct their lived experiences in order to determine and begin to model what is possible. Independent youth media spaces offer important insights in this area as the collective practice of making independent media entails continuous discussion about how to work cooperatively, how to represent an issue, and how to negotiate differing perspectives. We see through these collective processes that prefigurative work is as much about internal transformation in the form of collective struggle and negotiation as external transformation in the form of realizing an alternative model.

This paper builds on Tilly’s notion of “contentious conversations” to examine how youth negotiate difference and conflict as a means to build and negotiate a collective identity as part of the larger prefigurative work of modeling an alternative media system. There are three interrelated goals associated with this collective identity work. First, these spaces seek the involvement of youth from disenfranchised communities and underrepresented groups.³ With this orientation towards inclusivity, YMA has made significant inroads with a wide network of youth groups focused on multiple social issues including LGBTQ, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, juvenile justice, civil rights, substance abuse, academic advancement, immigration, labor, policing, international issues and the list goes on. Second, most of these spaces seek to foster youth involvement in social change work through the collectively production of activist media.⁴

³ By mainstream media channels, I am referring to large distribution channels that play a significant cultural role in circulating imagery, entertainment, and political information that influences attitudes, and in many ways determining the terms of public conversation (Hesmondhalgh 2002, Schudson).

⁴ Activist media is also often referred to as “alternative,” “socially conscious,” “oppositional,” “independent,” or “radical” media. Williams (2005) makes an important distinction between alternative and oppositional practice in that someone who possesses an “alternate point of view

Third, the focus on peer education, inclusivity, and hands-on experiences of filmmaking contributes to the formation and negotiation of a collective identity. Through participation in these practices, youth feel a sense of ownership and belonging within a larger youth community or culture. These factors also enable participating youth (to varying degrees) to prefigure or model a youth centered, do-it-yourself, experimental space to collectively make media about issues they care about from their perspectives.

This article draws from a case study of the independent youth media hub, Youth Media Action (YMA), a division of a public access media center in an urban area in the US Northeast. I frame YMA as a prefigurative space as it operates as an alternative, noncommercial youth-centered media system for youth to model practices, content, and values that differ from mainstream media. YMA espouses a peer-to-peer education model as a cultural platform for political engagement as youth look to each other to collectively produce and distribute media to bring into public view their perspectives about local and global issues that concern them. YMA peer educators are youth of a similar age and background that work with a changing cast of urban youth groups to facilitate the production of socially conscious media. As a researcher, activist, and participant observer attending a wide range of peer led media trainings with differing youth groups, I was struck by the wide range of difference and controversy that emerged in youth conversations over the course of collectively producing activist media. In particular, I examine how peer media educators manage contentious conversations among youth participants as a vehicle to expose and hold opposing views, values, and goals as part of the process of modeling and enacting an alternative media system. The quality of the peer-led facilitations of these contentious conversations play a significant role in informing to what extent the YMA peer educators could form and negotiate at least a short term intermovement collective identity between the YMA peer educators and the youth groups.

Social movement spaces that value prefigurative production practices and diversity, such as YMA, are fertile sites to examine how contentious conversations can influence collective identity work for youth engaged in making activist media. First, these sites are less marked by one racial, ethnic, religious, gendered, or class-based community and more likely to be composed of diverse communities with a common value, concern, or purpose. As such, these spaces confront the added challenge of building a collective “we” amongst youth of differing social and cultural backgrounds. Second, the prefigurative work of collectively producing oppositional media is a fruitful area to expose and analyze how peer youth educators deploy differing strategies to help youth negotiate their differing, contesting perspectives and backgrounds in the

is someone who simply finds a different way to live and wishes to be left alone,” whereas “someone [with oppositional views] finds a different way to live and wants to change the society in its light” (p. 42). While this is an interesting academic distinction, the terms for activist media are often interchanged and interchangeable in these circles. There are some more radical media groups that more explicitly identify their media as oppositional, radical, and/or activist.

process of modeling an alternative media system. To some extent, these negotiations can facilitate the formation of an intermovement collective identity but it tends to be a fairly short-lived one that waxes and wanes over the course of a 2-4 month community media training with a range of youth groups. Some participants in the community media trainings do develop a stronger sense of collective identity if they continue to work in media activist circles. Alternately, the peer educators carry a fairly strong sense of collective identity as they act as bridge leaders between the larger movement and participating community youth groups.

In this paper, I specifically examine the conversational strategies that YMA peer educators engage (*interpersonal openness* and *legitimation of conflict*) in an attempt – some successful, some failed - to leverage contentious conversations as a platform for intermovement collective identity work. This focus is directly tied to bringing into clearer view how contentious conversations surface in prefigurative work; what underlying assumptions, values, and interests inform these contentious conversations; and what role peer education models can play in utilizing conflict as a tool for collective identity work. I address an interrelated set of questions: What conversational strategies do peer media educators engage in an effort to build a shared sense of collective identity with differing constituencies of youth participating in community media trainings? Under what conditions do these strategies hinder, versus contribute, to collective identity formation for participating youth and peer educators? And more broadly, what are the implications of contentious conversations as a vehicle to engage youth in prefigurative social change work?

I assume a multidimensional approach to this analysis, which includes the conversational context from which contentious conversations emerge; the interpersonal, cultural, and political content discussed; and the strategies that peer media educators deploy to mediate multiple standpoints as they surface. I found that although the peer educators' conversational strategies did not always yield the intended results of a shared sense of identity, values, and action, the interactions carry rich information about how youth actively debate and sometimes transform their beliefs in these media making spaces.

Methodology

This analysis is based on an 18-month ethnographic study and a two year participatory action research project with Youth Media Action Center (YMA). Founded in 2000, YMA has built a strong youth-centered learning environment within a larger public access center. It is a multiracial independent youth media hub comprised of staff, peer media educators, and youth participants from varying ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds. The full time staff, all in their late twenties, is comprised of 5 positions – the director, education coordinator, outreach coordinator, production coordinator, and programming coordinator. In addition, there are 6 part-time peer media educators (sometimes called peer trainers), ages 16 to 25 who facilitate the educational and production workshops

for community youth groups throughout the city. Most of the peer trainers are college students or recent college graduates that have experience as participants or interns at YMA or another independent youth media group in the area.

YMA offers peer-to-peer media trainings that teach youth in community and school settings how to produce activist media from experienced peer media educators of their own age and background. YMA seeks the involvement from youth from disenfranchised communities including, but not limited to, youth of color, youth who struggle in traditional education programs, immigrant youth, LGBTQ youth, and youth from low-income families. The youth participating in YMA range in age between 14 and 35.

The ethnographic design included participant observation⁵ at YMA at in-house programs, community media trainings, and other related events such as media democracy conferences and public access hearings. I participated in, observed, and sometimes filmed community media trainings that were led by YMA peer media educators - Vamos, City Organizers, Urban Thinkers, and the Palestinian and Israeli Collective for Education⁶. The trainings ran for three to four months, and included a focus on media literacy, pre-production planning, storyboarding, filming, editing, and screening sessions. The majority of the YMA peer educators and participants were youth of African American and Latino descent between the ages of 15 and 25. Focusing on contentious conversations of production, I paid particular attention to three key themes – 1. the context of underrepresented youth groups making independent media; 2. the role of contentious conversations in prefigurative experimentation and do-it-yourself work; and 3. the role of contentious conversations in community building (i.e. facilitating and/or impeding collective identity work).⁷

⁵ My fieldwork amounted to 810 hours over the course of 18 months.

⁶ I assigned pseudonyms to represent the 4 groups.

⁷ In addition, there was a participatory action research (Cornwall and Jewkes 1995) component to this study that was funded by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) in the United States. My colleague Amy Bach and I worked with YMA to recruit a research team comprised of YMA staff as well 5 youth researchers that worked with us to design and implement a community needs assessment to examine the media needs and interests of urban youth. The youth researchers conducted 15 semi-structured interviews and 15 focus groups with YMA participants, peer trainers, community youth groups, schools, parents, and media activists that support YMA programs. We sought to create a youth-centered research process, which meant multiple feedback loops along the way. One pivotal feedback loop was a pilot focus group with YMA alumni who provided invaluable suggestions on ways to avoid academic jargon and make the focus group questions more accessible and compelling for the participating youth. These feedback loops were critical for the team to surface the inherent messiness of collaborative research in a manner that contributed to building a sense of trust and engagement in the research process (Bach, Castellanos, and Kulick 2010).

With a grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2005), I developed an analytical framework that examines the conversational strategies of peer educators: in the negotiation of difference and conflict. After coding to identify emergent themes and accompanying thick description, I engaged in a series of feedback loop sessions with YMA staff, peer educators, and participants in which I presented the themes and framework for the findings; and YMA responded with comments, corrections, and suggestions to enrich the overall analysis.

Locating contentious conversations

The general discourse on social movements tends to center on movements that have an explicit opponent with attention to political opportunity structures, resource mobilization, framing and diffusion strategies, collective action and identity, cycles of protest, and so forth with limited attention to how social movements are modeling or prefiguring change from within their groups and networks. This article centers on prefigurative work occurring in social movements to better understand what social change looks like when social movement organizations are attempting to model change from within, in their structures, practices, and values (Kulick 2013). In exploring this prefigurative realm, it has become increasingly evident that contention is deeply stitched into the process of prefiguration as actors confront differing and often contradictory ideas and values as a part of the larger process of enacting and modeling change in their everyday work.

The focus on prefigurative work affords a closer view of the ways that actors manage conflicting perspectives, differing values, and diverse identities in the collective process of realizing an alternative vision. Most conceptualizations of prefiguration pull from work on “free spaces” within and between social movements. Evans and Boyte introduce the term, “free spaces” in a fairly broad way:

Particular sorts of public places in the community, what we call free spaces, are the environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue. (1986:17)

Free spaces are qualified as “free” to imply community settings where individuals are free from the bureaucracy of large-scale institutions and atomization of private life. These settings lend themselves to the incubation of new ideas and visions where people “envision alternative futures and plot strategies to realize them” (Polletta 1999:3). Within the context of social movements, “free spaces seem to provide an institutional anchor for the cultural challenge that explodes structural arrangements” (Polletta 1999:1).

Polletta contends that the commonly used term, “free spaces,” would be conceptually more valuable if these spaces were disaggregated and distinguished according to patterns of mobilization and associative structures. As such, Polletta identifies the term “prefigurative” groups to characterize free spaces in which individuals with explicit oppositional ideas join together to

model the society the movement is attempting to establish in ways that “differ from those characterizing mainstream society” (1999:11).

While this definition is useful, there has been limited research in this area primarily because scholars tend to locate prefigurative practices in the realm of radical spaces, that is, autonomous zones, counterhegemonic groups, and do it yourself collectives with overtly oppositional political ideologies. While the focus on the political and structural arrangements of these groups is helpful in highlighting radical and “nonhierarchical” contexts in which prefigurative politics are practiced, it is somewhat narrow as it obscures how these politics penetrate a wider range of social movement spaces. Futrell and Simi suggest that prefigurative politics are “not necessarily a quality constituting an autonomous free space type, but can be understood as a continuous quality” of social movement spaces that seek to facilitate a sense of collective identity (2004:217).

By expanding the boundaries of what constitutes prefigurative work beyond radical political orientations and nonhierarchical structures, we can begin to discuss and better understand what groups with differing political orientations and organizational arrangements face in realizing an alternative vision. Formally, a public access media center such as YMA probably does not square with Breine’s and Polletta’s notion of prefiguration because YMA and the changing population of participating urban youth groups are not entirely radical or anti-hierarchical. But YMA does embody the spirit of prefigurative work with a focus on the development of alternative structures, practices, and experiences that begin to enact what is possible (Maeckelbergh 2011). From this standpoint, we can begin to examine how youth manage contentious conversations in the development of an alternative media system that promotes shared ownership, inclusivity, and solidarity.

This shift allows us to bring more attention towards process-oriented strategies or what Maeckelbergh calls the “how” or the means of organizing in which movement strategies or ongoing practices serve as “a reflection” of movement goals (2011:6). Futrell and Simi note, “prefigurative politics recursively build movement goals into the members’ daily activities and movement networks in ways that symbolize who they are and what they want not just as an end, but as a daily guide to movement practice” (2004:21). Breines asserts that these politics “create and sustain within the live practice of the movement” a vision of what social change might look like (1981:6). As such, political issues of power, resources, and other social forces play a large role in enabling and hindering groups and individuals in the imagination and realization of an alternative vision (Polletta 1993, Dowling, 2001, Echols 1989, and Stoeker 1994).

Attention to collective identity affords a closer view into “how” social change occurs in terms of how actors utilize conflict as a point of entry to discuss underlying assumptions and values that might otherwise go unheard. To a large extent, these contentious conversations that operate on the micro-level of everyday talk influence how actors hold and take into account differing meanings, identities, values, and interests in the collective process of enacting

an alternative vision. This dynamic is particularly relevant for youth who enter YMA spaces with a wide range of interests that do not necessarily fit neatly into the rubric of realizing an alternative media system. Discussion of underlying assumptions that surface in contentious conversations can also help groups steer away from the common trap of deploying stylistic approaches, representational practices and organizational hierarchies that reproduce some of the asymmetries of power in mainstream media, which they are attempting to reify.

In consideration of YMA as a multiracial youth media hub that seeks to prefigure an alternative media system for a diverse network of youth groups, it is also important to look to Flesher to explore the ways in which social movements seek to define their collective identity in terms of diversity, heterogeneity and inclusivity (Flesher 2010:299). In this prefigurative context, the collective identity work of “how people actually manage acting together and becoming a ‘we’” plays a significant role in informing the extent to which YMA can effectively work with a changing population of youth groups to co-create and co-inhabit an alternative media system (Melucci 1996:15). YMA and other movements (British anti-roads movement, global justice movement, and some eco-movements) “reject ideological purity and fixed identities on principle” (Flesher 2010:399). Rather, collective identity work oriented towards diversity operates as an ongoing process that emerges and functions differently within specific contexts (Turner and Killian 1972; Rochford 1985). In other words, the conditions of collective identity or “who we are” are relational, fluid, and dependent on differing contexts of social movement activity.

For YMA and perhaps most social movement organizations engaged in prefigurative work, a collective identity is necessary in enacting an alternative vision as actors continuously negotiate a shared sense of who they are, what they are attempting to build, how they are going to build it, and why they are doing what they are doing. It is only through the conversational transactions of actors examining their existing assumptions about a particular issue that they can begin to model something that attempts to address the inadequacies, injustices, or other shortcomings of the current system (Tilly 2002). With a constructionist view, the process of creating and negotiating a collective identity occurs within these media making spaces “as an emergent property of collective action and as an interactional accomplishment that is negotiated by members of the collective” (Reger, Myers, and Einwohner 2008:4). In other words, the prefigurative work of modeling an alternative system and making activist media operates as a mutually reinforcing process in which actors have a platform to discuss differing ideas, identities, and values. Under certain conditions, these conversational transactions can generate and create shared understandings, goals and a sense of cohesion (i.e. collective identity) amongst participants which can in turn influence the extent to which participants are engaged in the production process (Snow 2001; Tilly 2002).

Along with the focus on process-oriented or ongoing identity work, we also need to consider how these processes set the stage for the negotiation of difference

and conflict as activists seek to prefigure an alternative vision. Scholarly attention to intra and inter movement contention, while fairly understudied, points to some important cultural dimensions in everyday social movement work (Ghaziani 2008). While contention within social movements tends to be marked as a destabilizing and even a factionalizing force for structural arrangements, it can also be understood as a generative force in collective identity and action work (Gamson 1995, Balser 1997, Tilly and Wood 2002).

Amin Ghaziani self-identifies as perhaps one of the few scholars that frames “infighting” as a key social movement resource for cultural and political work in which actors actively debate everyday tasks as a way to uncover and debate underlying beliefs and assumptions. These interactions often occur within a small group framework that allows for the examination of the “contested nature of how culture emerges and is negotiated” (Ghaziani and Fine 2008:1). Paul Lichterman (1999) notes that building a sense of cohesion across identities depends on the willingness of activists to openly discuss their differing identities. This “identity talk” is culturally constructed in movement circles through interactive practices that can either increase or decrease tension between identity groups.

In the case of media activism, Carroll and Hackett assert that it is “characteristically embedded in other activist causes, so much so that it seems to be constantly transgressing political boundaries” and lacking a clear collective identity (2006:100). In clarifying this absence, they look to Melucci’s concept of an action system:

With media activism the action system, rather than being interiorized in a way that fosters collective identity, is exteriorized through constant engagement with other movements and progressive communities. However, if this form of activism is more about constructing a ‘politics of connections’ than it is about constructing its own composite action system, the lack of clear, regularized collective identity among activists may indicate their success in constructing the intersecting social circles that radical coalition politics requires (2006:100).

Mische also explores the “cross talk” between social movements noting, “social networks are seen not merely as locations for, or conduits of cultural formation, but rather as *composed* of culturally constituted processes of communicative interaction”(2003:258). We see these “cross talks” and “politics of connection” between YMA and partnering community youth groups. YMA operates as an alternative media hub or system that works with youth groups to make activist media about social issues. But these YMA community media trainings can also act as a conduit for raising controversial issues and discussions as youth decide how to collectively represent difficult issues such as urban violence, gentrification, teen relations, and so forth.

Amin Ghaziani asserts, “no analysis of social change can neglect the role of conflict” (2008:11). Building from scholarship on prefiguration, collective identity work and infighting, this study looks to independent media outlets to expand our understanding of how peer educators attempt to leverage contentious conversations as a potential site for intermovement collective

identity formation and negotiation in the prefigurative work of realizing an alternative media system. However, these conversational conflicts can be somewhat different from “infighting” in that they do not always carry across a number of interactional situations. Nevertheless, these exchanges can be particularly charged as youth invest and pool (to varying degrees) their differing experiences, values, and social locations into the collective process of producing an activist media piece. They can also be, as Ghaziani points out, critical sites for political and cultural work as these types of exchanges “bring to the fore cultural assumptions that may otherwise remain implicit” (2008:20).

I emphasize the “collective” nature of this cultural work of media making because it gets to the crux of this project, the role of conflict in prefiguring change. Since independent media groups both celebrate, and contend, with the challenge of turning complex social issues that they care about into oppositional media, it is an important site to examine how group dynamics of race, gender, class, and other power differentials inform the production of oppositional media. Precisely which social issues these groups choose to represent, how they negotiate difference and conflict in the process, and how their media pieces challenge the mainstream media landscape depends upon a number of intersecting factors including the social backgrounds of participants, the negotiating processes of collective production, the organizational arrangements of participating groups, the availability of resources, and other forces.

The following section details two YMA community media trainings with youth groups, *Vamos* and *Urban Thinkers*. In my analysis, I pay particular attention to the interactions between youth peer educators and youth as they relate to the larger context of urban disenfranchisement and resistance. The focus on the collective production of oppositional culture allows us to see not only the how the peer educators mediate difference and controversy but also how the context - the specific settings of the trainings, the social backgrounds and accumulated experiences of media educators and participants - play into the formation and negotiation of an inter-movement collective identity.

I also attempt to present the contentious conversations of the youth on a fairly wide scale. I do this with the aim of dispelling assumptions that some conflicts are more worthy of attention than others. Rather, I bring a wide angle to this paper with the hopes of highlighting the contours of how youth attempt to build a sense of collective identity through the negotiation of contentious conversations about interpersonal, cultural, and political struggles at the intersection of their accumulated experiences and social backgrounds.

The YMA peer media educators play a primary role in this identity work from which they seek to prefigure spaces for youth from various social change groups to engage media making practices as a conversational site to surface and discuss multiple standpoints and the underlying values and assumptions that inform their perspectives. The formation of collective identity in these media trainings signals a more transitory experience of collective identity as compared to what is typically represented in the literature. This more liminal experience is particularly relevant for social movements working with other movements, as a

sense of common ground between movements cannot simply be assumed. Building even a transitory collective experiences between movements require values similar to those used to characterize a collective identity – “a shared allegiance to a set of beliefs, practices, and ways of identifying oneself” (Whittier 1995:24). We see the potential for these qualities of connection to develop when peer educators and participants actively negotiate difference and conflict as part of the collective production process. As youth raise controversial issues, we see the relevance of praxis as participants reflect on their personal experiences and social locations to actively produce media that represent their differing perspectives (Freire 1994).

Interpersonal openness, keeping it real: Vamos youth collectively produce a PSA on “Experiences with Street Violence”

I begin this section with a summary of a community media training with the group, Vamos, to bring into relief the context of underrepresented youth groups making independent media; the conversational strategies that peer educators utilize to manage contentious conversations; and the possibilities and limitations of contention in building a collective identity.

In the fall of 2007, I attended the community media training in which the YMA peer educator, Soledad worked with the group, Vamos over the course of two months to produce a public service announcement (PSA). Vamos is a national not for profit organization, founded in 1961 to foster a “Latino consciousness” that supports Puerto Rican and Latino youth to better their lives through educational excellence and an ongoing commitment to leadership that advances the goals and cultural interests of Latino communities. The first day, I took the subway to the Duncan Avenue stop in the southern part of the city and walked a few blocks passing a handful of bodegas, a 99-cent store, some vacant storefronts, and McDonalds to arrive at the vocational high school where the after-school group Vamos convenes. Pedro, the Vamos youth coordinator, greeted me with a warm welcome directing me down the locker-lined hallway to the teacher’s lounge for the YMA media training. The students participating were four young men of Latino descent coming from different high schools in the neighborhood. Soledad grew up in this neighborhood, which served as a point in common between the participants and her. During the first few sessions, Soledad led the students through a number of team building and free write exercises to help the group shape a topic for the PSA based on an issue that mattered to them. The group decided on street violence and how they are surrounded by it.

Soledad’s approach to utilizing contention as a tool for collective identity work in many ways echoed her overall facilitation style that I am calling *interpersonal openness*. For example, during the second session Soledad distributed blue paper notebooks – the ones that are frequently used for in-class exams – and

asked the participants to free write about street violence. She encouraged them to write whatever comes to mind even if does not entirely fit with the topic:

Yeah, you can write about a fight you've seen, a fight you've been in, write about why you were fighting or how did you feel while you were fighting, why did you fight, why did you feel the need to fight. Whether it was a brother, sister, friend, enemy. And if you have a new thought in your head while you're writing, out of nowhere, you don't have to finish the sentence, just continue on the thought that you have in your head, you know?

After the participants finished doing the free-write, Keldrin, a fifteen-year old, read aloud his response to the group. He started by defining "fighting:"

Fighting is a form of violence due to anger or aggression at another person. People fight in my opinion for 3 major reasons. One is to impress others, second is because of self-hatred and third is because of anger towards another person. Well, as a matter of fact, people fight for a numerous amount of reasons, who am I to say why people fight? I've been in and watched plenty of fights. One fight, I was in about 8 months ago.... He stood about six feet, two inches tall with a slick black hair with the masculinity to take out four guys my size. However, this was not going to stop me... I approached him wondering if I was going to win or not. I know he was telling people how I was a coward.

Soledad probed further asking him how he felt when he was fighting. Keldrin responded, "I felt nothing. I was a different person inside." Soledad understood this and said, "yeah, you just become numb. The crazy comes out."

We see here how interpersonal openness yields some rich ideas as the peer facilitator and participants reflect on and dig into personal experiences and examples that relate to the larger topic for the PSA, street violence. Soledad shared about her experience with fighting as a young girl:

I fought in elementary school a lot, I was picked on. But my thoughts changed when I was in kindergarten, in the Dominican Republic, I got into my first fight, and I got kicked out of school because of it. Apparently, I started throwing rocks or something, got into a fight and then I threw a rock and then I got in trouble and I got kicked out. [The Duncan Avenue neighborhood] it's worse now than before when I was growing up there... growing up there, I felt the need to fight, with boys more than with girls. I guess I was more afraid of girls than boys. Because it was like even, if they did more damage to me, I felt bad. But if I fought with a boy, and he did more damage to me, I would have been like, oh, it was a boy.

The approach opens the door for youth to bring their personal experiences to the center of the media making experience in a manner that they might otherwise withhold in other situations. With this conversational strategy, we see the potential for the educators and participants to connect with each other and build a collective identity based on emotional connections that emanate from differing experiences of fighting.

The conversation between the participating youth and Soledad started to get contentious when the students interviewed each other on camera about their

experiences with violence and fighting. At one point, Keldrin interviewed another participant, Dominique. He set the stage with the first question:

Keldrin: “Dominique, do you feel like you're a violent person?”

Dominique: “I don't feel like I'm a violent person, but I mean, in some situations, when there's a fight, I am going to defend myself.”

Keldrin: “So, how do you feel after you've had a fight?”

Dominique: “I feel pumped, I want to fight again.”

Keldrin: “What do you mean?”

Dominique: “If I won a fight? A lot of people saw you so you are already pumped and you have the adrenaline, you can fight again.”

Keldrin: “But I thought you do not consider yourself a fighter why do you get pumped if you are not a fighter?”

Dominique responded with ambivalence that he did not know and proceeded to describe a fight that occurred when he was playing baseball last summer: “Well, this summer, I had a fight in baseball, I was batting in the first inning up and then the pitcher was throwing pitches, the first pitch, it almost hit me. Second pitch, it almost hit my leg. Third pitch, you know, actually hit me on my head. You know in baseball you don't do that, it's disrespectful...Then I started walking to first base, he [the pitcher] said something he started running his mouth, and we got into a fight there, after the game, there was a big team fight I don't actually know who won that fight, but we were still fighting.”

Soledad continued the interview with Dominique.

Soledad: “How did you feel afterwards?”

Dominique: “Afterwards, I felt even better that I beat his ass.”

Soledad: “You think your parents would be proud of you?”

Dominique: “Oh yeah.”

Soledad: “For fighting?”

Dominique: “Well, they were not happy about the fact that I was being suspended but they asked me, did you win? Did you hit him at least? I told them, yah. They were mad at everything except for the fact that I won the fight.”

Soledad: “Where do you think they learned to fight? Have they ever gotten into fights at school?”

Dominique: “I don't know.”

Soledad: “Maybe you should go home and ask your parents about any fights that they have gotten into since they're so proud of you.”

The tension was fairly thick in the room when Soledad encouraged Dominique to ask his parents about their experience with street fights. The conversation fizzled from there and it had an ensuing effect on the overall training as Soledad was left frustrated feeling a lack of cohesion and shared motivation for the media project amongst the participants.

A few months after the *Vamos* training, Soledad reflected on this interaction with her fellow peer educators and me. Soledad said to us, “I sounded a little mean...You know, I feel like I was being a little rude but it was so shocking to me that the parents were like great job, you fought and you beat his ass, you did great - kind of supporting his violent actions.” Her comments pointed to a tension that a number of the peer trainers confront. On the one hand, the trainers strive to cultivate spaces where youth feel comfortable expressing their perspectives even if they do not agree with them. On the other hand, the peer trainers expressed concern that they do not want to encourage street violence by letting statements - such as, “I beat his ass and it felt good” – go unexamined.

We see in this training a number of dynamics and contextual forces that influenced how collective identity was both facilitated and undermined through their contentious conversation about street violence. First of all, what makes this conversation contentious? Contention arose as the youth exchanged personal stories about a charged issue, the street violence that surrounds and sometimes envelops them. The contention builds when Dominique contradicts himself, saying that he is not a violent person but feels pumped when he wins a fight and, his parents are proud of him when he wins.

The group does form a boundary marker around their common background and their direct experience with street violence but is this sufficient for collective identity to form? On the one hand, Soledad’s use of interpersonal openness in the training is particularly effective in cultivating a safe space of belonging and community from which students feel comfortable exchanging stories from their lives and linking them to the larger context of their communities. Throughout the course of the training, Soledad repeatedly posed the question, “Why do you think people feel the need to fight? Especially being in...low-income communities?” The cultivation of a sense of solidarity is further bolstered as Keldrin and Soledad team together to challenge Dominique to unpack his multiple views of street violence. It is almost as if Dominique’s unwillingness to relent from his views operates as additional incentive for Keldrin and Soledad to probe further. Soledad faced a number of challenges during this discussion as she has to restrain herself from assuming, what she calls, the “Dr. Phil” position of advising participants on how they could approach a situation differently or more constructively.

At the same time, interpersonal openness can only go so far in facilitating collective identity. Given the vacillating views of the young men, it was challenging for Soledad to facilitate a space where the participants could begin to develop a collective oppositional consciousness about street violence. First, interpersonal issues such as “street violence” are a fairly charged terrain. Moreover, one could easily claim that the renunciation of fighting is a fairly

mainstream perspective so what makes their perspectives oppositional? How do their perspectives begin to challenge the dominant order? The fact that these young men are openly discussing their experiences and contradictory perspectives about fighting is oppositional in the sense that these young men grapple with the grey area that lies somewhere between a blanket renunciation of fighting and an unrelenting desire to fight. As they discuss their relationship to fighting and openly acknowledge the contradictions of not considering themselves fighters but also feeling exhilarated after a fight, they begin to dwell in this grey area that challenges the dominant order that street fighting is inherently wrong or bad.

While the peer approach of interpersonal openness can open a safe space for the youth to engage this grey area, it does not necessarily mean that groups know how to act or manage the ensuing conversations. Polletta (2002) contends that collective identity is not just the act of defining “who are you,” it is also a response to “how do we act?” Soledad’s line of questioning about how Dominique’s parents learned to fight points in part to an enactment of facilitation as she is encouraging these youth to explore how we are socialized to engage in violence. At the same time, her frustration and waning patience also affects her capacity to continue the conversation from a space of interpersonal openness.

While *Vamos* briefly participated by way of Soledad’s facilitation in the prefigurative work of making independent media within an alternative youth media system from which they could represent their own perspectives of street violence, their involvement was fairly short lived. Although the participants did begin to question and unravel their assumptions, the group did not reach a shared sense of understanding about street violence but they did begin trust each other enough to interview each other and gather footage for the public service announcement. In the end, Soledad edited the individual interviews into a coherent piece, which speaks to the lack of shared identity that can occur when participants collectively engage in the contested space of editing.

In addition, the context of a fairly stark, under-resourced room in a high school was not particularly conducive to the prefigurative work of participating in the enactment of alternative youth media system as most of these students spent most of their day in a classroom environment where their freedom of movement and communication was somewhat restricted. Some YMA staff and peer educators have noted that it is particularly challenging to conduct media trainings in school settings. Students become easily disenchanted with any form of teaching, even innovative ones, when they occur during school time or within classroom walls. Andrea, YMA director explained, “a lot of times our kids just shut down because they're still in school and are being asked to learn about media.” Unlike the *Vamos* training, most YMA trainings occur in community youth group spaces or at YMA where there are multiple activities simultaneously occurring and youth have more freedom to simply move around and embody the space however they see fit.

The next section shifts the discussion to a community YMA training with participants from the Urban Thinkers after-school program. The peer educator, Ina, employs strategies that legitimize debate and conflict, which in turn encourage participants to engage in a controversial discussion about the impact of video games on teen relationships.

Legitimizing conflict, inviting engagement: Urban thinkers collectively produce a live studio show on “Relationship Problems”

YMA participants frequently unpack the impact of popular culture, mainstream media, and underlying hegemonic messages in the collective process of producing their own videos. Debates tend to center on how a particular social force such as gender, race, or nationality gets played out in culture. In this section, I summarize a contentious conversation about the impact of video games on teen relationships that YMA peer educators facilitated during a community media training. Similar to the *Vamos* case, I present this case with a focus on the context, the peer education strategy of legitimizing conflict, and the role of contention in facilitating a sense of collective identity amongst the participants.

In January of 2008, I attended the youth media training that peer trainers, Ina and Majida facilitated with the group, Urban Thinkers. Urban Thinkers is part of a larger not for profit organization that acts as a conduit to support the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of comprehensive after-school programs in urban areas. These past few years, YMA has partnered with Urban Thinker high school students from disenfranchised neighborhoods that convene on Saturdays at YMA to collectively produce a live show about an issue of interest.

In the decision-making phase of selecting a topic for the show, the peer educators take an inclusive approach deploying a “deliberative process” that allows for diverse input and contributes to the overall strategic capacity of the project (Ganz 2000:1029). The Urban Thinkers devoted the first two three-hour sessions to brainstorming and defining a topic for the show. At the beginning of the second session, Ina walked over to the large newsprint that included a long litany of possible topics for the live show that she read aloud - relationship problems, mental and physical abuse, gang violence, drunk driving, arranged marriages, child brides, school conditions, Iraq war, global warming, poverty, pedophilia, materialistic society, alienation and friendship, sex education, racism, stereotyping, gossiping and self-esteem. There was no shortage of ideas. After reading the list, Ina reiterated what she had said the first day:

As I said, we can go as controversial as we want, we can express our own opinions, we can do it, basically, we don't have any censorship here at all, so we can do whatever we want.

To which Lee, a student of Chinese descent responded, “so we can curse?” Ina said, “we can curse” and proceeded to share examples of live shows in which

youth curse and choose to discuss controversial issues such as the War in Iraq, gentrification, and teen pregnancy from a youth perspective. After much back and forth, the students decided to focus their production efforts on “relationship problems” as it links to gender, culture, and media.

A contentious conversation erupted in the third YMA media training session about the impact of young men’s excessive use of video games on teen relationships. Aiesha, a female participant, remarked, “there are some guys who would rather play video games than talk to their girls.” Maeve and Savita, the two other female participants in the group, nodded their heads in agreement as the male participants, Lee and Mike crouched into defense mode. Mike replied, “there are a lot of causes of breakups.” And Lee argued, “I don't think video games can break up a relationship.” Savita disagreed, “No, I think, it could.” From there, Lee attempted to further explain his position, “That's because he's not interested in her in the first place, right?” He went on to personalize the issue by saying, “it's not like we [all young men] play video games all day and not talk to them [our girlfriends].” The students proceeded to analyze the situation proposing that sometimes people start dating to as Lee put it, “look cool or something” when they are actually not all that interested. Maeve noted, “there is a difference between how guys act around their girlfriends and how they act around their friends.”

In response to these comments, the peer educators relied on the conversation strategy, *legitimizing conflict*, as an invitation to continue the discussion. The females in the small group reported that they were having, “not an argument but like a...debate.” Ina, the peer educator responded, “I love debates...arguing, yeah, let’s go.” By saying “I love debates,” Ina legitimized contention as an important part of the media training experience. Savita recounted their discussion explaining that the young men in the group thought that video games do not affect relationships but she disagreed based on her observations of boyfriends that are “too busy” with their games and friends to talk to their girlfriends.

Lee was convinced that video game playing was a sidebar to a larger problem – “obviously, he doesn't like her! It's not the video game that's affecting the relationship, it's the fact that he doesn't like her in the first place....So he is like not interested in her so [he] like plays his video games or whatever.” Ina probed, “So why would he go out with a girl if he wouldn't be interested in her?” Maeve started to slightly shift her perspective on the matter, “so when you go out with a girl, do you stop everything that you love to do?” Mike, the only white person aside from me in the room, took a middle stance explaining that he would not stop everything but “I'm not going to spend ten hours playing video games.” Maeve remarked that it is not necessarily how much a guy plays video games but how he responds, “if I want to talk to you in that moment when you're playing the games.” Savita finished Maeve’s sentence explaining that the guy would probably respond, “no, I'll talk to you when I'm finished.” Mike and Lee questioned how ignoring calls from a girlfriend while playing video games actually affects the overall relationship. To which Maeve explained, “yes, it can,

because a girl can really get offended by it” and choose to end the relationship. Lee turned to his original argument that the video game playing operates as essentially a symptom for “bigger problems.”

Ina let the debate ensue for a few more moments. She affirmed the group’s differing standpoints by saying:

Okay I love that argument, let's go ask people [on the street] from different perspectives, one perspective of a guy that plays video games and [one] from the perspective of a girl who gets annoyed by that?

From there, the group started to think more broadly about questions that would encourage people in the street interviews to consider how gender roles affect relationships. Ina summarized their discussion by proposing the following line of questions:

Like, what are the roles for the men and what are the roles for the women?
Like, do we still have that dichotomy where the woman has to go to the kitchen, cook, and like, you know, look after the child or whatever and the man has to go work? Or have we broken that?

Maeve responded to her questions indicating that some people still embody those traditional ideals, “but I don't.” Ina encouraged the group to continue discussing gender roles but Majida, the other peer educator, a high school senior who is originally from Pakistan, took a different view, “I feel like this is a little bit too much.” Majida was aware of the time and concerned that if the students continued to unpack gender roles in relationships, there would not be enough time for them to go outside and conduct street interviews on camera. Maeve started to observe that the specific examples of gender roles, as she put it, “opened up more things to discuss, so this is like, a really, really big thing.” Ina gently urged them to go over the rest of the questions for the street interviews.

But the students had a difficult time surrendering the topic and the debate. Lee started another round:

If a person is in a relationship, right, and both persons have hobbies and things, right? And if they truly love each other, wouldn't they give each other, like, space, once in a while? I mean, the person, if you love someone, you would let them do what they would do for like a little enjoyment. You wouldn't like have a leash on them, would you? Cause you're not, nobody is controlling each other, right?

Lee’s take on the video games stemmed from the perspective that people should not have to relinquish their hobbies and overall independence for a relationship. Savita responded by posing the question, but what if the girlfriend experiences some kind of crisis, is it still okay for the boyfriend to focus on playing his video games? Lee agreed with Savita, “if something happened, then obviously, that would be so wrong, but like in your normal day.” Ina interjected here to suggest the question, “How much is too much? What are the limits?”

Ina proceeded to legitimize the conflict by summarizing the different stances that the youth were presenting. She explained,

I mean, from this side, I'm hearing that we're not talking about general hobbies and independence and stuff. Like, obviously, no one would come to you and be like, no, you can't go and play basketball with your friends, you've gotta chill with me every single second of your life. It's not about that, it's more about... instead of like, chilling with me ever, you're going to go watch TV all day or go play video games. It's more about obsessions, right? Is that what you're talking about?

Savita agreed and added that it also relates to our materialistic society and how people can get obsessed with an object to the extent that it undermines a relationship. Lee began to understand her vantage point, “okay, I get it, obsessions, you're talking about obsessions, okay. That's different. I wasn't thinking about obsessions, I was just thinking about every day.” Ina again encouraged the students to take these questions outside and Lee responded, “I am going to write this one down, how do video games affect relationships?” And Ina added, “Do you think it's normal to ignore your girlfriend's calls [when you are playing video games]?” Everybody laughed and moved onto another fairly heated topic, people's experiences with intercultural relationships.

In this contentious conversation, we see a number of enabling and impeding forces that influenced how Ina, Majida, and the youth participants collectively negotiated the gendered implications of gaming. First, the context of the conversation is important to mention. Unlike the *Vamos* participants that met in a fairly run-down school environment, the *Urban Thinkers* convened at YMA, a space that exudes youth centered culture with do it yourself signs and symbols of youth making independent media. These cultural aspects set a tone where youth can begin to see themselves engaging in social change work. The participants chose to attend this training on Saturday afternoon because of an interest in filmmaking or acting. While the *Vamos* participants were easily distracted and not particularly engaged in the YMA training, the *Urban Thinkers* almost immediately gelled as a group as they were eager to brainstorm and create the different parts of the show. In fact, most Saturdays the participants asked to stay longer to either watch another video or continue working on their show. The youth centered space and their already existing interest in media making contributed to their capacity to engage in conversations about controversial issues.

Second, the quotidian quality or everyday talk quality of the debate facilitates boundary markers for the formation of a collective identity. As a result of this shared familiarity, more of the participants have something to contribute to the conversation.

The *Urban Thinkers* unpack their use of video games as a “life politic” dilemma as they unravel a range of personal perspectives and experiences. Giddens (1991) notes that as social routines and practices activity such as food production, leisure activity, monetary transactions, and other forms of

consumerism are increasingly computerized and distanced across a wide scope of space, and disembodied from face to face encounters, they are increasingly tied to expert systems. Many social routines run by expert systems function devoid of ethical analysis, which can lead to consumer ambivalence and suspicion. As such, moral and existential questions arise such as the ones that the Urban Thinkers pose about video games, and we see the youth engaged in the “life politic”, or the politic of self-actualization, as they collectively uncover a renewed sense of awareness in attempting to link their everyday selves, bodies, and activities to the global stage of expert systems (1991:224).

Third, the peer educators play a significant role in deploying conversational strategies that legitimize and encourage the discussion among youth from underrepresented groups. Given that many of the youth view the peer educators as a mentor or role model, the peer educator’s positive response to dialogue about controversy greatly influences the overall tone of how the participants engage in contentious conversation. At the same time, the peer educators often find themselves on a tightrope negotiating the balance between friendship and leadership that they invoke in their interactions with participants. One peer educator, Vianka put it this way:

I flip flop. I be like, be quiet [and then], okay you want to hang out tomorrow. Yah I really flip flop because I understand that I am not that much older than them but it's kind of like a big sister, big brother role. It's much easier if you put it that way...because I am a big sister. I know that even though I still like to hang out and talk to my sister but I am still the big sister and there is still a level of respect that she has to have for me but at the same time I have to have it for her. So that's how I kind of see it, I put myself in a big sister role with the young people (Kulick 2013:245).

While the peer educators are peers in their desire to seek common ground and cultivate a shared identity between themselves and the participants, they are also educators with a particular ideology about who YMA is, how YMA acts, and why youth from marginalized communities play a particularly important role in the movement for independent media. These underlying agendas might prevent them from being entirely peers (Wood 2013). However, this flip flop and the overall peer to peer education model facilitates the possibility for youth-centered spaces from which youth can debate one another in the collective process of producing media that at least attempts to challenge the status quo.

However, the *legitimation* of controversial dialogue can backfire when it subsumes the conversation to the extent that the participants are unable to focus on anything beyond the debate at hand. The discussion can also turn tautological as we see a few times here when the participants use different words to say the same thing. The peer educator, Majida tuned into these tendencies as she encouraged the group to move on to the next topic.

The group was successful in building at least a short-term sense of collective identity, partially because of the conversational strategies that Ina and Majida employed but we also have to consider the collective process of producing a live show. The participants took on a fairly large production job with the live show

as they worked together to compile footage on a number of fronts including street interviews and a series of skits that they performed about relationship problems.

Interestingly, contentious conversations do not always translate into content for a media piece. In this case, the Urban Thinkers did not end up including the video games controversy in their live show but their conversation did contribute to their general capacity to engage other controversial issues such as interracial and gender dynamics in relationships which were key topics in the final live show.

Conclusion

Akin to recent works that privilege more youth centered experiences of activism and social change work (Akom et al. 2008, Bennett 2008, Coleman 2008, Chavez and Soep 2010, Gordon 2010), this article moves our attention to how youth engage difference and conflict through the prefigurative work of making media within an alternative media system. This case reveals that conflict and contentious conversations among youth do not necessarily reflect imminent danger, they can also represent the contested nature of collective action. Contention is a close relative to prefigurative work especially for youth who are already negotiating multiple, evolving and often contradicting perspectives. Ghaziani asserts that activists “use practical tasks to contest and clarify meanings of strategy and identity” (2008:314).

In the case of YMA, these practical tasks center on prefiguring an alternative system for youth to collectively produce independent, noncommercial media. The peer education model operates as a critical dimension of this collective identity work as YMA peer educators attempt to cultivate inclusive, egalitarian, and oppositional spaces for a changing population of youth groups. This process can be highly contentious for those participating. As such, YMA peer educators employ process-oriented conversational strategies – including interpersonal openness and the legitimation of conflict that are discussed in this article - in an effort to facilitate a space from which participants can at least begin to question their existing beliefs and potentially apply these shifts in consciousness towards their production practices and final media products. As the peer educators engage these strategies, they are also modeling ways for the participating youth to negotiate conflict as it does operate as a fairly prominent force for many youth as they transition from childhood to adulthood and confront the plentiful challenges that accompany this cultural transition.

The deployment of interpersonal openness can facilitate a safe space for participants to exchange experiences about difficult issues such as street fighting that might otherwise go unheard. This sensibility is particularly effective for peer educators working with groups that are reluctant to participate or connect the material at hand to personal experiences. The peer educator’s willingness to relate a given topic to his or her life sets the stage for others to contribute and begin to unravel existing beliefs and assumptions about a

particularly charged issue. This strategy can also backfire when interpersonal openness leads to an emotional conflict such as the one that Soledad experienced as she lost her patience with one of the participants who openly admitted that his parents congratulated him when he won a fight. This altercation points to a larger range of collective identity dilemmas about how to manage emotional conflicts that can surface across movement organizers/facilitators and participants as well between participants, and how do groups cultivate enough common footing, solidarity, or motivation to weather and endure everyday conflict. It also reveals the fine line that the peer educators walk in their desire to create a safe space that also challenges youth to uncover and probe their existing beliefs and assumptions.

The legitimation of conflict goes hand in hand with interpersonal openness as organizers attempt to affirm debates and conflict as a vehicle for understanding what might otherwise go unexamined. Encouraging the discussion of conflicting views also allows participants to engage multiple standpoints that interrogate and politicize issues related to lived experiences in ways that foreground underlying power dynamics and struggles associated with gender, race, social class, sexuality, and other social forces. We see this in the Urban Thinkers debate as gender and consumerism surface as factors undergirding the problems that participants have with excessive video gaming among young men. This strategy can also down spiral when the discussion gets tautological and participants become so consumed in the topic that it subsumes the other items on the agenda.

The examples of conversational strategies are by no means exhaustive but by highlighting the ways that power and difference are managed, they do provide an analytical lens for examining the ways that peer educators attempt to build collective identity when group conflicts arise. These strategies, when successful, contribute to a short-term sense of “we” that ebbs and flows over the course of a community training.

The focus on prefigurative practices also affords a closer view of the ways that today’s youth engage in activism and social change work. We see a changing citizenship in the digital age in which youth are moving away from notions of “dutiful citizenship” of civic obligation - based on voting and partisan, professional, and religious participation in formal politics - to an ethos of “actualizing citizenship” in which “citizenship is not merely inherited as found, but made through creative experience” (Coleman 2007:204-205, Bennett 2007). Peer education models facilitate the development of youth-centered spaces from which youth can begin to prefigure alternative media systems, practices, and content on their own terms. The focus on informal training and mentoring in youth media outlets allows youth to see one another as resources, which in turn facilitates connection, common footing, and difficult conversations between peer educators and participants (Kulick 2013). Contention is part of the creative experience of media making and other do it yourself practices as youth begin to render visibility to differing and often conflicting ideas, perspectives, and values that might otherwise go unseen. It is

my hope that the focus of this article on how youth negotiate contention and difference will open the door for more visibility and conversations about the many complexities and strategic dilemmas that groups face in finding ways to bridge difference in political objectives, cultural practices, and structural arrangements within and across social movement spaces.

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Cognitive dimension in cross-movement alliances: the case of squatting and tenants' movements in Warsaw

Dominika V. Polanska

Abstract

Squatting has been present in Central and Eastern Europe since the fall of state socialism and Poland is pointed out as exceptional in the development of squatting in the area. However, looking closer at the squatting environment in Warsaw reveals that the movements' successes are a result of a cross-movement alliance with the tenants' movement. The cooperation between squatters and tenants have in a short period of time gained a strong negotiating position vis-à-vis local authorities in Warsaw. The objective of this article is to analyse the mechanisms behind the cooperation of squatters' and the tenants' movements and in particular the cognitive processes behind the formation of an alliance. Specific research questions posed in the article cover how the cooperation between the squatting movement and the tenants' movement emerge in the city, and what cognitive processes characterize the cooperation. The empirical material for the study consists of altogether 40 semi-structured interviews with squatters and activists in the tenants' movement in the city. It is argued in the article that the development of alliance formation includes processes of defining common goals, underplaying of differences, and recognizing common strength. Moreover, in order to reach the point when the alliance is formed the process of recognition of common strength needs to be successful in both movements resulting in a shared perception of empowerment.

Keywords

Squatting, tenants' movement, collective action, alliance formation, social movements, Warsaw, Poland, Central and Eastern Europe

Introduction

Alliance building within social movements has been documented extensively among social scientists (i.e. Benford 1993; McAdam 1982; Polletta 2002; Rochon and Meyer 1997), however cooperative attempts and alliance creation across social movements has not been studied to the same extent (Beamish and Luebbers 2009; Lichterman 1995; Obach 2004; Rose 2000; Van Dyke 2003). Within-movements alliances might be smoother, as the actors involved often share common goals and repertoires of action. Cross-movement alliances, on the other hand, are associated with some fundamental negotiations running the risk of conflicts between different groups and competing interests. Moreover,

the process of alliance formation between social movements involves often an articulation of taken-for-granted issues within the movement that must be articulated and defended (Lichterman 1995). Beamish and Luebbers conclude that “cross-movement coalitions pose special problems for collaboration that cannot be sufficiently addressed through within-movement studies” (2009: 648) as they must merge divergent explanations and solutions to the issues they pursue.

The process of negotiating and reconciling distinctive explanations and answers to problems by social movements’ coalition work is interesting to examine further as it involves cognitive processes that can become crucial for the creation of an alliance. Cognitive elements in coalition work of social movements are, however, closely interrelated with structural and relational factors, and by revealing their interconnectedness we can start to understand the complexity of mobilization and cooperation processes. Cognitive processes are still an under-studied part of coalition work within and between social movements (dominated by studies on external conditions such as resource mobilization or political opportunity structures) and are given particular focus in this study. The cognitive process of dealing with differences is a field that needs scholarly attention, despite the fact that many social movement studies already cover conflicts within social movements on such issues as organizational structures, decision making, ideology, collective identity or cultural differences. Two social movements’ cognitive work when forming cross-movement alliances are in the focus of the study: the Polish tenants’ movement and the squatting movement.

Squatting, is often defined as “living in or using a dwelling without the consent of the owner” (Mayer 2013; Prujit 2003) and has been an important part of Western history since the 1960s. However, squatting has not been studied to the same extent in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). This is obviously related to the phenomenon’s delayed emergence in post-socialist milieus (1990s). Squatting in CEE occurred as a response to the developing alternative culture in the area, but also as an answer to the worsening of housing conditions (shortage and decay) along with privatization processes introduced in the ‘new’ economic system (Zuk 2001). The squatting environment in the Polish capital city, Warsaw, will stand in focus of this study, along with squatters’ coalition work with the tenants’ movement in the city. The squatters in Warsaw define themselves as a radical kind of movement and strive to be independent of existing institutions, organizations, or other formal actors and are motivated by ideological reasons. They organize according to decentralized models of networking and prefer direct action, as their main action repertoire. The tenants’ activists in Warsaw, on the other hand, are usually organized in the form of associations. The vast majority of the most active associations in the city were founded between 2006 and 2008, however there are also older and smaller organizations working with tenants’ issues. Tenants’ associations under study lack any financial assistance from abroad and are driven by a small group of most dedicated members. As it will be shown further on, tenants’ activism has

been motivated, not so much by ideology, but more by pragmatic reasons like their housing and socio-economic situation.

Looking at the development of squatting and tenants' movements in other settings we can observe the interconnectedness of these movements in their emergence (Castells 1983; Corr 1999; Katz and Mayer 1985; Owens 2009). In the Polish case the movements emerge and develop separately after the fall of state socialism and initiate cooperation first in recent years. What is most interesting about this cooperation is why it is taking place now and how it unfolds and is interpreted by both movements.

The objective of this article is to analyse the role of different mechanisms behind alliance formation between squatters' and tenants' movements and add to literature on alliance building in social movements, and in particular on cognitive mechanisms' role for alliance formation. By studying the process of alliance formation and its cognitive elements, I develop three important aspects in the cognitive process behind alliance formation and illustrate how these aspects are perceived, processed, negotiated by the involved actors, and how differences are handled.

The article begins with a presentation of previous studies on the topic of squatting including its links to the tenants' activism, both international and in the post-socialist context, where the development of the squatting movement and the tenants' movement in Poland and Warsaw is depicted. Next, the theoretical approach of the study is presented and described in relation to the aim of this article. The empirical material and methodological considerations are presented next. The analysis of the empirical material follows with the focus on the history of squatting and tenants' activism in Warsaw, and focusing on the processes behind the emergence of an alliance between squatters' and tenants' movements. I conclude that relational, cognitive and environmental mechanisms interplay in the mobilization of collective action and cooperation between social movements. However, the cognitive mechanisms are emphasized and it will be argued that in order to reach the point where the alliance is formed, the cognitive process of recognizing common strength needs to be successful in both movements. To reach such recognition the actors need to identify common threats and potential outcomes, but one of the most crucial components is the collective perception of empowerment.

Previous studies on squatting and its connection to tenants' activism

Squatting movements have been observed in the West in Europe: Italy, Germany, Spain, Great Britain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, France and in the US since the 1970s and 1980s (Bieri 2002; Martinez-Lopez 2007; Pruijt, 2003; Mudu 2013; Thörn et al. 2011; Owens et al. 2013; Corr, 1999). Squatting movements' goals have been described as utterly different from case to case and researchers have portrayed squatting as aiming at distributing economic resources in a society in a more egalitarian way (Corr 1999), squatting

as enabling and providing self-help (Katz and Mayer, 1985), squatting as counter-cultural and political alternatives (Lowe, 1986), squatting as providing housing alternatives (Wates 1980), squatting as an expression of Do-It-Yourself culture (McKay, 1998), squatting as a struggle for a better society (Kallenberg 2001), or squatting as a manifestation of political/ideological activism (Della Porta and Rucht 1995; Katsiaficas 1997; Ward 2002), squatting as counter-cultural expression of the middle classes (Clarke et al. 1976) or squatting as both a result of housing shortage and search for ideological alternatives (Karpantschhof 2011). Even if these mentioned studies are far from exhaustive for the research field of squatting (especially as they cover only Western contexts), they give implications for the variety of explanations (that vary with their specific contexts and over time) used in order to understand the squatting movement in the West.

In the literature on squatting the activism among tenants is often mentioned and separated from the very definition of squatting. Tenants' activism is defined as self-help activity, where squatting or occupying a dwelling might be inevitable, but is not the very goal in itself, as it is in squatting (Pruijt 2013). The development of the movements has however been intertwined and is often mentioned in the literature on squatting. For instance Corr (1999) has described the development of a squatter organization closely connected to organizations of homeless people and tenants in the US in the 1990s and concluded "squatters and rent strikers have often supported each other because both resist eviction and because many of their arguments, tactics, and movement trajectories have similarities" (1999: 9). Katz and Mayer (1985) have studied the development of the tenant self-management movement in New York City in the 60s and 70s and illustrate how this movement is intertwined with the squatters' tactics and repertoires of action. Tenants' movements' interests are here encompassing organization of squatting that is considered as a self-help tactic.

However, the connection between squatters and tenants is not exclusive to the North American context. Katz and Mayer (1985) analyse also the 'rehab-squatting' in West Berlin in the 70s and describe squatting as a tactic for the tenants and community activists 'to stop the deterioration, forced vacancies and speculation carried on by private landlords and developers' (1985: 33). In the case of squatter settlements in Latin America the squatters took over land informally and over time their activity was organized as tenants' communities (Castells 1983; Ward 2002). One of the largest European squatters' communities is located in Amsterdam. There the history of squatting was interwoven with the history of tenants' committees fighting for affordable housing already in the 1930s (Owens 2009). Owens emphasizes, however, that the identities of tenants and squatters were separated as "tenants used squatting as a tactic, however, they did not think of themselves as squatters, let alone as squatters' movement" (2009:47). The clear division between the squatters and the tenants, and at the same time their interconnectedness throughout the history raises some interesting questions on the relationship of the two movements and the nature of their cooperation. The ambition is to focus on this

relationship in this study, but in a different context that hitherto has been explored in previous studies.

Looking at the Central and Eastern Europe, the emergence of squatting centres since the fall of state socialism has been characterized by a moderate scale, however it has intensified in the last ten years. What is an evident difference to the cooperation between tenants' and squatting movements described above, in the Polish case the cooperation comes about long after the movements' emergence in 1989. In the other cases in Northern America, Western Europe or Latin America, the squatting and the tenants' movements cooperate closely almost from the beginning of their existence but develop separate movement identities. In the Polish case this rapprochement between both movements is of more recent date, and previous studies, although scarce, reflect it clearly. In Żuk's (2001) study of new social movements in Poland in the 1990s he describes the origins of squatting in Poland and states that squatting should be interpreted as a new phenomenon in the Polish context that is connected with the development of an alternative culture in the country in the 1980s. Żuk argues furthermore that Polish squatting is drawing its inspiration mainly from its Western counterparts, as it lacks a tradition in Poland. Piotrowski's (2011a) study of Polish, Czech and Hungarian squatted social centres demonstrate that squatting in CEE is both need-based, in other words caused by the need for housing (also the presence of vacant buildings), but also politically motivated. However, the squatting movement is described in both studies as grounded in a subcultural identity and from the beginning not interested in tenants' issues, only in its own development and consolidation. Among the few who have studied squatting in Central and Eastern Europe we find Holm and Kuhn (2013) who have examined squatting in East (and West) Berlin in the 1980s and 1990s. Squatting has also been touched upon in studies on the alter-globalist movement or alternative cultures in post-socialist societies (Piotrowski 2011b; Schwell 2005; Gagyí 2013). Still, all of these studies treat squatting as a movement on its own, not including the tenants' movement or cooperation between the movements in the analysis.

The same case is evident in studies of tenants' activism in Central and Eastern Europe, where tenants' activism is treated separately from the squatting movement. There are studies from the 1980s and the first years of transformation on housing and environmental movements in Hungary, Estonia and Russia (see Pickvance 1996; 1997; 2001) that show that housing activism has been driven by severe housing shortages, and the activists leading it have had access to significant cultural and material resources with clear goals of improvement of their living situation. Their activism is in other words caused by their living/housing situation, and not ideological beliefs, like in the case of squatters. Nothing is said about the squatting movement here either. However, something changes in the field of housing activism in the area in the last ten years and is reflected in the research on the situation in Poland. New studies are published where both squatters' and tenants' claims are presented, however not explicitly as squatting and tenants' movements, but under other labels such as urban civil societies (Zagała, 2008), right-to-the-city mobilizations (Płuciński,

2012; Grubbauer and Kusiak, 2012) or studies on more formal organizations such as district councils, common-holds or housing cooperatives (Matczak, 2008; Peisert, 2009; Sagan and Grabkowska, 2012). The aim of this article is to add to this scarce literature and shed light on the cooperation between the tenants' and the squatting movements.

Mechanisms altering collective action and alliance formation

In this article the theoretical approach is inspired by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly's distinction between environmental, cognitive and relational mechanisms constituting collective action (2001). This approach combines the now classic theoretical explanations in social movement studies; the resource mobilization approach, the political opportunity structure approach and the approaches focusing on social relations, identity and culture as main explanations behind collective action. McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly argue that relational mechanisms are causal mechanisms that alter connections between individuals, groups and interpersonal networks, but they combine this with environmental and cognitive mechanisms. Environmental mechanisms are externally generated and affect the conditions of social life. They include such important factors as the political opportunity structures, possibility of resource mobilization or other conditions or threats in the environment of the collective actors. Cognitive mechanisms are defined as individual and collective perceptions, where culture plays an important role and collective actors' perceptions, attitudes, decision making and dynamics are in focus. These three mechanisms are overlapping in processes of collective action and are all parts of multidimensional context of collective and collaborative action. This analysis focuses on how cognitive elements are working in conjunction with the relational and environmental mechanisms and its starting point is the crucial role that cognitive mechanisms can play in alliance formation processes.

Thus, the specific interest of this study is alliance formation and cooperation between collective actors and how these are affected by cognitive mechanisms. In previous studies on social movements the alliance building process *within* social movements has been examined extensively, however there are still considerable gaps in the empirical and theoretical literature on alliance building processes *across* social movements. Alliances across movements differ as cooperating or forming alliances within the same movement, but between different groups is qualitatively different from forming alliances between different social movements, whose goals might be shared, but whose causes are often different. The aim and contribution of this article is to illuminate the field of research of cross-movement alliances further and the case of cooperation between the squatting and the tenants' movement in Warsaw is used in order to illustrate the mechanisms behind alliance building in social movements.

Moreover, the ambition is to present a detailed study of the alliance building formation and, in contrast to previous studies that tend to emphasize what might be categorized as environmental mechanisms: external conditions

affecting collective action (Staggenborg 1986, Van Dyke 2003), to concentrate on the cognitive level and highlight cognitive mechanisms involved in alliance building distinguishing perceptions, along with the strategies and choices made by collective actors involved in cooperation in relation to these perceptions. Among the cognitive mechanisms that will be presented in the study three aspects of the social processes will be identified behind the formation of an alliance: *defining common goals*, *underplaying of differences*, and *recognizing common strength*. These aspects will be analyzed in order to examine the formation of an alliance between squatters' and tenants' movements in Warsaw. It will be argued that these aspects of alliance formation processes are idealtypical and sometimes their boundaries are fluent. Defining common goals and underplaying of differences often take place simultaneously. However, it will be argued, in order to reach the point when the alliance is formed that the process of recognizing of common strength needs to be successful in both movements. To reach such recognition the actors need to identify common threats and potential outcomes, but the most crucial component is the collective perception of empowerment. Empowerment, or the awareness of collective power among the collective actors, mobilizes them to act collectively and collaborate in order to reach their goals. I argue that the calculation of costs and benefits of potential outcomes of an alliance can be difficult to assess to movements at a given point in time, however, the sharing of a perception of empowerment, the recognition of the power of collective action, is crucial in the decision to form an alliance and ultimately reach social change. One important question to be asked here, apart from the question on *how* alliances are formed, is also the question of *why* the alliance is taking place now and how it is explained at a cognitive level by the movements.

In the case presented, the threats causing mobilization among the squatting and the tenants' activists will be presented and the cognitive processes behind an alliance between the movements will be outlined. Moreover, as we have seen in previous studies, cooperation between squatters and tenants is not uncommon, but has been in previous cases initiated much earlier in both movements' existence in other settings, often gradually resulting in separate movement development.

The definition of alliance formation in this article covers collaboration between two or more social movement organizations on the same task. According to Van Dyke and McCammon (2010) alliances can take a variety of forms and be more or less long-lasting, however, the partners always keep separate organizational structures. Alliance building, furthermore, is often in social movement literature associated with greater levels of success of social movements and higher probability of bringing about social change (Van Dyke 2003).

Social movement researchers have diligently exposed the factors facilitating cooperation and alliance building (to mention some; Polletta 2002; Rochon and Meyer 1997; Van Dyke 2003; Lichterman 1995; Obach 2004; Rose 2000). Among facilitators of alliance formation and cooperation there are both environmental and cognitive mechanisms to be observed. Van Dyke's study

(2003) point out heightened levels of threat or opportunity, the access to abundant resources and high levels of identity alignment among the actors as influential factors to the probability of alliance building. Additionally, in the interpretation of inspiration and facilitators behind cooperation and alliance formation scholars have highlighted the role of movement structure, ideology, resources and culture (Polletta 2002; Staggenborg 1986; Van Dyke 2003; Beamish and Luebbers 2009). Cultural expectations and their role, along with repertoires of organization and styles of commitment are underlined in the study of Beamish and Luebbers' (2009) for the understanding of collaborations within and between social movements. Others stress the presence of brokers as decisive for the initiation of collaboration across social movements (Obach 2004; Rose 2000). Brokers function as spiders in the web by connecting already existent social relations and forming new ones. Brokerage's function is to transcend differences, and it can therefore lead to scale shift in collective action.

Social relations create and shape identities that determine participation in collective action (Passy, 2003). Studies of participation in collective action have shown that identification is a prerequisite for collective action and it is formed by shared norms and values created in social relations (Melucci 1996; Corrigan-Brown and Meyer 2010; McAdam 1982; Diani and McAdam 2003). The presence of shared norms and identities is unquestionable in the case of squatters and tenants. Squatters' often sub-cultural orientation and clear views of anti-systemic character function as a common denominator and starting point for collective action. Tenants, on the other hand, share a common identity based in their economic and housing situation (often facing eviction). Even if their incentives for collective action can vary, their common picture of the causes and position vis-à-vis the authorities (both politicians and civil servants) function as common denominators for mobilization and collective action. Nevertheless, it is no surprise that there are some considerable differences in the squatters' and tenants' shared norms and identities (Owens 2009). The goals of their activism may also differ, even if studies have shown that parts of their repertoires of action and some tactics are shared (Katz and Mayer 1985; Corr 1999). What is interesting is how they negotiate differences and similarities between the movements and how this process is interpreted.

Even if it is tempting to draw parallels between the mechanisms behind collective action and alliance formation and their outcomes in the case of alliance building between squatters and tenants in Warsaw, for analytical purposes the mechanisms facilitating collaboration and the very results of such collaboration will be separated in the study. The achievements of the alliances will be referred to when the development of both movements is described, but it is the mechanisms linking the mobilization of collective action and its outcomes that will be focused on here, and in particular their cognitive dimension. Mechanisms are defined in the study as basic causal components of social processes altering 'relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations' (Tilly and Tarrow 2007:29). Moreover, in the description of the cognitive, relational and environmental mechanisms no analytical distinction will be made between threats and

opportunities, as these are overlapping and interacting with each other when facilitating (or constraining) collective or collaborative action (Tilly 1978).

Methodology and empirical material

The empirical material for the study consists of altogether 40 semi-structured interviews, 20 conducted with squatters and 20 with activists in the tenants' movement in Warsaw. Interviews were conducted with members of different Warsaw-based squats (Przychodnia, Syrena, Czarna Śmierć (no longer existing), Elba (no longer existing), Wagenburg, Czarna Żaba (no longer existing), Okopowa (no longer existing), Fabryka (no longer existing)¹) and with activists of the three biggest and most active tenants' organizations (Warsaw Tenants' Association, Committee for the Defense of Tenants, and Social Justice Office) along with tenants' activists in smaller tenants' associations or "un-associated" tenants' activists (see more explanations below) in the city in Spring and Autumn 2013.

The criteria for choosing squatting activists for interviews were three: 1) the first was that they would identify themselves as squatters, 2) the second was that they should also have been a part of a squatting collective (recognized by others as squatters) living at a squat in the city at some point in time and 3) thirdly that they at the point in time of the interview still were active in the squatting scene in the city (not necessarily living on a squat), in order to be able to reflect upon the recent developments within the movement. Squatting is not the easiest social milieu to access for a researcher, not being a part of the movement. Having interviewed representatives in the tenants' movement first I have over time gained some important contacts and gate-keepers (that were used strategically in order to gain access to the field). Most of the interviewed squatters were in their late 20s or 30s with the youngest respondent in the age of 26 years and the oldest of 44 years and a mean age of 30.7 years (see Appendix for more information). The length of their squatting activism (defined as living or being active at a squat) varied from 6 months to 14 years (mean 6.55 years). The choice of covering interviewees with different experience and length of squatting in the city was strategic and aimed at including as many nuances/perspectives of this kind of activism as possible. Six of the respondents had the experience of being active at only one squat and the rest had at least the experience of more than one squat in the city or beyond it (also abroad). Nine men and eleven women were interviewed.

In the interviews with tenants' activists the majority of the respondents were involved in the three biggest and most active tenants' organizations (*Warsaw Tenants' Association, Committee for the Defense of Tenants, and Social Justice Office*). In the selection of interviewees I have covered the leaders of the associations, but also other activists involved, in order to cover different

¹ As squatting is a temporal phenomenon, squats emerge and disappear over time from the map of a given city. For that reason even squats that no longer exist are included in the material.

perspectives coming from different positions within these organizations. Moreover 8 of my in total 20 interviews were conducted with representatives from other, much smaller associations active in the city along with tenants' activists not affiliated with one specific association, but rather identified by themselves and others as important actors in the tenants' movement (categorized in the Appendix as "un-associated", without any formal membership in any of the associations). Thirteen men and seven women were interviewed and the average age of the interviewees was 45.2 years, with the youngest interviewee being 27 years old and the oldest 65. The length of their engagement in tenants' issues (defined quite broad as formal and informal activism related to tenants' issues) varied from 2 years to 20 years (mean 8.25 years). The respondents were mainly involved in tenants' issues, however a few of them were active members of political organizations and trade unions.

The respondents among tenants were contacted by e-mail, and informed about the aim of my study. Some were recruited by snowballing technique. The squatters were recruited either by a snowballing technique or with the help of a gate-keeper. An interview guide was distributed to the respondents beforehand and they were encouraged to speak at length about the most engaging topics. Interview questions were formulated similarly to both groups and encompassed information on both individual motives, experiences with squatting/tenants' issues and collective strategies, practices, internal and external relations within a specific squat/organization, alliance formation and general characteristics of a given squat/organization. When it was possible the questions even covered respondents' interpretations of changes over time (depending on the length of their activism) in for instance practices, relations, attitudes and so on. All respondents are anonymous in the material and the quotations used are designed not to reveal any sensitive data about the respondents (numbers are used instead of names, with no correspondence with the list of interviewees in the Appendix).

Interview data was chosen as the aim was to cover activists' perceptions of their engagement, on how they perceive the activity of their squats/organizations, but also to cover the more informal or personal features of their engagement and social relations. The interviews have been transcribed and systematically coded by the author (content analysis) developing themes. Some of the themes found in the material reflected the questions posed to the respondents, however also other themes appeared. The main themes found were: *definition of activism, identification of main problems, solutions to the problems, emotional work, decision-making, cultural and historical context, relations and cooperations, conflicts, media/public opinion/dominant discourses*. These themes have been divided in sub-categories, and the theme of interest for this study is the one on the relations and cooperations, however not excluding features of the other themes as they are interconnected, in particular the theme of *conflicts*. Sub-categories were derived from the theme on *relations*: internal relations, external relations, conditions, tensions and conflicts, strategies, adversaries, and others. The theme of *cooperation* includes categories of: alliances formed and possible alliances, non-thinkable alliances, decision making, strategies,

goals of alliances, brokers, dealing with differences, dealing with emotions, threats and opportunities. The analysis presented here is based on this theme and in particular in the description of the three aspects of alliance formation process.

The choice of interviewing activists in the capital city can be justified with two arguments. The first is on the specific movements at study and the aim to study alliance formation. Warsaw is the city where this alliance formation has had significant outcomes. The cooperation between Warsaw's squatting scene and the tenants' organizations in the city is interesting as the urban activism that emerged in the capital city since 2000 has been intensifying in the recent years, and tenants and squatters have played an important role in this intensification. Moreover, the tenants' and the squatting movement in Warsaw have reached some considerable achievements in the city in the last five years that need closer scholarly attention, especially when examining the emergence of an alliance and cognitive processes behind it. The cooperation between squatters and tenants in the city gained in a short period of time significant recognition in the politico-institutional context and possibility to influence local housing politics, as it will be discussed later on in the text. Furthermore, the capital city is interesting as it offers a landscape of diversity, larger number of people, greater access to resources (material, symbolic and cultural), closeness to the political institutions and educated and skilled individuals, and the presence of a variety of social movements and a specific sort of dynamic on the social movement scene that is harder to find in smaller agglomerations. Nevertheless, the selection of this kind could entail biased information on the character of alliances undertaken by social movements. Yet, the cognitive processes behind alliance building between social movements, although triggered by external conditions, could hopefully be generalized to other contexts.

The development of squatting and tenants' movement in Warsaw

The first squatting attempts occurred in the capital city in the second half of the 1990s (Żuk 2001). The number of squatters in Warsaw was limited in the end of 1990s and the beginning of 2000s, but over time it increased² The squatters are closely connected to the anarchist environment (but not entirely) in the city and consist of young adults, most often students or graduates in precarious

² The very first squatting attempts in Warsaw were initiated in 1996 by the Student Autonomist Action that squatted a vacant building, owned by the Warsaw's University, at Smyczkova Street. The building was re-squatted several times during a two-year period until eviction in 1996. The following squatting attempts in the city were rather short-lived and located outside of the city centre (*Twierdza* 1998, *Czarna Żaba* 2002, *Okopowa* and *Spokojna Street* 2002-2003, *Furmania* 2003, *Spółdzielnia* 2005; *Czarna Śmierć* 2011-2013). The most long-lasting squatting attempts in Warsaw to be mentioned are the *Fabryka* squat 2000/2002-2011 and *Elba* squat 2004-2012. *Skłotpol* is at present an association, where ex-members of *Elba* negotiate about a new location with city authorities.

employment positions (short-term contracts, under-employed, un-employed) and with clear links to sub-cultural lifestyles (predominantly leftist, anarchists, punks).

There are four squats known to the public existing in Warsaw, at the time of writing (Autumn 2014). Among them there is *Syrena (the Mermaid)*, a symbol of the city of Warsaw), a centrally located squat, active since 2010 and working with housing and tenant's issues, workers' rights, food cooperatives, and the Street university: workshops covering teaching of foreign languages, bowling, singing, yoga classes, bicycle reparations, massage instructions, and so on. Not far from *Syrena*, there is *Przychodnia (the Clinic)*, located in a former medical clinic), opened in 2012, mainly focused on cultural activities, but also on right-to-the-city-activism. *Wagenburg* (trailer camp and eco-village), is a residential squat, existent since 2007-2008. It does not organize any cultural activities, and is mainly working with sustainable and ecological living. The fourth active squat is the newly opened A.D.A ('Aktywny Dom Alternatywny/Active Alternative House') (April 2014), concentrating on alternative social and cultural activities.

The general ideology that is shared by the present squatting environment in Warsaw is to create a space for radical anti-capitalist, anti-consumerist, anti-fascist, anti-homophobic, environment-friendly, feminist, LGBTQ-conscious, DIY(Do-it-yourself)-inspired action. What is common is that the membership in these squats is based on commitment and the most committed members are either included as residents in the squats, or as members of the 'collective', the team. Warsaw's squatters' goals are to offer alternative cultural activities (cf. Lowe, 1986) and to provide housing alternatives (cf. Wates 1980). However, as it will be discussed later on, the main focus of squatters' activism in the city has since 2010 shifted towards political activity and the cooperation with the tenants' movement. Ideological and political motives form the basis of such actions and are furthermore fuelled by the severe housing shortage and increasing socio-economic inequalities in the country along with national and local housing policies (increasing evictions, vacant housing buildings, re-privatization processes, rising costs of housing, shrinking municipal housing stock, and so on).

The very first tenants' association in Poland was founded in 1989, the *Polish Association of Tenants*. At present, about 40 associations working with tenants' issues in the entire country are registered, and the most active ones are located in Warsaw. There are three large and widely known associations working with tenants' issues in Warsaw: *Kancelaria Sprawiedliwości Społecznej (Social Justice Office, hence KSS)* founded in 2006, *Warszawskie Stowarzyszenie Lokatorów (Warsaw Tenants Association, hence WSL)* founded in 2007 and *Komitet Obrony Lokatorów (Committee for the Defense of Tenants, hence KOL)* founded in 2008. There is also the *Polska Unia Lokatorów (Polish Union of Tenants, hence PUL)* established in 1994, however the association is struggling for existence due to the high age of its core members and an inability to attract new members.

Tenants' associations' main activities encompass providing legal counselling for tenants; organizing protests, demonstrations, meetings, campaigns and eviction blockades; dissemination of information on housing issues (to the media, to the authorities, to the tenants, and so on), writing of petitions and legal act amendments. Tenants' activism in Poland is of grassroots character; however it is quite limited in numbers. It organizes around a core of activists and most often takes the form of associations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and is different from the squatting activism in the city as it functions within the politico-institutional order and is formed along a formal structure with representatives and specific rules on financing, regulation, membership, and so on. Tenants' movement in the capital city started off as a self-help movement of tenants of re-privatized buildings, municipal and social housing, but has especially since the end of 2009 and beginning of 2010 focused its activities on political activism, increasingly addressing the national level in their demands and claims.

The emergence of cooperation and defining common goals

The cooperation between squatters' and tenants' movements in Warsaw can be dated to the emergence of the squat Syrena in the city in 2010. Syrena's emergence established a somewhat different profile among the squatters in Warsaw. At the time that Syrena was founded the squat Elba and Fabryka were still existing in the city. Syrena consciously and strategically developed a profile different from the profiles of the existent squats (perceived as mainly concentrated on cultural activities), concentrating on tenants and housing issues in the city. According to the activists involved in the Syrena squat there was a gap in the local squatting scene not covering housing activism that was regarded as superior to cultural activities (perceived as not "serious" enough) dominating the scene:

Because I simply feel that we are burning ourselves out and if there were also other places, there would be some rotation, mutual support and inspiration and getting engaged in each other's activities, building larger coalitions for different serious goals. And at the moment I have this feeling that we are doing important things, that since Syrena exists and we have been opening flats for people, we have opened more of them than the city has opened municipal flats, or almost the same number. So I have this feeling that more could be done, and at a smaller cost. We could do more if there were more places like this [squats or other left-wing spaces] (13).

The depth of the housing crisis was overwhelming to the activists and Syrena-squat became the leading actor in this matter. The driving force was to broaden the scope of activities and develop the squatting movement further. Cultural activities encompassing organization of concerts, workshops, and classes were aimed to be broadened to political activities involving tenants' rights, but also migrants' and other minorities. More practically, in the case of Warsaw squatters, this meant that tenants' organizations were invited to cooperate with the squatters and the Warsaw Tenants' Association (WSL) to hold their

meetings and weekly counselling with tenants at the Syrena squat. Since then squatters and tenants began to coordinate their actions and participate in each other's meetings, demonstrations, eviction blockades, and so on. However separate organizational structures were kept. This rapprochement of Syrena and one of the largest tenants' associations in the city successively established links between the squatting scene and the tenants' organizations active in the city. Mutual trust was built over time and positive views of the unification of squatters' and tenants' struggles were spread among the activists. Tenants perceived squatters as 'unconditionally supportive' and squatters perceived tenants as fighting the consequences of the economic (and housing) system they opposed. In the interviews the squatters were expressing positive views about the activity and cooperation with tenants and described the two movements' as intertwined. When asked about the connection between the squatting and the tenants' movement the link was outlined by one of the squatters:

Because in declarations such a connection [between squatting and tenants' movement] is for sure there. When we were publicizing squatting, we were always trying to bring attention to that. For example there were meetings of tenants' groups in WSL... and on the other hand for example in Przychodnia – and Syrena does that a lot too – we admit people who were evicted from their flats or houses. If we assume that squats are a part of the tenants' movement, then for sure their PR activity is to sensitize the public to the issue of unoccupied flats, to the fact that there are many municipal buildings that are standing useless. It for sure is laying foundations to the tenants' movement. The tenants' movement can criticize municipal policy, while the fact that there are unoccupied flats is an expression of this policy. So the fact that these unoccupied flats are getting occupied indirectly is also a criticism of municipal policy. I treat it as one and the same (6).

The struggle of both movements was portrayed as the struggle for the same goals, although some of the tactics and the causes of mobilization differed. From the tenants' point of view the link to the squatters' activity was portrayed in a similar way as by the squatters. Moreover, the tenants emphasized similarities in goals and action repertoires. Here in the words of a tenant activist highlighting the complementary characteristics of both tenants' and squatting movements:

I would definitely include it [squatting] in the tenants' movement. All the more since a great movement is taking place at the squat. It makes you think. However, I think that squatters add some freshness and fast acting. Besides, they have a similar action structure, I don't know how to call it. It is a kind of incidents, quick organization, action, or something like the blocking of an eviction, it complements perfectly here (14).

The complementary character of the cooperation of tenants' and squatting movements was also recognized by the interviewed squatters. Some even portrayed both movements as parts of a bigger whole (urban movements), where squatters and tenants fight for their rights side by side, by filling different functions.

I think it [squatting] naturally becomes a part of urban movements which I think last year got a second wind. And these are urban movements that are not even strictly activist, but these are simply people who want some changes. I think they are mostly disappointed in the fossilized character of this city and they want some other forms. So on one hand we have the tenants' movement and people who directly experience the shitty housing policy of the city. On the other hand there are people who create food cooperatives, who want to shop in a different manner that is offered to them. We have squats, people who want to live differently and do something differently than it is offered to them in this urban space. And in this context I think we are a part of an organic whole. Organic also because these are the same people that are engaged in different things, are active in diverse fields (6)

The definition of common goals of the squatting and the tenants' movements in the city has since 2010 been developed and presented by both movements under different occasions. Two such important occasions have been the solidarity action and participation of the tenants' movement in a demonstration against the eviction of a squat in 2012 (Elba) that gathered 2000 participants, and the the initiation of meetings with local authorities (meeting with district authorities of Śródmieście and Żoliborz, but also city authorities in meetings with the Center for Social Communication and the vice-president of Warsaw). The common demand of tenants and squatters, brought to the meetings with authorities, was to establish Tenants' Round Tables, where the representatives of tenants' organizations and different squats along with the city authorities would take part, and this demand was met in 2012 when the round tables in the city took off. There were some other demands posed during these meetings, but these were specific for the needs of each movement (for instance on new location of squats in the city).

Since 2012 the cross-movement alliance has solidified further and the field of activity broadened to the national level when Warsaw's tenants' organizations and squatters entered formal meetings with the minister of Transport, Construction and the Maritime Economy, Piotr Styczeń, responsible for housing policy in Poland in 2013. Housing policy and the situation of tenants in the country was discussed at a series of meetings with the minister. The very initiation of the meetings, where tenants' and squatters' representatives were invited to speak to the minister on issues concerning housing, gave recognition to the movements as important political actors. The outcomes of these meetings still remain to be seen, as the meetings are planned to continue in 2014.

The underplaying of differences by identifying enemies

The most evident differences between the squatting and the tenants' movement in Poland are their organizational structures, their social composition, and their motives of activism. Previous studies show that movement structure can play an important role for the probability of cooperation between movements (Beamish and Luebbers 2009). However, this seems not an obstacle to the cooperation of squatters and tenants in the Polish case. Squatters organize in informal

networks according to the principle of horizontality and non-hierarchy. Tenants organize in NGOs (non-governmental organizations or associations with formal leaders), following the politico-institutional order. Many of the tenants' formal leaders are also very charismatic and well-known persons in the local environment, while squatters avoid hierarchical structures and are mostly cautious when choosing spokespersons for the movement. In the interviews the differences in organizational structures are mostly reflected in the respective movement's reflexivity where tenants' formal leaders reluctantly admitted that they were the leaders of the movement, continually repeating that the decisions were made among a larger group of members (in this way addressing the critique of squatters of hierarchical organizations). As for the squatters, most of them admitted difficulties involved in a horizontal model of decision-making, in particular if it required that all of the members of a collective were to be satisfied by the decision taken (in this way addressing the issue of inefficiency pointed out by more formal and hierarchical organizations).

Moreover, interviewees' emphasize age differences between the movements and squatters are generally described as young adults in their 20s and 30s and tenants are described as older generations. Despite that the organizational structures and the perceived age difference between the two movements, they perceive themselves as sharing common goals. Here in the words of a tenant activist:

I admire these people [squatters], I need to admit. I admire them because they are young people that sacrifice their free time for cultural activities for children or for organizing foreign language classes. They do a lot. You can always count on them. Whenever we need their help, if it is about a poster, or something else, they never deny. They are up-to-date with tenants' issues. They always join us whenever we need them. I simply admire them. I have very good contact with them, even if I call them the "third generation". First there is me, then there is my son, and then the grandchildren. And they are children, for me they are children, and so are you. I have kids older than this, they are in their 40s (10).

The age difference between the squatters and the tenants' activists is more often brought up by the tenants in the interviews, than by the squatters. The interviewed tenants express amazement with the young age of the squatters and their engagement, loyalty, energy and readiness to act. They connect tenants' more mature age with some specific life experiences leading to insights that they are surprised to find also among squatters. What is focused then is the common ground of neo-liberal critique and critique of Polish and local housing policies and the will of doing something collectively. Whenever the age differences are mentioned in the interviews, they are immediately put in relation to the similarities between movements and positive and complementary characteristics of their activists.

As to the motives and goals of both movements, tenants' organizations oppose the neoliberal logic prevalent in the housing sphere and demand the right to housing and dignified living conditions. Both movements' consider housing as a public matter (not private), even if they differ in their views on how housing should be managed (commonly versus taken care of by the municipality).

Similarities in views are emphasized, and in particular, in what is demanded from the local authorities.

The authorities wanted to break up the movement and close it in the shape of lifestyle, alternative culture. And us, different persons from the tenants' and squatters' environments wanted to act against it, to do the opposite, to broaden the area of criticism as much as possible, to show the common denominator – that it's about the right to the city, about the city budget and spending more on needs and not on some spectacular trinkets (8).

Few of the interviewees mentioned differences in how the solutions to the housing situations are perceived by both movements. Instead, they stressed the importance of the demands put on the local and national authorities. This strategy, of change of focus from possible differences in views to similarities in demands was expressed in interviews with both movements.



Picture 1. The portrait of Jolanta Brzeska on the wall of Syrena squat stating "To the memory of Jola Brzeska. You will not burn us all".

The squatting and the tenants' movement share some alignment in demands/goals and in the views on sources of inequalities. An example of this ideological alignment and rapprochement between the two movements is the shared icon of Jolanta Brzeska (born 1947), who was the founder of the WSL, and was burned to death in 2011 and has since become the symbol of both movements. Tenants' and squatters' interpretation of Brzeska's murder³ is that she was murdered due to her activism and her picture has become an icon for

³ The investigation of Brzeska's death showed that she was murdered, but the evidence in the case was lacking and the main suspect could not be sentenced. Also the investigation included a psychological profile of Brzeska excluding the possibility of suicide.

the both movements and a symbol of common ideology (of the weak fighting the unjust system).

In a situation where squatters rely on an ideology allowing only self-accumulated resources and tenants find it difficult to attract external resources (in the form of economic support) the cognitive processes stressing similarities and the mutual exchange of resources: symbolic, material and economic, favours both movements by empowering them and making their activities more effective. In this way some specific weaknesses are turned into strengths and ideas are exchanged. Here in the words of a squatter:

Squatters – if they are for example connected with the anarchist environment – in my perspective have less experience in negotiations, they don't go to meetings with bureaucrats, they haven't gotten the hang of different municipal resolutions, they don't follow it or write official letters. And on the other hand I see the people from these associations in that way, so we could learn that from them, but also they could learn from us an open formula of meetings, or that... well, no, actually they also go out on to the streets a lot and do a lot of things that could be called direct action, so it would be difficult to say that it is something that they hadn't known (15).

The aspect of underplaying of differences and emphasizing similarities plays an important role in the process of alliance formation. It allows the collective actors to focus on similarities and in particular in cross-movement alliances, compared to within-movement alliances, it holds a bridging function. The differences are left aside, at the same time as the movements can keep their specific characteristics (social, motivational and ideological) and organizational structures. In Figure 1 the above mentioned arguments used in the bridging of differences between the tenants' and the squatting movement are summarized. We can see that more instrumental and pragmatic arguments are highlighted by both movements in the process of alliance formation, over the more ideological ones.

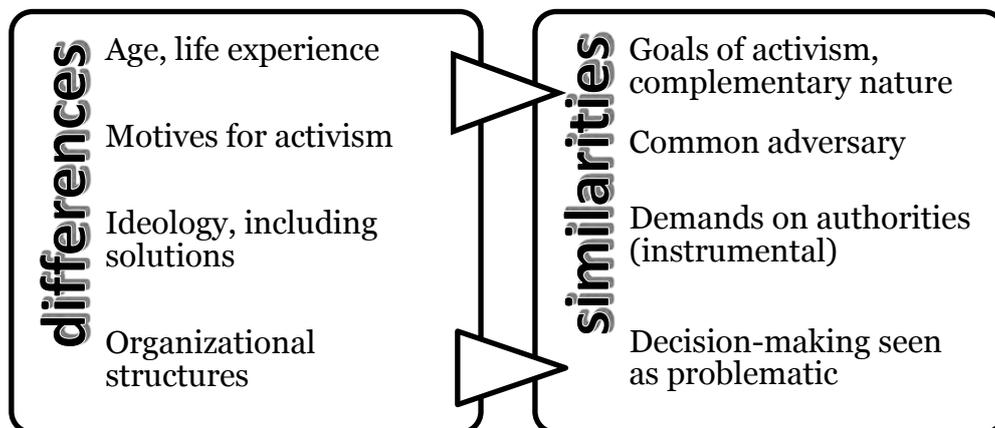


Figure 1. Arguments used in the process of bridging differences between movements

Recognizing common strength and empowerment

The cooperation and solidarity between the squatters and tenants was put to test in 2012. The ultimate external threat was directed towards the squatting environment in the city with the eviction of the squat Elba in March 2012, and I argue that it resulted in a culmination of squatters' and tenants' struggles and a further rapprochement between them. Despite that the eviction of the squat was unavoidable (and not fully unexpected) the squatters' demonstration organized days after the eviction succeeded in gathering a considerable number of participants, among them supportive tenants' organizations. In the Polish context, where tenants' demonstrations usually gather between 100 to 300 participants and where the most well-established and long-lived squat, Rozbrat in Poznań, had succeeded in gathering at most 1500 supporters when the squat was threatened by eviction in the 2009, 2000 demonstration participants is a considerable, if not exceptional, number for such a radical left-wing social movement. The eviction of Elba was shortly followed by the opening of a new squat, Przychodnia, and a wide coverage in local and national media. Many of the interviewees described the events following the eviction as the most successful in the history of squatting in the city. For the first time, the media was perceived as positive towards the phenomenon of squatting in the city and the subject was given considerable coverage. The interviewees recognized a change of attitudes in the dominant perception of squatting. In the citation below one of the squatters of Przychodnia described how the attitude of authorities changed due to the successful mobilization of participants in the demonstration, but also due to the links to Western examples of squatting made in the media:

But we could see that they [the police and local authorities] slowly started to back off, someone thought that maybe we could talk and not be thrown out by force. I think that the reason for this was the demonstration which showed our strength. And they were a little overwhelmed with the size of the event, they expected a small group of bums that live in a den and smoke cigarettes. Hanna Gronkiewicz-Waltz [the then president of Warsaw] made her famous statement about the fires in Wawer. Suddenly the media started to report about Elbląska [Elba squat] and talk about squatting. They began to take out all the material, show what squatting looked like in the West, the examples of Berlin, Christiania and all that is the most commonly associated with squatting. And I think that someone in some office began to understand that it wouldn't be a good decision to kick us out by force. Because people started considering squatting as having some value. And we started talking (2).

The main change in the perception of squatting, as described by the interviewees, was the move from the stereotypical perception of "bums that live in a den" to a view of squatters, as civilized actors making clear political statements. The demonstration was followed by an invitation of squatters to the talks with district authorities (of Śródmieście and Żoliborz districts) and eventually to a dialogue with city authorities (Center for Social communication and Warsaw's vice-president). For the first time, since the first squat was established in Warsaw in the end of the 1990s, city authorities were open to a

dialogue and willing to negotiate with squatters. An alliance with tenants' organizations in the city was formed when the opportunity opened and the squatters became invited to talk to the district authorities. Prior to that only Syrena was in close collaboration with tenants' organizations, but as the squatters were invited to a dialogue with the authorities an agreement was reached between the different squats in the city and the tenants' organizations on which conditions to pose, when, at that point in time, the negotiating position of squatters was perceived as favourable by both movements. The squatters described the demands posed as combining tenants' (Round Table) and squatters' (new premises) particular interests:

So we [the squatters and tenants] developed this stand, through very long and emotional debates, that we issue the city an ultimatum: that we would give the building away [of Przychodnia] on the condition that we would agree on, where we could be active, and that the talks of the Tenants Round Table would be resumed, because they were stopped a while earlier. These were talks about the housing policy of the city between the tenants' movement and the city authorities (5).

The process of arriving at the final demands to be posed was described as challenging and different conflicts within and across the movements were mentioned in the interviews (mostly encompassing disputes on which claims to prioritize, what conditions were acceptable and what risks could be faced, but also on whom to include/exclude from the talks). However, these were once again smoothed in the overall strategy to stand together vis-à-vis the authorities. The focus was shifted once again towards the authorities (local) and squatters' and tenants' attitude towards the authorities remained cautious through the process of negotiating. They were perceived as a threat to the squatters' and tenants' movements and as their strategy was interpreted as 'divide and rule', making the alliance between the movements inevitable. Here in the words of one squatter:

It seems to me, that it was quite uncomfortable for them [local authorities] that we stood up together with tenants about the same issue and insistently connect these matters as pointing out flawed legal solutions, while they wanted to talk separately about culture and separately about flats, which they gave us to understand very clearly. So from the city's perspective it is probably uncomfortable, and for us it's cool because it is an alliance in which we can support each other (15).

The initial purpose and reaction of the city authorities was described in the interviews as a success of the alliance of tenants' and squatters' movements. The strength of cooperation was emphasized as the crucial factor behind local authorities softened and welcoming attitude. The situation, following the demonstration, required some strategic decisions on claim-making and alliance formation on the part of squatters, in order not to be reduced to a definition of a cultural phenomenon or a lifestyle. For the tenants the alliance also opened up an opportunity to enter the discussions with the local authorities, side-by-side with squatters and to practice pressure politics, by showing a coherent and coordinated position vis-à-vis the authorities.

The aspect of recognizing common strength was described in the interviews when both the authorities, but also the squatters were overwhelmed by the support the demonstration against the eviction of Elba gets, and also by the subsequent reaction of the authorities and the recognition of strength of joining forces. In the interviews the squatters consequently used the term “ultimatum” given by the squatters to the authorities, and interpreted their position as favourable in the negotiations with the local authorities. Tenants on the other hand recognized a renewed opportunity to pose their claims in a joint action, and stressed the number of participants in the demonstration as extraordinary and interpreted it as significant pressure put on the authorities. Two years before, in 2010, the tenants’ movement in the city succeeded in calling for an extraordinary meeting of the City Council that in 2011 resulted in the Warsaw Housing Meetings organized by the City Council. The goal at that point in time was to initiate Round Table meetings where the tenants’ organizations could take part and influence local housing policies and the outcome (Warsaw Housing Meetings) was perceived as a failure within the tenants’ movement in the city and was heavily criticized in the interviews. The opportunity of reaching the goal of Round Tables opened again when the squatters entered the talks with city authorities in 2012 and brought tenants with them. The tenants’ activists did not conceal their gratitude towards the squatters in the interviews. Here in the words of one tenant activist:

Warsaw Tenants’ Association owes the squatters for these talks. [...] I think this was the reason why Warsaw authorities decided to have these talks. Because squatters gave a postulate on this round table, and it is why it is taking place, it is why it exists today (1).

Hence, in order to form an alliance the strategies in internal movement relations became to underplay the role of differences between tenants and squatters in an environment where different threats and powerful enemies were facing them. Instead, similarities between the movements in repertoires of action, demands or goals were emphasized as a strategy. The process of recognition of common strength was described by the interviewees as an important step towards alliance formation. In describing this process the decisive point in alliance formation is the shared belief in the ability of the alliance to make a positive change, in the potential power of collective and collaborative action.

Conclusions

The alliance between the two movements could be explained as a result of the interaction of environmental, cognitive and relational mechanisms (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly 2001), but the aim of this study has been to focus on hitherto neglected dimension of social movement studies, the cognitive dimension behind alliance formation. My argument does not exclude the different kinds of environmental mechanisms, including political opportunity structures and access to resources, that are important facilitators of cooperation. However, the crucial point in the alliance formation between the tenants’ and the squatting

movements was the threat and opportunity included in the invitation of squatters to formal meetings with the local authorities (first on district level, later on city level) that were the result of the demonstration against the eviction of a squat and a successful squatting attempt of a building in the city. This threat and opportunity was translated in the movements into an awareness of a favorable position and a perception of empowerment. Once the definition and goals of the movement were aligned and differences handled by focusing on the adversary, the only tipping point for the decision to form an alliance was to interpret the common position of the movements as enough powerful to make a difference.

This article contributes to the field of research of cross-movement alliances by filling in an important gap on the cognitive mechanisms behind alliance building in social movements. The article has highlighted cognitive mechanisms involved in alliance building by distinguishing perceptions, along with the choices made by collective actors involved in cooperation in relation to these perceptions. Three aspects have been distinguished in the formation of an alliance: *defining common goals*, *underplaying of differences*, and *recognizing common strength*. The three aspects can be seen not only as cognitive elements of alliance formation processes, but also as reflections and articulations of collective identity processes. The first aspect- the defining common goals - is a crucial part of collective identity formation and collective action as it requires a presence of a “we” that is characterized by common features and solidarity (Della Porta and Diani 1999). Moreover, as the “we” is created, it is always constructed in relation to an “other” or several “others”, where the “other” might be an adversary “against which the mobilization is called” (Della Porta and Diani 1999: 94). Melucci defines collective identity as created between individuals and recognizes adversaries as important for the creation of collective identity (1996). Moreover, the creation of collective identity is not only a negotiation of boundaries between different groups of actors, but also within groups (Gamson 1997) and this negotiation can bring together different and even contradictory definitions (Melucci 1995). An invaluable ability when negotiating common identities and goals is the skill to underplay differences and focus on similarities. Melucci (1996) emphasized the benefits of negotiating differences in collective identity formation. The pointing out of similarities and differences functions as a negotiation between which qualities and values are to be seen as acceptable and important, and which not. These values form a base for solidarity and underplay the risks of collective and collaborative actions when solidarity and collective identity are consolidated (Della Porta and Diani 1999: 94) and thus allow for the recognizing of common strength on the cognitive level.

The main argument put forward here has been that in order to reach the point when the alliance is formed the cognitive process of recognizing common strength needs to be successful and the perception of empowerment shared among the involved actors. It might be true that ‘since people tend to work more aggressively to avoid losses than to achieve gains, grassroots mobilization is more likely to flow from the emergence of new threats than from the prospect of

beneficial opportunities' (Heaney and Rojas 2011: 48). However, in the case of alliance formation between the Polish tenants' and squatting movements the interesting part of this process has been the cognitive dimension that reveals the ways in which movement process information and make decisions to form alliances based on collective interpretations.

Finally, I would like to call attention to the changes that are evident in the successes of the tenants and the squatters' movements in Warsaw, but can easily be generalized to the whole situation of urban social movements in Poland. The emergence, persistence, cooperation and influence of these movements, point to some significant changes that are going on in the field of urban activism in Poland since 2009 and 2010. These changes deserve close scholarly attention in the future, especially the more radical and informal forms of urban activism, as these are still unexplored. What are the causes of these changes? What role do alliances between different actors play in these changes? What causes and conditions these coalitions and how are they handled within and between the movements?

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Appendix

	SQUATTING interviewees	Gender	Age	Lenght of squatting activism
1.	Syrena	Woman	38	6 months
2.	Outside of Warsaw/Elba/Przychodnia	Woman	28	5 years
3.	Fabryka/Elba/Wagenburg	Man	28	10 years
4.	Abroad/Czarna Smierc	Man	26	2 years
5.	Elba/Przychodnia	Woman	33	9 years
6.	Elba/Przychodnia	Man	27	6 years
7.	Outside of Warsaw/Elba/Wagenburg	Woman	32	13 years
8.	Abroad/Syrena	Man	27	8 years
9.	Czarna Zaba/Elba/Wagenburg	Man	26	11 years
10.	Elba/Syrena	Man	27	8 years
11.	Twierdza/Czarna Zaba/Okopowa/Fabryka/Elba/Wagenburg	Man	35	14 years
12.	Elba	Woman	35	4,5 years
13.	Fabryka/Czarna Zaba/Elba/Syrena	Woman	27	11 years
14.	Elba/Przychodnia	Man	36	5 years
15.	Elba/Syrena/Przychodnia	Woman	32	4 years
16.	Elba/Skłotpol	Woman	34	6 years
17.	Elba/Skłotpol	Woman	44	4 years
18.	Przychodnia	Woman	26	2 years
19.	Syrena	Man	26	2 years
20.	Elba/Syrena	Woman	27	6 years
		Count: Men=9 Women=11	Mean: 30,7	Mean: 6,55 years

	TENANTS interviewees	Gender	Age	Lenght of engagement
1.	Warszawskie Stowarzyszenie Lokatorów	Woman	65	5 years
2.	Warszawskie Stowarzyszenie Lokatorów	Man	58	6 years
3.	Warszawskie Stowarzyszenie Lokatorów	Man	34	8 years
4.	Warszawskie Stowarzyszenie Lokatorów	Man	44	19 years
5.	Warszawskie Stowarzyszenie Lokatorów	Man	27	4 years

6.	Komitet Obrony Lokatorów	Man	55	6 years
7.	Komitet Obrony Lokatorów	Man	39	6 years
8.	Kancelaria Sprawiedliwości społecznej	Man	64	10 years
9.	Kancelaria Sprawiedliwości społecznej	Man	57	19 years
10.	Kancelaria Sprawiedliwości społecznej	Woman	40	9 years
11.	Kancelaria Sprawiedliwości społecznej	Man	36	4 years
12.	Kancelaria Sprawiedliwości społecznej	Woman	64	6 years
13.	Stowarzyszenie Hoża 27	Man	46	6 years
14.	Polska Unia Lokatorów	Man	58	16 years
15.	Stowarzyszenie Grunt to Warszawa	Woman	35	2 years
16.	Tenants' activist, un-associated	Woman	30	7 years
17.	Tenants' activist, un-associated	Woman	35	2 years
18.	Tenants' activist, un-associated	Woman	29	6 years
19.	Tenants' activist, un-associated	Man	27	4 years
20.	Tenants' activist, un-associated	Man	60	20 years
		Count: Men=13 Women=7	Mean: 45,2	Mean: 8,25 years

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Democratic uprisings and protest politics: an analysis of the organizational structures within the Occupy San Diego social movement

Lindsey Lupo

Abstract

This analysis explores the decentralized, horizontal, and participant-centered organizational structure of the Occupy movement, focusing particularly on disconnections between the rhetoric and reality surrounding the organization and mechanisms of the movement. Utilizing an original data set focused on the case of Occupy San Diego, I draw primarily on two research methods: survey research and direct observation. I find that – when asked directly – the movement participants often offered strong verbal support for the leaderless structure, the highly consensual form of decision-making, and the diversity of participants. However, our observations tended to uncover some challenges to and frustrations with these organizational aspects of the movement. These findings contribute to our understanding of the nature of prefigurative social movements, particularly with regard to the gap between expectation and reality. In the conclusion, I offer some suggestions for closing this gap in future non-hierarchical, mass-based movements.

Keywords

Occupy, protest, San Diego, organization, structure, social movement

Introduction

On October 7, 2011, two weeks after the Occupy Wall Street movement launched in New York, Occupy San Diego protesters gathered for the first time in a prominent downtown park near the San Diego harbor. From there, they marched about a dozen blocks to the Civic Center Plaza, where many of the participants set up camp for the next few months, officially kicking off their “occupation” of San Diego. Along the way, they carried signs and banners that signaled a deep distrust and abhorrence of the dominant social, economic, and political power structure – one that they viewed as corrupt and imbalanced (“People Over Profits – We Are the 99%” and “Corporate Greed and Endless War Crashed Our Economy” are just two examples). In reference to the bank and corporate bailouts of a few years prior, they angrily chanted “We got sold out! They got bailed out!”

Approximately 1,500 protesters from all walks of life gathered that day. As Karla Peterson wryly described in a *UT San Diego* article on October 10, 2011, “There were dreadlocks and John Deere caps. [San Diego] Padres windbreakers and John Lennon T-shirts. There were strollers and tambourines and sleeping bags

for the people who are in it for the long haul.” Indeed, over the next couple of months, hundreds of protesters spent their nights in downtown’s Civic Center Plaza. Though the numbers dwindled over those months as police raids and arrests took their toll, by early December, a core group of approximately 150 protesters remained in the Civic Center Plaza encampment.

This article explores the Occupy San Diego movement during a critical period of time: the weeks after many were cleared from the plaza during the police sweeps of late October but before the encampments cleared out of the plaza entirely. In short, this project analyzes a movement in a transition phase, when its most dedicated activists are highly visible and active, yet after many of the initial protesters have headed home.

This analysis seeks to deepen our understanding of the larger Occupy movement, by offering a detailed case study of a major, urban Occupy site. In particular, this analysis focuses on the disconnections between the rhetoric and reality surrounding the organizational structures and mechanisms of the Occupy San Diego movement. Therefore, a brief description of the organization of the movement is worth noting here, before moving on to a deeper discussion of the chasm between rhetoric and reality.

Some of the movement’s main components were horizontal accountability and non-hierarchical organization, with an emphasis on the lack of centralized leadership as a strength of the movement and a “living out” of their anti-elite message. For many in the Occupy movement, the intention was to create alternative structures that offered participants many access points, a contrast to what they claimed to be the problems of the American political system. Thus, the internal focus was on consensus building among the diverse group of movement participants. Decisions were to be made collectively, intentionally in contrast to the top-down, elite-driven manner predominant in American politics. The internal nature of the movement then – with its consensus norms of decision-making and egalitarian models of leadership and participation – reflected the external focus of the movement as a disruptor to the status quo. Put simply, the Occupy movement organized its own participants in a manner meant to starkly contradict what they argued was a dearth of real public – and truly democratic – participation in American politics. In short, the Occupy San Diego movement organized itself in alignment with the goals they had for the larger political and social world, with a focus on consensus, equality, non-hierarchical structures, and widespread participation.

But did participant hopes for this organizational structure match the reality of how it functioned? Our research indicates that, when asked directly, the Occupy San Diego participants strongly favoured such a system of organization, as they overwhelmingly emphasized that it was necessary to create these alternative structures within the movement, so as to influence and pressure the larger political system to do the same. However, during our observation period of the Occupy San Diego movement, we detected many challenges to or weaknesses in the horizontal and decentralized organizational structure. These challenges and

weaknesses tended to reveal themselves informally or indirectly, typically during deliberations, informal interactions, and meetings.

A few in particular are worth noting here. First, while the respondents did tend to emphatically and proudly emphasize the decentralization of leadership within Occupy San Diego, close to a quarter of respondents indicated that some core voices had emerged informally, illustrating the existence of a more centralized leadership than was perhaps intended or desired. Second, the decision-making process – intended to be grounded in consensus norms in order to maximize democratic participation – led to much participant disappointment in terms of stalemate, power inequities, and the need to tolerate all forms of speech, including those that were deemed offensive to many in the movement. Finally, a number of divisions arose in the movement, leading to a lack of unity that threatened the efficacy of the movement and perhaps more critically, tended to further disempower groups that are already marginalized in the political and social arenas.

Thus, there was a tension within Occupy San Diego. Participants tended to offer strong verbal support to the organizational structure when asked about it directly, however their actions and words in other observed moments tended to indicate a deeper level of participant discontent, fracture, and inequality within the movement. Over time, it seems inevitable that these issues would begin to chip away at Occupiers' conceptual support for such a high level of participatory democracy. Is this then the fate of all decentralized and highly participatory social movements? Are they doomed to lose steam as activists experience an expectation gap between hope and reality?

Perhaps. But this does not mean that we should throw the proverbial baby out with the bathwater. I argue here that the weaknesses that emerged with the prefigurative organization of the Occupy San Diego movement are first, not exclusive to participant-centered movements and second, should not be cause for declaring the movement to be ineffective, unwieldy, or impractical. Indeed, there are also many benefits to such a participatory democratic system of organization, including the development of better deliberative practices, the discovery of innovative tactics, and the grooming of more representative and accountable political leaders (Polletta 2002). Therefore, the process can fulfill many needs and offer much value, despite the challenges. The key, of course, is to discover the most appropriate and effective means for offsetting the problems, thereby reducing the tension between the rhetoric surrounding the benefits of prefigurative politics and the reality of such a system. Future social movements – Occupy or otherwise – would be well-advised to consider these processes in order to actualize the vision of decentralized organization and maximize the impact of their social movement.

Methodology

The case that I analyse here is the Occupy San Diego movement, occurring in the eighth most populous city in the United States. It is an example of the

nationwide, mostly urban-based Occupy movement that enveloped the country in the last few months of 2011. The research took place over a two week period, during the height of the Occupy San Diego movement and approximately a month and a half after the beginning of the protest activity in San Diego. Our focus was primarily within San Diego's downtown Civic Center Plaza, the headquarters of Occupy San Diego. However, we did attend events in other parts of the city.

I utilize two research methods: interviews/surveys and direct observation. The interviews, primarily guided by survey questions, were conducted by a team of researchers and capture a wide swath of movement participants. Specifically, 73 surveys were completed during this time. Based on participants' estimates, 150 people were still highly active in the movement at the time of research, thus providing about a 49% response rate among core participants.¹ The second method used, direct observation, was also conducted by a team of researchers. The process was unstructured,² reliant on general, ethnographic observations, and consisted of attending General Assembly meetings, committee meetings, teach-ins, protest marches, as well as just hanging around the encampment. These two methods offer an in-depth look at the Occupy San Diego movement, with the direct observation methods adding richness to the detailed and nuanced comments from the interviews and surveys. In the sections that follow, I report on the findings of this research, focusing on the organizational dynamics of the movement.

How did they organize themselves?

In San Diego, the Occupy movement designed their local movement based on the structure of the original Occupy Wall Street movement, adopting the collective leadership model of governance. The model emphasized group decisions, solidarity, and mass participation, all with an eye toward mutual respect and a sustained egalitarian ethos. Deliberation could take hours and typically relied on a stacking system (sometimes a progressive stack). In the sections that follow, I detail the Occupy San Diego movement's organization, including the perception of leadership, decision-making tools, and divisions that arose amongst this diverse group of actors. In particular, I focus on the

¹ Of our respondents, 73% were male and 27% female, with the majority of participants being under the age of 35 and about three-quarters of the participants being 45 years or younger. In addition, 37% of movement participants had *at least* a college degree. Once you take into account those with some college experience, the number expands to 75.4%. Finally, with regard to employment, our respondents were split about evenly between the employed (both full-time and part-time) and the unemployed.

² Unstructured direct observation is in contrast to structured direct observation, the latter of which includes the use of an observation protocol. Unstructured direct observation calls for the researcher to "pay attention to all that goes on in a debate, take careful notes, and analyze the notes in an effort to discover patterns that can provide a basis for theorizing" (Brians, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich, 328).

disconnection between a rhetoric of support and the realities of frustration and even failure.

Leadership

Social movement research has long illustrated the importance of leaders, pointing to the critical role they play as they “inspire commitment, mobilize resources, create and recognize opportunities, devise strategies, frame demands, and influence outcomes” (Morris and Staggenborg 2007, 171). However, the Occupy movement explicitly rejected a hierarchal structure of governance, instead organizing the movement as a leaderless, “real people’s movement” (Woodman 2011). Indeed, a participant in the Occupy Oakland movement notes:

What sets this apart from any other movement is that there are no leaders. There are people who step up and take more responsibility, take on facilitator duties, and more leadership roles inside committees, but anyone can do that...It’s important for everyone to be as active as the next person, and as accountable as the next person, and encourage others to stand up and speak. Because if you push someone to the top then you’re just replicating this hierarchy we’re trying to undo (Bardi 2012).

The Occupy San Diego movement utilized the same practice of collective leadership.

In our survey research, we posed the open-ended question: “Who do you see as the leader or leaders, if any, of the Occupy San Diego movement?” Two-thirds of the participants responded that there are no leaders, everyone is a leader, or mentioned the horizontal nature of the movement. However, 5.5% of respondents mentioned an actual person by name and 20.8% noted the emergence of what many called “core” members or “strong” voices, indicating that over a quarter of the participants did not view the movement as truly leaderless. In our direct observation, we did begin to notice regular contributors, strong organizers, and informal leaders, if only by virtue of their consistent contributions, technology skills, and articulation abilities. Thus, despite the leaderless nature of this horizontally-structured movement – designed by intention to embody their democratic message³ – influence among members did emerge in a disproportionate manner, producing a gap between expectation and reality.

Decision-making

Close to four decades ago, Piven and Cloward (1977) warned protest groups against too much organization, arguing that the protest spirit stems from the masses, not leaders focused on hierarchical structures. Similarly, the Occupy

³ As Pellotta (2006) notes, prefigurative social movement groups like Occupy tend to privilege democratic principles over political efficacy (p. 6).

movement was built on the idea of mass participation and, as discussed above, the notion of “everybody as leader.” As a result of this approach, the movement adopted consensus-based decision-making tools, including a nightly General Assembly where participants made group decisions on all aspects of the movement, from tactics to food distribution (Berrett 2011).

In the Occupy San Diego movement, the General Assembly (GA) was held every evening at 7:00pm. Smaller committee meetings were held in the hour before the GA, with the explicit purpose of delegating some issues to individual groups of participants. These committee meetings were meant to be held to the same standard of consensus in decision-making. In our research, we asked questions of decision-making in both the GA and the committee system; the results are reported below.

In response to the question, “the committee system of the Occupy San Diego Movement has been an effective decision-making tool,” 64.4% either agreed or strongly agreed. Only 4.1% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 23.3% answered that they were neutral in their assessment. We also posed a question about equality in the committee system (“all voices are equally heard through the committee system of the Occupy San Diego movement”). A strong majority (58.9%) either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, and 12.4% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Approximately a quarter of respondents replied that they were neutral. Finally, we asked about a desire to keep the committee system. Almost three quarters of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, with only 6.9% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.

With regard to the GA system, the results were similar. In response to the question of “the system of general assembly voting within the Occupy San Diego movement has been an effective decision-making tool,” a majority (56.2%) agreed or strongly agreed. In terms of whether or not voices are heard equally in the GA voting system, the same percentage of respondents (58.9%) as above (in response to the committee system) responded that they agree or strongly agree, with 13.7% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. And again, more than three quarters of respondents (76.7%) said that they would keep the GA voting system.

The responses from these six questions – generally geared toward governance, organization, and voice – offer a good starting point from which to assess the disconnect between rhetoric and reality as the respondents’ answers illustrate a few things. First, the committee and GA systems were largely supported by the participants of the Occupy San Diego movement, even two months into the movement.⁴ Second, while some activists were more tepid in their assessment of the efficacy of and equality within the committee and GA systems, movement participants indicated a strong dedication to keeping the systems in place. Finally, this support emerged in response to close-ended questions, but our direct observation produced a slightly different perspective, as frustrations

⁴ This finding could, of course, be the result of those who were unhappy with the processes having already left the Civic Center Plaza.

seemed to be voiced more often than is indicated in the survey responses. It is this last point that I'd like to highlight and discuss more fully.

Before doing so, let me briefly note that this discrepancy between what was expressed in the formal survey and what was observed more informally is likely not unique to the organizational structure of the Occupy movement. However, some (Juris, et al 2012; Maharawal 2013) have argued that the inclusive and aggregating principles of a movement such as Occupy only replicate – and perhaps *worsen* – societal inequities, as many of the processes rely on an assumption of established equality that does not exist in reality. The harm, then, is that the inequities, frustrations, and schisms that we observed and that are discussed below are not uncovered or properly recognized as the movement's mantra of equality masks the problems and stifles participants' ability to criticize what is supposed to be the model of participation.

Within the Occupy San Diego movement, these movement challenges revealed themselves in small and subtle ways. In both formal and informal settings, we consistently heard frustrations voiced regarding the consensus model of decision-making. The concerns centered on a few different aspects, including what level of consensus is required for decisions to be made, the power to block decisions, and the tolerance of intolerant speech.

First, with regard to level of consensus, Occupy San Diego protesters at times debated how much consensus was needed to achieve their egalitarian aims. Initially, the movement called for 100% consensus, but one protester mentioned that in some cases, this number had been reduced to 90%. There did not seem to be a clear rule for which decisions required full consensus and which could be made at a lower level of approval. Indeed, the consensus decision-making appeared to cause a dilemma in the movement – while the consensus norms of unanimity underscored the basic principles of the movement, they also threatened the level of efficacy and organization of the movement. At one General Assembly, one man summed up this tension, noting that they needed unity, organization, and to “just do.” With regard to organization, he said, “we are close to really, really bad,” illustrating that the quest for unity was threatening the basic organization. He then noted that the consensus model was not intended for every decision, stating “the consensus model is only if something is going to affect everyone – we don't need consensus to go to the bathroom.” A second participant concurred, agreeing that the organization of the movement was poor, but he added that this is not a critical default and that in fact, the disruptive protest activities will triumph over the lack of organization. However, at another event, a young woman publicly declared her disdain for consensus-voting: “I hate consensus – sorry, full disclosure.” She argued that it doesn't work, noting that the process was forcing indecision. She continued, arguing that many people do not attend the General Assembly because they felt as though it did not work. This was a frequently made comment. Our own observations supported these statements as people would often end their 6:00pm committee meetings and leave the plaza, despite the General Assembly occurring immediately after the committees and in the same

venue. This young woman finished her argument, stating bluntly that the entire process focused on blocking decisions, rather than making decisions.

This leads to the second point regarding consensus norms of decision-making. Occupy San Diego participants often voiced frustration that, under a consensus model of decision-making, a very small minority could block decisions, and in a way that often reflected larger societal inequities. One woman declared: “all it takes is one bigot to say ‘we don’t want queers’ when we’re talking about a declaration of tolerance.” Another added: “the power to block is giving power to [white men].” Another participant voiced her concern that women did not feel comfortable at the General Assemblies, leading to the disproportionate numbers of men attending them, often at double the rate of women. Here the aims of the movement, in terms of maximizing equality and horizontal power dynamics, were perceived by some in the movement to be turned on their heads. The perception caused many to complain that General Assembly was not only ineffective, but was actually counter to the movement’s goals. It was a common refrain for movement participants to say that General Assembly was not well-attended or well-received. Indeed, at the point of research, a common conversation at the General Assembly was what to do with dwindling numbers. Many Occupy San Diego participants remained disheartened by the way in which the egalitarian principles of the movement were only recreating the power imbalances within the 99%. In other words, the concern centered on the way in which consensus norms reproduced the very societal inequalities that the movement was seeking to eradicate.

Finally, we observed frustration at the expectation that all forms of speech should be at least heard, if not respected. At one “Feminist Friday” teach-in (teach-ins directed toward discussions of gender and discrimination), this erupted in a rather antagonistic exchange between a group of women and one young man. One woman noted that the first General Assemblies were male-dominated, leading to the establishment of Feminist Fridays and other female-only events. As the conversation continued to draw on themes of male-dominance, a young, white man then entered the circle, first sitting on the outside of the circle, but then slowly inching his way into an inner, more central location. As he moved, he began consistently interrupting the group, asking questions that alternated between a passive questioning and an aggressive challenge to their points. When he loudly declared that “we are all discriminated against equally...we are all oppressed people,” one woman responded by saying “a lot of us are very offended – can we cut this off?” Another responded: “don’t shut off someone’s free speech.” A heated conversation erupted, with the group debating the need to allow him to speak (free speech) and the need to curb offensive language (hate speech). The conversation ended when the young man stormed off, yelling expletives at the group. The consensus norm and focus on “people power” ran into problems in this situation and others, and while debate and discussion was lively and engaged, and civil, resolve never arrived and the consensus norm continued to drive the decision-making process, despite antagonistic interactions as the one described.

In fact, many did not agree that the consensus model was problematic for decision-making. One man spoke at General Assembly, stating, “we don’t need a bunch of naysayers... [so many people] say it won’t work.” He urged the group to continue with the consensus model, and his remarks were followed by a raucous round of applause and cheers. In general, our observations of Occupy San Diego indicate that a critical mass of influential voices were supportive of the consensus norm, thereby allowing it to continue as a decision-making procedure. However, some participants continued to be frustrated with the consensus norm and the egalitarian model in practice – whether because of stalemate or because of the power imbalance within the 99% or because of the expectation to tolerate all forms of speech. It is therefore not surprising that a number of divisions within the movement arose or deepened, threatening the movement’s focus on unification of the 99%. It is to these divisions that I now turn.

Divisions and Diversity

The Occupy movement, as with most modern-day social movements, did not act as a unitary actor; instead, it was a hodge-podge of groups, individuals, and organizations, uniting briefly under an umbrella of grievances, loosely aimed at the politically and economically powerful. Occupy San Diego was similarly diverse. The movement consisted of anti-establishment activists, homeless persons, young, highly educated feminists, non-profit workers, attorneys, middle-aged, middle-income former hippies, teachers, college students, marijuana-rights activists, current military members and older war veterans, and many more. These categories are of course not mutually exclusive, nor is the list exhaustive. And while the movement rhetorically celebrated these differences and distinctions, diversity within the movement also tended to produce divisions that threatened the organizational promise of prefigurative structures.

Over the few weeks that we observed the Occupy San Diego movement, we witnessed a number of schisms in the group, from small annoyances to large impasses, each threatening to send branches of the movement into other venues and arenas. I will briefly address some of the areas of discord in the movement, before moving onto a discussion of the ways in which these rifts tended to show themselves. One major schism that was apparent on almost every visit that I made to the site was between what I called the “social justice advocates” and the “constitutionalists.” The social justice advocates were often younger, highly educated, and focused on economic, political, and social power imbalances in the country. They tended to use the language of positive freedoms – rights *to* things (education, health care, social services). In contrast, the constitutionalists were often middle-age and older, less educated, and focused on constitutional freedoms. They tended to use the language of negative freedoms – freedom *from* government intervention (wiretapping, detainment, press restrictions). These groups did not necessarily clash in a negative way, but they often seemed to be traveling the same path in very different vehicles.

A second area of division was between the so-called “24/7s” and the media group. One occupier of the plaza, a middle-age homeless man, told us of his attempts to enter the media office of Occupy San Diego in a nearby office building. He told us that they physically prevented him from entering the office and then forcibly escorted him down the elevator. We could not verify the story, nor the existence of the media office, but his mere perception of these incidents indicates that he felt sidelined, frustrated, and unappreciated. This division may have been indicative of a larger issue and rift between the homeless and the media-savvy, higher socioeconomic status movement members. Indeed, one member noted a concern that people passing by the plaza may say “they’re just bums.” This concern for movement image likely impacted group relations, as each side sought appreciation for their influence and contribution.

A third source of division fell along gender lines. From the beginning of the observation period, we heard many complaints about the gendered nature of the movement, with women often feeling at best marginalized and disempowered, and at worst, physically threatened. As noted above, the number of men outnumbered the number of women in terms of regular occupiers. This could be a reflection of biographical availability, however, one teach-in leader told us that the constant police raids had driven away the less aggressive male activists, leaving what he called the “intimidators,” who could sustain the raids but who did not make the women feel safe.

However, most gendered discussion drew on more subtle forms of gender inequality in the movement. At the first Feminist Friday that I attended, over fifty women gathered in a large circle in the Civic Center Plaza to discuss societal patriarchy in America today. The conversation, however, quickly turned to a discussion of patriarchy within the Occupy San Diego movement. One of the first women to speak stated that she had “concern for [her] experience in the Occupy San Diego movement,” especially in the working groups as men were consistently “stepping over [her] voice in a project that [they were] working on together.” A second woman pointed out that many women were initially placed in support roles in the Occupy San Diego movement, tasked with such aspects as feeding people and finding showers. Another agreed, stating “it is assumed that I’ll do the relationship work.” One woman mentioned that the first General Assemblies were male dominated, leading to the eventual creation of a “women only” microphone at marches and at General Assembly. Another woman then pointed out the creation of a radical women’s group within Occupy San Diego, in addition to the already formed Women Occupy San Diego, a female-only branch of the Occupy San Diego movement. Both of these women’s groups operated alongside the larger movement, with the radical women’s group engaging more in discussion and support efforts, and the Women Occupy group focusing more on separate protest activities, sit-ins, and marches. As noted above, one concern of these women was that consensus decision-making tended to favor the already powerful. It should also be noted that feminist discussions did not consist of only female voices, as many men offered verbal support in the Feminist Friday group. Nor were all the anti-feminist comments from men. For instance, one

older woman sat in a chair just outside the Feminist Friday circle and loudly stated: "I can't stand this bitch emotion."

At another teach-in, this one a non-gendered discussion of the history of Western colonialism, the group was more racially diverse than other activities, but it did not include many women. An hour into the teach-in, twenty-seven people were in attendance, and only five of them were women. The discussion lasted almost two hours and during that time, only one woman spoke. She spoke briefly, only once, and only toward the end of the teach-in.

One final note bears worth mentioning with regard to a lack of cohesion. Many events and activities lacked crossover, resulting in groups that congregated in a location but had little contact with one another. For instance, one Friday evening, I arrived in the late afternoon and spoke with some 24/7ers about recent developments. Feminist Friday began at 6:00pm and very few of the 24/7ers joined the group, despite being only feet away from the gathering. After Feminist Friday ended, just before 7:00pm, most of this group quickly dispersed and left the plaza, while yet another group arrived for the 7:00pm General Assembly. These participation patterns were quite common, with movement activists seeming to adopt "their" mode of participation, engaging in few other activities.

The divisions and schisms often showed themselves in small ways. For instance, smoking cigarettes was a deep annoyance for some of the more environmental, health-conscious participants, while it was a consistent part of life for others. Irritated requests for smokers to leave the area were common, and smokers sometimes responded with frustration at being pushed from the circle of discussion. Other times, the rifts emerged very publicly, such as at a General Assembly meeting. For instance, on a few occasions, we heard public complaints regarding perceived intolerance toward LGBT participants. A second example emerged during the colonialism teach-in, when one participant took issue with the discussion regarding solidarity with the U.S./Mexico border in San Diego, noting his concern with the permissive and apologetic nature of the conversation regarding border crossings, immigration, and American hegemony. Finally, these divisions could be seen in ways that truly threatened the ability of the movement to function. For example, at least six Facebook pages or groups were established, as well as a few different websites. Indeed, the online world of Occupy San Diego was often fragmented and incomplete, as well as distant from the on-the-ground activities.

One area where Occupy San Diego *lacked* diversity was in its racial and ethnic make-up, as the group was predominantly white. In fact, despite San Diego County being home to the tenth largest population of Hispanics in the country – with Hispanics being close to a third of the population of the county – the Occupy San Diego movement lacked representation from the Latino community. Of those who answered the open-ended question regarding race and ethnicity, only 13.6% mentioned having a Latino or Hispanic heritage, either alone or in combination with another race or ethnicity. Blacks, Asians, and Native Americans were similarly underrepresented in the movement as

compared to the numbers living in San Diego County, while whites were overrepresented.⁵ In regards to the lack of diversity in the larger Occupy movement, Campbell (2011) writes, “it is difficult to understand how this predominantly, in fact, overwhelmingly, white movement proves worthy for black people to join.” He quotes Nathalie Thandiwe, a radio host and producer in New York: “Occupy Wall Street was started by whites and is about their concern with their plight. Now that capitalism isn’t working for ‘everybody,’ some are protesting” (Thandiwe quoted in Campbell 2011). Campbell concurs, arguing that her comments align with the “economic and financial realities for black and Latino/a people,” and reflect frustration with a continued norm of white privilege within the movement – and one that largely mirrors racial inequalities in society.

In Occupy San Diego, despite the power-challenging rhetoric of the movement, racial dynamics continued to drive power distribution and representation. For instance, at the largest Feminist Friday that I attended (over fifty people), people of color were almost completely absent from the group. When the one most identifiably black woman did speak in support of comments recently made by the group, people began to stand and move around, engaged in side discussions, looked around in a disinterested manner, and generally ignored her comments. This was a common occurrence, with white men tending to speak more often and more than once per session. In contrast, non-whites and women attended less frequently and therefore spoke less frequently. Thus, despite the egalitarian principles of the Occupy movement – or perhaps *because of* these very inclusive processes – the racial dynamics of the Occupy San Diego movement were unequal and unrepresentative of minority voices in the San Diego community. Indeed, this is a continual challenge faced by prefigurative groups and movements, as principles of horizontal organization could simply replicate societal inequities. Movements and organizations dedicated to decentralized structures and consensus decision-making often assume that equality and power sharing will be realized naturally – despite diversity within the group – because of a heightened awareness of and reverence for organizational horizontalism. Instead, the risk is that the strong rhetoric of equality that is so present in a participant-centered organizational structure will mask the realities of elitism and inequitable distribution of power, voice, and influence. Below I discuss ways to maintain the egalitarian ethos so desired in a decentralized structure, while offsetting some of these dilemmas.

⁵ If we look only at the City of San Diego, blacks and Asians are even more underrepresented in the Occupy San Diego movement, and whites are even more overrepresented. Hispanics, on the other hand, are less underrepresented when comparing participation rates to the demographics of the city. This is because many Hispanics live in San Diego live outside the city proper, in the many suburbs and surrounding jurisdictions in the county.

Discussion

This research has offered a snapshot glimpse into a major social movement as it operated in one of the largest urban cities in the United States. Occupy San Diego, in its quest to disrupt the cultural status quo, stoke the cognitive liberation of the entire region, and challenge the ruling political, economic, and social order of the country, grabbed the attention of the region with its disruptive tactics, thought-provoking claims, and seemingly nebulous organizational structure. Indeed, the Occupy San Diego movement was an intentionally decentralized movement, proud of its leaderless and non-hierarchical structure.

When asked, participants tended to respond that they liked the consensus norms of the movement and that they would prefer to keep the structure as it was operating. However, our directed observation of events and forums uncovered a less optimistic view. Indeed, many participants acknowledged that certain people had become de facto leaders of the movement. In addition, the consensus norms of decision-making tended to cause frustration at lengthy impasses that were often peppered with incendiary speeches. These consensus norms also produced a situation in which societal power norms tended to replicate themselves in the organization of the movement, as consensus was often subtly displaced in favor of a minority power structure. Finally, many schisms and divisions arose in the movement, threatening both the sense of unity surrounding the issues of the movement as well as the sustainability of this intensely participatory form of democracy.

Are there then ways to offset some of these problems? Both Polletta (2002) and Mansbridge (1980) suggest that the use of more conventional decision-making rules and organizational structures can assuage these challenges while still upholding the principles of cooperation and egalitarianism. For instance, when interests are in deeper conflict than is typical for the movement, switching to a vote of majority, supermajority, or proportional representation can restore efficiency and better protect the wide range of opinions. Similarly, it may be necessary for movements to occasionally limit debate or utilize a progressive stack, again in order to retain efficiency and to promote equality (since a regular stacking system would tend to simply reproduce power inequities). Finally, movements may need to authorize committees to make decisions for the group, as this will decrease stalemate and empower those whose voices are stifled in the larger arena. Proponents of participatory democracy and horizontalism may claim that these traditional processes merely insert the elitism that they are seeking to counter, thereby tainting their deliberative process. However, successful horizontal movements will recognize that organizational structures should be fluid, allowing the system to occasionally move to a more traditional model – and then back again. Wholesale attempts to be *only* horizontal, deliberative, or prefigurative, will often end up creating just the opposite.

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Books reviewed this issue:

Flesher Fominaya, Cristina. (2014). *Social Movements and Globalization: How Protests and Occupations are Changing the World*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan (230pp; £24.99). Reviewed by Catherine Eschle.

Doherty, Brian and Doyle, Timothy. (2014). *Environmentalism, Resistance and Solidarity: The Politics of Friends of the Earth International*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke. Reviewed by Eurig Scandrett.

Dupuis-Déri, Francis. (2013). *Who's Afraid of the Black Blocs? Anarchy in Action Around the World*. Toronto: Between the Lines (224 pp; \$22.95). Reviewed by Gary Roth.

Corley Íde, Helen Fallon, and Laurence Cox (Eds). (2013). *Silence would be treason: Last writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa*. Dakar/ Bangalore: Daraja/ CODESRIA/ Books for Change. Reviewed by Amanda Slevin.

Keniston, B. (2013). *Choosing to be Free: The Life Story of Rick Turner*. Johannesburg. Jacana. (276pp.; R220). Reviewed by Richard Pithouse.

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Manfred Steger, James Goodman, and Erin Wilson, 2013. *Justice Globalism: Ideology, Crises, Policy*. London: Sage. Reviewed by Ariel Salleh.

Hall, Gwendolyn. (Ed.). (2012). *A Black Communist in the freedom struggle*. University of Minnesota Press: Minnesota.

Bloom, Joshua & Martin, Waldo, JR. (2013). *Black against empire: The history and politics of the Black Panther Party*. University of California Press: Berkeley. Both reviewed by Mandisi Majavu.

Flesher Fominaya, Cristina. (2014). *Social Movements and Globalization: How Protests and Occupations are Changing the World*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan (230pp; £24.99)

Reviewed by **Catherine Eschle**

This is a timely and useful book, offering an authoritative overview of scholarly literature on globalisation and social movements alongside a near-exhaustive survey of recent examples of activism, ranging from the Global Justice Movement, to the so-called Arab Spring, to Occupy. While there are many other, more detailed, book-length treatments of aspects of this theoretical and empirical terrain (e.g., Della Porta 2014; Della Porta 2007; Macdonald 2006; Guidry et al, 2000), it seems to me that Flesher Fominaya's contribution is unique in both its breadth and in its temporal focus. Her empirical discussion remains particularly fresh while also having sufficient distance to gain some analytical purchase on what now appears, as the book convincingly claims, to be "a global wave of protest". As such, the book will surely be invaluable to undergraduate and postgraduate students seeking to navigate the fast-moving waters of social movement politics. Activists outside the academy may also find the book of interest because of the way it puts recent struggles into a deeper and broader context, highlighting continuities as well as differences with activism in other parts of the world and over the past two decades.

Opening with the claim that "[c]ontemporary social movement politics provide an ideal lens through which to examine some of the central debates about globalization" (p.1), the book proceeds in chapters 2 and 3 to unpack both of its key terms and their interrelationships. Chapter 2 surveys key conceptual issues in ways that are thought-provoking, albeit unavoidably partial and incomplete. Flesher Fominaya does not systematically cover the main approaches to theorising social movements, which is a shame as this would have been useful for those students using the book as an introduction to the field. Rather, her treatment of social movement scholarship prompts readers to take more seriously the "latent" dimensions of movements and the ways activists "prefigure" the world they want to bring into being, as well as urging us to extend our focus beyond social movement organisations (SMOs) and to broaden our understanding of social movement impact and success beyond government policy change – this latter point being one to which Flesher Fominaya returns repeatedly throughout the book.

The subsequent discussion of globalisation literature is organised around key debates, although where Flesher Fominaya sits on some of these is not entirely clear. She certainly seems sceptical about some of the stronger claims made for the emergence of a global civil society or shared values worldwide, and to hint at the need for a more nuanced and empirically-grounded approach to the complexities and contradictions of globalisation. Chapter 3 then surveys the empirical dimensions of globalisation, primarily in economic terms but also

encompassing institutional, environmental, military, cultural and technological developments, with the discussion of each highlighting the ramifications for social movement politics. This chapter closes by helpfully seeking to distinguish transnational networks from global movements (although I, for one, wonder if Flesher Fominaya's definition of the latter is linked too closely to the empirical specificities of the global justice movement), and by drawing attention to the variety of transnational-national-local movement linkages and transborder diffusion processes.

Chapters 4-8 of the book turn to the empirical cases or issues in which Flesher Fominaya is most interested and an expert, and on which non-academics may want to focus their reading. Certainly, for most readers it will be here that the book really takes off, as the insights flow thick and fast. The global justice movement is the subject of chapter 4 and while there are no real surprises here (except, perhaps, in the rather limited coverage of the Zapatistas), the analytical typology of autonomous and institutional branches of the movement is a useful contribution and sure to provoke debate, as is the discussion of the movement's key distinguishing features. Chapter 5 on "cultural resistance" then does an excellent job in highlighting the importance and ubiquity of cultural forms of movement politics without abstracting them from material concerns and contexts. Flesher Fominaya provides many examples of cultural tactics, ranging from lifestyle politics to culture jamming, and also of recent movements around the world that she considers to have linked the local, national and global in their cultural strategies.

If this section (pp. 103-112) could benefit from more analytical clarity in terms of the local/national/global framing, and of exactly how the movements chosen are comparable or divergent, there is no doubting the rich, suggestive empirical detail – on anti-roads protests in the UK, global SlutWalks, YoMango in Spain and Mujeres Creando in Bolivia, among others. I also particularly like the discussion of the literature emphasising the limitations of cultural resistance (pp.99-102). While acknowledging that satire or culture jamming and the like may be restricted in their reception and effect, or become routinised, Flesher Fominaya is pointedly critical of any approach that by "adopting ... an instrumental view of cultural resistance, [and] by focusing exclusively on a narrowly-defined and externally imposed understanding of 'impact', overlooks the much broader importance of cultural resistance for social movements and the importance it has for activists themselves" (p.102).

Chapters 6 and 7 are for me the strongest of the book, providing the most balanced evaluation of different theoretical approaches and the clearest and most original analytical contributions. Turning to social movements and communications technology in chapter 6, Flesher Fominaya examines competing claims about activist use of more conventional mass media, argues that both activists and analysts should move beyond that focus to examine the production and dissemination of counternarratives through ICTs, and provides a fascinating discussion of the opportunities and limitations of the new technologies, and of the strengths and weaknesses of movements focused on

them, such as Indymedia and Anonymous. From my perspective, as someone unfamiliar with such debates and with the newer technologies, this is all very illuminating. I am much more at home with the material covered in chapter 7, which surveys the “global wave of protest” since the global financial crisis of 2007/8. But this chapter too provides some fascinating material and arguments.

I like Flesher Fominaya’s decision to begin her discussion with the little-analysed Iceland case, and the ways in which her subsequent treatment of the northern African uprisings, the Spanish *Indignados* and the Occupy movements brings out the specificity of each as well as some of their commonalities. Flesher Fominaya concludes that these movements, taken together, constitute a global wave of protest - one typified by shared anti-austerity and pro-democracy frames, by the tactic of occupying public space and by the global circulation of information and identities (pp.183-4). Her most important claim, it seems to me, is that this wave differs from the global justice movement which preceded it in terms of its focus on the responsibility of national political classes for the economic crisis and on reclaiming state democracy (p.187). From the perspective of my location in Scotland, less than two months after an independence referendum which mobilised thousands in pursuit of an alternative to austerity politics and greater democracy, Flesher Fominaya’s claim is particularly resonant.

Overall, this book should be required reading for those social movement scholars and students seeking to make sense of recent developments in movement politics within a global frame. It will surely be a useful teaching aid on many courses. It is certainly possible to quibble, as I have above, with some of Flesher Fominaya’s analytical treatments and empirical choices. I also think the book would have benefited from more extended introductory and concluding chapters, as these are rather brief, and from more careful editing at a few points where the writing, and particularly the paragraphing, could be clearer. But it is hard to argue with the breadth of Flesher Fominaya’s ambition or of her knowledge. This book is at its best when Flesher Fominaya is synthesising diverse examples of recent movement activism and when she is staking out her own position on a particular academic bone of contention. There is much here for readers, and particularly students of social movement politics, to get their teeth into, to think about, and to continue debating for many years to come.

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Brian Doherty and Timothy Doyle. (2014). *Environmentalism, Resistance and Solidarity: The Politics of Friends of the Earth International*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke

Reviewed by **Eurig Scandrett**

At the World Social Forum (WSF) in Mumbai in January 2004, there was a breakaway forum called Mumbai Resistance (MR). The reasons for the split were complex, but included MR's accusation that the WSF was too dominated by Northern NGOs as well as front organisations for the Communist Party of India whose Left Front West Bengal government at the time was challenged by grassroots movements for its murderous land grabs and corporate collusion. WSF on the other hand argued for a principled nonviolent, anti-militarist stance, which prevented participation by groups engaged in armed struggle with whom some in MR were allied. The apparent split between social movements / civil society and people's movements / uncivil society perplexed some foreign grassroots movements who found themselves allied to groups on both sides of the rift. At a meeting called by these movements with representatives from both sides, two or three international NGOs were sufficiently trusted to facilitate communication. One of these was Friends of the Earth International.

This gives an indication of the exceptional location of Friends of the Earth International (FoEI) between civil society and people's movements, and which Doherty and Doyle categorise as a Social Movement Organisation. FoEI is a (con)federation of some 70 autonomous national Friends of the Earth (FoE) groups across the world, most of whom existed well before electing to join FoEI. The original four FoE groups in USA, France, Sweden and the UK formed FoEI in 1971, and Doherty and Doyle chart the development of the federation from then to the 74 groups at the time of their research, which was conducted primarily between 2004 and 2008.

The growth in membership, particularly since the 1990s, has come from groups in the Global South who now constitute about half of the members. The relationship between North and South is a major theme in *Environmentalism, Resistance and Solidarity* as the authors explore differences that have largely fallen along North/South lines and how they have been negotiated within the federation. Indeed, their research took place at a crucial time in FoEI, in the aftermath of the resignation from the federation of Acción Ecológica / FoE Ecuador. Acción Ecológica accused FoEI of being too conciliatory towards multinational corporations at the 2002 Johannesburg Earth Summit, and blamed this on the dominance in the federation by groups from the North. Doherty and Doyle were able to witness much of the soul searching that resulted from this resignation, observe the Strategic Vision and Planning Process which sought to build unity of purpose whilst respecting diversity amongst members, and have been able to interrogate the implications of this for multinational social movement organisations.

I was employed by FoE Scotland between 1997 and 2005, thus at the time of the *Acción Ecológica* resignation and during some of the period this research was conducted. A colleague of mine collaborated with *Acción Ecológica* after the resignation. My boss, FoE Scotland's Chief Executive Kevin Dunion, was Chair of FoEI between 1996 and 2000. Despite (or perhaps because of) this I was only distantly aware of the anxious debates going on in FoEI. Nonetheless some of the tensions which Doherty and Doyle analyse through North/South negotiations resonate with those experienced within FoE Scotland and elsewhere.

Doherty and Doyle's particular interest is in the politics of international environmental organisations and especially how the interactions between North and South are played out. In this respect FoEI is an ideal case study, especially during the period of their research. They regularly contrast FoEI with the other major international environmental groups, Greenpeace International and WWF (World Wildlife Fund / Worldwide Fund for Nature), considerably richer organisations which operate with far more centralised and corporate structures, and which are politically reformist. The authors are clearly sympathetic with FoEI's positioning (and this sympathy, as they point out, nearly cost them their research grant) although perhaps understandably reluctant to locate themselves with respect to the controversies within FoEI.

The received wisdom is that groups from the Global North are typically more reformist, technicist or conservation-oriented and operate largely as lobbying organisations within states with liberal democratic governments, seeking concessions within, rather than transformations of political structures. Southern groups are by contrast typically more politically radical, mobilising and providing legal and technical support to indigenous and oppressed communities to enable them to confront the corporations and states that are perpetrating environmentally damaging activities. They often work within less democratic governmental systems and advocate transformations to social, economic and political structures. They are far more at risk from state-sponsored or corporate violence and persecution, and whilst no FoE groups advocate violence, some in the South find themselves on the same side as groups engaged with armed struggle.

This tension between Northern liberal environmental lobbyists versus Southern radical environmental justice movement lies at the heart of the post mortem negotiations following *Acción Ecológica*'s departure. Doherty and Doyle acknowledge that whilst there is some truth to the North-South categorisation, the reality is more complex. Both approaches, and variations on these, can be seen in the North and the South, and even within national groups – as I experienced myself as an environmental justice advocate in FoE Scotland. Doherty and Doyle thus explore the complexities and nuances of the various positions through a series of clear and valuable analyses.

The book charts the history of the federation and the development of what the authors call the FoE Tradition: the range of ideologies within FoEI and the practices through which it negotiates its differences and mobilises its common

identity through collective campaigns. They locate FoEI within the diversity of environmentalist NGOs and other activist movements, and explore the modes of operation within the local, national, regional and international context. The focus is on the relatively small group of internationalist activists that maintain the contact between different national groups within FoEI. They point out that the focus of FoE groups is always primarily national, whether in reforming or implementing national legislature or else challenging national elites or the local impacts of multinational practices. Because of this focus, the international work of the federation tends to be pursued by those groups and individuals who are committed to - and can afford the costs of - such engagement. Drawing on geopolitical and social movement theories, Doherty and Doyle seek to analyse the ways in which the federation manages to hold together not only different ideologies of environmentalism, but also straddles divisions between NGOs and people's movements; professional research-based lobbying and grassroots mobilisation; insider participation in international negotiations and outsider street protests; as well as between Northern lobbyists and Southern environmental justice movements. They therefore categorise FoEI, not entirely convincingly, as a "hybrid network" between a first-generation NGO of professional lobbyists and a second-generation network of direct action anarchists.

This tension is well illustrated in their account of the discussion which took place within FoEI about the economic programme in FoEI strategic plan, where some groups (most notably Latin American) insisted that "resisting neoliberalism" should be included in the wording, whilst others (mainly European) rejected this language as alien to their constituencies. The ultimate title of the programme 'Economic Justice, Resisting Neoliberalism' reflected a clumsy compromise which left some groups in both the North and the South feeling uncomfortable. However, as the authors later suggest, this duplicity over the current neoliberal phase of capitalism and its diverse implications, and whether it can be resisted in some parts of the world and neglected or even accommodated in others, remains an uneasy truce within the federation.

The analytical tools applied in the book are very clearly articulated and useful. Doherty and Doyle explore themes such as the distinction between frame and ideology; the politics of governance versus emancipation; democracy versus community and explore the density of interconnections between groups along linguistic and regional lines. They categorise regional variations between environmentalist discourses using the "three posts": post-material, post-industrial and post-colonial. This is a helpful heuristic for analysing the geography of ideological positions within environmental organisations although it also appears ironically to dehistoricise the relationships between them – most colonialism was, after all, a practice imposed by countries of the North on the South. The authors analyse in some depth two international campaigns: one on food sovereignty and one on climate change as implemented in the different national groups of the North and the South. The authors argue that, to some extent, differences between North and South have been accommodated by

increasing amount of work conducted within regional blocs. In Europe this gives some coherence but risks neglect of the region's colonial legacy.

Some of the book's most significant insights relate to the tensions over neoliberalism, in which the "influence of post-colonial thinking on FoEI's positions has led it to champion the value of a diversity of cultures and the importance of local communities as sites of resistance." (p. 202). Arguably, FoEI is in a position to unite such diverse experiences of neoliberalism as resisting the privatisation of urban space and the market in carbon credits in the North, and of biopiracy and land grabs for mineral extraction in the South. However, a crucial question is missing: to what extent are those FoE groups, predominately in the North, that avoid mobilising against neoliberalism and instead focus on lobbying liberal democratic institutions for reforms towards environmental protection, actually colluding with neoliberalism? At its most recent Biennial General Meeting in Sri Lanka (October 2014), FoEI's debates on 'system change' criteria were grappling with this question.

As political scientists, the authors are interested in political questions of legitimacy, democracy and accountability, cosmopolitanism and solidarity. They pose questions about neoliberalism in terms of its relevance in liberal democracies or more repressive regimes. Starting at the other end of this problematic however begs the question of what contribution FoEI might make to forging a movement with a realistic challenge to neoliberalism (or at the very least the environmental inequalities resulting from it), and which of the multiple modes of protest in the FoEI repertoire is best served to achieve this? Supporting local communities in judicial and extra judicial actions; lobbying parliaments and intergovernmental polities; street protests and nonviolent direct actions; creating alternative structures of production and consumption; alliance building with (which) social movements? Most Southern approaches come closer to such a strategy whilst many Northern groups, benefiting from their (post)colonial ecological-debtor status, are somewhat incorporated by capitalist hegemony.

About the reviewer

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Dupuis-Déri, Francis. (2013). *Who's Afraid of the Black Blocs? Anarchy in Action Around the World*. Toronto: Between the Lines (224 pp; \$22.95)

Reviewed by **Gary Roth**

Francis Dupuis-Déri's defense of the Black Bloc is disarming in its subtlety. "The Black Bloc," he tells us, "is not a treatise in political philosophy, let alone a strategy." For Dupuis-Déri, it is simply "a tactic" (p. 3). But tactics too, as John Berger once pointed out, are often wedded to implied philosophies and unarticulated strategies. Besides, the very purpose of *Who's Afraid of the Black Blocs?* is to give voice to Black Bloc participants. They explain in their own terms why these "ad hoc assemblages of individuals or affinity groups that last for the duration of a march or rally" have been ever-present during the last few decades (p. 2). They have emerged as something of a cultural icon. Known for their characteristic use of black clothing and face masks, Black Bloc participants tend to be deeply ethical and deliberate in their decision-making, although not usually in ways appreciated by their many critics and opponents. This speaks to the huge gap that exists between the portrayal of the Black Blocs in the media and the self-consciousness of those who take part in them.

Black Blocs have influenced public discourse out of proportion to their actual size, which has ranged anywhere from a few odd individuals to several thousand people who coalesce at demonstrations seemingly from nowhere and then disappear just as anonymously. Dupuis-Déri traces their roots to West Berlin's squatter movement of the early- and mid-1980s. He acknowledges too that they are more properly considered a form of struggle specific to this new century. They are part of the same general trend as the "occupation of squares" that stretches from the Arab Spring to Spain's *Indignados* to Zuccotti Park, the Maidan in the Ukraine, and more (*Endnotes* Collective 2014). Black Blocs have been a feature of the alter-(anti-)globalization protests of the last decade and a half and have now evolved into a regular component of virtually every popular movement in recent years.

The notoriety that accompanies the Black Blocs derives from their deliberate pursuit of "symbolic economic and political targets" (p. 33). Large corporate entities and government buildings are sought out almost exclusively. In the urban areas where the Black Blocs have been active, this means the chain stores, with bank facades and the window fronts of well-known retail outlets such as Starbucks and Gap receiving special attention. In some places, public buildings in central city locations have been preferred instead. In either case, the Black Blocs direct their violence towards inanimate objects, overpriced articles of consumption, and ineffective and corrupt ruling strata, where "the target is the message" (p. 43). As Dupuis-Déri explains, the Black Blocs have modernized and also revitalized the anarchist doctrine of "propaganda of the deed." The Blocs have been rather scrupulous to avoid small businesses, community centers, homes, and libraries, a pattern that itself gives a clue as to the

worldviews that form their political sensibilities. Violence against people is taboo (except when responding to police violence), whereas their critics, as Dupuis-Déri points out with numerous quotes, tend to defend people and things as if these were equivalent categories.

If property damage defines the Black Blocs in the public's eyes, the Blocs regularly assume other functions at demonstrations. This has included the hauling of food and water to the protest sites, arranging transportation and lodging for out-of-town demonstrators, providing medical support, and serving as a protective barrier that shields non-violent protestors from the police and security forces. On some occasions, they have helped divert official attention from protest sites by creating a ruckus in another area. Because the Blocs function as affinity groups, on-the-spot coordination comes easily. The groups are anti-hierarchical, with decisions reached through consensus. They are capable of making tactical choices in conjunction with other groups, even though their ad hoc formations tend to preclude negotiations that get overly complicated.

One doesn't wander into a Black Bloc accidentally. Participants are typically veterans of previous protests and have received training in direct action tactics and ethics, legal issues, and safety measures. Many of them object to individuals ("activism tourists") not already a member of an affinity group, since their exclusion cuts down on provocateurs and other violence-prone individuals (p. 102). Black Bloc participants often come equipped with shields, helmets, gas masks, and anti-tear gas cream in order to protect themselves from police attacks, and with chains, locks, rocks, clubs, slingshots, and Molotov cocktails to counteract police aggression.

The Blocs now come in multiple colors. Besides the Black Blocs who are known primarily for their trashing of downtown areas, Red Blocs are clusters of leftists still supportive of hierarchical organizations and state-dominated social systems. White Blocs refer to the exclusive use of non-violent tactics. Pink Blocs are generally the most colorful, since they combine antics, art, and satire. A "Billionaires for Bush and Gore" contingent protested the 2004 Presidential election campaign in the United States with formal attire and fake banknotes distributed to police officers in thanks for their role in suppressing dissent. At another demonstration, protestors carried fishing poles with donuts as bait in an attempt to lure the police to them. Examples like these offer Dupuis-Déri ample opportunities to discuss the nuances of Black Bloc beliefs and practices.

Symbolism aside, the Black Blocs are demonized by police, political officials, scholars, journalists, and also other leftists, which Dupuis-Déri documents extensively despite the overall brevity of his book. The mis-characterizations projected towards the Black blocs are both crude and predictable, as: thugs, vandals, anarchists, trouble-makers, prone to violence, a mindless minority, soccer rowdies, proto-fascist paramilitaries, and more. The critics from the left are the most difficult to fathom. The Black Blocs tend towards a mixture of "Marxism, radical feminism, environmentalism, anarchism" (p. 24). Despite this, two issues come to the fore repeatedly—violence, whether directed against

property or the police, and the refusal to follow the dictates that government officials and the security forces set down for protestors.

For the Black Blocs, “peaceful methods are too limited and play into the hands of the powers that be” (p. 38). They are anti-establishment and reject a notion of representation which presupposes homogeneous communities. This undercuts other groups by limiting their ability to step forward as “people’s representatives” and thereby influence public policy. The Blocs, on their part, have been accused of hiding amidst non-violent demonstrators, a criticism that hit home. In recent protests, they have been overly conscientious about not letting this occur. Opponents also accuse them of antagonizing the public, even if just the opposite seems to be true. Black Bloc activity tends to boost interest in anarchist ideas and activities. Some Black Blocs have called for a “diversity of tactics,” a matter not well received by these other groups, despite the divide between spokespeople who denounce the Blocs and everyday protestors who want something more than just a peaceful, respectful protest that is easy to ignore.

Dupuis-Déri picks apart just about every negative characterization hurled at the Black Blocs, one of the several strengths of his book. The “propagandhi” of non-violent activists is his special focus. Sometimes, though, he gets lost in arguments not quite germane to contemporary reality. He reaches back to the 1500s, for instance, to show that not just anarchists but also dissenting Christians targeted the royalty for assassinations. Since assassinations haven’t been part of the anarchist tradition for nearly a century already (despite the mythology), the entire discussion becomes a bit unreal. He also relativizes anarchist violence by pointing to the troubled and often bloodied track record of liberalism. His overly brief discussion of the two traditions glosses over significant differences in which the latter’s violence is a product of its use of the state as a means to consolidate and defend its rule, whereas anarchism has rarely ever been tested on that score.

Perhaps most disturbing is Dupuis-Déri’s discussion of the cathartic effects of violence, its psychological benefits. Reminiscent of the pseudo-scientific justifications used by fascists and devotees of brutal sports, violence becomes a form of creative expression. Dupuis-Déri speaks in terms of “restorative violence” (p. 85). These are dangerous ideas, and to say that “emotions are rooted in a social context and a political experience” is only to say the obvious (p. 90). Even overlooking the fact that emotions are also innate, what else could they be except socially-generated and constructed?

What can be said, and which Dupuis-Déri emphasizes with great effect, is that Black Bloc anarchists are much more conscientious about the use of violence than are the many and various security agencies arrayed against them. Police violence is mostly random and unprovoked, directed not only at the Black Blocs but at non-violent demonstrators and bystanders alike. Anarchists are categorized as “pre-terrorists,” subject to intense surveillance, and heavily infiltrated (p. 150). Masking both hides Black Bloc participants and also makes infiltration easy. But also, because they fight back, the police are more hesitant

to abuse and brutalize protestors. The Black Blocs both draw and repel repression.

If Dupuis-Déri pushes his discussion further than necessary, it's because he wants to dissect every possible criticism made of the Black Blocs. Some discussions might have been carried further. Gender dynamics is one such area. Dupuis-Déri is quite conscientious in describing women's roles within the Black Blocs. All the same, the Blocs remain overwhelmingly young and male, precisely the demographic that defines violence in society at large. He mentions that anti-fascist blocs tend to be predominately male, while anti-racist blocs attract a preponderance of females. These are the sorts of differences that he might have pursued in much greater depth.

Dupuis-Déri considers the Black Blocs to be “an image of the future” (160). It's an image, however, that is clad in black and masked. It is an appropriate metaphor as well for Dupuis-Déri's *Who's Afraid of the Black Blocs? Anarchy in Action Around the World* – a view of things to come that one can't quite discern clearly but only watch in action. Uneven in parts, it is nonetheless highly informative and provocative throughout.

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About the reviewer

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**Íde Corley, Helen Fallon, and Laurence Cox (Eds). (2013).
Silence would be treason: Last writings of Ken Saro-Wiwa.
Dakar/ Bangalore: Daraja/ CODESRIA/ Books for Change**

Reviewed by **Amanda Slevin**

For Ken Saro-Wiwa, silence would not only be treason – it was simply not an option. In a land devastated by the consequences of badly managed oil exploitation, Saro-Wiwa and his comrades in the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) were not prepared to see people and place continue to suffer. And they paid the ultimate price for their struggles. Despite widespread national and international condemnation, on November 10, 1995, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Saturday Dobee, Nordu Eawo, Daniel Gbooko, Paul Levera, Felix Nuate, Baribor Bera, Barinem Kiobel, and John Kpuine (the Ogoni 9) were hanged by the Nigerian military following a sham trial.

In killing the nine men, the Nigerian government inadvertently focused greater attention on the concerns underpinning the men's activism, namely the environmental, social, and economic destruction wrought through decades of oil production in Ogoniland and the wider Niger Delta region. Oil spills in environmentally sensitive areas impacted on entire communities, destroying livelihoods and traditional ways of life while creating significant health, environmental and social problems. Massive profits created through prolific oil production rarely meant benefits for communities in which operations were based and there was "no discernible trickle down" for around 30 million people living in the Niger Delta, many of whom survive on less than a dollar a day (O'Neill, 2007). The ensuing protests against social and environmental injustices, poor corporate practices, and negligible wealth redistribution were met with state and private actor force, resulting in mass human rights abuses, lasting injuries, and the murder of innocent people.

A renowned author, businessman, and winner of numerous prestigious awards, Ken Saro-Wiwa had been galvanised by these and other issues, becoming a leading figure in MOSOP. In this book edited by Corley, Fallon and Cox, we can read a previously unpublished account of the latter years of Saro-Wiwa's life recorded through his letters and poems to Sr. Majella McCarron, an Irish missionary nun with whom he had become friends. By putting in print this correspondence that Sr. McCarron donated to the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM), Corley, Fallon and Cox bring to light Saro-Wiwa's final years spent in prison on fabricated murder charges.

Contributions by different authors augment a remarkable collection which illuminates various facets of Saro-Wiwa's life and the political and socio-economic climate influencing his activism. A Foreword by Nnimmo Bassey, writer, and co-ordinator of Oilwatch International and director of the Health of Mother Earth Foundation, depicts Saro-Wiwa and his wider social and political environment. Written as someone with firsthand experience acquired through activism and his relationship with Saro-Wiwa and Saro-Wiwa's family, Bassey's

foreword provides a background necessary to better understand Saro-Wiwa's commitment, actions, and the forces against which he struggled.

The first chapter by Helen Fallon paints a picture of the friendship between Sr. Majella McCarron and Ken Saro-Wiwa while outlining how McCarron gifted to NUIM prized resources detailed within the book. Fallon discusses aspects of McCarron's life in Nigeria and gives insights into an extraordinary woman who generously donated treasured possessions, likely due to the significance of these resources for social movements, academia, and other groups.

In his chapter, Laurence Cox extends the multiple levels of essay inherent to this book beyond Nigeria, highlighting how "the curse of oil" is evident in other countries, including Ireland. His comparisons with Norway, "a rare exception" (p.32) to the too-common story of resource mismanagement feeding conflict, corruption, and class inequalities, makes for a helpful contrast to Ireland and Nigeria, while illustrating how resources can be managed for the benefit of wider society, rather than elite groups. The articulation of similarities between Ireland and Nigeria in terms of state-capital relations, and the use of state coercion to repress dissent, is useful for reminding us of the actions powerful and entwined entities can take to protect their interests when confronted by social movements. This chapter does not overwhelm with the enormity of such issues, rather it motivates and inspires the reader, particularly with its emphasis on civil society participation in protest and the differences national and international solidarity can make in changing outcomes for communities and societies.

Cox likens Saro-Wiwa to Antonio Gramsci and there are obvious similarities, including immeasurable political and literary contributions, and wrongful incarceration in appalling prison conditions by dictatorial regimes. The appropriateness of comparing Gramsci and Saro-Wiwa is most apparent when one begins to read Saro-Wiwa's letters and poems. Saro-Wiwa's letters are multifarious – they illuminate his personal hopes and wishes, they contain strategies for MOSOP in tandem with plans for his release from prison, they critique the Nigerian state and its relationship with Shell. Saro-Wiwa's letters to Sr. Majella reveal a special human being, yet one not without flaws. At times, his letters truly move the reader through his reflections and recollections of his family, community and society. His letters also bring hope – hope in human strength, social movements, and humanity itself – while creating awareness of the strength of human spirit in the face of much adversity.

A strength of this book is its ability to illuminate conflicts and complexities within the multiple layers of societies – from the macro level of the Nigerian state and its relations with corporate interests amid a backdrop of environmental devastation inflicted on the Niger Delta, through the meso level of community organising, to the impact on individual's lives as they struggle to affect change. The prominence of the individual is accentuated through Saro-Wiwa's accounts, raising pertinent questions for those of us engaged in and/or studying social movements – how do the individuals who comprise social movements sustain themselves when facing extreme situations which can be

overwhelming to others? How do people maintain hope and inspiration when pitted against powerful structures that conspire to smash opposition? What enables activists to maintain the personal strength and perseverance necessary to affect change?

Saro-Wiwa's letters point to a person with such abilities and strengths, and this is just one of the many reasons why they are motivational. This book offers insights into an inspiring character who, when facing imminent death, remained a committed and passionate activist, displaying humility, love, deep and critical understandings. His letters also illuminate his conscientisation, which Freire describes as "learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (1996, p. 17).

Taking a broader perspective, the letters elucidate some tactics used in attempts to weaken social movements, for example extreme state coercion, and the removal of MOSOP's leaders through arrests, violence, or being forced into hiding, which impacted on the Ogoni people and the development of MOSOP (letter dated July 13, 1994). Bassey also signposts these matters, emphasising how Saro-Wiwa had regularly lamented that MOSOP had not sufficiently equipped the "generality of the Ogoni people for the struggle. This is a signal for all who are engaged in mass mobilisations and movement building" (p. x).

This book accurately portrays the situation in the Niger Delta in the early 1990s and is valuable for its attention to the emergence of MOSOP and the roles Saro-Wiwa played in its development. It would have been interesting to consider those topics in a modern day context. While Bassey refers to a recent United Nations assessment that emphasised the polluting activities of oil companies and their catastrophic impacts, this book could have benefitted from a chapter detailing the current situation.

Attention to Nigerian political economy, specifically the state-corporate nexus evident in the oil sector, would be useful for illuminating the continuation of questionable practices and serious consequences while further problematizing the activities of the Nigerian state and oil companies. The Ecumenical Council for Corporate Responsibility (ECCR) (2010) describes the Niger Delta as one of the most petroleum polluted environments in the world, a situation relatively unchanged since Saro-Wiwa's time. Given the social pressures generated by MOSOP and groups such as the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), how has this state of affairs continued? Why haven't environmentally damaging deeds, including failures to replace leaking pipes or the continuation of gas flaring, ended? Furthermore, considering the Nigerian state is directly involved in oil production through its national oil company, and receives higher rates of taxation than countries such as Ireland, why hasn't that wealth been distributed?

A 2010 ECCR report emphasised that benefits from oil industry operations in the Niger Delta have been outweighed by "very considerable local human and environmental costs" (p.5). Shell, which remains active in Nigeria and has become the largest international oil company, is heavily involved in generating

these outcomes. But how has Shell continued to wield such power, and create such negative effects, after decades of struggle against its activities? And on the topic of resistance, what is now happening with MOSOP? It would have been interesting to consider how MOSOP developed after the murder of some of its leaders, and examine how it relates to organisations such as MEND, in order to gain insights into the status of movement participation and organising in the region.

Through its careful attention to Ken Saro-Wiwa and the context in which he lived and affected change, Corley, Fallon and Cox's book raises questions like the ones stated above about the modern day situation in Nigeria. Of course, a greater focus on contemporary issues may have distracted from the aim of this book: to bring to public attention for the first time letters and poems created by an astounding activist; thus providing valuable opportunities for reflection and learning.

In conclusion, this is an important book. A fusion of different views and experiences, this book creates insights into Saro-Wiwa as an activist, and as a human being experiencing love, pain, loss, sorrow and hardship during his incarceration away from his family, friends and fellow activists in the MOSOP. It also documents a socially, politically and historically significant era and is a critical reminder of the potency of social movements and the forces against which they struggle.

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Keniston, B. (2013). *Choosing to be Free: The Life Story of Rick Turner*. Johannesburg. Jacana. (276pp.; R220)

Reviewed by **Richard Pithouse**

Rick Turner, a philosopher and a committed and effective radical, was assassinated in Durban, South Africa, in January 1978. Turner had, along with Steve Biko who was murdered in police custody in September 1977, been a leading figure in what came to be known as “the Durban Moment”. The phrase, which was first coined by Tony Morphet (1990), refers to a period in the early 1970s in which Durban became a site of significant political innovation in the struggle against apartheid, innovation that was conceptualised and organised outside of the strictures of the exiled African National Congress (ANC) and South African Communist Party (SACP). Morphet argued that “the Durban Moment” enabled a “structural shift in the received intellectual patterns of the social world” (1990, pp. 92-3). It also had enduring political consequences of real significance (Macqueen, 2014; Webster, 1993).

The Durban Moment had direct links to the student rebellion that had leapt from city to city - from Prague to Paris to Cape Town and Mexico City – in 1968, as well as the black power moment in the United States and anti-colonial struggles elsewhere in Africa. Like the rebellions in 1968 the Durban Moment was closely linked to the university. Biko was a medical student at what was then the University of Natal while Turner was employed in the politics department¹ in the same university. The bulk of the people that cohered around these two charismatic men were students.

Biko and Turner, who had a warm personal relationship, were both animated by the kind of charisma that enables others to come to voice and action as autonomous personalities. Turner is remembered as a gifted teacher who used Socratic methods to encourage his students to come to their own conclusions (Greaves, 1987; Macqueen, 2014).

In striking contrast to modes of leftism in which radical postures are implicitly taken as an end in themselves, even when they are unable to attain any sort of meaningful political efficacy, Biko and Turner were both highly effective political actors. Biko was a key protagonist in the emergence of the black consciousness movement, an event of real political weight and consequence (Gibson 2011; Mangcu, 2012), and Turner was an important protagonist in the alliance between radical students and workers that produced a powerful black

¹ With important exceptions in some of the historically black universities academic philosophy in South African universities has often taken a form that is narrowly analytic and far removed from any concern to advance a philosophy of praxis. Radical ideas have often fared much better in history and sociology departments (and on occasion in anthropology and literature too), and where radical philosophy is engaged in the academy it has and remains more likely to be in a politics department than a philosophy department.

trade union movement that played a central role in bringing down apartheid (Friedman, 2014; Webster, 1993).

Thinkers like W.E.B. du Bois, Aimé Césaire, Julius Nyerere and Frantz Fanon were central to the philosophical foundations of the young black intellectuals that made the black consciousness movement (More, 2014). For the young radicals that cohered around Turner, many although certainly not all of them white, Western Marxism (Gramsci, Marcuse, etc.) was central (Nash, 1990). But there were significant overlaps in the intellectual influences of the circles around Biko and Turner. Jean-Paul Sartre was a primary philosophical influence for Turner (Fluxman & Vale, 2004; Greaves, 1987; Macqueen, 2014) and an important thinker for Biko and other intellectuals in the black consciousness milieu (More, 2014). In a profoundly unfree society the form of radicalism at the heart of the Durban Moment was characterised by a choice, an immediate choice, to assert freedom against oppression. Paulo Freire was another thinker whose work was pivotal to both of the political projects that made the Durban Moment. The Freirean aspect meant that, at least in principle, there was a shared commitment to dialogical modes of engagement with people outside of the university based on an aspiration to mutuality and reciprocity. This was in direct contrast to various forms of leftism that, then as now, were rooted in the idea that an enlightened vanguard would bring politics to the people who, at best, were capable of “spontaneous” protest in an almost biological response to deprivation or repression.

The Durban Moment was a brief opening, a period of just a few years, that was swiftly crushed by state repression following which authoritarianism forms of leftism reclaimed some of the political space that had been opened by more participatory and democratic modes of militancy. Forty years later, with the ANC having turned to outright repression to contain popular dissent and, with the partial exception of Julius Malema’s Economic Freedom Fighters, authoritarian modes of leftism unable to sustain productive connections with escalating popular protest, there is growing interest in the Durban Moment and in Turner’s commitment to participatory democracy (Turner 1972; cf. Fluxman & Vale, 2004).

There are some important academic articles and theses on the Durban Moment and on Turner’s life and thought. But Keniston’s biography of Turner is the first book length examination of the Durban Moment from the vantage point of the present. Xolela Mangcu’s 2012 biography of Biko is largely grounded in Biko’s life in the Eastern Cape and doesn’t offer a full illumination of Biko’s life in Durban. Keniston’s book is also the first book length study of Turner.

Keniston’s book has often been read, and on occasion reviewed (e.g. Egan, 2013), together with Beverley Naidoo’s superb and beautifully written 2012 biography of Neil Aggett, a trade unionist who died in police custody in 1982, as well as, more recently, Glen Moss’s valuable contribution, *The New Radicals* (2013). Naidoo and Moss both offer important accounts of the white left in Johannesburg that, although rooted in the student movement, found its political vocation in the trade union movement. Both books enable us to think the

Durban Moment as an event with national consequences. But the comparisons with the better written and more politically sophisticated books by Naidoo and Moss do not flatter Keniston's work. In Keniston's introduction and conclusion his attempts to reach towards poetic insight fall rather flat. Moreover the author is not able to sustain a consistent fidelity to the democratic radicalism that he wishes to affirm.

Nonetheless a biography of Turner is certainly a welcome event and for those unfamiliar with Turner's life the book does provide a useful account of its subject's life and political work. Keniston does not aim to provide a sustained account or exploration of Turner's philosophical work and so criticism of the book on the grounds of this absence is unfair.

Unusually for a biography much of this book is made up of a collage of interviews, long quotes and documents. This can be a lazy way of working that absolves the writer of taking on the sort of responsibility to his or her subject that Naidoo's recent book on Neil Aggett achieves with luminous grace. But in this case collage seems to work. A clear picture of Turner emerges and as the book reaches its climax the narrative that emerges from the collage of materials attains a real emotional power. Perhaps there is something to be said for a method in which the author edits, or perhaps even curates, more than writes. Certainly this method does allow a variety of voices to emerge.

But of course the editor or curator is not absolved of the political responsibility for making choices about what is included, and how. Keniston's primary political project is to bring out the stakes in the difference between democratic and authoritarian modes of leftism and to place Turner firmly in the democratic camp. Early in the book he quotes Sartre describing the French Communist Party as "putrid" and noting, that "we were never sure that they weren't in the process of slandering us somewhere" (2013, p.31). Keniston develops a sustained critique of what one of his interviewees calls "gutter Marxism" (2013, p.133) and what he calls the "cold", "mechanistic" and "crudely rational" Marxism of Stalinism and Leninism that, in his estimation, is "merely a tool to organise large masses of people – to seize and exercise power" (2013, pp.232-234).

In his generally positive review of Keniston's book Eddie Webster, in his youth a protagonist in "the Durban Moment", offers two critiques. The first is Keniston's claim that Turner's support for the official registration of black trade unions was an instance of clear contradiction between Turner's political ideas and his practices. Webster argues that, on the contrary, this position made perfect strategic sense as "Turner was exploiting the contradictions inherent in the apartheid workplace and, in the process, winning space for democratic worker organisation" (2014, p. 149; cf. Friedman, 1985). Elsewhere in the book Keniston demonstrates some awareness that abstract ideas about radical politics do not always fit well with actually existing political realities, including actually existing forms of solidarity and organisation. He quotes a former student radical explaining that when the idea of setting up a formal organisation was first proposed in a meeting between workers and students it turned out, to

the surprise of the students, that the workers' first priority for the new organisation was that it should provide funeral benefits. But Keniston's position on the registration question seems both ahistorical and to confuse the easy assertion of abstract political principle outside of any historical or organisational context with the altogether more difficult work of making the strategic choices required to sustain actually existing forms of mass mobilisation under a repressive state.

Webster's second critique of Keniston's book is perhaps more interesting. He argues that the new political culture that emerged in Durban around Turner's charisma had a serious weakness, one that Keniston doesn't address – an "ignorance of the existing national political tradition" (2014, p. 150). On two recent occasions Webster, speaking at Rhodes University, has recalled a survey run by white radicals in Durban in the 70s with the aim of determining who black workers considered to be their leaders which threw up a name (Moses Mabhida – a Communist who had been a leading activist in Durban in the 1950s) that was unfamiliar to the white left. Webster recalls that the response of Alec Erwin, once seen as something of a guru in some left circles in Durban, was not to take seriously his alienation from popular politics but, rather, to attempt to reinscribe his authority by declaring that the survey had to be fraudulent. This is a telling anecdote with regard to a city, and indeed a country, where more than forty years later there are still people on the middle class left, often but not always white, in which even rigorously researched accounts of organisational and intellectual political practices in a popular sphere beyond the reach of the middle class left continue to be dismissed, on an *a priori* basis, as romantic or even fraudulent.

Keniston makes an important point when he insists, in the conclusion to his book, that "the ultimate erasure of Turner's ideas is to insist that they have been assimilated into the movements after his death" (2013, p. 234). The same point could be made with regard to Biko. But his concluding remark, that today the problem is that "the organisations of the liberation struggle have gained so much power that nothing much else has room to breathe" (2013, p.234) erases both the real struggles that have been waged from below, and in recent years with enough force to provoke a wave of assassinations of grassroots activists in Durban, and the undeniable fact that the authoritarian left has often been part of, rather than opposed to, the elite power bloc that has sought to expel these struggles from the domain of the political.

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Hancox, Dan. (2013). *The village against the world*. Verso Press: London. (pp. 252).

Reviewed by **Kenneth Good**

This review is based on the book by Dan Hancox, *The Village Against the World*, published in 2013 by Verso in London. The village in question is Marinaleda in Southern Andalusia, and its most prominent representative is Juan Manuel Sanchez Gordillo---its elected mayor since 1979. They arose together in the wake of the collapse of Fascism in Spain in the 1970s. Marinaleda is only some 2,700 people, but it is located in a region steeped in socialism and anarchism, with the latter not just a theory but a popular mass movement. Gordillo was 21 when first elected, and has been regularly re-elected competitively. Never a member of the Communist Party, he says that he is “a communist or communitarian” with his political beliefs “drawn from a mixture of Christ, Gandhi, Marx, Lenin and Che [Guevara]” (p. 13). For over three decades, he and the *jornaleros*, or landless day labourers, have struggled to build a veritable socialist utopia in Marinaleda. Such aims and determination placed them in opposition to the liberal capitalism, with its unemployment, homelessness and indebtedness, dominant almost everywhere. How they have done this, and largely succeeded in their aims, is relevant to social movements and protest action elsewhere.

In contrast with protest movements like Occupy Wall Street, the Marinalenos believe in the primacy of organisation: “before utopia,” and the land seizures and other actions that gave birth to this utopia, “came organisation” (p. 73). This organisation combined orthodox electoralism with strong, innovative, direct and participatory, democratic forms and practices. General assemblies, usually attended by 200-400 people, held weekly or more frequently when issues were pressing, debated spending and resource allocation, with simple “hands up” voting. For Hancox, this constitutes “the heart of village life” (p. 77).

The founding organisation, significantly, was a trade union, the *Sindicato de Obreros del Campo* (SOC), established in 1976, to respond directly to the precariousness of Andalusian rural life (p. 75). Three years later, a political party, the Collective for Workers’ Unity (CUT), was founded as a “partner organisation to SOC” by the rising *jornaleros*. Running as an “explicitly anti-capitalist” party, it won 78 per cent of the vote in the first free local elections in 1979, against the then centre-right party of the transition, the Union of the Democratic Centre. CUT has “maintained an absolute majority on the council ever since” (p. 76). The assembly, open to all workers regardless of political affinity, together with SOC and CUT, expressed for Gordillo the “power of poor people against the power of the rich”, popular “counter-power” (p. 76).

Back then, in Andalusia, about 50 per cent of the land was owned by two per cent of families. In August 1980 the village embarked on a “hunger strike against hunger,” to inform the nation of the situation in Andalusia. The tactic and the timing represented for Hancox a “brave and canny choice.” The normal

repression utilised by the Guardia Civil and the government would not work in this situation: nothing could silence, in Gordillo's words, "the voice of hundreds of empty stomachs..." The summer heat was then peaking above 38 degrees every day, and it was a perfect opportunity to win national media attention, as the mayor proclaimed that they had received "neither a telegram, nor a call...from the out-of-touch politicians busy sunning themselves on the beach."

Men, women and children were going without food. With doctors on hand just in case, they met every day at the assembly to decide whether or not to continue, and to discuss the messages that increasingly arrived. Utilising his charisma and growing notoriety, Sanchez Gordillo was "leading the *pueblo*, as much as it was leading him", notes Hancox. As the strike wore on, sympathy strikes occurred in neighbouring *pueblos*, and assemblies elsewhere discussed occupations and demonstrations. Eventually Spain's labour minister, Salvador Sanchez Teran and Seville's civil governor returned from holiday, and announced a payment totalling 253 million pesetas (or some \$1.6 million) for the Andalusian unemployed "to last until the December olive harvest", as Marinaleda had demanded (pp. 80-84).

Ideas and direct action went together, expressing the anarchist tenet of the propaganda of the deed. Marinalenos declared their belief in "the sovereignty of food" as a human right: natural resources, Gordillo stressed, should be at the service of the communities of those who work them, which in turn necessitated substantial land reform. At the front of the mega-estate owning nobility in Andalusia was the Duchess of Alba, said to be worth some 3.2 billion euros, in receipt of 3 million euros a year in EU farm subsidies. Another was the Duke of Infantado, four times over a Spanish grandee, and owner of 17,000 hectares in Andalusia. Sanchez Gordillo proposed the expropriation of 1,200 hectares of his land, an area known as El Humoso. The damming of the Gentil river would irrigate a large area, providing 250 families with jobs. Feasibility studies supported this plan. In 1985, SOC labourers from Marinaleda and two nearby *pueblos*, started to occupy this almost idle land, used then for only wheat and sunflowers, looked after for its absentee owner by a few caretakers (pp. 6, 96).

For Hancox, this was land reform from below, through patient and peaceful direct action. Each morning the people of Marinaleda marched the ten miles from the village to El Humoso and in the evening they walked back, "in a stream four or five people wide and several hundred long." This continued for a month interspersed with "countless lawsuits for trespassing, roadblocks and related incidents". They carried out over 100 occupations of El Humoso during the 1980s, at one point camping there for three months. The approach of the 1992 Seville Universal Exposition intensified the official hype of civic pride, and Marinaleda took their fight to the regional capital, where they were hit by water cannons. But with tens of millions already spent on this high-profile vanity project, with many valuable tourists anticipated, the village finally broke the Andalusian government's resolve. After long negotiations behind closed doors, they were granted the 1,200 hectares in 1991. The Duke was quietly paid off by Seville, and the people of Marinaleda became landlords: for the first time, says

Hancox, Andalusian farm labourers got the land that was rightfully theirs (pp. 96-99).

This was a foundational success, but substantive reform required much more--big changes in farming practices and the development of an extensive democratic cooperative. Marinaleda believed in the unity of work and the autonomy of the pueblo, and land ownership could now make a reality of this idea. The Duke's lands gave employment to a tiny few, when regional unemployment was around 36 per cent, and Marinaleda had a history of 65 per cent of its people being without work: at the time of Franco's death, 90 per cent of *jornaleros* had to feed themselves and their families on only two months of work a year (pp. 11,118). In sharp contrast with the owners of the great estates who planted wheat which was harvested by machine, the Marinaleda cooperative selected crops that needed the greatest amount of human labour to create as much work as possible. "Our aim", said Gordillo, "was not to create profits, but jobs." Any surplus was reinvested to create more jobs. Everyone in the coop earned the same wage: 47 euros a day for six and a half hours of work. This was more than double the Spanish minimum wage. Workers participated in decisions about crop selection and harvest timing. This was not mere subsistence farming--the bulk of El Humoso's produce was sold outside the village. When Sanchez Gordillo visited Venezuela in 2012, he persuaded the government of Hugo Chavez to buy olive oil from Marinaleda, reputedly of high quality (pp. 79, 115, 122).

Private ownership is an accepted part of socialist village life, with some seven privately owned bars and cafes. If anyone wanted to open a little family business of any kind, Hancox was told, no one would stand in their way. The *casitas*, 350 self-built family homes, constitute "one of the village's greatest achievements." Each house normally incorporated three bedrooms, bathroom, living room, kitchen and courtyard. The regional government provides the basic material for the houses and architectural assistance; the villagers build the houses themselves and pay a nominal 15 euros a month as a so-called mortgage. Legally the cooperative owns the houses, but residents were free to renovate as they wished. The main point, Hancox was told, was to ensure that no one had the opportunity to accumulate capital or to speculate on their property. The common facilities were equally good. "We believe that public well-being should never have a limit," Gordillo said in 2012. Private well-being should be limited, but "the well-being of a collectivity should be limitless." Wireless internet was free. Swimming in the public pool costs three euros a year. The child day-care centre costs 12 euros a month, and the children eat there. Evening classes in Spanish were offered to the village's small emigrant population, mostly British. The cooperative had its own TV station, and no police force exists in the village.

Marinaleda's main achievements appear to lie in three interrelated areas: it is not leaderless, it has from the start stressed democratic organisation and specifically the power of organised workers, and it has endured for decades, not just months or years. Edgar (2013) agrees and notes Slavoj Zizek's warning to Wall Street Occupiers in October 2011: "There is a danger. Don't fall in love with

yourselves...carnivals come cheap. What matters is the day after, when we will have to return to normal lives.” He sees too that socialist Marinaleda has “defined the fabric of the normal life of its residents, day after day, for 30 years” and Gordillo has been continuously re-elected as mayor against a functioning opposition. Edgar (2013) stresses that “things don’t have to work completely or forever” in order to have meaning.

Recent studies have recognised the contrasting style and performance of the Occupy movement in the United States. The movement made, notes Sandbu (2013), “a conscious choice to forswear a concrete policy agenda” and the political alignments that would accompany it. It was strong on what it was against, the plutocratic one per cent, but weak on the detail of what it was for, and weaker still on the bridging of the gap. Nonetheless it seems right to say that, in the conservative climate of the United States, no campaign has done more to “thrust inequality on to the political agenda”, turning in the process the “we are the 99% into one of the most resonant slogans in campaigning history” (Chakraborty 2012). After reading this literature, Sandbu is left with the feeling that “Occupy wasted its chance as a political movement.” It could have put its “people power” behind a number of clear and present political issues, such as tax reforms and mortgage debt, but embraced instead supposed procedures of participatory democracy in large open spaces, such as the “people’s microphone” (the crowd repeating speakers’ words). These concerns seem somewhat frivolous compared with the life and death struggles for democratisation and justice in Spain.

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Manfred Steger, James Goodman, and Erin Wilson, 2013.
***Justice Globalism: Ideology, Crises, Policy.* London: Sage.**

Reviewed by **Ariel Salleh**

This slim volume is public sociology at its best. It is empirically grounded, politically astute, and urgent in subject matter - amplifying global justice movement responses to the international crises of finance, food, and climate. The authors are widely recognised for published work in the field of global politics and they now offer an engaging textbook; one that will prove invaluable to courses in Sociology and Anthropology, Political Economy, Human Geography, and Government.

The investigation is framed by the tension between mainstream “market globalism” versus grassroots “justice globalism” tracing the rise and maturation of the global justice movement (GJM) since the early 90s. This political trajectory moved from support for the Zapatistas, through protests against the World Trade Organization and the War on Terror, to birth of the World Social Forum (WSF) in 2001. The WSF was designed to challenge the ruling elite World Economic Forum in Davos and its slogan “Another World is Possible” regularly draws activists together in tens of thousands from every continent. The authors note that while social movement researchers have evolved from the study of local organisations to global politics, their interest has tended to stay with movement dynamics rather than ideology. By contrast, this book looks at how “Political ideologies translate the largely pre-reflexive social imaginary - and their associated social forces - into concrete political agendas” (Steger et al., 2013: 5). Philosopher Michael Freeden's work (2003) is cited as foundational.

A unique contribution of *Justice Globalism* is its approach to mapping the dimensions of ideology by a qualitative method known as morphological discourse analysis. This content analysis of activist texts, websites, political declarations, press releases, and interviews, seeks to distil core ideological concepts. In this case, the concepts are - paradigmatic change, participatory democracy, equal access to resources and opportunities, social justice, universal rights, global solidarity, sustainability. The researchers examine how these concepts inform ideological claims about the social imposts of neoliberal economies, and eventually come to inform policy alternatives and action. The alternative globalisation movement and its ideology of *Justice Globalism* is far from an instrumental alliance of single issue groups, as described by detractors.

The book is not a study of the World Social Forum as such; rather it draws on a selection of 45 politically diverse organizations active within the Forum - among them are the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Friends of the Earth, World March of Women, and Via Campesina. Sample quotes from leading cadres from a number of groups grace the chapters, revealing both the ethical and tactical discernment of individual activists. Thus: “When we say development, we talk about the eradication of poverty, we talk about gender development, equality, food security, food sovereignty ...” (Steger et al., 2013:

20). Or again: "... the financial crisis is about 160 people in a few buildings around the world who made the crisis happen through speculation" (Steger et al., 2013: 93). Or again: "What's difficult about neo-liberalism is that there is no dialogue ..." (Steger et al., 2013: 21).

The textual analysis is complemented by a computer word-count to crosscheck the qualitative study of the justice discourse. Curiously, the authors find that terms relating to racism and sexism rarely occur in these mechanical counts. They interpret these as "recessive themes," indicating a will among global activists to move beyond the divisiveness of "identity politics." The hypothesis is interesting but further research could be worthwhile.

The second part of the book demonstrates how market globalism inevitably leads to crises of finance, food, and climate. Each section has a systematic structure, describing first conditions under the neoliberal hegemony, then the range of innovative activist policy responses to it. These tend to fall under one of three political styles - regulation, autonomy, transformation.

The chapter on the Global Financial Crisis is a powerfully succinct account for the non-economist and it is worth buying the book for this alone. To paraphrase: Cost of the war in Iraq to the USA (2003-2008) - US\$ 3.3 trillion ... Total amount paid by developing countries in debt servicing 1980-2006 - US\$ 7.7 trillion (Steger et al., 2013: 89).

International instability and crisis is inevitable, given a contracting productive economy with speculative finance expanding out of control. Everywhere, governments committed to "open competition" become subject to IMF manouvres, corrupt credit rating agencies, and regional free trade agreements (which by 2010 numbered 2807). An irrational economic regime is made worse by the rise of algorithmic investment strategies or 'so-called "high frequency trading" where financial decision-making is outsourced to supercomputers, which operate on split second margins. "By 2010, high frequency trading had overwhelmed equities markets and was prompting new debates about regulation ... " (Steger et al., 2013: 87).

With ongoing Global Financial Crisis, the use of public moneys for bank bailouts might have prompted the GJM to demand the socialisation of such assets. But as the authors observe, the movements are not sufficiently politicised for this. Certainly, the Indignados and Occupy brought popular attention to the neoliberal hypocrisy of austerity policies for people and welfare for corporations. The World Council of Churches would point out that ideally, finance should be treated as a "public service." The umbrella group known as Focus on the Global South has recommended a levy on goods traded and transported more than 1000 kilometres. Across the board, the principle of subsidiarity prioritising local decision-making is endorsed by GJM activists.

GJM responses to the Global Food Crisis include calls for social and ecological transformation based on alternative forms of property ownership, lifestyle measures, new governance mechanisms, and recognition of Mother Earth rights. But real change will depend on the WSF developing from a dialogical

social movement into an effective form of political organisation. The question of what actually constitutes “political action” might have been considered in more depth here. For instance: does politics inevitably mean engagement with the nation state? Should the prefigurative “horizontalism” of projects among the autonomist Left be identified as political?

The book's taxonomy of GJM organisations adapts sociologist Castells' (1997) tripartite network model of legitimisers, resisters, and project identities. So, in terms of the Global Financial Crisis, groups like ATTAC simply want global financial regulation with a Tobin Tax on transactions; other groups want stronger nationally based initiatives, possibly a basic income scheme; others are described as seeking the “democratisation of finance.” The meaning of the latter is not very clear. Moreover, as each of these policy stands means interaction with global institutions, where does the worldwide interest in establishing local currencies or money-free gift economies fit in?

In the case of the Global Food Crisis, GJM policy responses are characterised as broader market access for the reformers; food security and sufficiency for the delinkers; and food sovereignty for transformers like the World March of Women. The emergent activist profiles for Global Climate Crisis run in parallel to this triad, being - mainstream climate action including market solutions like carbon trading; climate autonomy implying a more vigorous nation-state role; and finally, a comprehensive grassroots push for climate justice.

In selecting a framework for the analysis of GJM policy standpoints, the authors reject the conventional political distinction between liberal, anarchist, and Marxist approaches. They argue that “the process of translating the global imaginary is producing new overarching ideological formations, including justice globalism, that generate substantive and distinct alternatives” (Steger et al., 2013: 151). However, under their three preferred heads - reformers, delinkers, and transformers - use of the “delinking category” seems to pull in two contradictory directions. It may refer either to top-down initiatives by a revitalised nation-state or to bottom-up eco-sufficient grassroots sustainability projects that “resist the network through an alternative ‘communal heaven’” (Steger et al., 2013: 151). In the politics of feminism, New Left culture, and more recent indigenous environmentalism, the word “autonomy” favours the latter communitarian sense. So staying with a Liberal, Anarchist, Marxist, classification might have helped resolve this ambiguity over “delinking.” It would also enable acknowledgment of the immediately “transformative” politics of horizontalism. Another future research area, perhaps?

Justice Globalism is not a book of political theory, but it is conceptually and methodologically innovative. It is also highly recommended for its accessible, thought provoking, and synoptic treatment of a new field.

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Hall, Gwendolyn. (Ed.). (2012). A Black Communist in the freedom struggle. University of Minnesota Press: Minnesota.

Bloom, Joshua & Martin, Waldo, JR. (2013). Black against empire: The history and politics of the Black Panther Party. University of California Press: Berkeley.

Reviewed by **Mandisi Majavu**

The political importance of the two books under review lies in how these works illustrate the ways in which two different generations of Black activists in the United States contributed to the Black people's struggle for freedom. *A Black communist* is a political autobiography of Harry Haywood, whereas *Black against empire* is a history of the Black Panther Party. The former is an abridged version of the original seven-hundred-page autobiography, and is edited by historian Gwendolyn Hall who was married to Harry Haywood.

Haywood was a member of the Communist Party of the United States (CPUSA). Prior to becoming a party leader in the CPUSA, Haywood spent four years in Moscow studying at the Lenin School. One of Haywood's greatest achievements was adapting Marxist-Leninist theory to the struggle against racist exploitation of Black people in the U.S. Before Haywood went to study at the Lenin School, the CPUSA regarded the struggle of Black people against racist exploitation "as basically trade union matter, underrating other aspects of the struggle" (p. 143). At the Lenin School, one of the theoretical questions that Haywood grappled with was what he, along with others, termed the "Negro question". It was through grappling with this question that Haywood arrived at the conclusion that looking at every aspect of the struggle against racism "in the light of the trade union question would lead to a denial of the revolutionary potential of the struggles of the whole people for equality" (p. 143).

In other words, Haywood argued that the struggle against racism had to be regarded as a revolutionary movement in its own right, independent of a class struggle for socialism. The Comintern in Moscow supported Haywood's position, and consequently, he convinced reluctant white communists in the U.S. that the "only road to a successful socialist revolution was by uncompromising support for the Black freedom struggle," (p. xiii).

Thus, Haywood and the CPUSA played a vital role in the organisation of the 'Free the Scottsboro Boys March' on Washington in May 1933. The CPUSA chose Birmingham as the centre for its drive into the Deep South and "as the logical jump-off place for the development of a movement among the small Black farm operators" (p. 193). In Chicago, the CPUSA led the National Unemployed Councils. In other words, Haywood's contribution to the struggle for freedom for Black people in the U.S laid a foundation for the civil rights movement in the South. It is this long tradition of protests, marches and civil disobedience that eventually gave birth to Black Power organisations in 1966.

In *Black against empire*, Bloom and Waldo trace the development of the Black Power movement, which the Black Panther Party embodied, to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Huey Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense in 1966. What gave the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP) its political edge is that it took the issue of police brutality, which was the major problem facing the Black community at the time, to a broader political level. Newton's and Seale's Black Panther Party identified "the police as representatives of the oppressive imperial power, an occupying force with no legitimate role in the black community" (p. 67).

As a solution, Newton and Seale proposed armed resistance as a strategy to build political power and gain leverage to redress the injustices against Black people. In addition to organising the rage of the Black ghetto into armed resistance, the Party championed "solutions to the pressing needs of the black community: decent housing, employment, education, and freedom" (p. 70). These were articulated in the Black Panther Party's ten-point programme.

What attracted Black people to the BPP was that the Party offered Black people more than a political alternative; "it promised dignity" (p. 146). The BPP dealt with exploitative landlords; the Party ran community programmes that included setting up alternative schools for Black children; it provided Black children with free breakfast and it offered free health care services to the Black community. The breakfast programmes became a cornerstone political activity of the BPP. "The Party claimed to have fed twenty thousand children in the 1968 – 69 school year and said it hoped to feed one hundred thousand in 1969 – 70" (p. 184). Further, the Party launched about nine alternative schools across the U.S, and established a series of free medical clinics throughout the country.

The politics of the Black Power movement taught White leftists in the 1960s that racism had to be fought not after the revolution but as part of "the prerequisite process of creating revolution" (Albert 1974). One of the weaknesses of the BPP, however, is that the Party had sexist and authoritarian tendencies. In *Black Macho*, Michele Wallace (1990: xxi), points out that "a brand of black male chauvinism contributed to the shortsightedness and failure of the Black Power Movement..." According to Bloom and Waldo, the Party never overcame its "masculine public identity."

The most important lesson that the books offer to activists is that it is possible to build effective, radical movements across the colour line in the most racist of places and under the worst of circumstances (Kelley 2013). Another lesson that activists could learn from these works is that although class politics are alive, "any class politics that pretend that race and also gender get in the way of class organising miss the point altogether" (Kelley 2013: 216).

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